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NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

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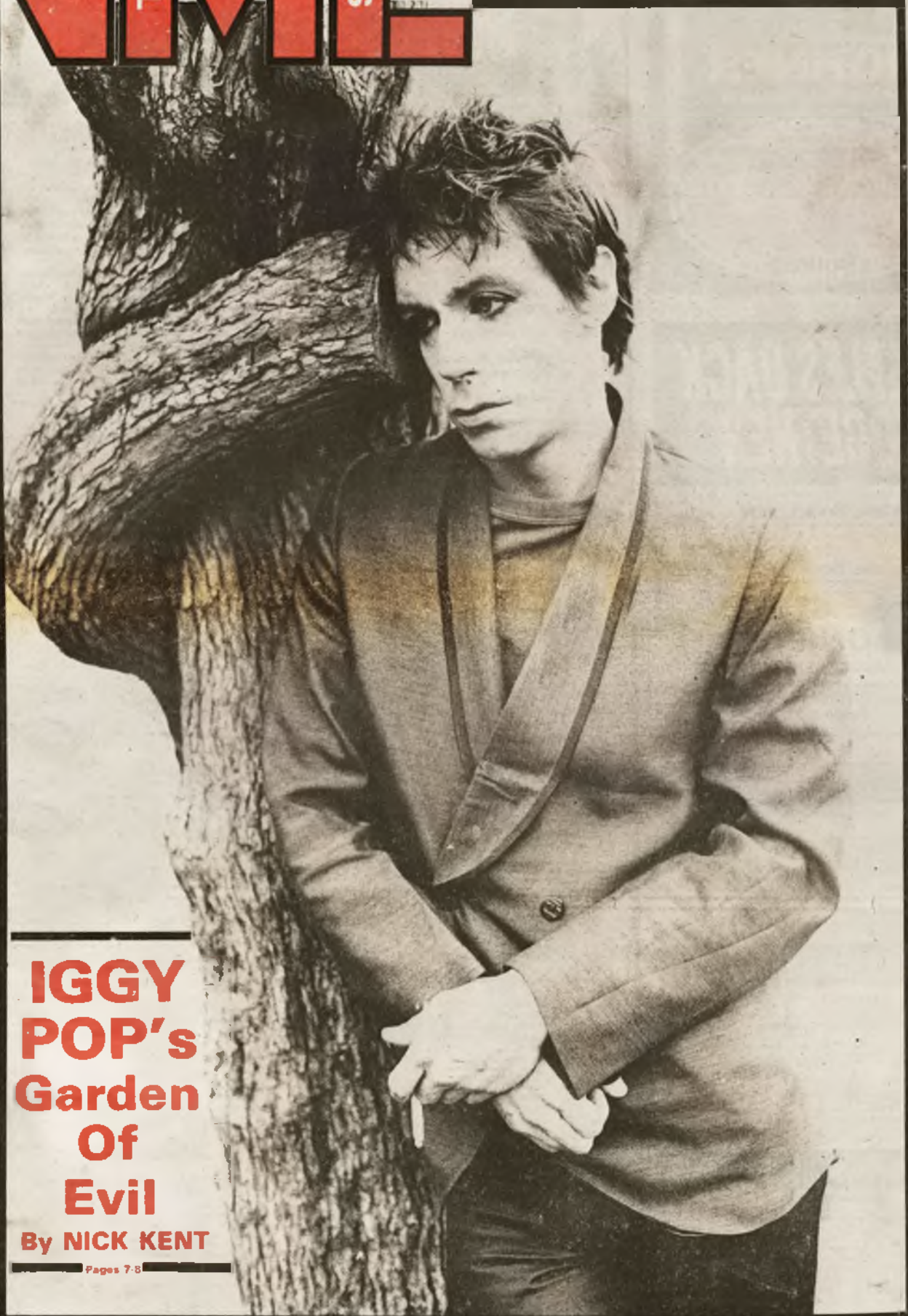
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IGGY POP's Garden Of Evil

By NICK KENT

Pages 7-8

iggy out of his tree again/Pic: PENNIE SMITH





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FIVE YEARS AGO

Week ending March 26, 1974

Last This Week	Rank	Title	Artist
1	1	BILLY DON'T BE A HERO	Paper Lace (Bus Stop)
2	2	THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL	Charlie Rich (CBS)
3	3	THE AIR THAT I BREATHE	Hollies (Polydor)
4	4	I GET A LITTLE SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU	New Seekers (Polydor)
5	5	EMMA	Hot Chocolate (Rak)
6	6	JET	Paul McCartney & Wings (Apple)
7	7	SEASON IN THE SUN	Terry Jacks (Bell)
8	8	YOU'RE SIXTEEN	Ringo Starr (Apple)
9	9	SEVEN SEAS OF RHYME	Queen (EMI)
10	10	REMEMBER (SHA-LA-LA-LAI)	Bay City Rollers (Bell)

TEN YEARS AGO

Week ending March 26, 1969

Last This Week	Rank	Title	Artist
1	1	I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE	Marvin Gaye (Tamla Motown)
2	2	WHERE DO YOU GO TO	Peter Sarstedt (United Artists)
3	3	GENTLE ON MY MIND	Dean Martin (Reprise)
4	4	SURROUND YOURSELF WITH SORROW	Cilla Black (Parlophone)
5	5	THE WAY IT USED TO BE	Engelbert Humperdinck (Decca)
6	6	SORRY SUZANNE	Hollies (Parlophone)
7	7	FIRST OF MAY	Bee Gees (Polydor)
8	8	WHICHITA LINEMAN	Glen Campbell (Ember)
9	9	MONSIEUR DUPONT	Sandra Shaw (Pye)
10	10	GAMES PEOPLE PLAY	Joe South (Capitol)

15 YEARS AGO

Week ending March 27, 1964

Last This Week	Rank	Title	Artist
1	1	CAN'T BUY ME LOVE	Beatles (Parlophone)
2	2	LITTLE CHILDREN	Billy J. Kramer (Parlophone)
3	3	JUST ONE LOOK	Hollies (Parlophone)
4	4	NOT FADE AWAY	Rolling Stones (Decca)
5	5	I BELIEVE	Beach Boys (Decca)
6	6	BITS AND PIECES	Dave Clark Five (Columbia)
7	7	I LOVE YOU BECAUSE	Jim Reeves (RCA)
8	8	ANYONE WHO HAD A HEART	Cilla Black (Parlophone)
9	9	THAT GIRL BELONGS TO YESTERDAY	Gene Pitney (United Artists)
10	10	TELL ME WHEN	Appleby (Decca)



SINGLES

Week ending March 24, 1979

This Last Week	Rank	Title	Artist	Position	Highest
1	(3)	I WILL SURVIVE	Gloria Gaynor (Polydor)	7	1
2	(1)	OLIVER'S ARMY	Elvis Costello (Radar)	6	1
3	(2)	TRAGEDY	Bee Gees (RSO)	5	1
4	(3)	LUCKY NUMBER	Lene Lovich (Stiff)	4	3
5	(5)	CAN YOU FEEL THE FORCE	Real Thing (Pye)	4	5
6	(9)	I WANT YOUR LOVE	Chic (Atlantic)	4	6
7	(6)	SOMETHING ELSE	Sex Pistols (Virgin)	3	6
8	(10)	KEEP ON DANCIN'	Gary's Gang (CBS)	4	8
9	(11)	CONTACT	Edwin Starr (20th Century)	7	4
10	(6)	PAINTER MAN	Boney M (Atlantic/Hansa)	3	6
11	(17)	WAITING FOR AN ALBI	Thin Lizzy (Vertigo)	2	11
12	(28)	HOLD THE LINE	Toto (CBS)	4	12
13	(13)	INTO THE VALLEY	Skids (Virgin)	4	13
13	(1)	IN THE NAVY	Village People (Mercury)	1	13
15	(8)	HEART OF GLASS	Blondie (Chrysalis)	9	1
16	(12)	GET DOWN	Gene Chandler (20th Century)	7	9
17	(16)	MONEY IN MY POCKET	Dennis Brown (Atlantic)	3	16
18	(—)	STRANGE TOWN	Jam (Polydor)	1	18
19	(30)	SULTANS OF SWING	Dire Straits (Vertigo)	2	19
20	(29)	TURN THE MUSIC UP	Players Association (Vanguard)	2	20
21	(19)	YOU BET YOUR LOVE	Herbie Hancock (CBS)	5	19
22	(25)	FOREVER IN BLUE JEANS	Nail Diamond (CBS)	2	22
23	(14)	GET IT	Darts (Magnet)	5	14
24	(—)	JUST WHAT I NEEDED	Cars (Elektra)	2	24
25	(15)	CHQUITITA	Abba (Epic)	7	1
26	(21)	CLOG DANCE	Violinski (Jet)	2	21
27	(18)	DON'T STOP ME NOW	Queen (EMI)	4	18
28	(20)	SOUND OF THE SUBURBS	Members (Virgin)	6	13
29	(—)	EVERYBODY'S HAPPY NOWADAYS	Buzzcocks (United Artists)	1	29
30	(—)	DISCO NIGHTS	G.O. (Arista)	1	30

BUBBLING UNDER
WOW — Kate Bush (EMI); BULLY FOR YOU — Tom Robinson Band (EMI); OVERKILL — Motorhead (Bronze); BRIGHT EYES — Art Garfunkel (CBS).

U.S. SINGLES

This Last Week	Rank	Title	Artist
1	(1)	TRAGEDY	Bee Gees
2	(2)	DO YA THINK I'M SEXY	Rod Stewart
3	(6)	WHAT A FOOL BELIEVES	Doobie Brothers
4	(3)	I WILL SURVIVE	Gloria Gaynor
5	(5)	SHAKE YOUR GROOVE THING	Peaches and Herb
6	(4)	HEAVEN KNOWS	Donna Summer with Brooklyn Dreams
7	(8)	SULTANS OF SWING	Dire Straits
8	(7)	FIRE	Pointer Sisters
9	(12)	EVERY TIME I THINK OF YOU	The Babys
10	(11)	WHAT YOU WON'T DO FOR LOVE	Bobby Caldwell
11	(18)	KNOCK ON WOOD	Ami Stewart
12	(14)	LADY	Little River Band
13	(16)	MUSIC BOX DANCER	Frank Mills
14	(15)	BIG SHOT	Billy Joel
15	(17)	CRAZY LOVE	Poco
16	(19)	Y.M.C.A.	Village People
17	(19)	I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S RIGHT	Evelyn "Champagne" King
18	(21)	I JUST FALL IN LOVE AGAIN	Anne Murray
19	(23)	STUMBLIN' IN	Suzi Quatro/Chris Norman
20	(10)	DON'T CRY OUT LOUD	Melissa Manchester
21	(26)	HEART OF GLASS	Blondie
22	(24)	FOREVER IN BLUE JEANS	Nail Diamond
23	(13)	A LITTLE MORE LOVE	Olivia Newton-John
24	(28)	LIVIN' IT UP (FRIDAY NIGHT)	Bell & James
25	(—)	I WANT YOUR LOVE	Chic
26	(25)	PRECIOUS LOVE	Bob Welch
27	(30)	MAYBE I'M A FOOL	Eddie Money
28	(20)	LE FREAK	Chic
29	(—)	HE'S THE GREATEST DANCER	Sister Sledge
30	(—)	BUSTIN' LOOSE	Chuck Brown & The Soul Searchers

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

ALBUMS

Week ending March 24, 1979

This Last Week	Rank	Title	Artist	Position	Highest
1	(2)	SPIRITS HAVING FLOWN	Bee Gees (RSO)	7	1
2	(1)	PARALLEL LINES	Blondie (Chrysalis)	23	1
3	(4)	ARMED FORCES	Elvis Costello (Radar)	10	2
4	(5)	C'EST CHIC	Chic (Atlantic)	7	4
5	(3)	MANILOW MAGIC	Berry Manilow (Arista)	3	3
6	(10)	THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE	Sex Pistols (Virgin)	3	6
7	(7)	MARTY ROBBINS COLLECTION	Marty Robbins (Lotus)	6	5
8	(18)	DIRE STRAITS	Dire Straits (Vertigo)	3	8
9	(22)	20 GREATEST HITS	Three Degrees (Epic)	4	9
10	(—)	BARBRA STREISAND'S GREATEST HITS VOL 2	(CBS)	1	10
11	(12)	LIVE (X CERT)	Stranglers (United Artists)	2	11
12	(6)	THANK YOU VERY MUCH	Cliff Richard & The Shadows (EMI)	5	5
13	(8)	THE BEST OF EARTH WIND AND FIRE VOL 1	(CBS)	11	5
13	(15)	NEW BOOTS & PANTIES	Ian Dury & The Blockheads (Stiff)	44	5
15	(17)	EQUINOXE	Jean Michel Jarre (Polydor)	13	6
16	(11)	52nd STREET	Billy Joel (CBS)	9	11
17	(—)	DESOLATION ANGELS	Bad Company (Swansong)	1	17
18	(27)	TURN TO THE MUSIC	Players Association (Vanguard)	3	18
19	(—)	SCARED TO DANCE	Skids (Virgin)	1	19
20	(24)	THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING DICKIES	Dickies (A & M)	5	19
21	(—)	STATELESS	Lene Lovich (Stiff)	1	21
22	(20)	OUT OF THE BLUE	Electric Light Orchestra (Jet)	63	3
23	(16)	BAT OUT OF HELL	Meat Loaf (Epic)	28	6
24	(9)	BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN	Rod Stewart (Riva)	16	2
25	(—)	SHEIK YERBOUTI	Frank Zappa (CBS)	1	25
26	(23)	AT THE BUDOKAN	Cheap Trick (Epic)	2	23
27	(—)	FEEL NO FRET	Average White Band (RCA)	1	27
28	(—)	TRB TWO	Tom Robinson Band (EMI)	1	28
29	(—)	NIGHTFLIGHT TO VENUS	Boney M (Atlantic/Hansa)	32	1
30	(26)	INFLAMMABLE MATERIAL	Sniff Little Fingers (Rough Trade)	3	26

BUBBLING UNDER
LOOK SHARP — Joe Jackson (A&M); BREAKFAST IN AMERICA — Supertramp (A&M); MANIFESTO — Roxy Music (Phonogram); EVEN SERPENTS SHINE — The Only Ones (CBS).

U.S. ALBUMS

This Last Week	Rank	Title	Artist
1	(1)	SPIRITS HAVING FLOWN	Bee Gees
2	(12)	MINUTE BY MINUTE	Doobie Brothers
3	(4)	DIRE STRAITS	Dire Straits
4	(3)	BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN	Rod Stewart
5	(5)	52nd STREET	Billy Joel
6	(16)	BRIEFCASE FULL OF BLUES	Blues Brothers
7	(18)	BLUE TRACKS	Gloria Gaynor
8	(11)	2 HOT!	Peaches & Herb
9	(17)	CRUISIN'	Village People
10	(10)	ARMED FORCES	Elvis Costello & The Attractions
11	(9)	TOTALLY HOT	Olivia Newton-John
12	(12)	C'EST CHIC	Chic
13	(13)	LIVE AND MORE	Donna Summer
14	(18)	AT THE BUDOKAN	Cheap Trick
15	(15)	BUSTIN' OUT OF SEVEN	Rick James
16	(14)	LIFE FOR THE TAKING	Eddie Money
17	(—)	LIVIN' INSIDE YOUR LOVE	George Benson
18	(12)	TOTO	Toto
19	(17)	ENERGY	Pointer Sisters
20	(—)	ENLIGHTENED ROGUES	Alman Brothers Band
21	(20)	THE BEST OF EARTH, WIND & FIRE VOL. 1	Earth, Wind & Fire
22	(—)	THREE HEARTS	Bob Welch
23	(23)	THE GAMBLER	Kenny Rogers
24	(27)	LEGEND	Poco
25	(25)	THE CARS	The Cars
26	(—)	GEORGE HARRISON	George Harrison
27	(22)	BARBRA STREISAND'S GREATEST HITS VOL. 2	Barbra Streisand
28	(19)	GOLD	Jefferson Starship
29	(30)	HEAD FIRST	The Babys
30	(—)	DESTINY	The Jacksons

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

HERE COME THE TUBES!



FEE WAYBILL (Pic: Nando Valverde)

THE TUBES return to Britain in May for a major 17-date concert tour, including a string of seven successive nights at London's Hammersmith Odeon.

Their itinerary comprises Glasgow Apollo (May 11), Edinburgh Odeon (12), Newcastle City Hall (13), Liverpool Empire (15), Manchester Apollo (17), Birmingham Odeon (18), Bristol Colston Hall (19), London Hammersmith Odeon (21-27 inclusive), Leicester DeMontfort Hall (29), Southampton Gaumont (30) and Brighton Conference Centre (31).

There are two performances each night (7 and 9.30 pm) at Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol. And it's understood there's a good chance of at least one more concert being slotted into the band's schedule.

Promoters are Straight Music, who announce that tickets are on sale now priced £4, £3 and £2 — except Hammersmith, where they are £4.50, £3.50 and £2.50.

The seven-member group will be presenting their brand new stage show in this country for the first time. Apparently their act doesn't feature as many dancers as before, as they are now keen to put greater emphasis on their music. But a spokesman commented: "There will certainly be some dancers, and you can bet the band will have a few tricks up their sleeve!"

The Tubes' last UK tour, a year ago, came to an early and abrupt end — when, soon after the start, Fee Waybill fell off stage at Oxford New Theatre and broke his leg. All the remaining dates, including a week at Hammersmith, had to be cancelled. They returned for a one-off appearance at Knebworth in the summer.

Their new album 'Remote Control', a concept loosely based upon American TV, is out this week on the A&M label. It's followed on March 30 by a single titled 'Prime Time'.



THE TUBES at Knebworth last year

DOMINO AND HANCOCK IN LONDON FESTIVAL?

FATS DOMINO, Herbie Hancock, B.B. King, Muddy Waters and Carmen McRae are among names provisionally set for a six-day festival to be staged at Alexandra Palace in North London in the summer. The event is the Capital Jazz Festival, and it takes place from July 17 to 22. The idea is for all concerts to be presented in the Palace grounds but, in the event of bad weather, they can be transferred indoors. Well-known jazzmen appearing include Woody Herman, George Shearing, Lionel Hampton and Dizzy Gillespie. But according to their respective record companies, several of the names announced are still subject to confirmation.

Punishment dates, single

PUNISHMENT Of Luxury have their new single 'Jellyfish' released by United Artists on April 13 — the seven-inch version is pressed in clear vinyl, is in a picture bag and has 'Engine Of Excess' as the B-side, the limited edition 12-inch, also in a picture sleeve, has an additional track called 'Excess Bleeding Heart'. The band will be going out on a full nationwide tour in April and May to promote the single, but beforehand they play nine selected dates at Norwich Boogie House (tomorrow, Friday), London Woolwich Thames Polytechnic (Saturday), Portsmouth Polytechnic (March 26), London Camden Music Machine (27), Leeds Fan Club (28), Retford Porterhouse (30), Lincoln Technical College (31), Cromer West Runton Pavilion (April 6) and Middlesbrough Rock Garden (7).

AEROSMITH OFF

AEROSMITH have cancelled their spring European tour, scheduled to begin in France next month. As reported last week, it was to have included a one-off London concert at the Hammersmith Odeon on May 20. They say that recording commitments will prevent them coming over at this time. It's not yet known if their visit is being re-arranged for later in the year.

JOAN JETS IN



AMID widespread rumours (now apparently justified) that The Runaways have finally broken up, their leader Joan Jett has arrived in London to start work on a single with Steve Jones and Paul Cook of The Sex Pistols. It's her version of Lesley Gore's 1964 hit 'You Don't Own Me'. She may extend her visit in order to record an album, once the single is finished. As far as the other Runaways are concerned, Laurie McAllister has definitely left the group, while Sandy West and Lita Ford are currently doing session work in the States — so the future outlook for the band is not bright.

NEWS DESK



DAMNATION!

They're back on the road

THE DAMNED set out next week on their first full tour since their re-formation, and their itinerary includes a major London show at the Lyceum. Dates so far confirmed are Blackpool Northbrook Castle (March 29), Hull College of Education (30), Croydon Greyhound (April 1), Rayleigh Crocs (4), Great Yarmouth Stars & Stripes (5), Manchester The Factory (7), London Strand Lyceum (8), Birmingham Barbarella's (10), Torquay 400 Club (11), Cardiff Grannies (12).

Liverpool Eric's (14) and High Wycombe Town Hall (18).

Several more dates are still being set — including gigs in Newcastle, Sheffield and Brighton — and these will be announced next week, together with details of the band's new single for release in mid-April.

STOP PRESS

TOM WAITS flies in to play a one-off concert at the London Palladium on April 21.

Makeshift band for Toyah's first outing

TOYAH — the band fronted by Toyah Wilcox, who recently signed with Safari Records — begin their first-ever tour next week, opening and closing in London. They've just lost two of their members, with bassist John Miller and drummer

Dennis Andress leaving, so they'll be using guest musicians for the first few gigs until they find permanent replacements. Several more dates have still to be finalised, but those confirmed so far are:

London Camden Dingwells (March 27), Rayleigh Crocs (28), Leeds Fan Club (April 12), Manchester Russell Club (13), Liverpool Eric's (14), Dumfries Stagecoach (15), Edinburgh Tiffany's (16), Sheffield Limit Club (17), York Pop Club (18), Birmingham Barbarella's (19), Cromer West Runton Pavilion (20) and London Camden Music Machine (21).

Re-vamped Rezillos in spring comeback

THE REZILLOS, arguably Scotland's leading new-wave outfit until their shock decision to split last autumn, are poised to re-emerge in a new guise. The band's two singers, Fay Fife and Eugene Reynolds, are in the process of launching a new group — and they have already co-opted the services of guitarist Hi-Fi Harris (who used to be with The Rezillos at the outset) and a couple of girl back-up vocalists.

They are still seeking a bassist and a drummer, but meanwhile they've been experimenting with some new material in Edinburgh studios, with both Fay and Eugene contributing instrumentally as well as vocally. It's understood that their eventual aim is to establish their own label, recording other acts as well as their own.

It isn't yet clear if they will retain the name of The Rezillos, though they're using it at the moment — but either way, they plan to resume live engagements in the late spring. And as an epitaph to the original band, their farewell live album is planned for release through WEA next month.

SIMPLE MINDS, the Scottish band whose debut album is due out on Zoom Records (distributed by Arista), have a double cause for celebration this week — they've landed the studio spot in 'Old Gray Whistle Test' on BBC-2 next Tuesday (27), and they've been booked to support Magazine in their British tour starting on April 16. Prior to this, they have five gigs in their own right at Dumfries Technical College (April 5), Leeds Florde Green Hotel (6), Newbridge Memorial Hall (8),

— AND SIMPLE MINDS KEEP SCOTLAND'S FLAG FLYING

Dawlish Grand Hotel (11) and Burton 76 Club (13).

Next week's 'Whistle Test' will be a special show in that, besides Simple Minds, over half the show will be devoted to Bruce Springsteen — who was filmed in Newhaven, Connecticut, late last summer.



ZEN DIES

Tragedy of The Bishops axeman

ZENON DE FLEUR — The Bishops' rhythm and slide guitarist who, as reported last week, was badly injured in a road accident earlier this month — died in hospital at the weekend. The tragedy was unexpected as, at one point, he had been taken off the critical list. A series of benefit gigs, to pay for his funeral, is now being arranged by his many friends and associates in the business.

The Bishops expect to carry on, and will probably undertake their projected May tour, as de Fleur expressed a wish for them to do so before he died. The band completed their third album shortly before his accident, and this will be released in the near future.

Nugent concerts are on

TED NUGENT's British visit in May, forecast by NME last week, has now been confirmed officially. He'll be playing two performances with his new band at London Hammersmith Odeon on Wednesday, May 9, as the climax of his European tour which starts next month. It seems unlikely that he'll be playing any other dates in this country. Tickets for the Hammersmith gigs are on sale now priced £4, £3 and £2.

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FRI. 30th MAR. - CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE

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MON. 2nd APR. - PORTSMOUTH GUILD HALL

TUE. 3rd APR. - DERBY ASSEMBLY ROOMS

WED. 4th APR. - SHEFFIELD CITY HALL

THUR. 5th APR. - LIVERPOOL EMPIRE

SAT. 7th APR. - BIRMINGHAM ODEON

SUN. 8th APR. - LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL

MON. 9th APR. - HANLEY VICTORIA HALL

TUE. 10th APR. - BRISTOL COLSTON HALL

WED. 11th APR. - MANCHESTER FREE TRADE HALL

THUR. 12th APR. - BRADFORD ST. GEORGES HALL

FRI. 13th APR. - LONDON LYCEUM

Ticket Prices are £2.50, £2.00, £1.50 everywhere except ST. ALBAN'S, CAMBRIDGE, AYLESBURY and HANLEY where all tickets are £2.00, LONDON all tickets are £2.50.

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT ALL VENUES NOW



Record News

SINGLES SALES SOAR IN 1978 DISCO BOOM

SALES OF singles soared dramatically in 1978, according to figures just released by the British Phonographic Industry. The total number bought in the UK throughout last year was almost 88 million, and that's 41 per cent more than in 1977 — a jump which can be attributed to the boom in disco music.

For the first time in several years, there were more singles sold than albums, which totalled 85 million (four per cent more than 1977) — although, of course, the LP revenue was appreciably higher. The BPI claims that many more albums would have been sold, if it had not been for home taping.

Cassette sales increased by more than ten per cent, to complete a very satisfactory year for the industry, in which it earned £247 million. This is a rise of 27 per cent over 1977 although, allowing for price increases, it represents a nett increase of six per cent. In any case, these figures show that the record business has now confidently hauled itself out of the depression of the mid-'70s.

Burnel, Stranglers discs

JEAN JACQUES BURNEL has a single released by United Artists to coincide with his upcoming tour — titled 'Freddie Laker (Concorde & Eurobus)', it's due out on April 13. The track is taken from his solo album 'Euroman Cometh', now issued on April 6, one week later than originally planned. The B-side of the single, which comes in a picture bag, is a new song inspired by a Shelley poem and called 'Ozymandias'.

U-A have also decided to reissue The Stranglers' single 'Peaches' which originally came out in May, 1977. It was initially in a limited edition picture sleeve, which has long since been withdrawn, and has subsequently only been available in a plain white bag. Now a print by fashion photographer James Wedge has been adapted for a new sleeve, and the disc is being re-marketed.

Anchor's up

ANCHOR RECORDS are to close down. This follows the news that MCA has purchased ABC Records from the American Broadcasting Company, and intends to combine operations of both companies — rather than continuing ABC (whose British subsidiary is Anchor) as an autonomous unit. This means that the ABC catalogue will henceforth be issued through MCA, though it's understood that many of the acts on the label — including Steely Dan and Don Williams — are at present considering whether to seek new outlets.

Who single

THE WHO have a three-track single issued through Polydor next week, described by the band's spokesman as a "taster" for their upcoming film 'The Kids Are Alright'. A-side is 'Long Live Rock', and the coupling features a re-recorded version of 'I'm The Face' (the first song the band ever recorded) and John Entwistle's 'My Wife'.

● Cashing in on Blondie's current success, Capitol are reissuing the solitary album by Wind In The Willows, the band with whom Debbie Harry sang several years ago at the outset of her career. It should be available in mid-spring.

● Several concerts in the upcoming American tour by Yes, starting next month, are to be recorded with a view to releasing a live album in the early autumn. The band's only previous live set was the triple 'Yessongs' six years ago.



● Precious Little (above) has the distinction of getting her debut single banned by the BBC in advance of its release, and on the strength of its title alone! Formerly a singer and dancer with Reflections and The Young Generation, she's recorded a reggae disco single called 'Ain't Got No Balls', which DJM Records issue tomorrow (Friday).

● Gino & The Sharks are to record a live album at London West Hampstead Moonlight Club next Wednesday (29). They'll be cutting 14 tracks for the LP, which will be issued on their own RPM label, and negotiations are well advanced for distribution by a major outlet.

● Nezereth — currently on a six-week U.S. tour, to be followed by concerts in Japan — have a new single issued by Mountain in their absence. Titled 'Whatever You Want Babe', and coupled with their stage favourite 'Telegram', it comes out tomorrow (Friday).



CBS SIGN REGULARS

THE REGULARS, formerly known as Reggae Regular, have signed a long-term worldwide deal with CBS — and their debut album 'Victim' is scheduled for May release, to be preceded by a single next month. The reggae band, formed nearly three years ago, will be going on tour shortly — the first confirmed date is Slough Langley College on March 31. They comprise Allan 'Kingpin' King (lead vocals), Errol 'Sly Jnr' Francis (drums), George 'Grab and Flea' Clarke (keyboards), Patrick 'Chiki' Donnegan (rhythm guitar and vocals), Tony 'Benjamin' Rookwood (vocals), Trevor 'Seal' Salmon (bass) and Norman 'Junior' Ebanks (lead guitar).



● Cher has her first release on the Casablanca label (distributed by Pye) set for March 30 — it's a single titled 'Take Me Home'. It's taken from her album of the same name, which follows on April 6.

Complete Holly

THE SIX-RECORD boxed set of 'The Complete Buddy Holly' is issued by MCA this weekend. It contains every known recording Holly made — as a soloist, with The Crickets and with Bob Montgomery — plus radio and TV interviews, and a couple of live performances. It comes with a 60-page illustrated scrapbook, and costs £14.99.

Pistols' new one

THE SEX PISTOLS' next single comprises two tracks from their film and soundtrack album 'The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle' — they are 'Silly Thing' and 'Who Killed Bambi?'. It's marketed in a picture bag, and is scheduled for March 30 release by Virgin.

● The Invaders have their debut single issued on Jimmy Pursey's JP Productions label (distributed by Polydor) on April 20. Title is 'Girls In Action'.

● Penetration's next single, for release by Virgin on April 20, is 'Danger Signs'. It will be available in both seven and 12-inch form, coupled with 'Stone Heroes' — plus an extra track on the 12-inch called 'Vision'. The same label issues a new Kevin Coyne single this weekend titled 'I'll Go Too', and it's pressed in green vinyl.

● Wings' first single to feature their new line-up is 'Goodnight Tonight'/'Daytime Nighttime Suffering', both Paul McCartney compositions, and it's out on Parlophone this weekend. Their new album, now almost completed, is planned for late spring release.

