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NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS NME

DENNIS BOVELL
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SHAM RIOT

Jimmy Page turns on the limpid Pre-Raphaelite gaze for the lens of PENNIE SMITH

Tory Rocker Speaks Out Against Redundancy Charges

THE JIMMY PAGE INTERVIEW

CHARTS

Week ending August 4, 1979

uk singles

This Week	Last Week			Highest position	Weeks in chart
1	(7)	I Don't Like Mondays	Boomtown Rats (Ensign)	2	1
2	(2)	Girls Talk	Dave Edmunds (Swan Song)	4	2
3	(2)	Silly Games	Janet Kay (Scope)	6	1
4	(1)	Are Friends Electric?	Tubeway Army (Beggars Banquet)	10	1
5	(5)	Good Times	Chic (Atlantic)	4	5
6	(9)	Wanted	Dooleys (GTO)	3	6
7	(17)	My Sharona	Knack (Capitol)	5	7
8	(8)	Breakfast In America	Supertramp (A&M)	4	8
9	(21)	Angel Eyes/Voulez Vous	Abba (Epic)	3	9
10	(14)	Can't Stand Losing You	Police (A&M)	3	10
11	(12)	Born To Be Alive	Patrick Hernandez (Gem/Aquarius)	4	11
12	(6)	Lady Lynda	Beach Boys (Caribou)	6	6
13	(4)	C'Mon Everybody	Sex Pistols (Virgin)	5	3
14	(16)	Bad Girls	Donna Summer (Casablanca)	4	14
15	(23)	We Don't Talk Anymore	Cliff Richard (EMI)	2	15
16	(—)	Beat The Clock	Sparks (Virgin)	1	16
17	(24)	If I Had You	Korgis (Rialto)	3	17
18	(—)	After The Love Has Gone	Earth Wind & Fire (CBS)	1	18
19	(26)	Chuck E's In Love	Rickie Lee Jones (Warner Bros)	3	19
20	(11)	Light My Fire/137 Disco Heaven	Amii Stewart (Atlantic/Hansa)	7	4
21	(—)	The Diary Of Horace Wimp	Electric Light Orchestra (Jet)	1	21
22	(18)	Maybe	Thom Pace (RSO)	5	12
23	(—)	Morning Dance	Spyro Gyra (Infinity)	1	23
24	(—)	Stay With Me Till Dawn	Judy Tzuke (Rocket)	1	24
25	(—)	Boogie Down	Real Thing (Pye)	1	25
26	(15)	Babylon Burning	Ruts (Virgin)	6	9
27	(30)	Duke Of Earl	Darts (Magnet)	2	27
28	(10)	Night Owl	Gerry Rafferty (United Artists)	8	5
29	(—)	Lady Writer	Dire Straits (Vertigo)	1	29
30	(—)	Here Comes The Summer	Undertones (Sire)	1	30

UP AND COMING: **Bang Bang** — B .A. Robertson (Asylum); **Ooh What A Life** — Gibson Brothers (Island); **Let's Go** — Cars (Elektra); **Reasons To Be Cheerful** — Ian Dury (Stiff); **Harmony In My Head** — Buzzcocks (UA); **The Boss** — Diana Ross (Motown).

uk albums

This Week	Last Week				
1	(3)	Best Disco Album In The World	Various (WEA)	4	1
2	(1)	Replicas	Tubeway Army (Beggars Banquet)	7	1
3	(2)	Discovery	Electric Light Orchestra (Jet)	9	1
4	(9)	Voulez Vous	Abba (Epic)	13	1
5	(7)	Communique	Dire Straits (Vertigo)	22	3
6	(5)	Parallel Lines	Blondie (Chrysalis)	42	1
7	(8)	I Am	Earth Wind & Fire (CBS)	8	2
8	(4)	Breakfast In America	Supertramp (A & M)	19	2
9	(6)	Bridges	John Williams (Lotus)	5	4
10	(17)	Outlandos D'Amour	Police (A & M)	12	9
11	(9)	Live Killers	Queen (EMI)	4	6
11	(11)	Night Owl	Gerry Rafferty (United Artists)	8	10
13	(19)	Rickie Lee Jones	Rickie Lee Jones (Warner Bros)	6	13
14	(18)	Lodger	David Bowie (RCA)	8	6
15	(12)	Last The Whole Night Through	James Last (Polydor)	15	3
16	(15)	Do It Yourself	Ian Dury & The Blockheads (Stiff)	11	2
17	(13)	Back To The Egg	Wings (Parlophone)	6	4
18	(14)	Rust Never Sleeps	Neil Young (Reprise)	3	14
19	(15)	Manilow Magic	Barry Manilow (Ariste)	20	2
20	(21)	The Best Of The Dooleys	(GTO)	3	20
21	(22)	Fate For Breakfast	Art Garfunkel (CBS)	13	3
22	(20)	Bad Girls	Donna Summer (Casablanca)	7	16
23	(25)	The Very Best Of Leo Sayer	(Chrysalis)	17	1
24	(24)	Manifesto	Roxy Music (Polydor)	19	4
25	(30)	The Great Rock N Roll Swindle	Sex Pistols (Virgin)	15	5
26	(27)	Morning Dance	Spyro Gyra (Infinity)	3	26
27	(26)	Candy O	Cars (Elektra)	3	24
28	(28)	Street Life	Crusaders (MCA)	2	28
29	(—)	20 Golden Greats	Beach Boys (Capitol)	1	29
30	(—)	Some Product	Sex Pistols (Virgin)	1	30