● Bill Nelson's Red Noise have their EMI single 'Revolt Into Style' issued on March 30, with the first 25,000 copies in a special picture bag. The B-side is a live version of 'Air On The Trumpet', recorded at Leicester De Montfort Hall earlier this month.

● Hot on the heels of their hit album 'Cruisin' Village People have their follow-up LP released by Mercury on March 30. Title is 'Go West'.

● Capricorn Records issue a batch of six new albums this month. They include 'On The Edge' by Sea Level, 'Enlightened Rogues' by The Allman Brothers, 'Night Of The Living Dregs' by Duke Dregs, 'I Reserve The Right' by Stillwater and 'The Dream Never Dies' by The Cooper Brothers. The sixth LP is a compilation titled 'Hotels, Motels & Roadshows' featuring the previous five acts, plus Marshall Tucker, Bonnie Bramlett and others.

● Blue have their new album 'Foots Party' released by Rocket this weekend. It consists of 12 new songs, all written by the band and mainly by lead singer Hugh Nicholson. Elton John assisted Blue in the production.

● Willy Barrett has a solo single titled 'Let's Play School' issued by Polydor on March 30. It's his first since his partnership with John Onway was dissolved last year.

● London-based independent Cherry Red have signed a three-year deal to distribute Bristol-based Heartbeat Records. First release, out this week, is a 12-inch four-track single by Bristol band Glaxe Babies.

● The Jolt are nearing completion of an EP called 'Maybe Tonight', planned for April release by Polydor. They've been working with producer Kenny Denton and arranger Lou Clarke.



... I mean you might think I'm a boring old fart but I'm really into Anthony Phillips his new album "Sides" is incredibly amazing he used to be in Genesis years ago didn't he really he's a bit like Mike Oldfield but "Sides" is this incredible amazing rock thing you can listen to hundreds of times not like some of that headbanging stuff not that "Sides" is hard to listen to I mean it's very accessible he's a multi-instrumentalist plays everything brilliantly went back to music college he's got one of the Superpolychronic SK 14 synthesisers amazing you ought to do yourself a favour and buy this album it's got a limited edition free collectors album of his early works "Private Parts and Pieces" are you going to see Lizzy at Hammersmith blah blah blah...

"SO LET US start with one average, stupid, representative case: Johnny Yen the Other Half, errand boy from the death trauma — Now look I'm going to say it once and going to say it slow — *Death* in orgasm is their unsanitary Venusian gimmick is the whole birth/death cycle of action — You got it — Now do you understand who Johnny Yen is? The Boy-Girl Other Half Striptease God of Frustration — Errand boy from the death trauma — His immortality depends on the mortality of others . . .

"All right back to the case of Johnny Yen. Write back to the streets, Johnny . . . Write out of the sewers of Venus to neon streets of Saturn — Alternatively Johnny Yen can be written back to a greenish boy — There are always alternative solutions Nothing is true — Everything is permitted.

"No hassen — sabbah — we want flesh — we want power — we want junk — we want power."

Chapter — "operation rewrite" — a segment from "The Ticket That Exploded", William Burroughs, 1962.

*"I'm heavy as a horse,
Ah, but everything is spinnin'
An' if I use a gun,
Then I sure to go to prison,
I'm stubborn as a mule,
And nobody breaks my rules,
'Ceptin' nothing comes my way,
I've got a hard-assed pair of shoulders,
I've got a love you can't imagine,
Yeah and what I've got I double,
I swear I'm keeping out of trouble,*

*I'm looking for one new value,
Lookin' for just one new value,
Ah but nothing comes my way."*
(*New Value* — composed by Iggy Pop — James Osterburg Music)

JOHNNY YEN, one of William Burroughs' many errand boys of the Death Trauma, ate hot justice in '62 and remained a museum piece for the literati to guzzle on until 1976, when Iggy Pop, a young artist who during his dissolute past had pretty much emulated poor Johnny's wretched vocation/malaise, chose to smash down the glass-case that held Johnny Yen's average, stupid, tortured being, drain the embalming fluid and allow Johnny his second shot at immortality.

Iggy didn't change a thing about Johnny's previous predicament — he just used him for a walk-on part in an autobiographical work he created entitled *'Lust For Life'*.

Burroughs' imagery was reverently left unsullied as Johnny Yen returned, brandishing his usual shoulder bag pack full of liquor and drugs, the snuff movies he'd stolen from that hard-nosed bunch of Mexicans last seen peddling every sleazy vice imaginable in Orson Welles' classic *Touch Of Evil*, and who were last believed to have set up a borderline motel where they were selling some placebo linctus disguised as the much-touted undercover legit cure for cancer.

Anyway Johnny, fresh out of the mausoleum, still knows all his old tricks — the striptease weaze, you name it. But his resurrector has been busy with those alternative solutions, and even though he still wants flesh and power, he's conquered the desire for junk to a point where one minute thread of shit would be just as preferable to a gram of Thailand Sweetheart Grade A in his book.

In fact Johnny Yen could just as easily have been Johnny Thunders back in '75 when he ran into his old buddy Iggy Pop at CBGB's and spent three damned, sweaty, hellish days trying to get his old shooting partner to break his spirit and join him round the back at the Mainliners Club.

But Iggy stood firm — this time out there were going to be no pin-point eyes on this boy's features, no more smacked-back rituals, no return to the bogus camaraderie of the elite of users.

Three days he stood his ground until Thunders finally collapsed, relented, tears swelling in his eyes. Iggy Pop had proved that he was not Johnny Yen, that he was nobody's errand boy, that he'd dug and dug until he'd located the very roots of his addiction, yanked them out, and set out to discover the most brutal positivism, the ferocious strength that only real ex-junkies who want to take their metabolic/spiritual/artistic renaissance to the blinding limits of human endurance, to strip away skin like snakes, can achieve.

"The Idiot," *'Lust For Life'*, *'New Values'* — a triumvirate of works that at least in the first two cases, have yet to be fully appreciated by the critical masses. If they were to be placed in a boxed set, the title would have to be *Triumph Of Will*.

THE FIRST interview is taking place. Iggy is getting very expansive about certain subjects close to his heart. The subject itself concerns amorality and corruption. The blanket statement for all this is made with a measured sense of its own controversy. "I," declares the indefatigable Pop, "am totally into corruption".

DR IGGY AND MR POP

James Osterburg wrestles with his twin, wallowing in corruption for the good of all our souls.



Iggy leaves it all behind

Occupational Therapist: NICK KENT
Senior staff nurse: PENNIE SMITH

Ironically amidst a barrage of vicarious statements made to break up this claim, an incident with Nico is recalled which ends up paralleling the Johnny Thunders saga. "It all stems from Nico actually" — Nico and Iggy became "An item" (for want of a better term) in the early, early Stooges days. "She was the one who took me when I was a skinny, little, naive brat and taught me how to eat pussy and all about the best French

wines and German champagnes. Anyway, one day she said to me [adopted doomy German tone], 'Jimmy you have zee one big problem' — I was just a little lad for chrissakes, but anyway I was game — 'you are not full of zee poison! Zis is not correct. Zis is not right. How can you perform when you are not full of the poison? Me, I will help you just enough to fill you with zee poison but otherwise you have nothing! We do not

want to see a person on the stage, no, no, no, we want to see a performance, and zee poison is the essence of the performer." "And she'd do things — like, I'd go away for a few days and come back looking healthy and she'd scream, 'Jimmy, what are you doing to yourself? You are ugly. Don't you know you are only good skinny. Skinny

■ Continues over page

■ From previous page

as a rail." And Danny Fields (current Ramones manager, but publicist / manager / nursemaid for Elektra-period Stooges) was always fussing about my hair in his usual faggy way, and it had reached a point where my hair had become so long and curly it pretty much totally hid my face.

"Anyway, Danny said something about me having my hair 'bangs' cut and Nico freaked completely and screamed 'But Danny, Jimmy's face is not meant to be seen' (laughs). And she immediately grabbed this wine glass and smashed it against the table which made everybody run away except me cos I knew her little games and wasn't afraid anyway, and she turned to me and said 'Good Jimmy, now we are rid of them' and she proceeded to carve the most incredible sketch of me somewhat in the style of Coteau, with maybe two cubic inches of my face showing.

"And she summoned everybody back and pointed to this sketch and said — 'Now this is Jimmy's face. And if you could see it, it would be a drag!' And I thought, 'Right on, Nico!' (Laughs).

Teacher and pupil, however, were to come to a suitably severe volte face when, in the year of the 'Idiot', Nico, the former ice queen now in her mid-40s, a pale narcotic shadow of her former beauty, desperately tried to contact Iggy (for David Bowie) in order to help her somehow regenerate her then stagnant career as well as commune with a former kindred spirit of sorts.

"It was in Paris and... oh forget the state she was in... she wanted desperately to get in touch with me, maybe with Bowie more, but I'd suffice, and she had me followed, had radio monitors scanning my every move, taxi drivers were bribed — just everything.

"Anyway when she found me I just rejected her immediately. I just said, 'You're not good enough for me to expend time and energy on anymore'. And the first thing she said — Iggy's eyes snake into a 'Hell-hath-no-fury-like-a-woman-scorned' viciousness in order to enhance the theatrics — 'was [words spat out venomously] was 'Jimmy you are strong'. And she got that look that Deutsches have when they're about to bite into a pig.

"She got the vampirism in her eyes, but she wasn't going to be defeated outright, or so she thought, because her next number was to slyly offer me a snort of heroin. Anyway she laid out a line, figuring that heroin would get me into her little web and just as the enticing line came close to my nostril, I blew it off the mirror all over the floor, got up and said, 'So long baby, nyah, nyah fooled you'. And that's the last I've seen of Nico since.

"I tell you all the bitches — all these women — want me now because they can sense that strength in me, and they want it so-o-bad. But they're not gonna get me uh, huh — only on my terms, and my terms are simply phoning 'em up, telling them to be at such and such a place and such and such a time, in good physical condition, to be fucked and then leave, goddamit.

"Because I've got more important things to do, and I cannot, and will not have my time wasted. It is not a case of my work suffering, it is a case of me wanting to go my own way. I want to go all the way. I can't think of one goddamned reason why I shouldn't achieve just that and go all the way to number one. All I have to do is corrupt others, instead of them corrupting me!"

A H HA I CAN see all you young moralists out there right now squirming at the bit, sizing up these testy little monologues and sharpening the quill to pen that barbed missive accusing this neo-fascist egomaniac of male chauvinism and every other amoral vice in the book.

And this character eulogizing the virtue of corruption and amorality is probably gleefully awaiting your salvos.

But wait one moment here because what you've been reading right back there are the words of just one persona of a self-confessed Jekyll and Hyde.

Both characters — one the Mighty Pop, hard-assed, loud-mouthed megalomaniac who openly claims, albeit in an intoxicated frame of mind, that were Satan himself to come down and confront him with the old Faustian line of (and I quote) "killing some anonymous, innocent bystander, and of course getting away with it, in return for gaining control of all the power in the world, then yes, I would do it without a moment's hesitation", and the other, charming, compassionate Jimmy Osterburg, self-confessed "dork" of the Western World — are two very different people.

This is not a case of schizophrenia we have here, nor is there any confusion as to how and when each role takes over. Our subject is totally in command of his personas and is deeply proud of both of them — if for nothing other than the fact that they complement each other in the furtherance of his vocation with perfect balance.

In fact it would be as downright facile to refer to Iggy/Jim in psychoanalytical terms as it would be to consider either one an act (although our sly little friend is not adverse to theatrics when they could come in useful).

If any one statement perfectly exemplifies

this supposed and not unusually somewhat bogus duality it is Iggy's summation of himself as — "a leader who does not want to be followed. And goddamit I am just that. I am exactly the man who Friedrich Nietzsche could only write about. I believe that statement is incredibly healthy and that every human being has the capacity to achieve it."

But let's return to Iggy Pop, subject of the first interview, replete with bare torso, vinyl pants and a little too much eye make up.

This is the Iggy Pop who talks of vengeance, who wallows in his own undeniable tenacity and indomitable will. The man who idly boasts of encounters with world-renowned beauties whose pristine, awe-inspiring looks and physiques have tried to play Delilah to his Samson with no success.

The word "corruption" keeps spurring forth in this little tete a tete and I suggest it could be time to define the term as Iggy conceives it.

"You wanna know about corruption? Okay, well let's say I want to corrupt you. Corruption would be you working for me for reasons that you'd think you were going to get something out of it, but I'd know you wouldn't so screw you. It's like W.C. Fields says — 'You can't cheat an honest man'. Right, he got it! There you go, that's corruption! You find a dishonest person and you use them. You use their corruption!"

Did you, I remark, work on that principle when you were sequestered at RCA during

I'm a big rich man, richer beyond my wildest dreams. Rich is life, goddamit! I have a job, I have my self-esteem, I have discipline."

And financially?

"Yeah, that too in the sense that I'm becoming a very good entrepreneur. I've just made an album financed on good will and responsibility, on Iggy Pop's name. Iggy Pop who three years ago was a name synonymous with 'shit'. Iggy Pop the guy who'd be tied up in a bag and thrown out of the window at a Deep Purple party two floors up in some hotel. Iggy Pop who's girlfriend would run off with Robert Plant. Iggy Pop the guy Ian Hunter said would never make it because he never had any talent. Well where is Ian Hunter now? Nowhere is where Ian Hunter is. And the only chance he could ever have of making anything of his tawdry life would be to listen to one of my albums.

"See, I play hard, and Christ almighty, I love my revenge."

It's only when I tactfully mention that a number of quotes he's allowed to be swallowed onto tape during this encounter could all too easily be construed as being fascist and male chauvinist that he becomes pensive.

"Hmmm," he pauses, mulling over certain quotes, some of which I have to remind him of. "Well, I can only see any notes of fascism in my attitude coming from the fact that it would only be in the sense that I know that what I'm dealing with is in essence a military industrial complex, albeit on a small scale, which is what rock'n'roll is right now."

"This new record tells you what things James Osterburg does and the fact that he's only interested in Iggy Pop."

the three years spanning 'Idiot', 'Lust' and 'TV Eye Live'? The question was prompted by the recollection of a photo of Iggy in a suit and tie with hair groomed 'just so' to perfect the emulation of the young executive look, yucking it up with some American big-wigs from the record company around the time of 'Idiot's' release.

"Damn right I did!", the reply shoots back. "Every goddam executive in the place I had researched, found out their weaknesses — everything. I played like a harp. I don't miss a trick, baby. I had a whole plane-load of 'em flown over — at my expense — to preview 'Idiot' at Winston Churchill's old club. And even though I knew damn well 'Idiot' was going to be a million seller I wanted the word put out on the Iggy Pop tells right from the top.

Also I wanted it made known in the most stringent terms possible that it would be very very foolhardy to mess with Iggy Pop. Because it might take a month, it might take a year, but you do the wrong thing by him and you're gonna regret it very, very sorely.

"See, I started reading in the papers about me being the 'Godfather Of Punk' and figured well, if I'm going to be the Godfather then I'm going to be a real Godfather, Mafia style. Taking no shit from anybody and screwing anyone who tried to screw me."

T HE SUBJECT to LA sends him reeling off into a near hysterical rap about his current status.

"See Nick, I'm so damn happy. I'm rich.

"As for sexism," here he lights up, "well, I hate women. I mean, why do I even have to have a reason for that? It's like, why are people reviled by insects? I use 'em because they are lying, dirty, treacherous and their ambitions all too often involve using me. And however close they come, I'll always pull the rug from under them. That's where my music is made."

Maybe you haven't encountered the 'Ms Right', I counter, aware of the dopiness of the remark.

"Oh come on, I've been around. I've met all the women, and I'll tell you one thing, I'm more woman than any of 'em. Just check my tits! (he points to his pectorals) I'm a real woman, because I have love, dependability, I'm good, kind, gentle, and I've the power to give real love. Why else would you think that such a strong man as David Bowie would be close to me? He's a real man, and I'm a real woman. Just like Catherine Deneuve."

Only the latter simile causes him to chuckle.

W HAT produces a 'dork'? Usually a kind and loving household. Plus the fact that he's usually a decent, bright guy with a distinct lack of aggression.

This is the second interview convened after a week of meeting Iggy every day. For this session he is wearing a casual suit and thick-lens, wire-rimmed glasses. There is none of the manic persona of the first official performance. Indeed this character couldn't

be more opposed. Relaxed, affable, almost a model of temperance. I am in fact interviewing James Osterburg who chooses to disguise his performer's visual by dressing nondescriptly to the point where he resembles a pro-golfer in his mid-thirties. Four years ago he would go to great pains to present a constant pretty blonde Adonis look. Osterburg is also prone to lie about his age. He likes to add a couple onto his 31 years, where others like to detract.

The questions in this session revolve around the theory that in order to kick his drug habit, and come to terms with himself, Osterburg reverted back to the 'dork' persona of his school days, a fact strongly backed up by both the concept of 'The Idiot' itself and the Alfred E. Neuman lookalike bedecking the cover of 'Lust For Life'.

"The basic theme of the 'Dork' and where the word comes from is that I experienced the incredible cruelty that children have at their disposal. Nobody can be crueller than a child and there's nobody more equipped or inclined towards cruelty than upper-middle class children whose folks have lots of spare money and cars and glib speech. I was burdened by the fact that whenever I tried to express myself I would be laughed at. I was considered weird, a weird kid. I was also very shy, very unhip, very unglit, and never wore the right clothes. I also had very weird looks, because my father, being a military man, forced a military haircut on me."

Jim's 'dork' days were slowly but surely left behind "when I became increasingly aggressive toward others. I learnt a unique and indispensable skill, which is to make rock'n'roll. I stopped my parents dressing me and started becoming a conniving cold-hearted son of a bitch, which I've always been since the beginning of The Stooges."

First there was the iguanas, Jim on drums and singing the hit numbers — mostly old Stones songs — from whence the name Iggy came and stuck. Then there was a series of one off gigs drumming for black bands, for folk as diverse as Junior Wells and Buddy Guy and the Shangri-Las. And then there was The Stooges whose mondo-bizarro act was inspired after Osterburg attended a Doors concert in Ann Arbor, and watched Jim Morrison completely out of his skull roll around the stage, do gorilla impersonations, stop one of his obscene poems half way through some dramatic climax by bawling into the audience — "Has anybody got a cigarette?" — and generally proving you can get away with anything if you've got style. Stooges drummer Scott Asheton was also the epitome of the meanest, most half-baked, super negative, physically imposing hulking monster that Detroit more than anywhere else is hypo-adept at cultivating.

These two factors plus Iggy's speedily attained ability to bend and curve his limbs into shapes that involved the most gravity-defying calisthenics provided the meat of the show. The fuel was, in Iggy's words "two grams of biker speed, 5 trips of LSD and as much grass as could be inhaled before the gig. I found this concoction effective enough to completely lose my senses, and then before a gig we'd gather like a football team and hype ourselves up to a point where we'd scream 'okay guys, whadda we gonna do? KILL! KILL! KILL!' Then we'd take the stage."

The first Stooges gig was at the Grande Ballroom where they performed two numbers — "Goodbye Jesus" (later to become 'Little Doll') and a current favourite for resuscitation on the coming (war) and 'Asthma Attack' — as support to Blood Sweat and Tears. The rest, as they say, is history.

Once signed by Elektra, the Stooges set, co-inciding with the first album, was pretty much a note for note recitation of what would end up on 'Funhouse' with every note, riff and line composed by Iggy himself.

By the time 'Funhouse' was released Iggy had honed his musical vision into a free form yowl, involving a brand new set of songs — 'Way Down In Egypt' and 'Big Score' premier among the bunch — that achieved, in his mind, exactly what The Stooges were. "I always considered The Stooges a jazz band more than a rock band," he states now.

The now legendary tales of heavy narcotics addiction that had netted all The Stooges (barring Ron Asheton) at this point, were just seen as more fuel for the grand slam of hyper-negativity The Stooges proudly projected. Ultimately too, Jim Osterburg as Iggy Pop had destroyed his old, dark persona. He was hip, he was a bad-boy junkie, surrounded by god-forsaken young hoodlums and bone idle juvenile delinquents.

Now, in retrospect, Osterburg views the pre-'Raw Power' Stooges as the more successful context for his performing talents.

Pop's involvement with Tony Defries and the whole Mainman set up — instigated by David Bowie, an early Stooges aficionado — he now regards as the big mistake. Defries seemed to want Iggy as a puppet for stray projects — a film role as 'Peter Pan' here, a bogus Rocky Horror archetype flanked by session musicians there, a Jobiath with

■ Continues page 46



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DEN HEGARTY:

**A man's got to
doo wop a man's
got to do...**

BIG DEN'S BACK!
You must have heard the word because Magnet Records are currently spreading the news around as if forewarning of a deadly virus for which there is no known antidote.

Big Den, for those of you who haven't stayed tuned, is Den Hegarty — Darts' former berserk bug-eyed bassman who last year quit the group he'd spent four years building from a bar band into an international attraction.

Den's father was dying and he wished to be on hand to help his mother through that period. As Darts were committed to a heavy touring schedule, Den wasn't in a position to walk out on his associates at a moment's notice so, in fairness to everyone concerned, he stepped down.

"I didn't quit the business altogether," says Den in one of his rare subdued moments. "I just retired for an indefinite period."

Even so, turning his back on six years' hard graft was a big decision. "Having originally set up Darts, it was only natural that I wanted to see it through to the very end."

Still, as subsequent events illustrate, Den fell flat on his face. Within a month of leaving Darts, he was offered the position of presenter for Tyne Tees TV's *Alright Now* — a series of eight half-hour programmes which Den describes as "a combination of *Ready Steady Go!*, *Blue Peter* and *Jackanory*" — in which his only musical contributions to date have been blowing baritone sax behind a couple of guests and, to his delight, singing back-up with The Clash on an impromptu version of Desmond Dekker's 'The Israelites'.

"It wasn't until I started work on this series," reveals Den, "that I realised just how difficult it was to interview people. Unlike so many other television interviewers who let the other person's personality come across, I've

adopted a more unorthodox technique: if someone is gonna get me, I make sure I get 'em first!"

To return to his more familiar role of musical madcap, Hegarty is resigned to the fact that the public expect him to perpetrate a specific image.

"Fair enough. At least I offered them the image as opposed to having that image thrust upon me." Similarly, he's prepared for comparisons to be drawn between his new single — a remake of Laverne Baker's 'Voodoo Voodoo' — and those of Darts.

"It's inevitable," he says without concern. "When people say to me, why is my stuff so much like Darts, I say, why not? I originally formed that group over four years ago, so why shouldn't I carry on singing in the kind of style that I do the best? Anyway, since I left Darts is a different band to the band I originally set up. They're now moving more towards a Motown approach."

If for Den Hegarty leaving Darts when he did was the proverbial blessing in disguise, he feels it also proved beneficial for his former associates.

"There are innate problems with having a large band. When people used to ask us how we dealt with internal problems our stock answer was: if two people have a disagreement, there's ten other people to laugh at them."

"But what really happens is that you eventually stop having things out with each other. Usually, they blow over, but should a crisis suddenly arise, all these little things suddenly come out into the open and then there's the risk of everything getting completely out of hand."

"If anything, my decision to leave did everyone a power of good."

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 Thorne Howell, Wallington. Unilet Products, New Malden.
SUSSEX: B & K Hi Fi, St. Leonards-on-Sea.
 Barkers of Oxford Rd, Worthing. Jeffries Hi Fi,
 Eastbourne. Sounds Supreme, Hove.
WEST MIDLANDS: Ray Charles Audio, Walsall.
 Five-Ways Hi Fi Ltd, Edgbaston, Birmingham.
 Rugeley Radio, Rugeley.
WILTSHIRE: Duck, Son & Pinker, Swindon.
 Sutton's Music, Salisbury.
WARWICKSHIRE: J.C.V. Organisation, Warwick.
YORKSHIRE: Simply Hi Fi, Hull. Vickers Hi Fi, York.
NORTH YORKSHIRE: Quadraphenia, Sheffield.
 Sheffield Sound, Sheffield.
WEST YORKSHIRE: R.S.C., Bramley, Leeds.
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The longest journey begins with a single step...



The man freezing his ass off in this picture is ex Stealers Wheel man, Joe Egan.

We wanted a picture that would tie in with his latest single called **'Back on the Road'**. So we suggested he stand at the London end of the M4 with his thumb out, and when someone stopped we'd bang off a few shots and go home.

After about half an hour it started to rain. By the end of the first hour it became obvious that no one was going to stop. The guy taking the pictures muttered words to the effect that maybe Joe would be better off walking.

Joe agreed and tramped off in the direction of a café for a tea.

So there you have it. Joe Egan back on the road again to publicise his single, **Back on the Road**.

(Incidentally, for those of you interested in such things, the temperature never got above 2 degrees and everyone got cold except the photographer.)



Joe Egan
new single
BACK ON THE ROAD

ARO 153



SMIRKS KEEP RIGHT ON SMIRKING

JUST ONE YEAR ago the future of The Smirks seemed assured. A contract with a fashionable label was secured after only a few gigs, and a bundle of rave reviews echoed a busy word-of-mouth buzz on the streets in hometown Manchester.

What then happened could be the story of dozens of bands.

"Beserkley," says a rueful Simon Milner, "was supposed to be the 'fun, fun, fun' record company. It could have been fun, but they were really humourless about everything.

Like the 'Smirks Against Travolta' campaign — surely that was fun — they had to be forced into it. They wouldn't mention it on the adverts. When one of our fans wrote to them asking for information, they wrote back, giving our mailing address in Manchester and saying it was absolutely nothing to do with them. They seemed to think it would ruin their image."

When Milner was subsequently arrested for obstruction — at the premiere of *Grease* — and got saddled with the resultant legal costs, Fred Cantrell, then Beserkley UK boss, wrote to NME to state that "Simon hasn't asked us to pay his legal fees and if he does, we will."

He asked. The cheque bounced.

"When the band signed to Beserkley," comments Smirks manager Andrew Jansen, "it was just after 'Egyptian Reggae' had hit, and they seemed to be a small company who gave personal attention to their artists, who seemed to have the right ideas about marketing, and also seemed to have money. But when Richman stopped shifting units, the resultant cash shortage meant they were spending all their time wondering where the next penny was coming from and the creative side just seized up."

So in nearly a year with Beserkley, only two singles were released. 'OK UK' was an

YOUR STARTER FOR 10

If this is the audience . . .



. . . can you name the film?

IT WAS a night like any other. A hot, muggy, Berkeley, California kind of night. The kind of night that makes underwear itch and shirt collars damp. The kind that makes people get restless.

Teenagers, when they get restless, tend to do crazy things. They get kind of frisky with it, y'see . . .

They get up to the sort of mischief that makes their parents start cursing Dr

Spock and asking each other where they went wrong.

It all began when one of the downtown movie houses started running late-night screenings of *The Rocky Horror Show*.

This was mostly to compete with the sexual circus going on outside on the strip: the sunset parade of TV queens and cruisers and kids running away from birch and brimstone bible-belt fathers in Sesserille or some similar one-horse township.



THE SMIRKS prepare for their solo flight (L-R): Ian Morris, Mike Doherty, Neil Fitzpatrick, Simon Milner. Pic: KLAD McNULTY

NINE Record Of The Week — despite the atrocious production. "We had no experience in the studio before then," admits Milner, "and it was all mixed down by Kenny Laguna after we'd finished recording. When we heard the final mix we discovered he'd added a glockenspiel all the way through."

"Rosemary" was a misguided stab at a commercial formula. Originally scheduled for September last year, by the time it was released two months later it was caught in

the pre-Xmas rush. "Rosemary" sank without trace.

The last straw was Beserkley's refusal to accept The Smirks' debut album. Exit one band amidst a sea of litigation which concerns not merely The Smirks' relationship to Beserkley UK Ltd., but the company's relationship with Beserkley Inc. (the U.S. parent), distributors Polydor, and with various creditors.

All this would cause many an act to call it a day — but The Smirks have decided to Go It Alone.

Already heavily in debt — "we've decided to extend our creditors" — they've elected to go ahead with a tour originally scheduled to promote the album, re-labelling same the 'Smirks Seek Employment Tour', secure in the knowledge that all the gig receipts go to paying off their agency and on equipment hire, and that two gigs are at subsidised rates for charity anyway. "We're hopin' RAR and Gay Lib will do a benefit for us!"

To replace the never-to-be-released album, The Smirks have rush-recorded an EP, which they feel — and I can agree having heard the result — to be the best thing they have ever done.

"American Patriots" is more definitive of our style. The singles we've had out have been other people's ideas of what we should sound like. Before, it was drummed into us to record something to get on to the playlist. But we've got three good songs here, if the lyrics mention 'penetration', 'sentimental shits', things like that, well, bugger the radio, we'll just put it out anyway for people that like us. Looking at it now, if 'Rosemary' had been a hit, it'd have been a disaster."

Of course, behind all the optimism, the cost in human endurance will be high. Road manager Steve wonders exactly how far five loaves and two fishes will stretch. And as there's no chance of hotels it's a question of sleeping in the van or travelling from home for every date.

But don't worry. True Northern Grit will win out. And just in case any younger fans are worried about the — ah — 'questionable' lyrics of the popsters' new material, The Smirks have a new strategy to avoid the temptations of the road.

Not only has bass player Ian Morris, formerly the toast of Manchester's giggling circles, gone on the wagon — "mine's a Britvic Orange" — but they have a new code.

Each of them starts off the tour with 30 points, and these are then lost for such aberrations as brief encounters, too many shandies, and generally not having that certain *je ne sais quoi* at all times.

And wouldn't you just know it. As I write this, they've all got 30 points.

IAN WOOD

THRILLS

Meanwhile, back in Kings Road . . .

ON MARCH 31 after more than 2,500 performances, *The Rocky Horror Show* does the time-warp for the very last time at the Kings Road Theatre, its home of nearly six years. In time-honoured showbiz fashion, the lease runs out and the production must move lock, stock and barrel . . .

The musical comedy, written by Richard O'Brien and partner Richard Hartley, began life at the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs but soon outgrew the tiny loft and moved down the road to the Classic Cinema. It stayed there for two months to accommodate the rapidly growing cult following before finally resting at the Kings Road Theatre in October '73, where it's been ever since.

Rocky Horror not only launched the careers of Tim Curry, Little Nell, Meat Loaf and creator Richard O'Brien (who has not since managed to repeat this huge success in his subsequent productions *T-Zee and Disaster*), but it generated a whole *Rocky Horror* industry — spawning the sleeper cult film, at least three sound-track albums, and worldwide shows (New York, L.A., Japan) most of which curiously bombed-out.

Now, the world famous Kings Road Theatre is to be converted back into a cinema complex — Classics 1, 2 and 3. Somebody's bound to have the bright idea of screening *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* once renovation is completed — the irony is just too irresistible — but it would have competition. The Kings Road production reopens in April in the West End (Comedy Theatre) where director Jim Sharman already has a modest little success called *Jesus Christ Superstar*, London's longest running musical ever.

Will he repeat his success? Does anyone really care anymore?

ELISSA VAN POZNAK

THRILLS



Rocky Horror fanatics at the U.C. Theatre in Berkeley. Pic: DAVE PATRICK.

Then a strange thing happened.

The regular night crawlers got displaced by teen weekenders driving up from the suburbs by the borrowed car load.

Sure, there's nothing so new in that — except that they were coming back week after week . . . and as the weeks went by they began to mimic the bizarre antics that go on in the movie, and as the months went by they just got wilder and wilder.

They would dress up Mondo Pervo like the characters on the screen, and cheer and cuss and hiss as the

situation demanded. They'd sing all the songs, savouring the more risqué lines and giggling at words like 'transvestite'. They even took to showering each other with rice during the wedding scene.

Now *The Rocky Horror Show* is playing later all over the US and the cult — that's what they call it — is spreading.

Like I said, figuring out teenagers ain't easy. They got the craziest crazes . . .

PRIVATE DICK

THRILLS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

AM

66

THE NEW SINGLE

GUSH IS something which the music business has down to an art. And in last week's *Music Week*, The Biz's Bible, no less than 25 gushing pages were devoted to the 15th birthday of *Top Of The Pops*.

Introducing the supplement was a tribute from those purveyors of pop Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman which went like this: "Imagine... If we had left this planet 15 years ago we would only just have reached the vicinity of Uranus or the corner of The Milky Way, and probably would have seen and achieved very little."

"In those 15 years one television programme has created hundreds of stars and has captured the imagination of countless millions of people, young and old. We don't have words to express our thanks for your support..."

Quick nurse, the screens.

More self-congratulatory drivel was contained within, where such turkeys as ex dancer Robin Nash, *TOTP* head honcho (whose track record includes associations with *Basil Brush* and *Cockerjack*), Tony Blackburn and Peter Powell have their thoughts on this important feature of national life.

"It's an institution," gushed several of these Very Important People. Original *TOTP* producer Johnnie Stewart revealed how his association with the programme had been "a lot of fun and a lot of headaches."

Numerous record company promotion men (it is their thankless task to flunk around the powers that be at the Beeb in order to get their product played) sang the praises of the programme with the kind of sycophancy that would make even Little Nicky Horne eat his heart out.

TOTP man Paul Bishop related the hilarious yarn of how a band wearing masks nearly plunged him into the nearest psychiatric unit. Said Bishop: "Not so long ago a band turned up at 11 o'clock and I nearly had a blue fit when I saw them on the monitor. The whole band were wearing masks. I could accept the fact that the backing musicians might wear masks, but the lead singer had the most hideous mask I'd ever seen. It immediately occurred to me that this was a show for the family going out at 7.15 pm and there was no way he was going on TV with a face looking like that!"

"I refused to discuss the matter, and needless to say, they were all looking much more normal by five pm." Thank goodness for that!

Three notable absentees from the record company tribute adds that paid for the supplement were Stiff Records and, more surprisingly, CBS and A&M.

Thrills leaves the last word to Toe-nee Black - Black Blackburn: "It (the prog) features top pop music and that's what people want to hear. Other pop TV shows have fallen down because they try to present new acts who people don't really want to see. The day that they change the format of *TOTP* is the day that it will crumble."

And all of Western Civilisation As We Know It Too, eh Tone?

E.FUSIVE

THRILLS



ROBIN GURNASH at the controls. Pic: PENNIE SMITH.



Pic: JILL FURMANOVSKY

ZENON DE FLEUR

THIS WEEK, the London R&B community is in mourning for Zenon Hierowski — better known as Zenon De Fleur, rhythm guitarist and founder member of The (Count) Bishops. As noted in last week's *T-Zers* and news pages, Zen had been seriously injured in a car accident during the early hours of the morning of Saturday March 10 after a Friday night Bishops gig at The Nashville in West London.

Zen had been in intensive care at West Middlesex Hospital, but had been taken off the critical list midweek. He had been conscious and coherent to the point of demanding to see proofs of the artwork for the upcoming Bishops third album (recording of which had been completed only a few days before his accident) and insisting that the band carry on with a temporary replacement until he was fit enough to rejoin them. However, he'd been experiencing trouble breathing, and what was expected to be a fairly routine operation was planned. It was expected that Zen would be transferred to an ordinary ward after his operation, and then released to convalesce at home until he was ready to go back to work.

Unfortunately, there were unforeseen complications. Zen died on the operating table, and on Sunday his many friends and colleagues learned that they had lost a fine musician and a fine man.

Zen had been an accountant before he got bitten by the rock and roll bug, and the legacies of that period of his life were a sound head for business, a few flash threads and the Aston Martin that was his pride and joy. He'd put together The Count Bishops (later

to abbreviate their name simply to The Bishops) in collaboration with Mike Spenser and flown ace picker Johnny Guitar in from the States to join the band: a tough, tight, boisterous R&B unit that had joined the *amb* circuit around the same time as the then-new punk bands.

In partnership with the band's then manager, Pete Mannheim, Zen had opened up a P.A. hire company which boasted one of the best rigs in town, and he ran the P.A. company with the same blend of enthusiasm and professionalism that he brought to everything he touched. He wrote some of The Bishops' best material and sang 'Train Train', the most haunting number in their repertoire, and his crunching, relentless rhythm guitar drove the band along with both power and sensitivity.

He was also much in demand as a sound man, and any group who rented his P.A. hit the jackpot when — if The Bishops weren't working — Zen came along in person to mix their sound. He'd dabbled in record production, mixing a few of The Bishops' tracks and taking care of production duties on the Blast Furnace records, and was shaping up to be a hell of a good producer. Zen was blessed with both of a fine ear and the ability to coax and coerce musicians into giving of their best.

If you were a friend of Zen's, you could rely on him for help and advice whenever you needed it. Whether it was a few tips on how to fix an amplifier or repair a guitar, or whether you needed a shoulder to cry on when your band broke up, Zen would get on the case and help out. His experience, humour, compassion and strength of character were attributes that he placed at the disposal of anybody who needed them, and he did it without a second thought: simply as part of his

responsibility as a human to other humans.

That don't mean Zen was a sucker for anybody. He was shrewd and canny, and a sharp and precise judge of character: plus his business acumen came in handy when The Bishops had a long run of management problems. If he hadn't been a dedicated musician, he could've distinguished himself as a manager, a producer, a sound engineer. He was a talented man, was Zen.

He'd gotten his *nom de guitar* during a riotous session at Pathway Studios when a combination of exhaustion and booze had led him to assume a recumbent position during the mixing. Someone mumbled "Look at Zen on de floor!", and Zen was known as Zenon De Fleur for ever after.

Writing obituaries is a wrench even when you're writing about someone you didn't know: whose music you've admired from afar. Zen was a fine guitarist and songwriter and I admired him for that, but I admired him also for his dazzling variety of skills, for his professionalism, for his enthusiasm, for his resilience, for the way that he expended his energies as goodhumouredly and wholeheartedly on the behalf of others as for himself.

Plus he was my friend; he helped me a lot, taught me a lot. I enjoyed his company... what can I say? I knew him well and I wish I'd known him better. For everyone who knew him, for everyone who enjoyed his music, for every one of the bands that he helped out with his expertise and his time and his facilities, for his family, for The Bishops and all of their friends and fans, let's leave it with this:

Zenon De Fleur will be remembered. With love and a sense of loss.

CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

STEELY DAN TO TOUR? UH, NO...

APART FROM queries about the prompt arrival of expenses, one of the most pressing questions asked by us rock hacks is will Steely Dan ever tour again?

Steely Dan have toured Blighty but once, and the last time they played live anywhere was back in July 1974 — in California. Since then there have been repeated rumours that Walter Becker and Donald Fagen, supported by an artillery of

expensive sessioners, would once more take to the highway.

According to Toto's Jeff Porcaro, drummer on numerous Dan records and one of the two stickmen who accompanied Steely on their last tour, Becker and Fagen were all set to peak their suitcases last year — until the musicians they'd hired priced themselves right out of the market.

Amongst those involved were Jim Keltner (drums), Tom Scott (horns) and Victor

Feldman (keyboards), as well as Dan regulars guitarist Denny Dias and Porcaro himself. Fagen had even written a 45-minute medley containing songs from the first three Steely Dan albums; and they were to play their last two long players 'The Royal Seam' and 'Aja' in their entirety.

But couldn't Becker and Fagen have hired different musicians, *Thrills* asked the Toto man?

"They don't like trying out different musicians. They just

love the guys they play with."

But not, it seems, enough to pay the earth for them.

Porcaro, presumably, wasn't one of the players who'd asked for too much?

"I asked for enough, but not too much."

Steely Dan are currently recording their next waxing, their last for ABC Records, after which it seems that they'll work for those wonderful WEA people.

CUT PRICE

THRILLS



FAGEN ponders the imponderability of it all. Pic: JOE STEVENS.

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Blood in Brisbane

MORE BAD BOY STRANGLERS STORIES

THE STRANGLERS caused uproar here in Brisbane, the city that spawned The Saints, when they cut short their gig at the Queens Hotel and walked offstage after playing for only 35 minutes.

Two nights earlier, at the same hotel, bass guitarist Jean Jacques Burnel leapt into the audience and smashed a well-known local punk on the head with his guitar.

The punk who copped it was no ordinary ligger. He calls himself V2 and is a familiar figure at most Brisbane rock concerts and dances. His eyes bug out of his head like those of the kids in *The Village Of The Damned*, and he invariably wears Iggy Pop style black leather pants and whatever punk paraphernalia is currently fashionable.

During The Strangers' first two songs in Brisbane V2 pogoed close to the stage and spat repeatedly at Burnel. Burnel put up with the spitting until the middle of the third song, 'Straighten Out', when he jumped into the audience and smashed his bass guitar down onto V2's head.

Blood streaming from a head wound, V2 fell to the floor, picked himself back up, shook his head and continued dancing.

After the next song, lead guitarist Hugh Cornwell said: "Listen, spitting is two years out of date man. Spitting was big then. Now it's called sweat."

This incident, however, was by no means the start of the evening's troubles. Five minutes before they were due to begin the set at 10.30 pm The Strangers demanded four bags of lollies (sweets) and refused to go on until they got them.

There were no shops selling lollies nearby, and the Queens Hotel didn't stock any. The show's promoter, Peter Williamson of the local FM station 4ZZZ, ran round the

audience asking if anyone had lollies in their cars.

Somehow, he managed to scrounge enough sweets to satisfy The Strangers and they went on with the show.

At the end of 'Burning Up Time', Cornwell sang "Would you like a sweetie?" and the band threw lollies to the audience.

Before 'Nice 'n' Sleazy', Cornwell asked: "Are there any potential strippers here?" Quick as a flash, a bra-less, buxom blonde in a firmy white dress jumped onstage. "The stage is yours," said Cornwell. According to promoters and members of the audience who knew her the girl was not a plant — just an enthusiastic member of the audience.

She danced energetically throughout the song, dropping the top half of her dress several times to reveal her rather large boobs.

When she ended she jumped back into the arms of her boyfriend in the audience.

"Thanks a lot clobber", said Cornwell. "That was really Bruce, shella." But then he added: "We were a bit disappointed. We thought you'd get your knickers off. Why didn't you get your knickers off? That's what's called a strip."

Cornwell's between-song patter during the remainder of the set included such witty comments as:

"We were told the Queensland audiences were amazin', but you lot are like a block of concrete."

"I'll tell you why it's 'ot in 'ere. It's because you lot are standing still. If you start moving, we'll get a bit of wind going. I'll try farting."

"You look like you're 'arf asleep."

The Strangers played for more than an hour to about 600 people at the first Brisbane gig.

Not so the second gig.

About 1,000 people squeezed into the pub on a hot Thursday night (March 2) This time V2 was banned from the hotel by the management.

Trouble started during the

Excited Aussie punks gaze in awe at smashed drumkit, broken beer glasses, empty stage, expensive ticker stubs...

second song, 'Sometimes', when Cornwell was hit on the head by a beer glass thrown from the audience. After the song, Cornwell said: "Listen, some jerk's tryin' to be clever throwin' glasses at me. Do you wanna come up here and finish it off? Or do you wanna hide in the shadows with all the other people out there?"

Several glasses were thrown onstage during the next six numbers.

Then came the ninth song, 'No More Heroes'. After the first verse, Burnel turned his back on the audience and bashed Jet Black's drum kit with his guitar. Black pushed

the kit onto the floor and threw his sticks and pieces of his equipment into the audience.

Smirking, the four Strangers then marched off stage. They had played for 35 minutes.

The bewildered audience screamed for more. Some yelled "Go home poms", "Pommie bastards", and "Come back you bastards". But The Strangers did not return.

"I bet they're back at the Parkroyal (the plush hotel where The Strangers were staying) counting their money," said one long haired surfer.

Many witnesses said they felt the walk-off had been premeditated. It was certainly well timed, when one considers their last song was called 'No More Heroes'. While it was true that Cornwell was hit by a beer glass, the group went on to play six more songs after that. And when they walked off, they gave no explanation for their actions to their audience, who had paid \$6.50 to see them.

I went to the Parkroyal in an attempt to ask The Strangers for an explanation for their early walk off. A clerk at the reception desk told me The Strangers had given instructions that they were not to receive any visitors or phone calls.

When I told the clerk I wanted to give The Strangers a chance to explain their action, as I was doing a story on the concert for the local paper, he rang Cornwell's room.

He spoke for a few seconds, and as he put the phone down, he said: "Mr Cornwell said to tell you to go bury your head."

KEVIN MEADE

THRILLS

AND FINALLY...



DAVID BUYS A BEARD!

AND THIS is what he looks like this week... Sporting a Deer Hunter crop and a fetching line in peach-fuzz, self-confessed *L'Uomo Vogue* David Bowie queues up for fish-head soup along with all the other dissidents prominently displayed in a recent issue of *Vogue* For Men (Italian edition, a snip at 2,000 lire). Actually, once inside the glossy pages David prefers to rub shoulders with Diane Keaton and Amanda Lear (yawn!) and he drops pearls of wisdom like "Quando lo giravo il suo vestito era pronto." We think he was complaining about the meatballs on the set of *Just A Gigolo*.

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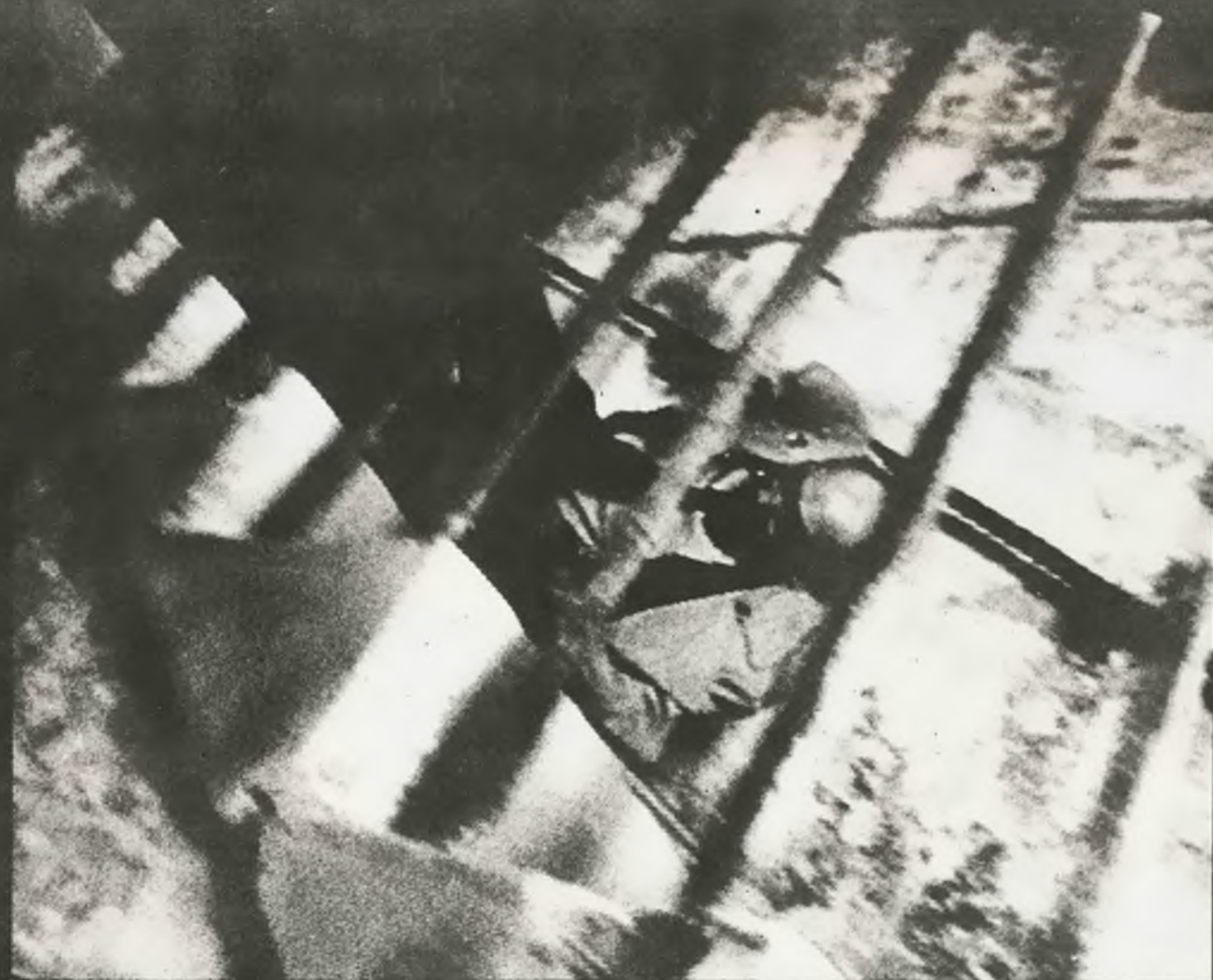
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СТАТИНТРАД

SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES NEW SINGLE THE STAIRCASE



RED NOISE making it. Pic: R. C. PEARSE

How a rock band evolved into...



THIS BAND isn't an all-out change. There's no way it can be. I couldn't write it as intensely as I have done if it was just an over-night change. That's what annoys me. People have already said that Bill Nelson is bandwagon-jumping."

To the uninitiated Bill Nelson's new band Red Noise does seem like an overt attempt at bandwagon jumping."

His combo's Red Guard suits and fierce parade-ground haircuts would alone persuade a cynical observer that Nelson, erstwhile creative fulcrum of BeBop Deluxe, is bending over backwards to be 'modern'.

An aural flick-through of Red Noise's album "Sound-On-Sound," with its XTC, Bowie and even Stranglers soundalikes, not to mention themes that very fashionably echo Orwell's 1984, would only confirm this opinion.

It would be wrong, though. After all, didn't BeBop have an album out entitled 'Modern Music' long before *modern* became a genre within a genre? And hasn't Nelson, now a wearing-wall 30, been touting suits on stage long before anyone had even heard of The Jam?

What's more, "Sound-On-Sound" isn't the first album on which Nelson has voiced his misgivings about the future. "Had BeBop stayed together," he opines, characteristically co-operative, "the album we'd have made probably wouldn't have sounded all that different from the Red Noise album."

"But we couldn't have gone out and played the entire album on stage 'cause we would have been harassed by people who wanted to hear stuff off our early albums."

"It's like the other night (he refers to Red Noise's Bristol gig, the first of the tour), it would have been easy to say, 'Heads down, c'mon, let's rock and roll,' which is what we used to do to get people going when the music or the sound wasn't happening with BeBop."

"With this band I don't want to work on that level at all. I refuse to do what we did i.e. BeBop material just to get the audience off. If it doesn't happen with Red Noise on a concert level we'll play clubs, even if it does mean a loss in earnings."

To tell the truth Nelson did slip in the old BeBop fave 'Ships In The Night' as an encore at Bristol, and two songs from the last BeBop album, 'Drastic Plastic,' are featured in the Red Noise set; he regards the latter as on very much the same lines as Red Noise and a direct departure from the rest of BeBop's albums, hence the word 'drastic'.

Where's the gold medal then, lads... Pic: GEORGE BODNAR

...The Soviet Table Tennis Squad

STEVE CLARKE investigates an alleged Opportunist Modern Coup. BILL NELSON defends vigorously.

Moreover, further questioning reveals that despite his musical radicalism Nelson still wants to please audiences.

"I played 'Ships In The Night' at Bristol for an ego boost. I'm not that independent. I mean, I freak out when an audience doesn't really go for something. I get worried if it's not getting through, and ask myself if it's my fault. And yet somewhere deep inside I really believe that what we're doing has got to be fought for."

ON STAGE at Southampton Gaumont, the second date of the Red Noise tour, Bill makes no such concessions to the audience even though he's bombarded with requests for old BeBop material. "We're trying not to soft soap you," he announces at one point and later tantalises the crowd with a typically elegant guitar solo — but not before saying: "The next one contains something remotely resembling a guitar solo."

There is just one guitar solo in the set.

Despite the poor attendance — apparently Bristol was little better — the crowd are surprisingly familiar with Red Noise's material and give the band an enthusiastic welcome. Red Noise are clearly an outfit who need to play themselves in, but their energy and enthusiasm are obvious, a marked contrast to the last time I saw BeBop — a slick but ultimately weary tribe.

Bill's rhythm work is particularly impressive and Andy Clark's keyboards are right on target. Apart from Nelson, Andy is the only member of BeBop to survive the upheaval. He says that not only is Red Noise an entirely different band to BeBop, but Bill is a new person.

THE NEWS THAT Nelson had decided to call it a day with BeBop came as a surprise to devotees. But for some time he had been thinking of breaking up the group. "My heart went out of it just at the end of the 'Modern Music' period," he says. However, the way it actually ended came as something of a surprise even to Nelson himself.

BeBop had just completed an American tour last year (Incidentally, 'Drastic Plastic' was their most successful so far in the States), and Bill, with his wife Jan, had gone on holiday prepared to be committed to another BeBop tour and album.

Meanwhile his tour manager, friend and confidant Paul Bailey had informed BeBop's management of Bill's continued frustration with BeBop that Bill himself, or so he says, hadn't dared to pass on. Lo and behold the management told Bill on his return

from his hols that if he really wanted to change his scene, then so it should be.

So how much is Red Noise influenced by the new wave, Bill? "Not so much influenced by it as encouraged by it. Which is what I think we were doing on 'Drastic Plastic.' I was very much encouraged by the fact that it was now quite acceptable to do ideas that BeBop used to have to do in parts and dare not bring totally out into the open for fear of being... well, not ridiculed, but we'd developed a certain style and I was a bit afraid of doing anything too drastic with it over-night. Which I couldn't have done anyway 'cause the record company would have turned around and I'd have been sacked on the spot."

His paranoia about The Biz is still there, even though it was his management who ultimately approached him about knocking BeBop on the head.

He continues: "The new wave connotations are all well and good if you still accept the new wave as a sudden overnight thing. But it really isn't."

You can compare it with the Modern Music Movement that started around the '20s."

Nelson, of course, refutes the suggestion that he is trying desperately to be *modern*. And I for one don't disbelieve him. For instance, he tells me he got the idea for Red Noise's Red Guard

suits not from the likes of Devo but from The Beatles circa 1965.

As for the haircuts, he admits that the basic initiative for the collective crop came from him, but he doesn't want it to look as if anybody is under his thumb.

"It's important that we look like we mean business. The music is rigid and stark and the look should complement it. The songs are reflective rather than overtly laying a trip on the audience. It's enough for it to be said and for people to make their own judgement."

"A lot of the songs are a little bit 1984ish so that sort of look goes with it. It doesn't mean to say the band's going to be that forever. This is one album and if there was a certain unity that emerged in our songs, then that's what I want to put across for this tour and this album. Next time I might do something totally frivolous."

But a lot of bands are writing about 1984ish things.

"It's difficult to run the narrow line of being intelligent and fashionable at the same time."

Come again?

It does seem as if you're at pains to get A Point Across with Red Noise?

"Yes, I think it should say it for itself," he says after a moment's reflection. "I think it might fail completely on that level. I'm hoping that it should be said more by the way the band presents itself, either on record or in front of people, than by too much explanation on my part."

XTC appear to have played a part in influencing Red Noise.

"I disagree. It's like a couple of guys said to me the other day, 'Did you choose John Leckie to produce you because of XTC?' If you're sensible about it you could take seven records and find some points of comparison. Surely nothing's that original anyway."

"I can't see it (XTC) myself. Neither can John Leckie."

But your vocal inflexions seem very XTC?

"I don't know whether you've heard the very first BeBop single, before we signed to EMI, 'Teenage Archangel,' released on a private label."

"The first time Jan heard the Red Noise album she said, 'Why have you gone back to singing like you did on 'Teenage Archangel?' All I've done is taken that and gone back to what I consider my primitive vocal style, but tried to..."

"What I didn't have then, perhaps, was the understanding of how it could be put together. In fact towards the middle period of recording BeBop everything got much smoother. We got much more slick, which wasn't necessarily a good thing. Which wasn't the idea when I started out with the band. The edges were knocked off by the industry."

You seem to continually harp on about the industry perverting your 'vision'.

"That's only because I'm weak, or I was weak. I didn't have to do that. You get a taste of success for one thing and you get a fair amount of financial reward for it, and it's then very easy to compromise. I don't think many of the new idealistic bands will keep up what they're doing if they start getting money for it."

"I don't think Red Noise is going to be that successful. I don't even look to it to be as successful as BeBop. I'd be kidding myself if I thought it was."

"I didn't expect 'Furniture Music' to be a hit single. That's not the point. That's not supposed to be what the band is about."

Which is?

"Just trying to play to people who understand what we're doing. I'm not bothered about a huge audience. I don't want to conquer the world."

"I want to find an audience who are discerning enough to appreciate what I'm doing. I don't want to be thought of as elitist or anything. There should definitely be enough people who enjoy what we're doing to make it worthwhile. I don't mean financially worthwhile, but spiritually worthwhile."

How much of a risk is it financially?

"If you compare it with before I started working with BeBop and turned professional, I had a terraced house and brought in between £15 and £20 a week. And now I earn — and so does the band — £80 a week."

Edmands say man who don't play long guitar solos miss out on big money . . .

Pic: ROB HALL



CHRIS SPEDDING talks to BOB EDMANDS

(Probably wishes he hadn't)

"I haven't. I can't do any of that. There is absolutely no precedent for anyone thinking that I could have done what Jimmy Page did."

You're not in his class as a guitarist?

"I hope I'm in a slightly higher class than Jimmy Page."

"He seems to have taken it to a pretty low level. It's not all that clever what he does. In fact, it's a bit crass."

But people have made millions through being a bit crass.

"Yes, but you've got to believe in what you're doing otherwise you destroy the spirit of why you're doing it. I think you'd find that Jimmy Page believes in what he's doing, otherwise he wouldn't have made a success of it."

"There'd be no challenge for me in doing what he's doing. Regurgitating tried and tested things. I want to be ahead of the game."

"For example, I've not used wah-wah since 'Shaff' came out, whereas all other studio guitarists went out and bought them. I liked being the first one to use it."

Didn't Jimi Hendrix use wah-wah before you?

"He just played lines with it. Sounded like someone cleaning his teeth. Would have made a good ad for toothpaste."

As you can see, it's not for any lack of confidence that Spedding's failed to make his millions.

The point of the interview is to promote his new album, 'Guitar Graffiti'. One side of the album is mainly given over to live recordings and Spedding has this to say:

"I find the second side of the album very boring. I thought that if people wanted long, boring guitar solos, then I'd give it them."

"I went through my live recordings with the Chris Spedding Band, took out the solos, and edited them

together. As a result three of the songs on the album aren't songs at all, but just the solos from the songs."

"This gives the impression that my music is very guitar-oriented, when in fact it isn't. But if that's what people want then that's what they've got."

This sounds like a very cynical process, Mr Spedding. "It is".

Are you a cynical person, then?

"If you think so, yes."

It's not what I think. Are you a cynical person?

Spedding says: "I don't actually think so. It's all done from a fun-loving attitude. You know. Let's try this for a line of soldiers."

Spedding won't actually be promoting his new album with live gigs. He says if it's a good album — and he thinks it is — sales will take care of themselves.

The next time he'll play live in Britain is when the Gordon band come over in the summer.

He was invited to join Gordon after Gordon decided he wanted to record one of Spedding's songs, 'Wah Wah Woman'. The song never got recorded, in the event, but Spedding stayed, replacing the venerable '50s guitarist Link Wray.

"After my own band folded I decided I needed a geographical change. I couldn't change my music. It's just what I do. In London, I was taken for granted. Too available."

"Now that I've moved to New York, the British rock press are a hundred per cent more interested in me. Frightened they might lose me, probably."

Sounds a bit improbable to me, Chris. But you're free to believe it if it helps.

ROCK GUITARIST Chris Spedding has a reputation as a picker. Sitting on a sofa at RAK records, he first of all picks his nose with the tenacity of an archaeologist at a major dig. Then he transfers his attention to some glistening red spots on his face.

Mr Spedding does not seem to be in good shape. The spots stand out brightly against a deathly night-club pallor.

He's just got off a Transatlantic flight and is inevitably somewhat tired. He hardly looks the picture of a rock superstar.

One reason for this is that he isn't one, despite 10 years of slogging round the business.

"I should have fucked off ages ago," he ruminates. "I should have earned millions and retired by now."

Why haven't you?

"Basically, because I'm still excited by the music. I'm still hungry for success. I've had some success, but not enough to retire to a country mansion."

In fact, Spedding's so far from being a rock millionaire that he's had to disband his backing group and take work as a supporting player with the '50s revivalist Robert Gordon.

The Chris Spedding band got too expensive. Unfortunately my last album didn't produce any hit records so there wasn't enough money to support a road operation.

"If I don't sell enough of my new album, it might not be possible to go on making records."

By the late '60s Chris Spedding was already an accredited guitar hero with the sort of reputation that has since ensured platinum status for many of his

contemporaries.

He's had a couple of hit singles in the UK in recent years, been part of Bryan Ferry's touring band, played on Wombles' sessions, belonged to a much fancied group called Sharks, and for a time was associated with The Sex Pistols, though he insists he never played with them.

"I was the only established music business figure who took the Pistols seriously when they started. I phased myself out when everyone else went to the opposite extreme and said they were brilliant. They weren't that bad, but they weren't that good either."

"It'll probably go on my tombstone that I was the man who played with The Sex Pistols, but it's not true. I just helped them out when they were attacked."

Once again Spedding was in the wings, but not centre-stage. The mystery is why he never did a Jimmy Page 10 years ago, and formed his own head-bangers group for the American market, doing fancy guitar solos in sports stadiums.

"Well, I would have been selling myself short doing that. Besides, what fancy guitar solos are we talking about?"

The sort of fancy guitar solos of which you are presumably capable.

"This is what people presume about me. I don't think I could do that sort of thing."

Surely you have the skill?

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It's Number One, It's Top Of The Agitpops

WHO or what is Rock Against Racism? Why was RAR formed and what are its intentions? With the exception of *The Daily Mirror*, the Fleet Street press would probably tell you that, along with the marginally more 'respectable' Anti-Nazi League, RAR is a pernicious plot to deceive the youth of the nation; that RAR is little more than a front for the Socialist Workers Party; that RAR and similar pressure groups are busy undermining the 'Great Britain we all know and love'.

Well, it ain't so — and since when did you believe everything you read in the papers anyway? In a little less than three years, RAR has put on approaching 800 gigs under its own banner of "Love music. Hate Racism" and has sprouted over 90 local RAR clubs up and down the country. This represents a formidable achievement by any standards.

But unlike the ANL — a broad alliance of opinion whose declared aim is simply to stop the National Front — RAR has pretensions to being much more than just another organisation fighting the good and very necessary fight against racism and fascism in this country. RAR publish their own paper, *Temporary Hoarding*, and the briefest glance through it will show you the range of issues RAR are attempting to raise.

Keep politics out of music? Impossible, say RAR — and we'd agree with them, at least in point of principle. Whether or not you go the whole hog and support RAR on every issue they advocate is your own affair. Both the interviews that follow will give you some idea of what RAR is and what exactly it stands for.

The first interview was conducted in RAR's North London headquarters. Their understandable aversion to being firebombed by fascists leads them to prefer box numbers to addresses. We spoke to five members of the RAR collective for a very long time in their very cramped offices.

Now in his thirties, Red was both a professional photographer and heavily involved in fringe theatre before starting RAR; big, bearded and ebullient, he talks a lot, but not always coherently. Sid has also been in RAR from the off; he's wiry and compact, talks less than Red, but just as emotionally. John has been with RAR fulltime since Carnival 2; he's very tall, thin, gaunt almost, and thoughtful, more inclined to consider the wider ramifications of RAR as an organisation. Lucy Toothpaste used to edit a fanzine called *Join*; she's small, perilously sallow and pretty uptight. Kate Kate has worked for RAR for nearly two years; fair, friendly and a dedicated TRB fan, she spends much of the interview answering the 'phone.

So here goes.

INTERVIEW 1: The RAR Collective

AM: How did Rock Against Racism start?
Red: It goes back to the long, hot summer of '76, the murder of those Asian kids, Robert Relf doing his "I'll only sell my house to an English family" bit, Enoch Powell saying this and that, a *Sun* headline about "Immigrants Stay In Five-Star Hotel!" — all that bollocks.

The whole National Front thing was really up and about. Then that same August Clapton got up on stage in Birmingham and said what he said: we've got it all down chapter and verse somewhere. Meanwhile Bowie had come into the country and gone on about what we needed was a strong man, like in Chile or somewhere, and that got splashed all over the dailies...

Sid: The Clapton thing wasn't that important in itself —

Red: It was, because that's what prompted me to write. I was outraged, as much as a fan as anything else, because I used to really like Clapton's music.

So then there was also the Punk thing, all this energy, and I wrote a letter, which was published prominently everywhere. I wrote that we wanted to form a rank and file and rootsy thing with musicians and fans who hated all that stuff, and call it Rock Against Racism. I got in touch with friends as well, I didn't want to do it on my own. Then to our amazement, by the next week we'd got over 200 letters of support. We didn't believe we'd get such a large response.

Lucy: But it couldn't have got off the ground without punk and reggae music. Ours wasn't just a banner, people were already writing songs about and against racism.

Red: Yeah, it all related as a sort of "We've had enough" feeling...

AM: So you had a consensus behind you — then what?

Red: Well, we thought we'd better organise a gig. I'd had some experience in that, so we booked a venue and did so; it was Carol Grimes because I knew her.

Sid: That whole period — there were a few other gigs, but people hadn't really heard about RAR at all. They'd come up to you and say "RAR — that's the anti-Eric Clapton group, isn't it?" The first significant thing we did was to book The Roundhouse, again with Carol Grimes, on May Day in '77.

Red: We showed people at *NME* and *Sounds* the bill and they were just amazed it was so diverse. But the gig was a great jam. That's always been our thing. The Cimarons and

What it is and isn't to be a Rocker Against Racism — as told to ANGUS MACKINNON and CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

Generation X gig later that year was great for the same reasons.

AM: We're jumping ahead, but that gig was around the time of Lewisham, wasn't it? What were your reactions to Lewisham itself?

Red: I suppose the main feeling there, although for me it was tainted by the fact that a friend of mine got arrested, was just the sheer elation of the whole thing. I mean the fact that the black community turned out. It was all a definite recognition of solidarity with the white anti-racists who were there.

Sid: I found it terrifying, but the most amazing thing to me was, despite everything the press said about the SWP and the IMG (International Marxist Group) leading everything, it was the black kids who did that. They had nothing to lose and inspired everybody. They weren't going to let people who'd said "You're scum and ought to be deported" walk through their community.

Red: But Lewisham changed the face of politics in this country, didn't it?

AM: Why?

Red: Well, for a start it precipitated the birth of the ANL, a broad anti-fascist alliance. Lewisham also made it clear that the police and the state were prepared to defend fascists, though they wouldn't do the same for the black and Asian communities in Britain.

I mean, however much the bourgeois media do to get round the fact, it's still true that nobody in the Asian or West Indian

Express, they both do a bloody heavy job, don't they?

There's also the whole issue of sexism, the other side of it all. This is just as much a sexist society as it is racist. That's another four-day debate.

John: If you like, the history of anti-racism and anti-fascism is about popular movements. History shows that united fronts like RAR or the ANL are vital. So that tendency, exaggerated of course by the press, to dwell on, say, the SWP alone in relation to the fight is a smokescreen, one that verges on a witch hunt at times. The point is that anti-racism and anti-fascism and anti-sexism are always going to be this year's thing. As Red said, we've got however many hundreds of years of the white system oppressing blacks to get rid of and erase. Another point is when we're asked things like "Where are all the blacks at RAR gigs?" We've only been going for a couple of years...

Red: We're fighting racism within the white society.

Sid: This whole argument leads on to another. We're always getting people say that we draw attention to the NF, that they wouldn't exist if RAR didn't exist. But where, for Christ's sake, do those people live, I wonder? Fine if you're white and live in Fulham or Hampstead, the NF won't come there, they don't need to.

Just before Christmas a black kid was stabbed to death where I live, right round the



The RAR Collective point another way. Counting from left (geddit) to right: JOHN (1), RED (3), KATE (4), SID (7) ... Pic by STEVENSON

communities in this country has any confidence in the police. All these thuggeries, stabbings, killings, robberies gone uninvestigated or ignored. As David Wiggery said in his recent *Time Out* piece, we're on our way to the police state, or rather police cities. Mind you, lots of *NME* readers might not be grasping this — which is why we're doing what we're doing.

Can you imagine having to go in fear of your bloody life whenever you walk the streets at night? Our way is one answer to that situation, one small step on a thousand-step ladder.

John: I think there's an aspect of RAR that gets missed quite frequently. It's this. As much as we've contributed to rock or worked alongside the rock world, there's another side to it all that's based in the localities. There, ideally, the local RAR group should be sufficiently locked in to what's going on — in Camden, Islington or wherever — to join with any organisation to rebuff the bad things going down there.

This is a level of organisation that's crucial and when you start looking at the police state and its inevitability, I think that's falling into a trap. It's like saying "Here's RAR — so what? The police state's moving in". It is, but the point is that the only defence against it is self-defence among both black and white people. That's what we're about as well with our 90 odd clubs around the country.

Lucy: It's also all very well just having gigs, but in *Temporary Hoarding* we do try to analyse a bit and redress the balance. If people just read the ordinary papers, they'll be so misled by them. The papers themselves are so racist and will always support the police.

Red: I think what we'd say is that this is a racist society, one hundred per cent born, bred and fed, you know. Its history of imperialism — whether you're looking at Jamaica, Trinidad, Ireland or Zimbabwe — its whole policy is a racistist policy and therefore its press reflects that. This is all part of the divide and rule that goes on here — there's nothing better for those on top to play the racist card. The *Sun* and the

corner. He bled to death on the police station floor eventually. It's lovely to say the problem's not real if you don't live in the real world — you know, the pop star world of somewhere or other. There it all seems that it's no front, no problem. Bullshit.

AM: Point taken. But what do you think of Rastafarianism, given that it's probably the dominant culture amongst the black youth in this country and given that people have also accused you of just riding on it as some kind of bandwagon?

Red: Well, I would never attack Rasta in public in this country...

John: You've hit the nail on the head when you say it's the dominant movement among the black youth. It's another popular movement.

Red: I mean, we should have you talking to the Rastas who support RAR and who regularly involve themselves at major RAR events, particularly Aswad and Misty. Both of those bands came to our conference and there for the first time — it's something we're very proud of — we had the beginnings of an open democratic debate about Rastafari and we tried to get all the RAR groups around the country to see it for what it is.

AM: Which is what, as far as you're concerned?

Sid: Well, obviously none of us here in RAR are Rastas, but the great thing about it is that it isn't a religion or philosophy of inactivity or waiting around and doing nothing. It demands that people get up and fight for their rights and, if people are prepared to stand under that banner of ours through that philosophy, then that's fantastic. Unlike so many other religions, it doesn't restrict activity; it encourages it instead.

John: There's a problem talking about Rasta as a homogenous doctrine. It isn't. That's the delightful thing about it. Just the history of the movement, the kind of conditions under which it's grown, all the English oppression...

Red: I remember a kid coming up to me at an RAR gig and saying "You've got a white queen, but I've got a black king". And that

was that. But I don't think it's par for the course for us to talk about too much about Rasta. It's a black organisation to do with black people and it's their self-activity. That's important enough at this moment in time and for the coming years it's absolutely essential.

I read with interest what Linton Kwesi Johnson (Poet And The Roots) said about Rasta. He said it was a reactionary doctrine and that Haile Selassie was a puppet of imperialism, and yet I see it as a language of national liberation.

AM: Perhaps he does too —

Red: Like John says, it's down to the individuals involved. In RAR, because of the responsibilities we have when we work with black people, we're pretty aware of our own deep racist indoctrination. So to cleanse yourself and understand it all you've got to educate yourself about other people's culture.

AM: But don't you feel there's a spiritual dimension to Rasta that you're not fully appreciating?

Red: No, that hadn't struck me.

AM: What do you feel when Linton Johnson serves notice of his intention to dissociate himself from what you're doing? He has done, after all.

Red: I was very disappointed.

John: Well, a few weeks ago in *The Leveller* he said he supported us.

Sid: I was disappointed too, but if you do anything there's always someone who'll turn round and slag you off. The point is, as we've got to repeat over and over again, we're fighting racism in the white community.

AM: OK, let's move on. Some say that the initial optimism of Punk has been dashed, that its momentum has been swallowed up by the business. Do you feel your own energies are in danger of being dissipated in the same way?

Lucy: No, there's lots of RAR clubs starting up all over the country and we get an awful lot of letters from punks in really out of the way places. It seems that in the provinces

"There's no point us putting on Judas Priest when they strut around with their bollocks hanging out" — Red Saunders

there's still real energy, and that it hasn't turned sour there at all.

AM: Granted, London isn't and shouldn't be looked on as the centre of any universes. But the analogy holds — sooner or later you're going to have to set some kind of organisational hierarchy up yourselves, and that's often when, even with the best will in the world, the rot sets in.

Sid: I think you could say that many of the exciting things that happened with Punk at a grass roots level are happening all over again with RAR. That's meant a fantastic growth for RAR, and now we're tied tight together with Punk. If you look at the bill for our tour, nearly all of the 32 bands are ones that haven't taken the slippery path and signed themselves away. Kids are beginning to see RAR very much as a thing that isn't a sell-out or a cop-out, and they want to say things through us. It's a very strong alliance. John: I'd say that the key to any successful advance in rock music is looking at the ways it's organised. Now we in RAR have based our organisation on the fans. That's something that's never been done before. It's never been seen as a crucial issue or factor in making rock accessible or demystified.

If you start asking questions about the demise of Punk, you have to look at how bands organise themselves and go about their business as individuals. It's a kind of individualism that this society is based on. As long as it goes on, we're not going to change anything. The thing is, though, to make sure bands and audiences interrelate in a much more cohesive way.

AM: But until now rock has generally had no political meaning beyond its ability — or the ability of its backers — to maintain the status quo. Revolt into style and all that.

Red: Look, we don't have any illusions about rock in that sense. Too much of it is part and parcel of the culture we're trying to change. I think whatever Bowie or Clapton says does matter, it all reinforces the racist stereotypes in society.

The whole point about rock's vulnerability is that capitalism learns. Next time round they'll be even faster swallowing something new up. However hard the bands on our tour try to do things their own way, we're — together with them — the only hope that they won't slip away like all the rest. If you're in a young band and somebody offers you the facility to make your music in fairly comfortable environment, then you've got to fight pretty hard to say "No, I'd rather stay in this shitty little room".

John: The only other outfit that's trying to do something similar is Rough Trade, what with their special relationship to their bands, their moral and aesthetic support of them. I think that together with our kind of relationship to our fans, that's a mixture that could really achieve something.

We really need a whole new approach. There just aren't enough people in the rock

world to fight fascism effectively, there aren't enough people in the media or the bands who have those kind of aspirations. We need a popular basis of support.

Whereas the business, it just sees things in terms of a take-off or take-off point. It's happening to Stiff Little Fingers right now. You can see the transformation of the band, despite their individual motives...

Kate: But there is hope in all that. Their success was the first time. They actually did get into the charts through Rough Trade's distribution. It can be done.

Sid: Yeah, what we need is a RAR record shop, even a label. At the moment we're putting forward ideas which are the opposite of the ideas held by the companies that market the machines by which we put out these ideas.

AM: But that's an occupational hazard of what you're trying to do. It's also one of the NME's relationship with IPC, of *The Clash's* with CBS and Tom Robinson's with EMI.

Red: But there are some areas we can control. Like we decided definitely against having any record company advertising in *TH*. Whereas we haven't got that control at big gigs. There we're at the mercy of Tom Robinson's, Elvis Costello's, whoever's manager.

CSM: So RAR develops — but how long can it keep people under the one banner of "Hate racism. Love music"?

Red: The more we grow, the more people we lose. Inevitably the organisation hardens up, gets a little more fibre and body to it. When it finds out there are problems with agents and managers, when it finds out there is sexism in bands.

CSM: One issue draws together and a whole lot of issues pulls apart?

AM: What we're talking about here are the, if you like, umbrella issues; pieces in *TH* on Steve Biko (a black civil rights leader murdered by the South African police), on Wolf Biermann (an East German protest singer who fled to the West), on world affairs in general.

Sid: This is one of the more difficult questions facing RAR because the thing is a whole amalgam of people who have all sorts of different views on different things. Another problem is that even agreement on that one central issue of racism depends on how you define it. What is racism? Are immigration controls racist or not? That's the great difference between the ANL and RAR. The ANL has set itself the aim of defeating the NF, whereas we're opposed to all kinds of other oppressions.

AM: But did you see this broadening of your responsibilities as something you were going to have to accept eventually? For all we know, you had every intention of introducing all these associated issues right from the start.

Red: In the beginning it was just a battle to get the slogans established.

John: This all depends on what's going down at the time. The Left in the UK is historically sectarian and self-divisive. This is an area that RAR is very grey about. We've had one conference so far, when we actually discussed our overall policy as such, but we're going to have to sit down and look at this whole range of issues very carefully before the next one. We have to, because we're an organisation working on an everyday basis with people, some of whom might well disapprove of some of what we say about issues other than racism. RAR really has got to avoid being destroyed by the whole history of The Left, if you like.

AM: And how exactly do you think you're going to avoid that?

John: There are very practical lines to run along. We could, for example, easily do a concert with the Troops Out (of Northern Ireland) movement. Not that RAR has any national policy on that matter. You can have a consensus that leaves the road open, that doesn't exclude other groups fighting for particular things.

CSM: But the average Stranglers fan will probably be right with you on the issue of racism. Are you then going to turn round and say "No thanks" because he or she happens to dig a band whom you consider sexist?

Lucy: But you've got to confront sexism, because it won't go away either. If there's an RAR concert where a band makes any comments that are offensive to women, then we must take them up on it. I just don't think it's good enough to say "Well, at least they agree with us on racism". It's not acceptable if women are being put down, whatever it is. John: That's why we now have these five principles, which we ask bands to look at before they appear.

Lucy: One of the things about RAR gigs is that a lot of the bands who play them are only used to ordinary rock audiences, they're not used to politicised or feminist audiences. Red: Rock Against Sexism has grown out of RAR. Rough Trade similarly don't stock records by bands whom they consider sexist. This is another aspect of RAR. We can still debate these issues with upcoming bands.

Sid: This is really it. *TH* is the key because it provides a forum. It's a vehicle through which we can put forward articles and ideas. We do this to put things in focus, to give kids who just don't like racism because their best mate's black more to fight with. We never say we're the RAR central committee and we've got all the answers. We published that Peter Tosh piece, for instance, where he expresses all sorts of ideas about Jamaica,

its economy and the place of dope in it. We probably wouldn't actually agree with him, but we published it all the same.

It's all to do with different ways of approaching things. It's like *TH* itself, how it looks. We've deliberately tried to develop it as some sort of cultural warfare, a breakthrough in a visual sense of its own: the offset litho revolution; the kinds of graphics and ways of presenting information. That's very important.

AM: Have any established bands approached you about the possibility of doing RAR gigs?

Red: Now this is very interesting — not one, not bloody one. That just about sums them up. We've had no support from any of those bands whatsoever. I read this obscene article in the *Mail* with Roger Daltrey where he said — and I hope he was misquoted — that he was a socialist, but that all these Carnivals were just using music to push other ideas across. My God, how bankrupt can you get?

Anyway, those bands are the enemy now. Who needs them? They've just become totally irrelevant to what's going on. They're not Militant Entertainment like we are now. The Stones aren't militant in any sense. We don't want them.

AM: I only asked because, since it's so easy to dismiss those bands — the Jethro Tulls, the ELDOs, and so on — it's also easy to dismiss their audiences. Easy but stupid.

CSM: It's like the Judas Priests of this world. I happen to loathe their music but they've got a lot of young fans and I'd take the view that, if they did an RAR gig, then so much the better.

Red: But it's like the Stranglers argument. There's no point in us putting on Judas Priest when they strut around the stage with their bollocks hanging out and all dressed up in leather, giving the whole sexist thing.

AM: But, ideological purity of bands aside for a moment, surely you're limiting the appeal of your message, of what you want to put across by denying the Priests, UFOs and their audience a voice in your movement. What about disco as well?



DAVID WIDGERY. Pic by STEVENSON

Red: We're not limiting anything. You come on the tour and see.

Kate: The thing is that RAR is trying to get involved with people we're all into and interested in, instead of doing things we just feel we ought to be doing.

AM: OK, I don't like Judas Priest either. But you may look at any number of disco covers and think they're sexist rubbish, however the fact remains that a colossal number of kids listen to that music — so maybe you're missing out.

Red: I dunno about disco. It just bolsters The American Dream.

Sid: It's more that RAR grew up with music that had nothing to do with either Hotel Californias or getting down and boogieing. None of that has anything to do with the street-level reality. I'd personally argue against all those bands you've mentioned. Accepting them would be a sell-out.

Red: There's very few artists in soul who actually say anything that relates to what we're articulating.

CSM: But aren't you then preaching to the converted? Maybe the people who most need their consciousness raised are the people who really are suckered by all that Judas Priest bullshit and by straightforward American Dream disco. Shouldn't you take the message to the people instead of waiting for people to come to the message?

Lucy: There was a girl at the conference who said she was once really into disco, but now she's outgrown it and looks back on it with horror. Maybe because of all the sexism in disco. People do dance to it, yeah, but they're also lapping up all this sexist rubbish. And actually I don't think we're always preaching to the converted. At a Sham gig last year there were kids asking what RAR was — did they, RAR mean rock against wogs? So obviously we had some explaining to do to them.

CSM: But look — if Motorhead rang up and asked to do an RAR gig, would you tell them to piss off because you don't like their clothes, graphics, songs, albums, imagery and so on?

Lucy: They're not likely to offer. Neither of us would want the other. We've had similar moments, like when Adam And The Ants rang up. It was quite difficult to know whether we should 'allow' them to go ahead or not. We finally decided it would be

alienating for us to put them on, so we just did an interview with them in *TH* instead. John: What it comes down to is RAR has certain predilections in terms of music, and it's therefore certain bands that are going to get used. We'd wanted to get Hi Tension to do a disco for us, actually, but they hassled us about money so much we gave up the idea.

But I can see all this becoming a dilemma. If we started a record label, we'd have to agree with the bands we put on it in most respects — otherwise all our work would be for nothing. Like you say it's a matter of evolution, of creating a climate in which all the bands we know are redundant are finally and actually made redundant. I don't feel pessimistic about any of what we're doing. In fact I think we're only just beginning.

A WEEK later we talked to David Widgery, who combines his medical practice in East London with a passionate interest in all things political. Involved in the underground press of the late '60s and early '70s (where and when he would embarrass hippies by ranting on and on about dole queues, tower blocks and suchlike), Widgery became a member of the SWP in 1967 and has only recently returned to rock as an energy source and a vehicle for his ideas and ideals.

He's a Marxist, but one whose sense of fun manages to encompass all kinds of music: a rare bird indeed. We had originally intended to speak to Widgery alongside the RAR collective. Mention of his name and the announcement of our wish to interview him had induced virtual epileptic fits among the RAR regulars. They seemed anxious to play down his involvement, suspecting us presumably of wanting to 'expose' them as very standard dupes of the sinister manipulations of a devious Marxist mastermind. The RAR collective felt that

"The National Front is big because the Labour Party is finished . . ." — David Widgery

Widgery was becoming too much of a star name at the expense of the unsung heroes who did the 'dirty work'.

It transpires however that Widgery writes a large proportion of *TH* under a series of idiotic pseudonyms or in collaboration with Lucy, that he was responsible for most of RAR's early slogans; that, although he's not so actively involved in the day-to-day running of RAR, he has contributed much to the development of the organisation. In fact, if you compare the two interviews, you'll perhaps agree with us in concluding that Widgery gives RAR a definite ideological focus they might otherwise lack.

Widgery is neither a) the Marxist puppet-master or b) a boring and humourless old Trotskyite. His obvious and genuine enthusiasm for music contrasted favourably with some of the equally well-intentioned but VERY earnest pronouncements by the RAR collective.

So here goes again.

INTERVIEW 2: David Widgery

AM: What are your reactions to accusations that RAR is little more than a front for the SWP? What exactly is the relationship between the two organisations?

DW: There was a very definite overlap between the SWP and RAR to start with. It was a straight political agreement between the two bodies. About three years ago the SWP were more or less the only people saying that racism was widespread and dangerous, that the NF were a small but significant and growing force, and that yes, we had to stand up and stop it.

So there was that much in common. The SWP also gave practical aid. They lent us their address and some studio facilities. They gave us moral support too, so we had connections outside London to help us get the thing off the ground. But as far as I know, they've never tried to exert any influence over RAR; they've discussed RAR once in three years, I think. They didn't come to any conclusions beyond saying they were happy for SWP people like myself to carry on doing whatever they were doing in RAR. In my view they've behaved in a very positive and responsible way about it all.

AM: So the fact you're a fully paid-up member of the SWP is almost irrelevant to your participation in RAR?

DW: No, it's on parallel lines. There are several SWP people who've been involved in RAR at various stages, but RAR is an independent organisation and can — in fact does — include people of any political party or belief or, in some cases, no party affiliation at all.

■ Continues page 52

SINGLES

SINGLE OF THE WEEK

THE THREE DEGREES: The Runner (Ariola). Despite Prince Charles' recommendation, I was never keen on the Three Degrees when they worked out of Philadelphia. All that shrill screeching seemed at odds with Gamble and Huff's studio subtleties. But now the ladies have moved to Munich they've found a more comfortable habitat. Fact is that artists have to shriek a bit if they're to compete with Mr Moroder's rampaging synthesizers. (Which is why Sparks sound even more anaemic on their new album, by the way.) It seems to me that Moroder's gift is for taking songs that would otherwise be fairly ordinary and transforming them into something majestic. Equally, he can find himself defeated by strong songs where too much production trickery can kill a good melody. 'The Runner' — as a song — is none too impressive. What makes it work is the grandiose keyboards, a drummer who sounds too muscular to be electronic, and a brass section with the punch of a '40s swing band. The Three Degrees are principally there to provide vocal punctuation, but the showpiece is the long instrumental break on the extended white-vinyl version. A touch psychedelic, it seems designed for disco dancers who've dropped a tab or two. Particularly fine on headphones, though headphones are admittedly tricky when you're dancing.

B-SIDE OF THE WEEK

DEAN FRIEDMAN: Shopping Bag Ladies (Lifesong). Friedman manages the neat trick of singing about New York's vagrants without being patronising or trite. Backed by a simple acoustic guitar, he provides sharp, literate insights into the paradoxical strength of human dignity below the headline. At the same time, he's tartly dismissive of the fashionable voyeurism that these ladies have attracted. I suspect he's trying to have it both ways, but it's still a great song. The A-side is some nonsense about a talking rocking-chair. The chair should have said: "Get off your arse," but doesn't.

RESURRECTION OF THE WEEK

THE EARLS: Remember Then (Lightning Old Gold). "Remember re-mem-mem re-mem-mem-uh-member / Re-mem-mem re-mem-mem-uh-member / re-mem-mem re-mem-mem-uh-member / Woodhoo-oooh Remember then." My all-time favourite pop lyric in my all-time favourite high-school doo-wop song. A grander piece of stuttering than Roger Daltrey ever managed. A more splendid rewriting of the English language than Little Richard ever perpetrated. (Though "Awopbopaloobop-lopbamboom" comes close). This is a timely reminder of how crassly inept Stigwood's *Grease* was. There never was such joyful, simple, inspired music-making as this, before or since. To hear it is to bust a gut.

SHAM 69: Questions And Answers (Polydor). **SILOUSIE AND THE BANSHIES: The Staircase (Mystery).** (Polydor). So this is what's left of punk rock. With the loss of the Pistols and the Americanisation of The Clash, we're left with Sham 69 and Silousie and the Banshees. Both these bands are considered to be uncompromising in their idealism, and that seems to be a little odd in the

Music To Sit Down To

Or not, as the case may be. **BOB EDMANDS** plays musical chairs with the week's releases.

circumstances. Sham's last hit was a celebration of the joys of going down the pub. Silousie and the Banshees gave us a song about Chinese takeaways. Nothing too revolutionary about any of that. Since then, of course, both bands have made a bit of money and naturally you'd expect that to affect their choice of material. This time, maybe, a tune about wine bars from Sham and one about bistros from Silousie. Alas, nothing so exciting. Mr Pursey offers us some advice on how to run our lives: "Think before you do what they say/It's your life so go your own way." Good advice, James. As for Silousie, she's trying terribly hard to be mysterious as the hint in brackets might suggest. All four Banshees had a hand in the songwriting, but they appear to have mislaid the tune somewhere. Nothing wrong with that, of course. Just the thing for oddball albums about fashionable psychiatry. Hardly the ticket, though, for Radio One. "I was standing on the landing/Now I'm standing in the hall", warbles Silousie, "looking up..." A pity to have come down in the world so soon.

THE SMIRKS: American Patriots (SmirkSongs). **THE RIVVITS: Alright On The Night (Alien).** These Smirks are pretty brave chaps. Having been abandoned by their record company (Beserkley),

they've hurriedly got together their own three track EP. It's easy to hear why the Californians thought they were getting English eccentrics in the first place; note the brain-damaged lead vocal. Equally, it's not too hard to detect why they got cold feet; unmemorable songs. The Rivvits meanwhile adopt a cautious approach to do-it-yourself records. Their single's a flexi-disc, retailing at 30p. Do The Rivvits sound weedy because the plastic is cheap, or is that the way they are?

BLACK LACE: Mary Ann (EMI). What a great joke fate played on all those glossy, vacuous boys and girls in the *Song For Europe* contest. All that *Seaside Special* sophistication, and the winner is this creaking groaner off the Northern club circuit. It sounds like a bad parody of Rod Stewart, and in the context that's a refreshing change, not a suggestion of "boom-bang-bang" within earshot. Bound to fail in the Eurovision final. Or is it? Who cares? For the moment, at least, it's a substantial two-fingers to pre-digested showbiz pap.

JONATHAN RICHMAN & THE MODERN LOVERS: Lydia (Beserkley). This sounds like it might have seemed a good idea at the time: chirpy '50s doo-wop of the sort favoured by Dion and the Belmonts,



Jimmy Sham takes a perch. Pic: Pennie Smith

Just the thing, you might think, for a perpetual teenager like Jonathan. The trouble is that his distinctive, flat, off-key voice is out of place among all the winsome harmonies. Normally, his gauche vocalising is what lends

authority to his jokey lyrics; in this instance, it proves to be a drawback.

TUXEDOMOON: Tuxedomoon (Tuxedomoon). Imagine Kraftwerk attempting reggae with a lead singer

who's a butch version of Lou Reed, and you get some idea of the opening cut on this four-track EP. I've no idea who this band are, or where they come from, but they're quite a laugh in a Devo sort of way. The least weird track is called *Litebulb Overkill* and appears to be an electronic string quartet. Worth seeking out, sounds more like a burger; pre-processed, hygienic, unpalatable. Essentially a Delaney and Bonnie re-run, white soul tending to grey.

MEATLOAF: What You See Is What You Get (Prodigal). The strangest aspect of the Meatloaf phenomenon is the way he turns up in heavy metal popularity polls. Heavy, obviously. But metal, never. Unless it's his voice that we're talking about, and that's as bombastic as the grossest Black Sabbath guitar solo. Beware of this single, however. Recorded for Motown before he ever met Jim Steinman, Meatloaf

WINGS: Goodnight Tonight (Parlophone). Disco must now be doomed. Yes, down on the farm, old Paulie has wakened up to the fact that popular music has undergone a transformation since the days of 'Abbey Road'. Naturally, a one-time innovator must keep up with current trends, at least for the sake of appearances, so in addition to a disco rhythm track (all fussy Latin percussion), there's a touch of dub (multiple moaning) and a vocoder (hitherto intended as an aid for duff singers). The only thing absent is a bit of a tune. Still, you're bound to admit it's the best thing he's done since his 'London Town' album.

DESTROY ALL MONSTERS: Bored (Cherry Red). "When I woke up this morning I was really bored," intones a lady with a dreadful nasal American accent. "When I woke up this afternoon I was really bored," she adds. The answer is obviously to stay asleep, darling. A blessing for all of us. Perhaps this punkette is bored because the lead guitarist plays bombastic solos as though auditioning for a support gig in an ice hockey stadium. Reviewers of this single get a free pin-up pic of the lady in question. A little unkempt, she looks as though she's just got out of bed. Was the effort really worth it, chuck?



JOHN OTWAY: Frightened And Scared (Polydor). Just in case it escaped your attention that John Otway is a funny geezer wiv a funny voice, they've brought in Neil Innes as co-producer to really emphasise it. Innes is presumably responsible for the every so-cute '50s arrangement, and no doubt Sir John Betjeman is in among the backing vocals. Happily, Otway carries on regardless in his own sweet, eccentric way. Probably not a hit.

MATUMBI: Blue Beat And Ska (Harvest). "Somebody tell me", coos Matumbi's lead singer, "what happened to Rock Steady?" In response, the rest of the band murmur: "Where is Rock Steady?" This record starts off as a gentle, nostalgic review of reggae's roots. But don't be lulled; a few bars on, the subject shifts to Africa and slavery, almost before you know it. The tone of voice never changes. Matumbi clearly have a skilful way with harsh lyrics.

THE ROYAL RASSES: Old Time Friends (Ballistic). Will it be mansions all round now that reggae artists have discovered the commercial potential of disco? Probably not. Mainly because there's simply not the commitment to the overpowering four-square beat that dominates disco. This song, in particular, is probably far too subtle in its approach for crossover success. A hint of reggae mixed with a hint of disco. Sadly, hints aren't acceptable currency among the white-suit funky-chic crowd. They're too smart to be that smart.

WILLIE HUTCH: Come Up And Dance With Me (Whitfield). As some old beatnik once said: "Those who will not dance will have to be shot." There's the same kind of obligation with this Willie Hutch song. Produced by Hutch himself, it's got the same kind of customised danceability that you normally associate with his gaffer Norman. Hutch used to specialise in somewhat meandering funky guitar solos. This is tight, compact, and compulsive. The sort of dance-floor potential that's created by men not machines. Excellent vocals, too.

FUNKADELIC: Cholly (Funk Getting Ready To Roll)

(Warner Bros). George Clinton's cast of thousands busier than a symphony orchestra, but tighter than a Stax rhythm section. Amazing the way all the massed voices and instruments come at you at odd angles, but still add up to a unified whole. Weird and apparently anarchic, but it works. The funk has rolled.

DEBORAH WASHINGTON: Standing In The Shadows Of Love (Ariola). There's nothing like an old Holland-Dozier-Holland song when you're looking for a hit single without too much effort. Equally, there's nothing dozier than taking a grand old number like this and slapping an off-the-peg disco arrangement all over it. The shadows are where this should stay.

TERRY GARTHWAITE: Moonance (Fantasy). Ms Garthwaite turns the Van Morrison classic into a disco number by the simple expedient of abandoning the tune. Over to Van Morrison himself. What do you think of this, you plump, balding legend? Really? Don't talk to me like that. I only asked.

COWBOYS INTERNATIONAL: Aftermath (Virgin). Jolly pop song with disco synthesizers and a lead singer straight off a surfing anthem. Probably some tortured genius discovered in a Notting Hill garret, recording classic teen epics on a couple of cassette players. By no means a burn steer, definitely not bad for a first round-up, etc.

RACEY: Some Girls (RAK). No relation to the Stones hit of the same name, but a Chinnichap song of the sort they used to write for The Sweet before they went heavy. It's not quite in the class of 'Ballroom Blitz' and the like, but the Mickie Most production emphasises the drums in the traditional style. Lyrics are a touch twee: "Some girls will, some girls won't". Nudge, bleeding nudge.

CHRIS REA: Diamonds (Magnet). Since few people cared about whatever happened to Benny Santini, Rea shifts his attack and tries a Billy Joel: big production, hefty piano, Motown-style strings, gruff macho voice. "My love, she don't need diamonds", he growls. Won't get them at this rate, Chris.

GORDON GILTRAP BAND: Fear Of The Dark (Electric). This picture disc 12-inch comes in a limited edition of 15,000. Only 15,000? If there's a crowd, 15,000 is a multitude. Does old Giltrap need this sort of corny gimmick? Possibly. While there's no doubt Rattrap is an excellent, stylish guitarist, this single would make splendid TV continuity music, but not much else.

STEPHEN BISHOP: Animal House (ABC). No doubt this is an hilarious film. No doubt this is an hilarious theme tune. No doubt. The trouble is the accents are so impenetrably ethnic (ie American) that I can't understand what they're singing. The words "The Animal House" are clear enough, sung with dumba inflections, but the rest is all Mork the Dork from Ork as far as I'm concerned.

Doing *The Sitting Down* left to right: Giorgio Moroder, Dean Friedman, Siouxsie Sioux, Jonathan Richman.

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SINGLE OUT NOW/ALBUM RELEASED THIS WEEK

THE RUTS: (from left) Paul Fox, Malcolm Owen, Vince Segs, Dave Ruffy. Pic: CHRIS HÖRLER.



NEVER mind the boat race, it was one hell of a heavyweight bill that launched Rock Against Racism's first ever nationwide tour at Cambridge Corn Exchange on Saturday night.

Four bands — an agreeably assorted bunch of militant rockers — in just over three hours in a venue that resembled nothing so much as a giant, cavernous shoebox with the acoustics of the Grand Canyon.

Headlining are Misty, arguably the most accomplished of the second generation British reggae bands.

Under them are The Gang Of Four, who even on a below-par night still seem to these ears the most crucial rock group to emerge since The Clash well over two years ago.

And below them The Ruts. The Ruts describe themselves as 'an aspiring comedy punk band', but the response they managed to elicit from the fervid fry crushed rib-cage-to-backbone at the front of the Corn Exchange stage was anything but a joke.

For on the night both Misty and Gang Of Four are well and truly uplegged. No mean achievement.

Then again, that is what comes of ferrying your own fans to a gig approximately 60 miles or so from home: two coachloads made the journey from Rutland to Cambridge for the concert.

'Home' to The Ruts and their fanatic young followers is the West London borough of Southall, which stretches from where the Great West Road becomes the M4 round about Osterley Park right to the edge of Heathrow Airport's runways.

You don't have to come from Southall to like The Ruts, but it certainly seems to help a lot. Is this the sound of the suburbs or what?

"Dis one's dedicated to all the Southall RARRRRRRR!!" bawls Rut vocalist Malcolm Owens in his guttural, camp brogue. "It's called 'I Ain't Sophisticated'!!!"

True, The Ruts are the type of band some of our music journalists would have you believe became extinct around the end of 1977.

If you can imagine The Lurkers with a social conscience and a sense of humour, you should be pretty close to the mark. They're tight, loud and angry. They demand to be heard, but if fashionable cool prevents you from lending an ear then that is just too bad.

Fortunately there are still those who are all too ready to listen.



Very live at the Cambridge RAR gig. Pic: VIRGINIA TURBETT.

Ruts, Backflips And Pogoing Pakistanis

From multi-racial Southall we proudly present THE RUTS — who travel to RAR gigs mob-handed and feature a neat line in upstaging billtoppers. ADRIAN THRILLS reports on how it's done.

By the time the group are halfway through the aforementioned ditty, the floor is looking more like a human swimming pool. The more ambitious and agile of Southall's two coachloads of Poggers Against The Nazis take the analogy to ludicrous extremes via a succession of kamikaze dives and backflips from the lip of the stage into the throng.

Occasionally it all spills over onto the hallowed boards of the stage itself, whereupon RAR's amiable Edwardian bloodnut hulk of a tour manager, 'Red', appears from behind the speaker cabinet to gently ease the gleeful infiltrators back.

Thankfully this delicate operation is executed without so much as a hint of any of those ugly and all-too-common bouncer-lan scenarios.

But inevitably the mob are soon back on the stage and Malcolm Owen's hennaed barnet is barely visible above the array of bobbing heads in front of him by the time a well-deserved encore approaches its completion.

This time no-one even attempts to clear the stage until the band are back in the dressing room.

BACKSTAGE, in the communal dressing room, things are hardly any less claustrophobic or chaotic: Red Express, who were the first band on, are packing up and clearing out. The Gang Of Four are just about to go on although their guitarist is still in the pub over the road and their drummer seems more concerned with noisily bemanning Spurs and FA Cup exit.

exit.

Misty are filling the air with the unmistakable aroma of some suspect looking cigarettes and also dishing out portions of a delicious Jamaican rice brew to the swarming members of the Southall coach contingent.

Not quite the ideal interview location.

However, sooner or later (I forget which), a few square feet of valuable floorspace is secured and I am able to ask Malcolm Owens about that pogoing stage invasion at the end of the set.

Such mass leaps for the limelight can, and indeed have, been construed as pitiful and unnecessary short cuts to the rock egalitarianism we should be striving to achieve in other ways.

"We never invite them onstage specifically," replies the singer. "But I don't like trying to stop them

when they do come up, especially on the last number.

"Obviously you can't have them all up onstage for every number — that would really fuck the whole thing up, even though they all are just our regular fans, all just exactly like us when it comes down to it.

"With our lot, I reckon it's great when they come onstage anyway. They're not there posing. They're there to sing. They're all really into it, so you just have to give your mike to them.

"As a band we love all that, but it's not an ego thing. It's just that it gives us a great buzz when it happens."

A LONG WITH their close pals Misty and a legion of lesser lights from The Black Enchanters to The Milk, The Ruts grew up out of a localised West London band explosion of about 18 months ago.

The majority of their early gigs were on small scale RAR bills in the youth clubs, colleges and community centres of Southall, Hounslow and Hayes — a scene with a lot of similarities to the corresponding mini-circuit on the other, northern side of town as detailed in last week's NME in Penny Reel's Leyton Buzzards' piece.

"We gigged solidly in the RAR clubs with bands like Misty", Malcolm tells me as the other three members of the groups, bassrut Vince Segs, drummer Dave Ruffy and guitarist Paul Fox, pull up chairs and listen in.

"We played gigs like that for a year with virtually nothing else. But it certainly wasn't against our principles to do RAR gigs. We enjoyed doing them and, more than anything else, they were giving us gigs when no-one else was."

"Southall is like a very closely knit multi-racial community anyway, so, like, you've got the two types of music, reggae and punk, at the same gigs... not forgetting of course, the pogoing Pakistanis. You've got everybody."

It would be churlish here to underestimate the importance of Rock Against Racism to the growth of bands like Misty and The Ruts; like the other essential catalysts from Rough Trade to John Peel to NME, RAR are admirably keeping alive the original spirit, drive and militancy of Punk.

And even if the organisation

■ Continues page 46.



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TRB

CONTINUED

■ From previous page

and why the West looks the way it does, I'm no longer as 100% certain as I was when I wrote the song and I'm not preparing to tie to the audience. "But I've wandered off the point again. I was saying that 'Power In The Darkness' — for whatever reasons — was quite a bleak album, and it's nice to be able to move on to a second album where you can retain the balance of the stage act within the new material you're writing."

COULD TOM see TRB recording an entire album of songs that didn't happen to be Relevant with a capital R? "We've always done songs which weren't relevant with a capital R, but if you say so in interviews it looks as if you're backing down on the ones which are relevant with a capital R."

No, it doesn't. Plus a song doesn't have to be Relevant to be relevant.

"Sure. But I enjoy both and I intend to continue writing both."

So what's been written now?

"I've still got about 12 or 13 unrecorded songs at the moment, and I'm still writing, sometimes in collaboration with other writers, but mostly with the band. You're always filing through the stuff you've been writing because not all of it's good. Anyone can make mistakes and... I make mistakes. The main thing is to be free to own up and say *okay, I was wrong, I did what I thought was right.*"

On record — and on public platforms in general — Tom always sounds absolutely certain of exactly what he feels is Right and Wrong: doubt is an emotion rarely expressed in the TRB. Has he ever felt totally divided on an issue?

"I think 'Crossing Over The Road' from 'TRB Two' throws the thing a little wider open; I think 'Hold Out' does. Sure, I mean, I've had moments of self-doubt. They usually last about 23 hours. There are some issues I just don't know, and one of them's Northern Ireland. I know the orthodox straight-down-the-line leftist stance is to support the Catholics and say that the Protestants are the bad guys. It's somebody's else's situation, for a start, and I'm not going to get into a 'Right On Sister' thing where one pretends to give a seal of approval to a particular attitude on a thing that doesn't concern you directly."

"It's down to bands like Stiff Little Fingers to say something about it according to their own views, backgrounds, ethics and instincts. Northern Ireland... I don't know who the hell's right."

"Some Catholics took us round the Catholic area, and a Protestant guy took us round the Protestant area and we talked to people and had a visit, but what can you say after one three-day visit? You can't possibly stand up on a stage and make pronouncements about it if you're not from there. I don't know who are the good ones and who are the bad ones. The official Rock Against Racism line is Troops Out, and it's the *Daily Mirror's* stance and it's the general leftist stance, but on the other hand Stiff Little Fingers assure me that from their point of view they fervently hope that the troops will stay. In any case, I think it's a bit academic because I hear that the troops are being gradually phased out... on the quiet."

"But here's me voicing an opinion on it, but what I was trying to say was that I wasn't going to do that. I'll withdraw that, but I'll mention that as an issue on which I'm... I don't know what the fuck's right and..."

"Own-up time. You do what you can to help the things that you believe in within your own field of action. You act according to your convictions and according to your conscience and according to your own sense of responsibility towards the world you live in and how you feel that dictates whether you should or shouldn't take action, get involved or don't get involved."

"I happen — for a job — to be an entertainer. I play music for my living, which I've done for four or five years now, but that doesn't mean that I'm more qualified to know about these issues than any member of the audience or anybody reading this article. So at this point I've got to make it absolutely clear that although I believe these things, just as you say about the articles you write that they're just one man's opinion, the opinions we express are what's discussed around TRB: that they're where we happen to stand."

"People write in to us: they're worried about certain issues and they expect you to have a clearcut answer, and you gotta write back to all of them. I don't know what the answer is. Maybe you know what the answer is. Well, tell me. What's the answer?"

"Maybe they know better than you do. Just because I play the bass doesn't mean that I know the answer any better than them. If I knew the answer I'd stand for Parliament and probably be a total failure. You just put your finger on it. All you can do is ask a few



questions which people may not have thought of asking before and then they can work out their own answers.

"Hey, I thought we were gonna talk about music!"

AND THEREIN lies the rub. Back in 1977, Tom used to complain that nobody wanted to talk music with him because all they had on their minds was the fact that he was gay. Now the most askable questions are about involvements and issues and the ins and outs of Being A Spokesman and one - two - three, what is the fighting for? So yes, we talk about music.

"Let's talk about the 'is' rather than why the 'was' isn't. After Dolphin (Taylor, drummer with what we'll call TRB 1) left, Preston Hayman came in to do the album at two days' notice. We started it on a Wednesday and we finished it the following Tuesday. The first day we went in we recorded four backing tracks. It was very fast work with very few overdubs, unlike the first album, which had a lot of overdubs."

The album bears a credit to producer Chris Thomas and engineer Bill Price "who helped prepare the groundwork to these songs." Recording had begun with Thomas and Price (the team who worked on the first album), but had to be shelved when the mighty duo were called away for other projects. (Price to The Clash, Thomas to Wings). Rather than wait for Thomas and Price to return, TRB called in Todd Rundgren and started again from scratch, though the groundwork for the arrangements and the ideas had indeed been done during the earlier sessions.

"Neither version of the second album features Ian Parker's keyboard playing very strongly. The axis of the band has up to now been my voice and Danny's guitar, but now it's the voice balanced either side by keyboard and guitar. Since Dolphin's gone Ian has stepped into writing stuff for the bulletin, contributing stuff to the sleeve notes and generally become much more a participating member of the (accident switches to Peter Ustinov Central European comic-meance) *zer Politbüro* — oops — of the TRB co-operative. Plus he gets to sing one of the songs on the album, which is a completely manic pistake where he gets to sing about being a sheriff in the Deep South in a broad Glaswegian accent. He's actually from Irvine, and there was a newspaper article about him which said that he was the third most famous person ever to come from Irvine."

"He's a vegetarian and involved in many of the things on the inner sleeve of the album. The interesting thing is that we didn't know anything about any of that until he got the gig. He was auditioned purely as a keyboard player and he beat all the others hands down. Mark (Ambler, TRB 1's keyboard man) was basically a rhythm player and he only played lead on the jazzier things, but Ian's influences are more Weather Report... and Deep Purple."

"The other bizarre thing about Ian Parker is that he has friends. Not just 'friends' but *zillions* of friends. Any town you name, we'll play and Ian'll say 'Och, canna put a few people on the guest list?' and he'll have 25 names."

"Plus we have a new drummer named Charlie Morgan. Preston Hayman, the guy who played on the album with us, is in the Kate Bush Band and Charlie was Kate Bush's drummer. The potential is incredible. Even with the straight rock and roll things, there are just so many ways of rocking out now..."

Endgame: as we wind up the interview and pack up the cassette machines, a young writer in the restaurant bounds over to cop an autograph and say "Hello, you're Tom Robinson, aren'tcha?"

"I liked 'Motorway' best of all your stuff," he says. "Why don't you do more stuff like that?"

Tom smiles as he scrawls his name and salutation. "We've got some new stuff," he says genially, "which I hope you'll like as much as that."

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Love And Bullets

Directed by Stuart Rosenberg

Starring Charles Bronson and Rod Steiger

The Domino Killings

Directed by Stanley Kramer

Starring Gene Hackman (ITC)

A fairly incongruous double-bill, which can be recommended only as an alternative to rain-swished beaches.

Love And Bullets marks further the peculiar decline in Stuart Rosenberg's work which — with *Cool Hand Luke* and *WUSA* to his credit — seemed so promising back in the '60s. Not that Charlie Bronson fans will give a hoot since this highly improbable gangster yarn is kept pretty pacey as we follow Our Hero — on the trail of syndicate crime boss Joe Bonaparte (Rod Steiger, with a stammer) — from dusty Phoenix to scenic Zermatt.

He's still squinty-eyed and lantern-jawed, but he's far chattier than usual and is actually called Charlie here, which is nice — makes him seem almost human. Which is more than can be said for the assorted zombies he comes up against, particularly a pair of hitmen called Huntz (Paul Koslo, with a deaf-aid) and Farroni (Henry Silva, with a hair-cut). "Blood makes them laugh," says someone, and he's right: the Swiss may like holes in their cheese, but they're not so keen on holes in bodies.

Me, I don't go a bundle on



Gene Hackman, an unwilling participant in *The Domino Killings*.

holes in plots but — despite a massive sabotage job by the missus (Jill Ireland, with Dolly Parton wig and squeaky voice) — Charlie just about manages to keep *Love And Bullets* afloat. Routine though it is, it's probably still the best Bronson pic since *The Mechanic*.

The only thing it has in common with *The Domino Killings* is that Fred Koenekamp photographed both (iPhone up Arthur Koestler, quick. — Ed.). But Fred's not quite so busy as it

sounds, because Stanley Kramer's movie was made three years ago.

A flat and implausible addition to the corruption 'n' conspiracy genre, it has gained no credibility through languishing on ITC's shelf, nor by signs of obvious pruning. Gene Hackman, as ever, is eminently watchable as a kind of beleaguered King Midas in reverse (everything he touches turns to shit) but elsewhere the staid Kramer has indulged his propensity for inappropriate casting; thus

cherubic Micky Rooney is a hardened con, fatherly Eli Wallach a sinister Marine General, lovely Candice Bergen a dowdy housewife.

The Domino Killings is convoluted as hell and empty as Stan Ogden's beer mug. So it's of little consequence that these people are struggling through an ongoing tricky Franz Kafka situation — well, that's how Richard Widmark wearily puts it. I thought they were being obtuse on purpose.

Monty Smith

SILVER SCREEN

Wet weekends in Wigan — with soggy popsicles

Same Time, Next Year

Directed by Robert Mulligan

Starring Ellen Burstyn and Alan Alda (CIC)

1951. Two people meet at a seaside motel, and spend the night together. Though they're both happily married, they're able to talk to each other more successfully than to their respective partners. So they decide to meet again in twelve months.

This implausible relationship continues for 26 years through the film, continuing for a mere two hours, is restricted to visiting them at five-yearly intervals. The changes that Doris (Ellen Burstyn) and George (Alan Alda) go through in this period enable the film to gloss over, with typical liberal

tokenism, the great issues of the time; the Vietnam war, the rise of feminism, the therapy movement etc. — all are encompassed by a few glibly witty lines of dialogue between characters forced into a succession of awkward stereotypes.

There are lots of jokes — few of them funny — and a couple of embarrassingly contrived serious moments. Ellen Burstyn and Alan Alda (of TV *MASH* fame) perform miracles with the cack-handed script, but nothing can disguise the film's ultimate hollowiness. It's cosy, sentimental, studiously entertaining. There's also a horrible (and unintended) fascination in seeing two such very nice, very hung-up people slowly waste away their lives.

One for that rainy afternoon when the TV's broken and all your friends are out of town.

Graham Lock

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Lemon Popsicle

Directed by Boaz Davidson
Starring Yiftach Katzur and Anat Atzmon
(Entertainment)

Theoretically set in Israel, this movie has been contrived as an *American Graffiti* of the Middle East; 'theoretically' because *Lemon Popsicle* has clearly been designed as two hours of rollicking fun for an international market, and hence takes place in a celluloid nowhere land, in which US influences invariably abound, either through the customary totems of Western lifestyles, or the

relentlessly Americanised dubbing.

The lack of atmosphere makes a pair with the film's historical infidelities. The music apart, one of the few attempts to locate the time-period is through a Pathe News film, clearly dated 1957. This deals partly with John Kennedy's presidential campaigning — which actually took place in 1960.

Such ineptitude is of course inexcusable, but it pales beside the grosser shortcomings and regular lapses of taste of this terrible movie. The central characters are three 17-year-olds looking for — do you really need to be told this? — sexual adventure and experience. It's an

old-fashioned chauvinist formula, but one which is no more stereotyped than the characters — the winner, the loser, and the fat one.

In the absence of wit, the script relies for its laughs either on the discomforting embarrassments of Fatty, or else on the erstwhile shock tactics of conversations about penis-size, condoms, venereal disease, and suchlike. In short, the kind of humour that would charitably be described as 'schoolboy'.

Naturally, such sexual bravado has its come-uppance, which takes the form of the standard nemesis of films about this era. Indeed, since *Lemon Popsicle* coincides with BBC-2's series *The Best Of British*, it's been a bad month for unwanted pregnancies (*A Kind Of Loving*, *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning*, *Alfie*). The obligatory abortion scene here is entirely distasteful, partly because one resents a film which tackles comedy so crassly pulling emotional chords with such clumsiness, and partly because it's all so unrealistic anyway. Would a 16-year-old have found it that easy to get a pregnancy terminated in Tel Aviv in 1957? Come to that, were Jewish teenagers of the '50s ever this independent of parental control?

One feels sorry for the cast, many of whom try their best, often in unpleasant or downright humiliating conditions. Most of the post-*American Graffiti* movies (*Cooley High*, *That'll Be The Day*, *Grease*, *Animal House*) have had individual merits. *Lemon Popsicle* has none, and hopefully represents the end of the line.

A few final thoughts about the soundtrack, since transistors, juke-boxes and Dansettes blare out the '50s sound so relentlessly that one could believe the dramatic edifice had been constructed simply as pictures to accompany the music. (The movie's publicity actually lists the names of the singers, not of the actors.)

First of all — and this is something that applies to every film of this kind, even *American Graffiti* — the songs are not always of the correct vintage. 'Long Tall Sally', say, was 1957, so that's accurate, but 'Sealed With A Kiss', 'Hey! Paula' and 'Hey! Baby' were all 1962 — and I always understood that five years was a long time in rock'n'roll.

Secondly, you've heard all the songs before. Not 20 years ago, but in last week's '50s nostalgia movie, ('Hey! Paula' also occurred in *Animal House*, for example). For all that his name is never far from anyone's lips, and his image never long off the screen, there are no Presley songs in *Lemon Popsicle*. It's simple — the rights to his material are

not available, so it's the same tired old sounds that are always recycled as representatives of their era.

There are, however, songs here by Paul Anka, Domenico Modugno and Marino Marini. In other words, *Lemon Popsicle* finally gets something right, if only accidentally.

The music of the late '50s was by no means the undiluted excitement that the myth-makers pretend, and the film attests to this by including some dire material. During one party scene, three Paul Anka records are played consecutively, and in full. Does this sound like your kind of movie?

Bob Woffinden



Lemon Testicle: "Yup — eleven fingers!"

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THE FALL

Live At The Witch Trials
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CRASH! RING! This is the way The Fall begin, not with a whimper but a BANG! "Frightened", brooding, alert, scary. The one track here to equal the stature of 'Various Times'. "I feel trapped by mutual affection / I don't know how to use freedom / I spend hours looking sideways / To the time when I was sixteen / Cos I'm in a trance / And I sweat some / I don't wanna dance / I wanna go home / I'm frightened." The music builds, retreats, turns in doomy, foreboding circles. A brilliant beginning.

The rest is a mixture of the good, the slight and the slightly scrappy. Mostly, it's the good — ranging across the edgy, infectious pop of 'Rebellious Jukebox', 'Underground Medicine', the hypnotic sway of 'Two Steps Back'; the speedy, disconcerting statements of 'No Xmas For John Quays', 'Futures And Pasts'.

Karl Burns excepted, The Fall are not accomplished musicians. His superb drumming holds the album together, drives it along, rescues it from the possibility of formless repetition (and I wonder how they'll fire / fare now that he's gone). The others function well within their limitations. The resonant, minimalist bass of Marc Riley; the catchy

three-chord swell of Yvonne Pawlett's keyboards; the versatile spiky-to-scream guitar of Martin Bramah.

When they really coalesce — 'Frightened', 'Rebellious Jukebox', 'Two Steps Back' — it works beautifully. Solid, intriguing music, full of quirky touches and basic power. When sometimes they don't, things tend to drag, clutter or fall apart.

There are disappointments. The too-long, too-negative 'Music Scene'; the too-cryptic

'Mother-Sister', the too-dreary 'Industrial Estate' (is this a parody, or what?). And there's also the strange title track — Mark Smith announcing "But we're still one step ahead of you. I still believe in the R and R dream, in R and R as primal scream", even though his own singing is mostly flat, as in deadpan (it's not true that the songs are humourless — eg the hilarious line about free festivals as being "like cinemas without films" — it's

just the way Mark Smith sings 'em).

The Fall are reputed to be sensitive to criticism (thus the title?), and they do play one or two silly defensive games. Like 'Crap Rap 2', or the opening of 'Mother-Sister' where a voice asks "er, what's it about?" and Mark Smith replies "er, nothing."

But if 'Frightened' and 'Various Times', 'It's The New Thing' and 'Rebellious Jukebox' are indicative of the directions they're taking, The

Fall have little to worry about (and incidentally the album contains only previously unrecorded material, so do buy the last single).

And buy this. It's flawed, but at its best 'Live At The Witch Trials' has that true rock energy. That spark inside. The nicest way there is of wasting time.

CRASH! SMASH! CRASH! RING!
The Fall have landed on their feet.

Graham Lock

The Fall: Keep up the good work and there'll be no need to look over their shoulders.

Pic: Kevin Cummins.

Richman, he's a baby



Jonathan: Zzzzzzz went the strings of his heart.

Pic: Joe Stevens.

JONATHAN RICHMAN AND THE MODERN LOVERS Back In Your Life (Beserkley)

It seems a familiar story. A year ago, Richman was throwing model aeroplanes

into this audience, and singing "Buzz buzz buzz goes the honey bee — and tweedle tweedle twee goes the bird." Words like enigmatic, innovative, 'eccentric' and endearing began to fight for space in his ample — and mostly

sympathetic — coverage.

And I don't doubt that 'Back In Your Life' will induce the same people to suspect that Richman and sanity have now got very little left in common. But if this album achieves nothing else, it shows that while a reaction flared up and

burnt out around him, his ideas have actually remained both unchanged and unaffected.

Observe the man — he shuns all established means of projection; his songs sketch drolish Disney cartoons; he has a strong affinity with the virtually inanimate ('birdies', moose, mosquitoes, bees, etc); they understand him, they talk the same language. He attempts a rose-tinted vision of global 'love politics'. His emotions overflow like bulging bibbuls of Farley's rucks. He is apparently immune to reality. We wonder at times if he has diapers for brains.

Spin the disc and find neither answers nor surprises, but another oblique catalogue of his inadequacies and other earnest trivia, all wrapped in deliriously skimpy arrangements. Generous slabs of '60s rock 'n' roll, doo-wop, ballads and R'n'B are instilled with the same old cracked sentimentality against a samba / skiffle backdrop. Just to add to the effect, both his oddball, nasal vocals and the precariously tuned guitars make you feel that the Danseuse is in constant need of being cranked up.

I hardly need add that the album features a totally wacky performance in both grooves, and will only make Richman's following even more exclusive.

Opening with the typically low-key 'Abdul And Cleopatra' (rhymes with 'I wonder where she's at'), it divides loosely between the sentimental and the plain stupid. Prime examples of the latter are 'Buzz Buzz Buzz' and 'I'm Nature's Mosquito', in which, amid sounds of droning insects, our malarial spokesman claims "I'm gonna go bite bite / Bity whitey white, Sir!" — but in effect hardly even goes skin-deep.

Highlights, apart from the zany doo-wop 'Lydia', are 'Affection' — an accessibly diluted plea for just that and the suppressed rock 'n' roll of 'Party In The Woods Tonight'. Listening to its lines 'The Moose go Miy-ooh / The Deers are there Yiy-ooh / And The Monsters are cooking up their disgraceful soup for you', there's more than a hint that such french-fried inspiration derives from a past of committed psychedelia.

Well that's my theory, and I'm sticking to it.

Mark Ellen

SUPERTRAMP Breakfast In America (A&M)

I used to think that Supertramp were *all* style and no substance, but now I think that the word is 'mainly'. In many ways, the blend of voices and keyboards they offer is an exquisite confection, but who wants to eat a gallon of syllabub?

Singer Roger Hodgson has a melodramatic voice that's every bit as mannered as Freddie Mercury's. And that can get obnoxious, but put to the right use it can be quite appealing.

The outstanding song here is called 'Goodbye Stranger' and it shows how good this band can be when the formula works. Their second singer Rick Davies draws an engaging little melody over a keyboard line that's barely more than a doodle.

Compared to the surrounding material the song seems simple and uncluttered. Then suddenly Hodgson chirps up, in a childish sort of voice, with a killer of a chorus, the sort of thing they used to sweat over in the Brill Building.

The lyrics are unbearably corny: "Goodbye Mary, Goodbye Jane / Will we ever meet again / Feel no sorrow, feel no shame / Come tomorrow, feel no pain." But then who said that great pop needed a Ph.D. in English Literature? This song's almost as compelling as one of the Beach Boys' minor classics. It's that good.

Inevitably, though, one song doesn't make an album, and while the rest of the tracks provide a luxurious musical texture, the band never get so methodically inspired again.

The opening cut, 'Gone Hollywood', demonstrates the weakness of this kind of thing. Pleasant vocals and a gorgeous woodwind solo. A nice experience, but fundamentally unmemorable.

A friend of mine who's a hi-fi buff thinks Supertramp are in the same class as the Floyd. If you like electronic embroidery, then maybe you'll agree.

Bob Edmunds

THE BAR KAYS Money Talks (Stax)

A sumptuously funky offering from the 'new' Bar Kays — not to be confused, or compared, with the 'original' Bar Kays (of 'Soul Finger' fame), four of whom died on December 10, 1967, in the same plane crash that killed Otis Redding — these gents are most definitely funk(k)ioning in an on-going situation, delivering goods of a kind only the best doctors order.

Seductive, powerful, loping, impressive and happy, The Bar Kays play contemporary black music with great finesse and grace.

Music to dance to, and music to imagine extraordinary things to. As complex as you care to make it, as comfortable as a pair of old jeans; as smart as a new razor.

Nice to know that the band — and record label Stax — are willing and able to move with the times so effortlessly.

John Hamblett

TOTO

Solid rock with a razor's edge



“The overwhelming attraction of Toto’s is undoubtedly the level of craftsmanship on display, and the integrity with which it is exercised.”

—Harry Doherty, *Melody Maker*

Toto is a new band. Steve and Jeff Porcaro, David Paich, Steve Lukather, David Hungate and Bobby Kimball. Between them they’ve played with just about every rock giant you care to mention.

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Toto features the chart smash ‘Hold The Line’.

Toto’s is a band you must get to know. Start today.



NEW ALBUM 'TOTO'

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One too few boom-booms

WILLIE ALEXANDER AND THE BOOM BOOM BAND
Meanwhile... Back In The States (MCA)

The image-buck Willie wants to pass to you — which he hopes will in turn pass the big bucks back to him — is that of an adventurous, amiable, respected modern beat Beudelaire's too-sensitive-to-stay-sober drunk. Well, it's a shame to say, but Willie sounds too much like an old lufft wishing he were a young lufft here — big difference you know.

Still, he was only the second best thing to emerge from Boston's Rat Club — Marc Thor was the greatest and he's still not signed. The rest of the promising went on to sign with Sire or something stupid, where they would immediately flunk out.

Willie meanwhile cut a thick-mixture, kohled pot-pourri, Side Two stinking out the homestead with imagined glam, A 'n' B (whatever that stands for these days), heavy guitar and pop — it was gorgeous. I tried to play Side One quite a lot when we first acquired the work, but I couldn't ever want it — it seemed so plain.

Side Two was awful indulgent and young for such a good old boy, but it was cute and appropriate — “I feel so depressed/Guess I should have guessed/I feel so blessed/Have I passed the test?” — and the melodies rolled on like a girl with a vendetta. They sprawled, but like Theda Bera and her magic mascara... gorgeously and with an aimed wantonness.

‘Kerouac’ was lovely, homosexual torch-trickster hero-worship, the first song to practically spell out that hero-worship is homosexual. ‘Hair’ was jokey jive, ‘Looking Like A Bimbo’ was the old, sad rock and roll truth that only your parents used to be proud enough to see. ‘Home Is’ was a heartbreaker — they were all stunning, with histrionic, honest to God tunes. Most people love tunes like practically no other entertainment on earth.

Those songs were all so damned lush — oops — where the tunes sounded born for the stories, holding each other perfectly upright all the way home to the end, like two old drunks who knew each other since they were kids.

This album just limps haywire. It seems stunningly hurried yet exhausted, exhaustingly so. ‘All these songs were written between 1971 and 1978 in various bars’, good God forbid that the rest of us should start digging up the stuff we wrote in 1971 — the mere thought makes me want to tremble and froth.

Even the bass-heaviness of the Boom Booms can’t help them — the bass is a graceful sound, the most dignified thing about that abomination ‘rock’ — as the songs surrounding it pass over one so soon and smooth, leaving warnings of too many guitars in hands and gaps between the ears. The songs are short and so is the lifespan of a band that prints its lyrics on its inner sleeve, though of course for laughing matters we all wish they would.

There’s a little sticky lipstick intangible charm about this thing, only hanging over like a tooth on a thread from my fondness for the first LP... an awful lot of bands eke out a sentimental, temporary living these days from being ex-passions of people.

‘Modern Lovers’ and ‘You Looked So Pretty When’ would have been at home on



Rare pic of Willie with silly hat and Unigate bonis. Pic: Rob Hall.

Record One Side Two if only Willie had had half as much to drink when he wrote them; their desire for stumbling flesh stunts their sweetness, the alcohol or some other mire causes them to leer and wink instead of sneer and slink like his romantics used to. There’s a couple of hurtful lines here (“You seduced me with a smile and I followed you for miles” — ohhh) but his tunes seem shot forever. Write all the girls in the Western World a slim beat book, Willie, that would be better.

A lot of bands were signed yesteryear when we were young, en masse and massively, because every fool scout suddenly reckoned that every unsigned band — specially those busy being little cults in little clubs — was ‘new wave’. The Boom Booms are one such hangover who’d be happier just mucking about and leaving the precious time of the recording world alone, because they’ll never sell and they’ll only grieve their labels and get inferiority complexes about not selling. They shouldn’t fret — they’re sweet little combos — it’s just that making records involves time and money and ends up saying HURRY! which inhibits and over-reaches them.

Remember Willie Loco this way, leaning on some bar, waiting on some waitress, resting on some laurels when — boom boom — it all fell through.

Julie Burchill

VARIOUS ARTISTS No Wave (A&M)

Well in line with recent compilations by other major labels, A&M’s ‘No Wave’ throws the spotlight on nine of their latest signings. It also falls foul of two common “selection disc” pitfalls. First off, any such mixture of diverse music — in this

case, its “new wave” bracket merely implies a uniformity — makes it impossible to sit through an entire side without having to regulate the running order. And second, existing as it does to expose weaker acts via the commercial pull of stronger ones, the former don’t merit exposure, and the latter don’t need it. Hence the album accomplishes zero.

On both sides the dynamic duo, Joe Jackson and The Police, are found rubbing shoulders midway to sustain its otherwise meagre wares. The Police showcase ‘Roxanne’ and ‘Can’t Stand Losing You’, both tracks as excellent as they’re underrated. Jackson’s, inevitably, are ‘Is She Really Going Out With Him?’ and ‘Sunday Papers’ — likewise, classics the pair of them, though it’s crass to confine him to his singles alone when his ‘Look Sharp!’ album offers a host of more diverse selections.

The fifth and other decent cut is ‘Take Me, I’m Yours’ (Squeeze) — dance rock grapples with synthesised Eurodisco and comes through an outright winner.

The rest degenerate from Clark Kent’s ‘Don’t Care’ and ‘Office Girls’ — effortless dross by plain-clothes Police; to The Secret with ‘Going Down Again’ and ‘Lucky Lizard’ — jerky, derivative cabaret-rock with distant shades of Bonzos; down to The Dickies with the frantic, banal ‘Hideous’ and the rantings of gonzoed gibbons at large in ‘You Drive Me Ape’.

‘Urban Gypsy’ Bobby Henry takes the bottom line with the boorish, plodding ‘Head Case’, and shares it with Shrink who has no more to offer than his gold-painted visage, bacofail suit and a partially-shaved dome.

Stick with the singles or go for the albums but don’t break the bank for this one.

Mark Ellen

The boot is metaphysically put well and truly in. Pic: Al Johnson.



CRASS The Feeding Of The Five Thousand (Small Wonder)

This isn't an album at all, it's a 12 inch 45 rpm 17 track very EP — very good value and very angry, very trite and very boring.

The Clash and TRB's politics are facile but inoffensive whereas Crass are facile and offensive, directing their self-righteous superiority, vehement cluck-clucking disapproval and anachronistic three-chord thrashing at such disgusting rubber-duckies as Securitor guards (you wanna cosh the driver, cut a record with Ronnie?), factory workers (you gonna support the living dead sheep if they quit and move into your Epping commune?) and, of course, them, one system, society, fringe and rant but keep it non-specific, spread the guilt, make it painless, make it product.

'The Feeding Of The Five Thousand' starts off with a few minutes of silence entitled 'The Sound Of Free Speech' because nobody would press their song, 'Asylum', which was marked to occupy this vinyl. It's no loss — 'Asylum' is more of the contrived, sordid, ignorant piffle (it wasn't Little Lord James who dug the graves at Auschwitz, you sanctimonious shirheads) which proliferates throughout the record. And, not to be outwitted by the jackbooted Whitehouse censor, Crass sulk, pout, spit and slip in so much anti-religion crassphemy beyond the confines of their suppressed 'Asylum' that eventually one feels like subscribing to life-long celibacy and joining the Jesuits.

At least PIL's 'Religion' is a bit of fun.

This is a nasty, worthless little record — if I thought it reflected some mass post-punk consciousness I swear I'd pogo mindlessly until the brains were oozing

out my ears — and only when the Gumbie-activism unintentionally veers over the edge into pure Charlie Drake parody does it justify its very existence.

"The shit they get/The shit they get/The shit they get/Defense? Shit, it's nothing less than war/And no-one but the Government knows what the fuck it's for./Mai Lai, Hiroshima./Know what I mean?"

I enjoyed that bit.

Tony Parsons

DOLL BY DOLL Remember (Automatic)

Oh dear. The title's the first clue. Portentous, vague. Remember what? An empty pose, it echoes the contents.

I remember Doll By Doll. At the Rochester Castle last August they were superb, committed, intense: at the Roundhouse in October they seemed ill at ease. Then last month came the dire 'Palace Of Love' single. 'Remember', if it doesn't accentuate this downward curve, does little to reverse it.

Here they sound like a watered-down version of Television trying vainly to be Blue Oyster Cult. Long, meandering songs, heavy riffing, touches of melody, and occasional interruptions of the contrived dramatics: crescendos, abrupt silences, funeral drumbeats, hardly any of which occur with the necessary element of surprise.

Such creaky devices might still be effective if braced with a large degree of attack; the major surprise with 'Remember' is that it's so tame — would you believe understated Heavy Metal? What's happened to the fiery passion that epitomised their live gigs? How come 'Butcher Boy' and 'Palace Of Love' — so riveting on stage — have been reduced to the weak, convoluted gestures they sound on vinyl? One factor is the unassuming, almost monotonous production. Another is the selection of tracks: outstanding songs like 'Strip Show' and 'Teenage Lightning' have been dropped, while a mediocre rocker like 'Lose Myself' is mysteriously retained.

The one really good track is the least ambitious. 'Jenice' has an enticingly pretty tune — it obviously should have been the single — and achingly soulful vocals by Jackie Leven. A song of charm and tender regret. Lovely pop — not at all what you'd expect from Doll By Doll.

The songs on 'Remember' are weird, incomprehensible stories of sex, violence and mystery — most of it, apparently gratuitous (though I'm less sure of this than I am of the songs' general lack of clarity).

It's a shame. I remember that first time I saw them as one of the highlights of last

Amen O'Eno

BRIAN ENO
Music for Airports
(Ambient)
GARY PEACOCK
December Poems ECM)
TERJE RYPDAL Terje Rypdal (ECM)
FRANK ZAPPA
Sleep Dirt (Discreet)

'Music For Airports' is Brian Eno's latest stroll down the supermarket aisles of Muzak, re-named "ambient music" because, he claims, his muzak's intended to alter or modify a listening environment rather than just occupy it.

This is no big deal, and certainly nothing new: LaMonte Young, for one, has tried similar "environmental exercises" which, also depend on the spatial relationship of the listener (Music For Moving Bodies?). Indeed, The Shander label — Young, Riley, Glass, Reich, etc. — seems to specialise in records with little overt action in them.

Then there's the Obscure stuff, the most enduring of which is Michael Nyman's 'Decay Music' more successful as ambient music than either 'Airports' or 'Discreet Music', the first of Eno's dabblings in the genre.

The sad thing, of course, is that 'Airports' will sell more (in Britain, at least) than any of these other, more deserving, pieces.

"Ambient music... must be as ignorable as it is interesting" set Eno in his sleeve-note, by which canon he effectively admits defeat: ignorable 'Airports' certainly is, but there's no way it can be considered even slightly interesting on any level other than the purely conceptual. So it may be valid, but it's still muzak.

Eno threatens more chunks of environmental music, tailored to specific situations. So we can look forward, presumably, to Music For Garages, Bedrooms, Lavatories, Libraries and Lecture Theatres, till we come full circle to —

Eureka! — Music For Lounges! Like Eno, ECM once made interesting albums — Towner, Jarrett, Rypdal, Weber and Garbarek amongst others all profited at some time from the rigorous, cool cleanliness of the Manfred Eicher production. Now, and more so with each release, ECMs are just so many slices of the same cake: interchangeable, not individual.

The last one to interest me at all was Dave Holland's 'Emerald Tears', so I was hoping for a little more than the usual from Gary Peacock's 'December Poems', a similar solo double-bass affair (save for a couple of Garbarek sax contributions and some uncredited piano-string noodling on one track).

Sadly the sax is usually tasteless, swamping any bass subtleties: the marriage of Garbarek's sharp angularity with Peacock's mellow roundness, interesting on paper, just doesn't gel on record.

Elsewhere, Peacock succeeds in concocting some marvellous ambient music, just as ignorable as 'Airports' but far more interesting than that album when listened to rather than heard, especially the gently informal swing of 'Snow Dance' and the delicate fragmentation of 'Flower Crystals'. Unobtrusive, but interesting.

The Rypdal / Vitous / DeJohnette collaboration — another "perm any three from 30" ECM instant-album recipe — embodies all the faults of



Brian Eno'll drink to that. Pic: Gus Stewart.

the ECM malaise, the glaring of which is the narrowness of the emotional range available.

Doleful, despairing and depressed would seem to be the gamut of Rypdal's particular emotional expressions, and he holds sway over the album. DeJohnette reduced to an ineffectual tippy-tappy cymbals style imitation of Jon Christensen which is totally out to lunch, Vitous coping remarkably well considering the limitations imposed.

Fine if you happen to be in a Norse maiden, cliff-top gazing, windblown hair situation, but otherwise...

'Sleep Dirt', a Zappa contract-fulfilment job for Warners, exemplifies the opposing extreme to 'Airports', in that it tries too hard to be obtrusive, yet ironically ends up as probably even better muzak. It's so damn full and so damn cluttered, the aural plane

becomes just as flat and empty as if there was nothing there. An all-instrumental album, 'Sleep Dirt' represents the side of Frank that desperately needs acceptance as A Great Composer.

Unfortunately, the present-day composer is effectively dead, reduced to reiterating the same tired clichés in such dull unrelentingly lifeless manner that a good case could be made for considering 'Sleep Dirt' one of Frank's little jokes. Certainly, the noodling cocktail seizure of "Flambay" is impossible to consider as anything but a joke, and the long jazz-rock studio jam "The Ocean Is The Ultimate Solution" (Tee Hee Frank) is surely a parody of fashion music...?

Surely? Maybe? It really doesn't matter in the end.

Andy Gill



D by D: "Sod it". Pic: Pennie Smith

year. I'm also all for people who're "gonna change the world".

After 'Remember', the world, alas, looks much the same as before.

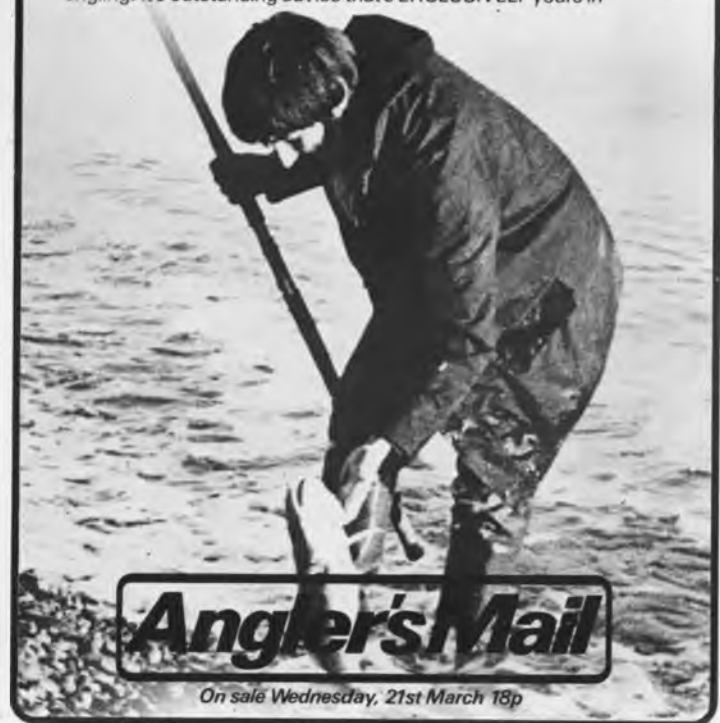
Graham Lock

Complete Beach-Angler's Guide...

SHOREFISHING

by John Holden

Angler's Mail is serialising key extracts from this new book that breaks new ground in sea fishing techniques. Part 3 of these extracts, in the "Mail" tomorrow, gives you that essential, inside-the-expert touch on choosing your sinkers and line and using them for truly fulfilling angling. It's outstanding advice that's EXCLUSIVELY yours in



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Gloria on points

GLORIA GAYNOR
Love Tracks (Polydor)
BONNIE POINTER
Bonnie Pointer (Motown)

Gloria Gaynor's album comes complete with major claims on her behalf by the record company. They say she's "Queen of the Discos", and her albums are made to dance to all the way through.

Donna Summer might well argue with the first contention. Many dancers would probably quarrel with the second.

Ms Gaynor's hit single 'I Will Survive' dominates the set, more glorious for being extended to over eight minutes. The song's main appeal is undoubtedly its melody and unrelenting hook. With or without a disco arrangement it would have been a smash. At the same time, there's no denying the power of the rhythm section that propels it along. Notable among them is percussionist Paulinho Da Costa, whose presence is no doubt reflected

in the cut's Latin flavour.

It's true, too, that with a voice less distinctive than Ms Gaynor's the song would be less substantial, but the singer's dependence on strong material is glaringly obvious on the rest of the



Bonnie Pointer — not impressed. Pic: Joe Stevens.

album. Gaynor's so hard-pressed that she opts for a cover version of Clout's 'Substitute' and the old Little Anthony song 'Goin' Out Of My Head'.

This album has nothing like the compulsive danceability that's achieved by the likes of the French band Voyage, for example. The main problem seems to be that Ms Gaynor's personality is allowed to get in the way. A slow balled 'Please Be There' is a suitable showcase for her vocal talent. Alas, it slows down the first side in a way that would clear most dance floors.

Bonnie Pointer is an equally personable vocalist. In fact, her range is probably greater than Ms Gaynor's. While Motown were quite right to see her potential, they seem somewhat unsure about how best to deploy her.

The venerable Berry Gordy co-produces with Jeffrey Bowen, and they immediately invite you to compare Ms Pointer with the stars of

Motown's heyday. The opening cut is Smokey Robinson's 'When I'm Gone' and the next but one is Holland-Dozier-Holland's 'Heaven Must Have Sent You'. Great songs, but Ms Pointer deserves something distinctively her own.

In fairness, that's what she gets with 'Free Me From My Freedom', the cut sandwiched between the oldies. The lyrics look corny written down: "Darling won't you free me from my freedom/Darling put love's chains back on me." Yuk.

But the way Ms Pointer sells them, they could be classic romantic poetry. And just to show that Gordy and Bowen are trying hard, you get a banjo solo thrust up in the middle of the song. Oddly enough it works.

Pity they weren't as adventurous on the rest of the two sides.

Bob Edmunds



Mick Smith (no relation, centre) — Softie supreme.

Not so soft

THE SOFTIES

Nice And Nasty (Charly)

Some of the most inventive flesh and blood rock 'n' roll currently available comes courtesy of a 15 stone-plus ex-Damned roadie on a primarily oldies label. This has been a public service announcement.

For Big Mick — sorry, Michael Smith — and his Softies, witty, gritty songs and strong, varied playing are the norm. Allegedly Big In Holland, the band were originally a hobby for guitarist-singer Mick and The Damned's Sensible and Scabies. By the time this album was made, Keith Line (drums) and Texan Jack Boothe (bass) made up The Softies proper.

My initial reaction to 'Nice And Nasty' was amazement that someone of Mick's ability should roadie for anybody. Split roughly into one raunchy side and one tough-but-tender, The Softies' personalised mastery of Motors-style overdrive rock is clear from the off.

The current single, 'Killing Time', is a strong man's 'Streets Of London', trading spurious compassion for unfeigned horror: "Crucified messiahs who never saw the nails / Midnight tube train passengers who never saw the rails". These are the dosers, "waiting on a street called Death / Turn left at Soho Square". At once chilling and unhysterical, the song's attack is offset by Mick's unhurried solo and spicy, sparing effects.

'Whiskey Man', John Entwistle's perverse celebration of alcoholism, continues the mood of understated menace. A tight, appreciative version, it's particularly welcome as the 'Quick One' album has not worn well.

But nimble hard rock is merely the upper portion of The Softies' ice cube. Mick moves from aggression to pity, tenderness or pride without shedding a scrap of credibility, while the rhythm section prove subtle as well as tough. With Jack doubling on keyboards, fiddle and guitar and co-producer Hugh Jones guesting on twelve-string, there's little they can't do. Time-honoured seagull effects open 'We Don't Want You Back', for instance, Mick's plaintive voice somewhere between Bowie and Roy Harper, yet the acceleration into an Abba fairground rhythm seems entirely logical.

The Smith songbook is littered with tangible, no-bullshit images, 'Your memory's so thick / You could cut it with a knife' and 'I was like a blind man / With no stick

to tap' being but two. 'Lovin' Me The Way You Do' is shamelessly devoted in an aw-shucks-but-we're-old-fashioned way: "Seems like this don't happen any more / Everybody's creeping behind locked doors". Listen and sigh.

Side two's 'Do In It All Again' and 'Try A Little Bit Harder', the most ambitious tracks, are also the most successful. Mick's knack of making clear, uncluttered language say anything he wants it to is strongly evident on the former, where he bemoans man's inability to learn from history. In bossa nova time, the song glides from a jazzy solo to clean, distant rock lines. Easy as breathing.

Like 'Rusty' on side one, 'Try' celebrates life on the road in Lynott-approved fashion: "Can't you see that you are free / And what's the use of trying to be / Sad about it". No jaded moaners on The Softies' bus.

Line has since left, replaced by ex-Clancy man George Butler, while the addition of Syd Geary on rhythm guitar means there's little here they can't reproduce.

Music this adventurous is rarely this approachable. Why ever not?

Harry George

WILLIE HUTCH In Tune (Whittiera)

Yet another Motown quilter, William McKinley Hutchinson has packed his trusty Gibson and hitched a ride on Norman Whitfield's 125 soul train.

Initially, all bodes well as Wah Wah Watson does his chicken run thang on the opening cut, while a second guitarist (Hutch?) floats in some Wes M. octave work and Willie Boy raps enthusiastically about his new record before describing a trip to a disco — at which point everything reverts to mundane partydown.

Most of the album's other tracks — which, apart from a couple of midnight smoochers, are aimed directly at the tootsies — prove equally lacklustre. Not downright bad — Hutch has got enough going for him, as both musician and vocalist, to keep things above the plimsoll line when it comes to quality.

But for a guy who's penned such long-term royalty gainers as 'California My Way', 'Guess I'll Learn How To Fly' and 'I'll Be There', plus a couple of well-healed soundtracks for *The Mack* and *Foxy Brown*, he seems to have temporarily run out of gas.

Fred Deller

THE NEW SINGLE FROM

Eric Clapton

"IF I DON'T BE THERE BY MORNING"

B/W

"TULSA TIME"



TAKEN FROM THE ALBUM "BACKLESS" AVAILABLE ON RSO RECORDS AND TAPES





Hank Marvin: "So there are still young ones..."

CLIFF RICHARD AND THE SHADOWS

Thank You Very Much: Reunion Concert At The London Palladium (EMI)
No prize for spotting the instant irony.

The opening song here is 'The Young Ones' — and almost 20 years after it was a hit, Cliff Richard sings it totally straight-faced.

The lyrics, the arrangement, even the Hank B. Marvin guitar solo, are all immaculately in place. Cliff doesn't even change the emphasis of the words to acknowledge the passing years. And quite right, too.

This is a performance and an album that will appeal most strongly to people who were teenagers in the '50s and '60s, and let's not belittle their pleasure. (Well, if you want to...)

The implicit rebellion of 'The Young Ones' was hardly as ferocious as performers need to be these days in peddling their product, but no doubt it reflected the mood of the kids at that time.

Okay, everyone knows that Cliff is a soppy Sunday school sort of chap these days, but there's a certain courage involved in an album like this.

Cliff and the Shadows do their golden oldies note perfect, and inevitably that emphasises their commitment to the past — and the redundancy of their music for the new generation. Tunes like 'Apache' sound unbearably tame now, but in their day they had considerable potency. Every '60s beat group took The Shadows as their starting point, and much has evolved from there.

Rock stars of the '60s and '70s have proved to be rather nimble at disguising their ages than Cliff and the Shads. The Rolling Stones, for example, have simply ignored the implications of growing old. After all, there's a lot of

persuasive pacing and clever arrangements.

Yet, in lurid dayglo, I sense the word 'artificial' scrawled all over this album. Grand Hotel aim for glamour, for a glossy, illusive sheen. 'Do Not Disturb' is wallpaper for discos, it's canned cocktail party music — it would mingle well with diamante, vermouth and cashew nuts. It's a very insubstantial album.

sometimes pleasant, and sometimes unevenly balanced with an excessively hard-hitting rhythm section.

But it is designed solely to motivate feet, and that almost excuses the lack of lyrical inspiration. It dabbles with spaciness ('Atmosphere' and 'Light Years') and in 'Secret Life' it even expounds the dilemma of being another urban Superman possessed of extra-sensory powers.

Basically, Grand Hotel have nothing to day, and say it with enough conviction for you not to notice. It's just dance music, neither appalling nor appealing: a very safe album from a very safe group.

It will not disturb.

Mark Ellen

Imports

Despite the critical acclaim afforded La Belle — the *NME Encyclopedia of Rock* described the group as "one of the most inventive soul acts of the '70s, blending black consciousness lyrics with raunchy delivery" — I always felt that the talent involved could have been better utilised.

Image was everything. La Belle came on as space-age super-hip. Real roots took a dive and, frankly, I wasn't worried when black America's answer to *Rock Follies* called it a day. However, since Patti LaBelle opted for solo gigs, she has achieved little in the way of kudos on this side of the Laker-run. Her last album, 'Tasty,' didn't even see the light of day here and it's anyone's guess whether 'It's Alright With Me,' Patti's latest Epic release, will ever grace the British catalogue.

At surface level this is understandable, for the album boasts no superstar back-up names, the songs are mainly penned by producer Skip Scarborough — a fact which hardly merits a line on the blurb sheet — and the music

ultimately slots into no particular category, being a mixture of disco and 3 a.m. smooch. But Patti LaBelle is a genuine soul lady — her offerings to the Travolta trade are propelled by human heart-beats and not programmed tick-tocks of the Germanic kind. And if her ballads are of the type Barbra Streisand wouldn't mind taking to her hairdresser, so what? For a cling-tight love-song, given guidance by the right set of tonals, can be a wondrous thing — as Billie Holiday never ceased to prove. Though Patti's no Lady Day, she does share that same ability to get inside such material and turn After Eight mints into boxes of real Black Magic. 'It's Alright With Me' is just that.

So phooey to trendsetters unlimited and those given to categorisation. May their dreams be plagued by plain everyday folk who refuse to fit into labelled niches and whose only common virtue is one of genuine musical talent.

Talent is where you find it, be it onstage at the Albert or at some acoustic guitar bash in deepest Oldham. In the case of *The Leopards* it's probably some bar-cum-dance hall in the U.S. of A's central state. For the

band's album is titled 'Kansas City Slickers' and it appears on the KayCee-based Moon label.

Little info regarding those involved is provided by the sleeve — all you get is a set of four substandard passport shots set among a profusion of veteran ads ('The Commercial Bank pays 3% interest on deposits' etc.) and no names are given. So everything is down to the music, which is lightweight stuff, indicative of Ray Davies in vaudeville mood. If you consider 'Well Respected Man' to be the acme of rock songwriting then 'Kansas City Slickers' will doubtless sit well on your turntable. But if, like me, you found The Kinks of 'All Day And All Of The Night' more appetising then avoid The Leopards by a wide margin — for it's obvious their spots come from eating too much candy-floss.

Finally, a news-flash for hi-fi freaks. Latest in the direct-cut discs heading your way is 'San Francisco Ltd.' (Crystal Clear), on which the admirable Terry Garthwaite wraps her chops around Lil Green's 'What's The Matter With Love,' Dylan's 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight' and Alberts Hunter's 'Read What You Sow.'

Fred Deller

JOHN OTWAY

FRIGHTENED AND SCARED

HIS NEW SINGLE

OTWAY LIVE IN YOUR LIVING ROOM!

When you buy John Otway's new single 'Frightened and Scared' have been let loose — bargained for.

Three instrumental pressings of one of these collectors items Otway will give you a personal performance of his new release in your own home.

He will arrive laden with gifts — the official single 'Frightened and Scared', a copy of his forthcoming album 'Where Did I Go Right?' and two tickets for his concert at the Rainbow Theatre on May 12th 1979.

If Otway's voice is absent from your copy of the single send a telegram claim to 'Otway in Living Stereo', Polydor Limited, 17/19 Stratford Place, London WIN 0BL.

Warning: Otway can seriously damage your living room.

money in it for them.

There's a case for saying that the dignified middle-class middle-age displayed on this album is a rather more honest approach.

Bob Edmunds

THE SQUAD

Out For Revenge (Hav)

'Out For Revenge' — put together and out, into a cruel, cold landscape. The Squad — three lads from Newcastle, put out and brought together by the cruel, cold response their demo tapes got from that fabled A&R zone.

They built their own studio. Specially to record. Conviction. They're convinced, this Squad. Not me. I see no point at all. Me, I can hardly be bothered to go on here. This Squad with their ridiculous anachronistic 'outlaw' 'mystery' 'macho' 'dribble'... you've got a body like a woman. Hairy chests, boutique haircuts, bomber jackets, world without end, Amen. 'The Road', 'Honey', 'Heavy Dudes', 'Winds Of Change'...

A tepid twilight landscape of twisted romanticism and masculine power trips.

'Out For Revenge'? If any radical feminists want a copy of the album, the address is: Slowback Records, 44 Highbury, Jesmond, Newcastle Upon Tyne 2, £3.70 inc. post & packing.

Adios, mes amigos!

Ian Penman

GRAND HOTEL

Do Not Disturb (CBS)

They're all here — the shimmering hi-hat, the wire hawser funk bass, those gushing, creamy banks of vocal harmony, the clean, synthetic keyboard sounds — all the right ingredients for such 'sophisticated' dance music.

There's some half decent compositions, too, a gentle,

BUZZCOCKS MINI-TOUR

THE BUZZCOCKS, pictured right, begin their spring mini-tour this weekend. They're playing seven dates in all, and six of them fall in the period of this Gig Guide — at Manchester (Friday), Carlisle (Saturday), Blackburn (Sunday), Peterborough (Monday), Coventry (Tuesday) and Aylesbury (Wednesday), with London's Hammersmith Odeon to follow at the end of next week. They're not planning a full-scale tour until the autumn, so if you want to catch 'em in action, better make the most of this opportunity.

MOTORHEAD also go out on the road this week, coinciding with the release of their new album 'Overkill', which obviously they'll be promoting (what else?). And there's the added novelty of a support act in the shape of heavy-metal all-girl band Girls School. First dates are at Cromer (Friday), St. Albans (Saturday), Newcastle (Monday), Edinburgh (Tuesday) and Glasgow (Wednesday).

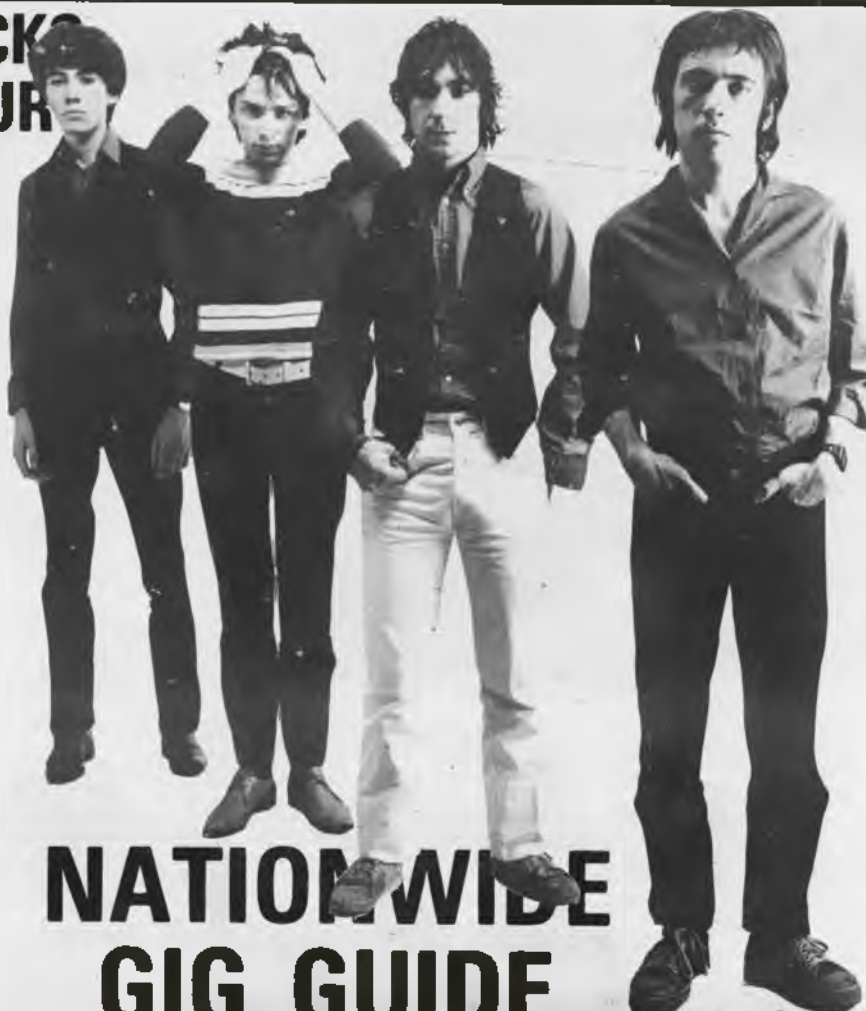
FRANKIE MILLER also starts a new tour with his re-vamped band, aimed at boosting his new single 'Good To See You' and album 'Falling In Love'. He and Full House are playing a total of 25 dates, running through to the end of April, with initial gigs at Colchester (Thursday), Reading (Friday), St. Austell (Saturday) and Cardiff (Wednesday).

DAVID ESSEX is touring for the first time since leaving the cast of 'Evita', and his schedule includes two nights at London Hammersmith on Friday and Saturday. Also this week he visits Ilford (Thursday), Middlesbrough (Sunday), Edinburgh (Monday), Newcastle (Tuesday) and Hull (Wednesday).

COMPILED BY
DEREK JOHNSON

Thursday

Amphill Folk Club: Andy Caven
Birmingham Bar: Straight 8
Birmingham Mercat Cross: Special Clinic
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Orphan
Birmingham The Bell: The Clerks
Birmingham Westhill College: Speed Limit
Blackburn Technical College: Eric Bell Band
Bournemouth Wallisdon College: The Westers
Brighton Cock & Lion: Truth Hurts / Johnny Solo
Brighton Alhambra: Fan Club
Brighton Sussex University: Jonathan Richman
Bristol Polytechnic: The Pretenders
Burnwood Troubadour: The Amazing Dark Horse
Bursough Admiral Lord Nelson: The Accelerators
Christchurch Jaspers Tavern: Tours
Colchester Essex University: Frankie Miller's Full Moon
Coventry The Climax: Atlas
Derby Ajanta Cinema: The Pop Group/Alternative TV/Manicured Noise
Derby Havens Club: Pressure Shocks
Derby Old Bell Hotel: Spasms
Glasgow Apollo Centre: Journey/Pat Travers Band
Great Yarmouth ABC Theatre: Slim Whitman
Halesowen Tiffany's: Samson
Hale Wallgreen Folk Club: Martin Carter & Graham Jones
Hanley Victoria Hall: Klaus Wunderlich
Harrow The Havelock: The Chevrans
Hatfield Forum Theatre: Roger Whittaker
Hereford Technical College: Neon Hearts
High Wycombe Kings Head: Low Lewis Reformer/F.U.X.
Hucknall Welfare Club: Bethnel
Ilford Odeon: David Essex
Jackdaddy Grey Topper: Terot
Leeds Cavendish Hall: The Bozoes/The Asbestos
Leeds Polytechnic: Eddie & The Hotrods/The Members / The Magnets
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: Red Eye
Liverpool Eric's: Pink Military Stand Alone
London Camden Brecknock: Seasacrow
London Camden Dingwells: Zaine Griff
London Camden Music Machine: The Pirates
London Canning Town Bridge House: Dog Watch
London Chadwell Heath Greyhound: Jameson Reid
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse: Billy Harper Quintet/Urban Collier Six
London Chiswick John Bull: Electrotunes
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: The Vahnes/Necromats
London Deptford Albany Empire: The Red Lights
London Epping Folk Club: Chris Rohmann
London Fulham Golden Lion: Ex-Directory



NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE

London Hammersmith The Swan: Double Exposure
London Islington Hope & Anchor: Red Beans & Rice
London Kennington The Cricketers: Manyas
London Kensington De Villiers Bar: Gold Dust Twins
London Kennington The Nashville: Carol Grimes Band
London Knightsbridge Pizza On The Park: Martin Taylor & Ike Isaacs
London Marquee Club: Inner Circle
London Maunberry's: Miatta
London Notting Hill Old Swan: S.W.1
London Oxford St. 100 Club: Black Slate
London Plumstead Green Man: Future Bodies
London Soho Pizza Express: Johnny M & The Midnight Men
London Southgate Royalty: Ray Campi & The Rockabilly Rebels
London St. Mark's Club: Red Tape
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Secret Seven/Drill
London Tottenham The Spurs: Zilch
Manchester University Owens Park: Product
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: Chase
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: Patrick Fitzgerald
Middlesbrough Town Hall: The Only Ones
Newcastle City Hall: Elton John
Newcastle Spinnymoor Leisure Centre: Ralph McTell
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: The Hormones
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: Lap Region
Nottingham The Bodega: Art Failure
Oxford Culham College: Thieves Like Us
Plymouth Locarno: Culture
Plymouth Palace Theatre: Max Boyce/Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators
Plymouth Polytechnic: Tom Robinson Band/The Straits
Portsmouth Guildhall: Graham Parker & The Rumour/The Sports
Poynton Folk Centre: Pumpkin Pie/Pete Farrow
Preston Guildhall: Nana Mouskouri
Rochford Rocheway Community Centre: The Bothy Band
Roxton Bull Hotel: Foggy
Sheffield Limit Club: The Smirks/The Jags
Sheffield Polytechnic: Barry Forde Band/The Leyton Buzzards/The Piranhas
Slough Fulcrum Centre: Bill Haley & The Comets/Flying Saucers/The Wild Angels
Southend Scamps: Grinder
St. Albans City Hall: Matchbox
Stoke Gately Bar: Mistress
Sunderland Fusion Disco: Delegation
Sunderland Halford Inn: Sleeper / Johnny & The Jets

Friday

Birmingham Barrel Organ: Bright Eyes
Birmingham Regals Social: Culture
Birmingham Elizabethan Days: Bed Earth

Birmingham Railway Hotel: Spire
Birmingham (St. Martin's): The
Sydenham: The Crack
Birmingham The Sheldon: Orphan
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: Minotaur
Bokon Farnworth Veterans Club: Hounds
Brighton Adur: Shakedown
Brighton Alhambra: Night Rider
Brighton Bombay Bar: David's Dykes/The Parrots/Woody & The Splinters
Brighton Conference Centre: Bad Company
Bromsgrove Stars Nightclub: The Foundations
Canvey Island Goldmine Club: Light Of The World
Carnarvon Trinity College: Hi-Fi
Cheltenham Gloucester Technical College: The Pretenders
Chiddingfold Six Belts: Snoots
Coventry Climax: Urge
Cromer West Runton Pavilion: Motorhead/Girls School
Croydon Fairfield Hall: Klaus Wunderlich
Dudley J.B.'s Club: Jameson Reid
Dundee Bowling Alley: Let-D
Dundee College of Technology: The Francies
Eastbourne The Cavalier: The Dials
Etchingham Arms: John Thomas
Falkirk The Maggie: The Freeze
Harrow College of Higher Education: The Buzz/Indecent Exposure
Hemel Hempstead Cellar Folk Club: Foggy
Ipswich Gaumont Theatre: Slim Whitman
Kettering Windmill Club: The Beersbank Band
Kirkcaldy Country Club: Grand Hotel
Knaresborough Folk Club: John Leonard & John Squire
Kingston Eel Pie Rock Club: Strangeways
Leeds Polytechnic: Barry Forde Band/The Leyton Buzzards/The Piranhas/Shenay & The Gays
Leeds Trinity & All Saints College: Capital Letters
Leicester Phoenix Theatre: Pressure Shocks
Liverpool Eric's: Patrick Fitzgerald / The Molesters
London Acton Kings Head: Paz
London Camden Brecknock: The Vipers
London Camden Dingwells: Straight R/N/W 10
London Camden Music Machine: ABC
London Camden Music Machine: Fashion
London Camden Southampton Arms: Jettyroll Blues Band
London Camden Town Hall: The Bothy Band
London Canning Town Bridge House: Les Hart
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse: Ian Carr/New Alban Holdsworth Band
London City Polytechnic: Bram Tchakovsky/Steps
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: Crazy Caven & The Rhythm Rockers
London Elephant & Castle College of Printing: Radio Stars / Bobby Henry / Shrink
London Fulham Golden Lion: Jackie Lynton's Happy Days

London Hammersmith Odeon: David Essex
London Harrow Rd Windsor Castle: C Gas 5/The Resistors
London Highbury Grove Ladbroke House: Sounds of Soulband
London Islington Hope & Anchor: Tribesman
London Islington North Polytechnic: Belt & Braces Band
London Kensington The Nashville: Supercharge
London Kingsway College: U.K. Subs
London Lewisham Black Bull: Shot Rod
London Marquee Club: Inner Circle
London Middlesbrough Polytechnic: Bethnel
London Oxford St. 100 Club: George Melly & The Feetwarmers
London Paddington Western Counties: First Aid
London Putney Star & Garter: Greig & Nigel's Folk & Blues Night
London Soho: Pizza Express: Benny Waters Quartet
London Southall Hambro Tavern: The Chevrons
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: The Crooks/The Carpettes
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: Tolumbo
London Victoria The Venue: David Sanicous
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: The Psychedelic Furs / The Reds / The Vains
London Willesden White Horse: Flying Saucers
London W 1 Portman Hotel: Roger James Band
London W 10 Adlam Hall: Split Rivit/Mat Stagger/Action Replay/The Planets
Manchester Belle Vue King's Hall: The Buzzcocks
Manchester Free Trade Hall: Nana Mouskouri
Manchester New Century Hall: Rokotto
Manchester New Osbourne Club: Ray Campi & The Rockabilly Rebels
Manchester Russell Club: The Skids
Merton Mowbray Painted Lady: Chase
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: Eric Bell Band
Newcastle Mayfair Ballroom: Journey/Pat Travers Band
Newcastle Polytechnic: The Only Ones
Newport The Village Little Acre
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: Last Call
Nottingham Sandpiper: The Red Crayola/Laura Logie/Scotti Pollitt
Nottingham Trent Polytechnic: Wilko Johnson's Solid Senders/The Young Ones
Oxford Polytechnic: Gino & The Sharks
Plymouth Palace Theatre: Max Boyce/Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators
Port Talbot Troubadour: After The Fire
Preston Guildhall: Elton John
Reading Hexagon Theatre: Frankie Miller's Full House
Reading Worthingham Rock Club: The Beavers/The Fast Crowd
Redhill Centre: Matchbox
Redford Portershouse: The Smirks

Rowley Regis Four Ways: Ocean Boulevard
Scarborough Penthouse: The Jags
Sheffield Limit Club: Panties
Sheffield Polytechnic: Ralph McTell
Sheffield Top Rank: Eddie & The Hot Rods/The Members/The Magnets
Sixth Rugby Club: The Accelerators
Southampton Motbury Old Mill: Eyes
Stafford North Staffs Polytechnic: Pressure Shocks
Stalybridge Rose & Crown: Martin Carter & Graham Jones
Stevenage The Swan: John Grimaldi's Cheap Flights
Stockton Teessider Club: Basczax
Stoke Green Star: Peay
Stourport Civic Centre: The Big Nose Band/Regina
Swanton Youth Centre: Fast Cars
Uxbridge Brunel University: The Movies
Uxbridge Unit One: Camie Major
Wolverhampton Lafayette: The Pirates
York The Revolution: The Drones
York Winning Post: Ethel The Frog

Saturday

Aberdeen 72 Club: Patrick Fitzgerald
Barkingside Old Maypole: Gina 'n' The Rockin' Rebels
Basildon Double Six: Dog Watch
Belfast Ulster Hall: Tom Robinson Band / The Straits
Birkenhead The Gallery: Panties
Birmingham Barbarella's: Bram Tchakovsky
Birmingham Bogarts: Dangerous Girls
Birmingham (Kings Heath) Hare & Hounds: Mike Elliott
Birmingham Odeon: Nana Mouskouri
Birmingham Railway Hotel: School Sports
Birmingham (Yardley) Bulls Head: Let Conchill / The Utensils
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: Analog System
Bokon Institute of Technology: The Passages / Auto Da Fe / Manchester Mekon / The Liggers
Brighton Conference Centre: Graham Parker & The Rumour / The Sports
Bristol Crown Cellar Bar: The World Beasts
Burnwood Troubadour: Ocean Boulevard
Carlisle Market Hall: The Buzzcocks
Carshalton St. Helier Arms: Ray Campi & The Rockabilly Rebels
Cheltenham Plough Inn: The Red Crayola / Laura Logie / Scotti Pollitt
Chiddingfold Six Belts: The Dials
Cromer West Runton Pavilion: The Movies
Dudley J.B.'s Club: The Pirates
Dundee Barracuda Club: Delegation
Gravesend Prince of Wales: The Much
Guildford Star Hotel: The Volunteers
Hastings Good Mood Club: Capital Letters
Haverfordwest Masonic Hall: Ritual
Hazel Grove Three Tuns: Martin Carter & Graham Jones
Huddersfield Polytechnic: The Jags
Ilford Oakfield Hall: Belt & Braces Band
Ipswich Gaumont Theatre: The Holmes
Kington Polytechnic: Bethnel
Leatherhead Leisure Centre: Annie Day & The House Band
Leeds Haddon Hall: Agony Column
Lincoln R.A.F. Swindery: Strange Days
Liverpool C.F. Mott College: Garla
Liverpool Eric's: The Pretenders
London Camden Brecknock: The Vipers
London Camden Dingwells: The Lightning Raiders / White Lightning
London Camden Music Machine: Wilko Johnson's Solid Senders
London Canning Town Bridge House: Jackie Lynton's Happy Days
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse: Chet Baker Quartet / New Music Orchestra
London City Polytechnic: The Resistors / Greaves
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: Low Lewis Reformer
London Deptford St. Paul's Crypt: The Monitors
London Fulham Golden Lion: Ricky Cool & The Sabers
London Fulham Greyhound: Straight 8
London Hammersmith Odeon: David Essex
London Hammersmith The Swan: London
London Islington Hope & Anchor: The Soft Boys
London Islington Pied Bull: The Fixations
London Kensington The Nashville: The Immaties / John Potter's Clay
London Kingsway Sandewig: Witchfynde
London Lewisham Black Bull: Crazy Caven & The Rhythm Rockers
London Manor Park Three Rabbits: Raised On Robbery
London Marquee Club: The Young Bucks
London Plumstead Green Man: Earthbound
London Rainbow Theatre: Culture
London Regent's Park Cecil Sharp House: Martin Simpson
London Royal Festival Hall: Klaus Wunderlich
London Soho Pizza Express: Ron Russell Band
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Big Chief
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: Tolumbo
London Waterloo Royal Vic: Sweet Substitute
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: Split Rivit / Zero Zero
London Woolwich Thames Polytechnic: Punishment Of Luxury
Lyncham Matravers Chequers: Raw Deal
Maidstone Dunning Hall: R.A.P. / Music Families
Manchester Apollo Theatre: Eddie & The Hot Rods / The Members / The Magnets
Manchester Polytechnic: Grand Hotel
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: Chairman Of The Board
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: The Skids
Middlesbrough Teessider Polytechnic: Barry Forde Band / The Leyton Buzzards / The Piranhas / The Barbarians
Northampton County Ground: Radio Stars

CONTINUES OVER...

MOTORHEAD



Nottingham Boat Club: Eric Bell Band
Nottingham Club Malibu: Jonathan Richman
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: Outward Bound
Nottingham Sandpiper: The Smirks
Peasfield The Royal Oak: The Little Jimmies
Peth Riverside Inn: The Trendies
Petersborough ABC Theatre: Slim Whitman
Reading Target Club: Moonraker
Reading University: Tot & The Girls in Room 419
Redruth Cam Brew Leisure Centre: Max Boyce / Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators
Retford Porters: Atlas / Ponders End
Rochdale Champness Hall: John Pentry / Bill Meeson Band
Rotherham Dickens Inn (lunchtime): The Accelerators
Sheffield City Hall: Journey / Pat Travers Band
Southampton Holbury Old Mill: Real Ale & Thunder Band
Southend Minerva: Matchbox
Southport New Theatre: Ralph McTell
Stafford North Staffs Polytechnic: Leargo
St Albans City Hall: Motorhead / Girls School
St Austell Band Club: Lipservice
St Austell Cornish Riviera: Frankie Miller's Full House
Stoke Out Of Town Inn (lunchtime) and New Panny (evening): Pans
Stratford-on-Avon Ennington Park Manor: Orphan
Torpennyand Naval Club: After The Fire
Torquay 400 Club: High Fines
Walsall Town Hall: Inner Circle
Warrington Park Hall: Julie Felix
Warford Red Lion: Canis Major
Wishaw Crown Hotel (lunchtime): The Peas
York The Revolution: The Squares

Sunday

Bokewell Mansel Head: Witchyfynde
Borrow Civic Hall: "Up Country" with Martin Paul & Country Velvet/Gordie West/Snuffy Garrett
Birmingham Barbarella's: Deep Throats
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Prima Donna
Birmingham Odeon: Bad Company
Birmingham Shirley Red Lion: The Crack
Birmingham Town Hall: Eddie & The Hot Rods/The Members/The Magnets
Bishops Cleeve: The Magnets
Bishop's Cleeve: The Magnets
Blackburn King George's Hall: The Buzzcocks
Bradford Alhambra Theatre: Ralph McTell
Bradford Princesville Club: Sports
Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): Bill Scott & Ian Ellis
Chelmsford Chancellor Hall: Bethnal
Chelmsford Arts Centre: White Raven
Christchurch Saddle Barn: Raw Deal
Dunfermline Kinema: The Skids
Ipswich Kingfisher: Boy Bastin
Lancaster New Planet City: The Only Ones/Berry Forde Band/The Leyton Buzzards/Interference
Leeds Florida Green Hotel: Grand Hotel
Leeds Victoria Hotel (lunchtime): Best Friends
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: Howard Ellis Band
Leicester De Montfort Hall: Nana Mouskouri
London Acton Kings Head: Geoff Castle's Strange Fruit
London Battersea Nege Head: Jugular Vein
London Camden Brecknock: London Zoo
London Canning Town Bridge House: Remes Down Boulevard
London Charing Cross Duke of Buckingham: The Invisible (for four days)
London Chiswick John Bull: First Aid
London Clapham Two Brewers: Live Wire
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: Portraits
London East Ham Ruskin Arms: Dog Watch
London Finchley Torrington: Bobby Henry Band
London Fulham Golden Lion: The Sunday Band

London Greenwich Theatre: Amber/Jona Lewis/The Squelch
London Harrow Road: Windsor Castle
The Soul Boys
London Islington Hope & Anchor: The Sinceros
London Kensington The Nashville: Bram Tchakovsky
London Lewisham Concert Hall: George Moly & The Postwarriors
London Marquee Club: The Cure
London Palladium: Roger Whittaker
London Peckham Montpelier (lunchtime): Blue Moon
London Rainbow Theatre: Culture
London Shaftesbury Avenue Apollo Theatre: Time Turner
London Soho Pizza Express: Benjamin Waters
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Lee Hart
London Strand Lyceum Ballroom: Still Little Fingers/Woman League/The Fall/The Mekons/Gang Of Four
London Victoria The Venue: Duffo
London Waterloo Royal Vic: Sweet Suburbia
London Woolwich Tramshed: Monty Sunshine Band
London W1 Portman Hotel (lunchtime): Midline Follies Small Band
Middlebrough Town Hall: David Essex
Newbridge Memorial Hall: After The Fire
Newquay Central Hotel: The Winners
Norwich Boogie House: Electrotunes
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: Band
Paignton Festival Theatre: Max Boyce/Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators
Pools Arts Centre: Klaus Wunderlich
Poynton Folk Centre: Jo-Ann Kelly/Terry Walsh
Reading Haxagon Theatre: Graham Parker & The Rumour/The Sports
Ringwood Elm Tree: Real Ale & Thunder Band
Stockport Davenport Theatre: Slim Whitman
Stratford Ettingdon Park Hotel: Speed Limit
Uxbridge Brunel University: Low Lewis Reformer
Walsall Dirty Duck (lunchtime): The Amazing Dark Horse

Monday

Belfast White Hall: Eton John
Birmingham Barrel Organ: Fashion
Birmingham Marquee: Orphan
Birmingham Odeon: Bad Company
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Video
Brentwood Hermit Club: Tour De Force
Bristol Stonehouse: Juan Foote 'n' The Grave
Coventry Theatre: Nana Mouskouri
Edinburgh Odeon: David Essex
Exeter Routes: The Pretenders
Guildford Civic Hall: Eddie & The Hot Rods/The Members/The Magnets
Hford Cauldwell Hotel: Original East Side Stompers
Leeds (Veardon) The Peacock: Son Of A Blitch
Leicester De Montfort Hall: Graham Parker & The Rumour/The Sports
Liverpool The Crown: The Clerks
London Camden Brecknock: Urchin
London Camden Dingwalls: KHz/Girls School/Disturbance
London Camden Music Machine: U.K. Subs/Blitch
London Canning Town Bridge House: Warm Jets
London Clapham 101 Club: Thief
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: Soulyard/Geneva
London Fulham Golden Lion: Joe Brown
London Hammersmith Odeon: Journey/Pat Travers Band
London Islington Hope & Anchor: The Monos
London Kensington The Nashville: The Values/Pinpoint
London Marquee Club: The Movies
London New Cross Goldsmiths College: Nicky & The Dots
London Putney Half Moon: Noel Murphy Banned
London Putney Star & Garter: Penny Royal

NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE

Birmingham Digbeth Civic Hall: The Pop Group/Alternative TV/Manicured Noise
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: Brujo
Birmingham Marquee: Killer
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Speed Limit
Bishops Cleeve: The Magnets
Bishop's Cleeve: The Magnets
Blackburn King George's Hall: Ralph McTell
Brighton Richmond Hotel: Dirty Weekend
Bristol Colston Hall: Klaus Wunderlich
Cannock Star & Garter: Ocean Boulevard
Cardiff Great Western Hotel: Zipper
Coventry Locarno: Tom Robinson
Coventry Theatre: The Buzzcocks
Croydon Fairfield Hall: Roger Whittaker
Dartford Folk Club: Martin Carter & Graham Jones
Eastbourne (Norman's Bay) The Star: Shakedown
East Grinstead Clouds: Airport
Edinburgh Clouds: Stiff Little Fingers/The Freeze/The Mekons/15-18-17
Edinburgh Odeon: Motorhead/Girls School
Greenock Victorian Carriage: The Motels
Hemel Hempstead Scamps: Ready Free
Huddersfield Polytechnic: The Skids
Leeds Fan Club: Sound On Vision
Leicester De Montfort Hall: Journey/Pat Travers Band
London Camden Brecknock: Street Chorus
London Camden Dingwalls: Toyah
London Camden Music Machine: Punishment Of Luxury
London Canning Town Bridge House: Zeise Griffin
London Clapham 101 Club: The Fridges
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: Tot & The Girls in Room 419/Shocking Stockings
London Fulham Golden Lion: Too Much
London Islington Hope & Anchor: Pinpoint
London Kensington The Nashville: Shrink/Bobby Henry
London Marquee Club: The Leyton Buzzards
London Mauniberry's: Freddy & The Square Pegs
London Putney Half Moon: Le Chelle
London Soho Pizza Express: Eddie Thompson Quartet
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Scandal/The Tigers
London Waterloo National Theatre Foyer: Affix
London Wembley Conference Centre: The Hollies
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: Fashion/Vermilion
London Woolwich Tramshed: Skin Deep
London W.C.1 Conway Hall: The Cues
Manchester Apollo Theatre: Bally Connolly
Manchester Band On The Wall: I.Q. Zero/Fast Cars/Staff 9
Newcastle City Hall: David Essex
Northallerton Target Club: The Ruts
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: Cuffs
Oxford New Theatre: Nana Mouskouri
Plymouth Fiesta Suite: The Pretenders
Pools Arts Centre: Max Boyce/Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators
Plymouth Locarno: Eddie & The Hot Rods/The Members/The Magnets
Radhill Nake Drive Centre: John Thomas
Stockton Fiesta Club: The Dooleys
Swindon Brunel Rooms: After The Fire
Walsall Dirty Duck: The Amazing Dark Horse
Wrexham North-East Institute of Wales: Leargo

Wednesday

Aylesbury Friars: The Buzzcocks
Belfast The Pound: Patric Fitzgerald
Birmingham Barrel Organ: Brujo
Birmingham Odeon: Journey/Pat Travers Band

Tuesday

Belfast White Hall: Eton John
Birmingham Barbarella's: Neon Hearts

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ON THE TOWN

George Thorogood And The Destroyers Albert Collins Lew Lewis Reformer

Electric Ballroom, Camden Town

Friday's gig nearly wasn't — see *T-zers* — but went ahead minus bar facilities. Fortunately a humane pass-out system permitted a steady flow of Pils and light ale, the minimum requirement for an evening of quintessential drinking music.

Aided by a combative guitar trio, Lew Lewis is currently shedding the stigma of past untidiness with a series of super-pro pub gigs throughout the capital. Ace harp and unquestionable spirit outweigh any vocal limitations, while 'Lucky Seven' and bassist Johnny Squirrel's excellent 'Night Talk' are the standout originals.

Which is a long way of saying I missed them on the night — circa, beyond my control, honest. Don't let it happen to you.

Black artist plus British pick-up band usually equals rip-off, but Albert Collins used those guys last year, barring Lou Martin (keyboards). If Sinceros drummer Bobbi Irwin and veterans Martin Stone (guitar) and Paul Riley (bass) don't set the skies alight, they never allow the simple grooves to drag.

Though adding an occasional crackiness to his clean, BB-like tone, Collins never really establishes a sound of his own, while his voice is agreeable rather than stirring.

Bearded and cuddly, the resemblance to a black Rolf Harris is heightened by a severe case of BB's syndrome, a.k.a. The Blues As Showbiz — 'Nice of you to have me', farewell peace signs etc. But, fuelled mainly by Martin's organ surges, it's a while before he puts a foot wrong, excelling on the strutting, orthodox 'Talking Woman Blues'.

Preferring to back up some tedious innuendo with face-pulling and nudge-nudge gestures, Collins ditches his axe for the first part of 'Conversation With Collins' — you've seen my Rolf Harris, here's my Benny Hill. A mildly amusing talking guitar sequence hardly compensates.

'Frosty', one of the man's many sub-zero titles, starts promisingly with well-controlled effects then degenerates into total hokum. Soloing from the audience probably works a dream in the clubs, but an endless excursion of minimal musical interest palls even quicker when you can't see the perpetrator.

You want craftsmanship and flash? You want barnstorming excitement overlaid with delicacy and control? You want Thorogood. Believe everything you've read — most of it, anyway.

The records are wonderful, but this was better. Live, the bass and drums lose their ham-fistedness, bringing the leader's astonishing guitar into even sharper focus. George Thorogood's knack — shared with Dave Edmunds — is to let other people's songs and styles speak for themselves, while his own character seeps through.

There's no attempt to be George Lee Hooker on 'One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer' for instance, yet he can add a throwaway line like



GEORGE THOROGOOD. Pic: DENNIS O REGAN. Inset pic by DAVID CORIO.



TINA TURNER. Pic: CHRIS HORLER.

TWO KINDS OF ECSTASY

'There's nobody but me and Albert Collins left in the bar' without diluting the song's effect. At other times he hogs the shadows like somebody's sideman, wandering intently stage left or towards Jeff Simon's drums.

The snakeskin jacket soon comes off: 'We got John Lee Hooker, Johnny Cash, Bo Diddley — who've we left out?' The Berry into rings out like it was conceived that minute: give this man anything from the rock 'n roll canon and he'll add something of his own to it. What makes George Thorogood such a magnificent, unacknowledged rocker is his assimilation of so much that went before.

After years of bludgeoning by the likes of Jeremy Spencer, the ghost of Elmore can again walk tall. On 'The Sky Is Crying', Thorogood's slide contrives to be fiery, precise and languid at the same time — sure, he could get by on straight boogie, but

then this isn't Alvin Lee.

Forget the cloying folksiness of the 'Move It On Over' sleeve notes — you don't swap the Innocence of the blues bars for the Experience of supercut status without the ground rules shifting. Come the '80's, the pressure to redefine as well as celebrate will grow. But in March '79, George Thorogood's music has a liberating quality that transcends mere revivalism. Collective ecstasy is no more than he deserves.

Harry George

Tina Turner

Hammersmith Odeon

"A boiling, foaming cauldron of rough, sophisticated sexuality," gushes the souvenir programme.

That's pitching it a little high, but the lady's vocals alone still pack enough raunch and soul to make your knees melt, your teeth tango, and

your string vest run up your back like a window blind.

The whole brazen seductive strut is a tag she'll never lose, even when it becomes totally inapplicable. Right from the second she snakes on stage, embraces the mike stand, and breathes 'Are you ready for me?' (hoots, wails, rampant shrieks). 'Cos I'm ready for YOU!', on both sides it's an accepted charade.

The Tina Turner Revue spells excess in every detail — two hours of high tension disco-boogie and R'n'B, exhaustively choreographed, subtly paced, affectionately delivered, and so engaging that the audience need the 20 minute interval about as much as she does.

She's backed by a smaller, less flamboyant band than last year (piano, keyboards, guitar, drums and the supreme Billy Haynes with funky bassline and Inner Circle waistline), together with two pairs of dancers who complement Tina's own

featsome bump 'n' grind with some deliciously loose routines and a sharp line in form-hugging catsuits.

Behind this semi-slick Vegas sheen, the feel is still far from automated. Those unbelievably gripping, gravelly vocals level out Jack Good's uneven song package into an absorbing and truly spontaneous show which at times includes a few brave readings of some appallingly bland material.

"There's crooners, there's croakers, and there's jokers," comes the husky intro to the first half. "Ah don't consider mah-self a crooner, and Ah'm definitely not a joker... for the next few minutes Ah'm gonna croak for ya."

And croak she does, through the slinky, persuasive 'Crazy Cajun Cakewalk Band,' the inevitable 'River Deep, Mountain High' and 'Nutbush City Limits' — both dynamic and scored with faintly ludicrous Tiller Girls workouts — and the true grit of

'Life In The Fast Lane.' Her control is immaculate, taking it right down for 'I've Been Loving You Too Long,' holding those long, sensual notes, those seething pauses, and then hauling back with the likes of 'Don't Leave Me This Way'.

For the second half she stalks out, to single bass notes, in a red satin two-piece plus feather boa, for a simmering version of 'Fever.' Then recklessly stripping off this garb, she breaks into 'Disco Inferno' clad in only a drastic black-bodice that doesn't leave a lot to the imagination.

Some mighty turgid tunes follow, notable offenders being that lumpy disco hit 'Every One's A Winner' and the soggy sentimentality of 'Sometimes When We Touch'.

From then on, with yet another costume change (a pink spray-on chorus line outfit, fashion fans), it all just flows, throwing together 'Proud Mary' and Chic's 'Freak Out,' and with encores airing a fair selection of Old Stones, 'Gypsy Acid Queen,' and the new, and eminently powerful 'Hollywood Nights On The Hollywood Hills'.

Sheer magic.

Mark Ellen

Bill Haley

Rainbow Theatre, London

Edwardians from Enfield to Egham, Greasers from Grove Park to Greenford, Bikers from Balham to Borehamwood, their assorted parents, offspring and weaponry have crammed en masse to acknowledge tonight's ongoing blast from the past.

I arrived in time to catch the tail end of 'The Wild Angels' set. Appearance-wise they live up to their name. They stormed through 'Roll Over Beethoven' / 'Johnny B. Goode' in solid (as in BSA or Royal Enfield) fashion.

Their brightest star is a boogie pianist who tickled the ivories in 12 yoga positions, deftly removing sock and boot in the middle of 'Lucille' to get this toes into the act.

Enter Bill & Co amid

Tru-gelled tumult. Without wishing to diminish their status, popularity, dedication, or their sheer moxie for keeping a roadshow alive when they could be collecting telegrams from the Queen, I feel that The Comets were never the hottest combo in Rockermans.

As a vocalist, Bill was generally regarded as a benign curiosity, with a flat C&W style voice, fronting a team of live hep unicorns.

Tonight Bill was accompanied by two original (almost) Comets, Ray Parsons on guitar and, surprisingly, most of the lead vocals, and Jim Liback, the bionic bassman, who played electric for most of the set but stole the show with some dandy duets with the Big Box.

Most of the musical muscle was provided by younger sidemen — Joey Tilley and Pete Spencer playing workmanlike but occasionally dazzling guitars; Jeff Driscoll, who harked a mean sax, and Steve Gray who thrashed a meaner drumkit.

It was a short set — they rocked around 50 minutes of the clock, chugging through a satisfying gamut of raunchy perennials — 'See You Later Alligator', 'Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On', 'Shake Rattle & Roll', etc., plus a wonderfully sleazy rockabilly / tango hybrid.

And so the legend continueth. At times the performance had that Barnum & Bailey big show shuffle flavour but overall, it was highly enjoyable lightweight boogie.

Rick Joseph

Alive, young and confusing

The Pop Group

St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden

The Pop Group spark confusion, produce excitement and create powerful dancing shadows that are difficult to pin down and hard to confront. They play out ideas in sharp and constant streams, perhaps too many ideas in too short a space. Perhaps they should employ more self-control, more discipline. (Perhaps I just want to make things easy for myself.)

The Pop Group are young,

enthusiastic, full of notions and motives, but I would hesitate to call them a rock 'n' roll band. They embody the ideals — excitement, youth, power, hysteria, fun, change — but refuse to conform to the musical ethos.

Perhaps they are a rock 'n' roll band. Their impulsive tribal mannerisms make compulsive viewing. Their wild, jumping, rhythmic music is for moving bodies and mobilising imaginations. They toss rhythms around like confetti.

To make an 'intellectual' issue of their music would be unfair and pointless: The Pop Group are not elitist. Their music draws freely on many sources: rock 'n' roll, jazz, soul, music to experience, a celebration of being alive and young (and confused).

They are provocative, arrogant and dramatic.

Their music is certain to produce a reaction, and whether that reaction is negative — alienation, distrust, anger, confusion — or positive — enthusiasm,

wonder, constructive thought, dancing — is largely immaterial. They are not a soft option, but they do pose an interesting question: I hope they don't claim to have the answer.

The Pop Group are very special. They make you feel that there is hope, make you want to talk about contemporary music: rock 'n' roll. The Pop Group are not the whole answer, but they are a vital part of the picture. See them.

John Hamblett

Lene Lovich

Lyrium

Sorry, missed The Yachts, but caught the last 20 minutes of The Squeeze. A year ago The Squeeze were a threatful gaggle of Deptford street-heavy bar-room lizards. Now freshly returned from an American sojourn, they appear to have gained a quota of technology and polish at the expense of their original growling menace.

From my vantage point at the back of the auditorium, they sounded like a vigorous mainstream rock band. But from a distance of 300 feet without a telescope I cannot fairly assess whether they still squeeze or have squeezed.

I risked my rib-cage and ruined my new shoes in the battle to get within grinning distance of Lene Lovich. Over the past few weeks this dame has had more in-depth press coverage than most musicians get in their entire career. Which is not to say she is not *Fraught With Fabness*.

For those untutored in things Lovich (people who haven't read recent rock scamsheets, don't eat T.V., or drink radio), here's a brief lowdown of on the lady in question as she appeared tonight — Gorgon-wrapped in a cumulus of vermillion lace, an exploded black mantilla, and 500 KW of plated orange hair.

Graced with an ear-boggling voice that ranged from icy Dietrichian Lieder-Vamp to Moog-blip soprano, she twisted her larynx round a repertoire of very catchy, melodic bizzareries, with all the panache of a cheerleader at a medieval Bulls-Blood Bacchanalia-Fest.

You get the picture? And a word about the band? As it has recently been mooted that Lene's unique talent has yet to find a compatible crew of back-up musicians, it only remains for me to give my tenpenny for Don Snow (keyboards), Ron Francois (bass), Bobby Irwin (drums), aka The Sinceros, plus Lene's stablemate Les Chappel on guitar, who between them supplied the dynamics and musical goulash with understated zest and stylishness.

Lovich & Co. have frequently been likened to Bowie, Costello, and Patti Smith, although any comparison ends with the co-incidental similarity of some of their respective songs, and on this score their set even reminded me of Sparks (laugh!) in their more manic moments.

Lene's crash-landing into the lime-light owes as much to Cliff's uncanny penchant for launching the right face at the right time as it does to her own enigmatic wizardry; and judging from tonight's sardine-packed 3000-strong turn-out it would be hard to



LENE LOVICH: anyone for a pint of bull's blood? Pic: DAVID CORIO.

A Triumph For Orange Hair

dony that she has struck a major chord in the public imagination.

Notwithstanding the dictates of fashion, the perils of publicity overkill, and whether she can get her saxophone serviced in time, Lene Lovich stands in good stead to become this century's answer to Joan of Arc.

Rick Joseph

Martha Reeves

Music Machine

Many Motown artists who surfaced in the '60s to proffer plenty of talent and good songs now seem fated to sink into a maelstrom of cabaret,

emerging cleansed and purified, spouting Las Vegas patter, Disco and MOR Soul.

In other words, whether fire and spirit they once possessed is wrung out of them, they are programmed, cellophane wrapped and re-presented to a brand new audience of mass consumerism.

Should Martha Reeves have followed a different path?

Well, The Vandellas have changed a little over the years: Patricia Mitchell and Harry Booker (recruited for her forthcoming album) serving the spot once occupied by Rosalind Ashford and Betty Kelly, and Martha herself has been

understandably affected by her proximity to The Greatest Bland-Out On Earth, but... The Music Machine? I ask you, what a place for a respectable lady to make a return.

Honky provided her with musical backing and indeed the first set of the evening, during which I distinctly remember having to be woken up — an ill omen. The soft soul shuffle and disco backing of the first two numbers 'Free Again' and 'So Many Memories' followed by her breathless cabaret that prepared me for the worst, but then came 'Nowhere To Run', and the heat was on.

The crowd responded immediately, moving onto the

dance floor until every space was filled with jostling, jiving kids having a real good time. Martha, in turn seemed to warm to the reaction, soaking it up and giving it back, so that every number took her farther away from the superficial trappings of her recent past and closer to the source of her original inspiration.

The balance of material was perfectly weighed, classic singles interspersed with new material and absolutely none of those medleys of truncated hit songs that tear the heart with fear and loathing.

Her new songs are more exotic than the old ones, bearing traces of jazz influence which worked best on 'Dedicated To Be Your Woman' and 'Special To Me', from the latest album, and the band's raison d'être was clearly focused: tight, clever and unobtrusive, it provided the perfect setting for the vulnerable jewel of her voice.

Tall and willowy Martha's spare frame matched her voice; at times so wounded it hurt, at others, desperately powerful. 'Heatwave' preceded 'Jimmy Mack' and she closed the show with 'Dancing In The Street' and 'Forget Me Not Boy'. High times.

It wasn't perfect. There were times when new material let her down and she was constantly threatened by the all-pervading presence of MOR production. But her confidence grew from the audience and that was enough for the magic to shed its cobwebs and tumble through the crowd.

A Soul Sister has returned to us. There are few of them left. Keep her precious, hold her dear. The Lady's not for spinning.

Neil Norman

The Fall

Warrington

Some people think The Fall are the country's most enigmatic band. They're wrong, but it's certainly fair to say that The Fall save their best shots for the most unprestigious occasions.

This was another. In reality, they're merely universally misunderstood. While every week artistic (sic) bands come along, promising to set rock n' roll on its head and saying, well, what? — you tell me — The Fall have retained their individual minimal but orthodox formula.

Personnel have come and gone, but other than a vast improvement in technical fluency the only real change since the early days has lain with the increasingly abstract development of Mark Smith's lyrics: he's turned away from merely bitterly reflecting upon the random craziness of industrial life to explore the laughing madcap which exists hidden within us all.

Since The Fall's current material echoes the light, crash, smash, crash ringing of 'It's a New Thing' in terms of catchy accessibility it was hardly surprising that the chemical paranoia which infects such as 'I Go To Pieces', 'A Figure Walks Behind You' and 'No Xmas For John Key' left most of the audience bewildered.

But by 'Rebellious Jukebox' the truth was obvious. It's the dance music of tomorrow today. A Donna Summer fantasy world turned outside in. A fast grey expanse of disco reality, with Mark Smith as DJ, the meaningless patter replaced by mocking self-analysis. That Mike Leigh, The Fall's new drummer, wore drapes and poked theatrical faces just added the final touch to the total absurdity.

I was stunned by the entire set, but 'Music Scene', as now reworked, was a classic piece of rock n' roll from any viewpoint. It's The Fall's 'The End', made up from a melody line copied off Dale Evan's 'Happy Trails', a standard

Motown bass riff and heavily overlaid with Martin Bramah's quite unique guitar improvisation. Every step was deftly drawn out to breaking point, Mark Smith assaulting the microphone with layer upon layer of bile and loathing, the tension only finally snapping when the set was over.

As a special favour to the audience, they disintegrated 'Bingomasters'. It was anticlimatic. For The Fall have discovered what comes when the Wagnerian Disco stops.

Two steps back.

Ian Wood

Steve Hillage

Rainbow

At last, the 1984 Show...

Reviewing a Steve Hillage concert is fraught with danger, especially in the light of recent acrimonious articles in these very pages. What to do? Do I maintain the apparently traditional anti-Hillage stance, thereby alienating the artist and his followers even further; or do I attempt to highlight the positive aspects of the gig and so invite the old

'anti-backlash' accusation? I'll try to be as honest as possible. Hillage freaks were enthusiastic, recent converts were disappointed and I hated it.

The music was uninspired and uninspiring, the new direction being great dollops of funk backbeat to bolster the chaotic song structures and Hillage's own immoderate playing. The band were an uncomfortable hybrid of modern styles: Andy Anderson and John McKenzie provided the black rhythm on drums and bass respectively, while Miquette Giraudy regularly injected synthesizer in a vain attempt at keeping the corpse on its feet. She also provided some effective little girl vocals and the only point of focal interest on the stage. Dave Stewart had a guitar strapped on but I couldn't be certain that he actually had it plugged in.

And then there was Steve who performed on electric and acoustic guitars and synthesizer and for want of a better word sang. Unfortunately, due to lack of vocal power and poor mixing, his singing sounded like tape hiss, rendering most of the words totally unintelligible. This was a blessing as any lyrics that did escape seemed utter nonsense.

Clad in white boiler-suit, he wandered around onstage occasionally getting worked up enough to nod his head. Visually, he was about as exciting as an underdone poached egg.

The music was mostly a kind of futuristic funk — Amon Duul meets Steve Wonder in a Battle of the Blands — and there was a taken new wave number which caused a minor stir in the front. The Dervishes' was pure Greasy Trucks/Hawkwind, a mono-dige beat under a series of pointless guitar solos; and 'Motivation' was based almost entirely on the riff from 'Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll'. The saddest point of the evening for me was their rendition of the ethereal 'Hurdy Gurdy Man' that made Vanilla Fudge sound like The Searchers.

There was one encore. There's no doubt that Steve Hillage can play the guitar but tonight there was no inspiration and no invention in his playing. Doubtless there will be those who'll say I missed the point or that I'm just being plain miserable. But there was simply nothing to enjoy.

If Steve Hillage continues to do battle in the musical arena he may keep the mob on his side; just don't expect me to give the thumbs up at the end. Not for this musical trumpery.

Neil Norman

Stranglers Dug By Diggers

The Stranglers

Sydney

It was midweek but there were still about 400 people crowded into a place the size of a MacDonald's burger bar and the support band had warmed them up to such an extent that the smoke-filled atmosphere was enough to send you to sleep.

We were waiting for The Stranglers, the only new wave act apart from Elvis Costello to achieve something like general acceptance here possessing a crossover appeal — the suburban coffee-table concession to punk rock.

Their albums tend to make the lower reaches of the Australian Top 20.

At midnight they walked onto the tiny stage — carrying a young girl bound head to

foot in masking tape. She was dumped in front of the drums as Hugh Cornwell boasted that back in the dressing room she'd said she wanted to get tied up with the band.

Ho Ho, what crazy guys. They started from strength with 'I Feel Like A Wog', and rammed home song after song at such a staggeringly brisk pace that they scarcely had time between numbers to knock back a tube of Sydney's finest.

High energy was the keynote, with Jet Black becoming more of a metronome than a drummer, barely altering the rapid thump-blat rhythm.

Jean-Jacques and Hugh Cornwell were, predictably, the visual mainstays — nasty, smouldering, morose and uncommunicative.

Dave Greenfield visually and temperamentally he

seemed out of place and Black lived up to his name by merging into the darkness behind his drum kit and remaining totally invisible.

They played it LOUD... a swirling maelstrom mixture of Burnel's thundering, agile bass lines, Black's rock solid time-keeping, Cornwall's scratchy rhythm and Greenfield's rinky-dink embellishments.

Much of the potency of The Stranglers' sounds seems derived from the tension between the awesome power of the rhythm section and the lack of same between the lead instruments — the effect akin to driving a speed-boat with the engines of the Queen Mary.

Hugh Cornwell was to me the musical weak-link — a surprisingly mediocre guitarist — but his snarled spat lyrics to 'Hanging

Around' and 'No More Heroes' made up for it.

The audience lapped up this full-throated assault. Crammed shoulder to shoulder, they were mostly casually-dressed kids from the suburbs with very few committed punks. There were a few fights, at one point causing Cornwall to empty a bucket of ice into the crowd to help us 'cool down', but generally a good time was had by all.

The Stranglers deserved their applause for delivering a fine blistering set, even if they didn't appear to be overly thrilled at being here. And full marks must go for playing to audiences in small venues like the Stagedoor Tavern, rather than opting for a single, convenient money-spinner at one of our really atrocious larger concert halls.

Stephen Dowse

MAGAZINE

TOUR -

APRIL

- 16 MALVERN WINTER GARDENS
- 17 BLACKBURN KING GEORGE'S HALL
- 18 SHEFFIELD TOP RANK
- 19 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
- 20 EDINBURGH CLOUDS
- 21 ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY
- 22 ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
- 23 MANCHESTER APOLLO
- 25 NEWCASTLE CITY HALL
- 27 BIRMINGHAM ODEON
- 28 SOUTHAMPTON GUILDHALL
- 29 OXFORD NEW THEATRE
- 30 BRISTOL COLSTON HALL

MAY

- 1 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD PAVILION
- 2 LONDON THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE
- 3 CANTERBURY ODEON
- 4 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
- 5 LEEDS UNIVERSITY
- 6 LIVERPOOL EMPIRE



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SEND STAMPED ADDRESS ENVELOPE FOR LEAFLET

NOT WITH massive frequency, but just often enough to lash the dying flickers of interest into a reluctant wakefulness, this task, of editing The Bag, can provide what Steve Hillage would doubtless call a peak experience.

Such occasions occur when what at first glance appears to be a Category A letter (Category A: opinions engendered by direct reaction to recent NME feature or a review) suddenly metamorphoses, without warning, into a priceless non sequitur of the rare Category X variety.

Perhaps significantly, it's the hapless Hillage himself who stimulated the upcoming example.

"Great," writes DICKY DOM, of Aberdare, Glamorganshire. "It's about time the likes of Hillage and Bad Company were able to counter (NME criticism) in a constructive manner."

So far so normal. Reader stands up for hero's rights. But what's this?

"Very often, especially when I'm disturbed, I find myself psychically aware. Whether you take Hillage's view that such awareness is due to brushes with the supernatural, or Lene Lovich's idea that vivid imagination and mental troubles stem from powerful psychological processes (so far as I'm concerned they may well be synonymous), the resultant phenomena can be both terrifying and exhilarating."

"I've been thrown out of bed at 3 am by forces unknown and unseen, and in case you're wondering I do not frequently use drugs."

A gem! And how tempting, under the normal Bag format, to advise the psychically aware Taff to switch off his electric blanket before nodding out. This time, however, we marvel only, and, still in hot pursuit of the Hillage Code, pass on to HUGH SYDER, of London NW3.

"Three cheers," he warbles — guess who for? — assessing the Last Hippie Left Alive thuswise:

"His New Age philosophy is basically an assortment of practical and realistic answers to the world's problems. These are followed (sic) by a large number of people. But as Steve so rightly says, his ideas should be made available to everyone." Should they? Why? But HS closes with an unanswerable point. "To me and a great deal more people, variety is bliss so why shouldn't Steve Hillage be allowed to get on with it without undue bullshit from NME?"

I think I go along with that.

KNOCKED-OUT-IN-THE-FIFTH-ROW, writing from England, makes the same point even more didactically. "I saw Steve Hillage in concert last week and he was bloody fantastic so stop knocking him you bastards."

But Hillage is by no means alone in enjoying resolute defence by NME readers. Take Van Morrison, for example. In last week's interview, Tony Stewart's attempts to portray the surly emigre as Morrison doubtless intended to be



portrayed receives little sympathy.

"Ten out of ten to Van Morrison for putting interviewers in their place," opines S. WATSON of North Shields. ROGER H. BRAWLEY, a man of Kent, uses this same angle to launch a full-blooded peroration of the old school.

"Since when," he barks, "have any of you lot been caring journalists? Clumsily exalting whoever you choose to be in vogue and then ignoring them like broken toys or used Durex (Van) knows exactly what you're up to and he doesn't give a cuff about your amateur sociology games. You were out of your depth, and revealed!" — wait for the timely apposition — "your shallow motives. Now we all know your incapability to grasp the real situation."

Here, clearly, we have a bitter man, doubtless an original thinker in his own way but nevertheless ineluctable under the broad definition supplied so conveniently at this point by MR BUMB of Whitley Bay, Yorkshire.

"Every week there are letters from people of all shades of opinion who seem to have only one thing in common: they don't like NME."

How true — but, say I, let it serve as a common rallying cry until something more positive presents itself.

Accept in lieu what is positively the best letter of the week, a minor masterpiece of accurate dialect, superb pacing, mordant bathos and subtle comment — alas unsigned, except by the cryptic I. SMOKE.

"Ey mon. When I in de land of Jah, smoke de 'erb an' I fear no evil y' knoh? But when I

come 'ere an' I smoke de 'erb, de poles mon come aroun' de carnar' (exquisite!) 'an he kick de shi out of I."

"Ow lang Whitey 'ad dis strange custom eh?" So many traps he could have fallen into, and not a foot wrong.

AS FOR one-liners, in their purest form perhaps the Bag letters, for at least four years these have been a crutch. It may have been noticed that these, too, tend to divide naturally: into two sorts. The Oblique Attack; and the Gormless Dismissal.

A good example of the latter is, "Dear Karin. Told you I would get a letter printed in NME. HAMSH, The House, The Street, The Town, The Date." Here generally speaking, a determined clique of gagsters have (quite rightly) sussed that charm as well as content is a criterion for inclusion.

All the same, "My mum just read your paper and thought it was very good, yours, E. D. Plus-Complex, Bishop's Stortford," just scrapes in, as does MA from Tooting's offering: "I haven't felt like reading much lately." (Very marginal, that one.)

Re-calibrate for Possible Hidden Statement and a few more possibilities present themselves. "What makes me sick," writes ARTHUR CRUMBUCKET (how often the pseudonym fails to match the letter), "is the way you print letters like this one which don't say anything except 'What makes me sick is the way ...'" and so on for the best part of a paragraph.

But one-liners often verge on the personal. "Will the Shaar abdicate or are we

doomed forever?" asks DEAN JOHNSON of Newcastle. "I thought a mensrual cycle was a kind of racing bike until I read Julie Burchill" (IVAN ORDINARE, no address). "If

Tony Parsons and Julie Burchill think rock needs an obituary why do they flog a dead horse by writing for the NME?" (PAUL SEERY, Lancaster). Ouch! Twenty with one blow! And rock stars get it, too. "Is 'Armed Forces' Rhyme without Reason?" questions IDI O'SINCRACY (on a fetching postcard). A MORON of Molesey, Surrey, aims his niggles elsewhere. "If Tom Robinson supports minority groups why is he so mean to the Nazis?" (I'll have to think about that. A VILLA FAN from Birmingham, opining that we at NME have the power to crush whom we like, begs us to do something about the continued existence of Birmingham City ("so that they go down for ever"). And, in a final sally from this zone of deadly fleabites, C. LUNT of Rotherham tells us, without shame, that he is a fan of "Zeppelin, Floyd, Sabbath, Hendrix, Rainbow, Hawkwind, ELP, AC/DC, Rush" (and a lot more besides — take my word for it) and I have nothing to say because you won't print it". But we did, C. Lunt, we did print it, which only goes to prove that you can even get in a plug on behalf of those toadstools — a real plug! — provided you seek out the necessary oblique approach and use it.

To me, one of the oddest things about The Bag is the exact similarity of tone of all foreign letters, whether they come from Scandinavia, Germany, France, anywhere. A xenophobe who based his view of foreign persons

exclusively on what might be deduced from the occasional Bag letter would end up with an image of somebody very clean but not perhaps very bright, with lank blond hair and innocent blue eyes, purveying with hideous reasonableness a kind of all-purpose centrist viewpoint. And there's another quality I can't instantly identify. In addition the combination of fluent but oddly unidiomatic English, devout views and general sincerity, leads one to the conclusion that Abroad is ideal Steve Hillage country.

This week's Foreigner — who confesses that he's "not a very trendy person", so fair enough — is GUNNAR KIHLESTEDT, from, yes, SWEDEN (which is his problem).

"My only intention is to make a number of solicitous stands," he declares. And isn't that true of us all? "Contradictions" (in NME) "are glancing from every other page." True, and why not?

But what does this mean? "I consider plenty of reviews to be suspensive on a defensive level, unaccountable self-protection. Tony Parsons" (sorry about this TP but you must admit your name does come up a lot, even in Skandaland apparently) "when reviewing a bunch of American 12" singles, adapted to a misinterpretation where you alienate yourself and ominously rate things as an without receiving it the same way ... I admire people exposing themselves, prepared to face the outcome." All right, all right, settle down — but does anybody out there understand this man? (Next week the Bag will print possible solutions Address letters to "Decode the Swede", GASBAG, etc.)

Anyway, at this point Gunnar realises his control is slipping slightly. "I don't want to get stuck in this mess" (At last! Coherence!) "so I refer to the singles reviews again. My comprehension is that you possess an attitude that is underrating and disregarding the effect ability of the singles division. My last grievance concerns this page." (i.e. Gasbag) "You're leaving a lot of letters without a decent reply, especially the eager ones."

That's the word I was trying to think of — "eager". Gunnar is "eager".

Finally, a heartfelt one: "Mike Patto was my hero and can I have a new one please?" (BISH of Portsmouth).

And a wry one: "I've just put more sugar in my coffee than Jesse Presley did in his entire life." (VARNERY DAIN III, London).

And to close, a viewpoint that, no matter how often it is said or written, can always count on a warm welcome at this particular hearthside: "Is it too early to say I hate the new series of Rock Follies?"

Yes, DISTURBED of Tunbridge Wells, it is, far too early; but say it anyway. The very formation of the words on paper hold, for me, an almost tantra-like quality. I never get tired of it. Never.

Next week the Bag returns to normal.

Composed by U. The Reader
Orchestrated by Antonio Tyler

Illustration: Raymundo Lowry

DOLL BY DOLL



remember



tough time touching you