UP AND COMING: **Tribute To The Masters** — Steel Pulse (Island); **In The Skies** — Peter Green (Creole); **Dynasty** — Kiss (Casablanca); **Wild and Peaceful** — Teena Marie (Motown); **The Muppet Movie** — Original Soundtrack (CBS); **Songbird** — Ruby Winters (K-Tel).

us singles

This Week	Last Week		
1	(1)	Bad Girls	Donna Summer
2	(2)	Ring My Bell	Anita Ward
3	(3)	I Want You To Want Me	Cheap Trick
4	(8)	Good Times	Chic
5	(5)	Makin' It	David Naughton
6	(7)	Gold	John Stewart
7	(9)	When You're In Love With A Beautiful Woman	Dr Hook
8	(18)	My Sharona	The Knack
9	(11)	I Was Made For Lovin' You	Kiss
10	(15)	The Main Event/Fight	Barbra Streisand
11	(13)	You Can't Change That	Raydio
12	(10)	Boogie Wonderland	Earth Wind & Fire
13	(14)	Mama Can't Buy You Love	Elton John
14	(4)	We Are Family	Sister Sledge
15	(6)	Chuck E's In Love	Rickie Lee Jones
16	(27)	The Devil Went Down To Georgia	Charlie Daniels Band
17	(12)	Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now	McFadden & Whitehead
18	(25)	Lead Me On	Maxine Nightingale
19	(—)	After The Game Is Gone	Earth Wind & Fire
20	(28)	Sad Eyes	Robert John
21	(21)	Do It Or Die	Atlanta Rhythm Section
22	(23)	One Way Or Another	Blondie
23	(24)	Is She Really Going Out With Him	Joe Jackson
24	(16)	Hot Stuff	Donna Summer
25	(19)	Does Your Mother Know	Abba
26	(—)	Let's Go	The Cars
27	(—)	Suspicions	Eddie Rabbitt
28	(29)	People Of The South Wind	Kansas
29	(30)	Weekend	Wet Willie
30	(—)	Goodbye Stranger	Supertramp

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

us albums

This Week	Last Week		
1	(1)	Bad Girls	Donna Summer
2	(2)	Breakfast In America	Supertramp
3	(3)	Candy O	The Cars
4	(4)	Cheap Trick At The Budokan	
5	(10)	Get The Knack	The Knack
6	(6)	I Am	Earth Wind & Fire
7	(8)	Teddy	Teddy Pendergrass
8	(5)	Discovery	Electric Light Orchestra
9	(7)	Back To The Egg	Wings
10	(13)	The Kids Are Alright	Who
11	(11)	Communique	Dire Straits
12	(9)	Rickie Lee Jones	
13	(12)	Dynasty	Kiss
14	(17)	Million Mile Reflections	Charlie Daniels
15	(15)	The Gambler	Kenny Rogers
16	(18)	Live Killers	Queen
17	(16)	Desolation Angels	Bad Company
18	(14)	Where I Should Be	Peter Frampton
19	(21)	Bombs Away Dream Babies	John Stewart
20	(19)	Monolith	Kansas
21	(25)	Mingus	Joni Mitchell
22	(22)	Van Halen II	Van Halen
23	(34)	Rust Never Sleeps	Neil Young
24	(23)	Minute By Minute	The Doobie Brothers
25	(26)	One For The Road	Willie Nelson & Leon Russell
26	(27)	Underdog	Atlanta Rhythm Section
27	(28)	Streetlife	Crusaders
28	(—)	The Boss	Diana Ross
29	(—)	Reality ... What A Concept	Robin Williams
30	(20)	We Are Family	Sister Sledge

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

years 5 ago

Week ending July 30, 1974

1 Rock Your Baby — George McCrae (Jay Boy)
2 When Will I See You Again — Three Degrees (Philadelphia)
3 She — Charles Aznavour (Barclay)
4 Band On The Run — Wings (Apple)
5 Kissin' In The Back Row — Drifters (Bell)
6 Born With A Smile On My Face — Stephanie De Sykes / Rain (Bradley)
7 Amateur Hour — Sparks (Island)
8 You Make Me Feel Brand New — Stylistics (Avco)
9 Young Girl — Gary Puckett & The Union Gap (CBS)
10 Tonight — Rubettes (Polydor)

10

Week ending July 30, 1969

1 Honky Tonk Women — Rolling Stones (Decca)
2 Give Peace A Chance — Plastic Ono Band (Apple)
3 In The Ghetto — Elvis Presley (RCA)
4 Saved By The Bell — Robin Gibb (Polydor)
5 Something In The Air — Thunderclap Newman (Track)
6 Goodnight Midnight — Clodagh Rodgers (RCA)
7 Hello Susie — Amen Corner (Immediate)
8 That's The Way God Planned It — Billy Preston (Apple)
9 Baby Make It Soon — Marmalade (CBS)
10 It Mek — Desmond Dekker (Pyramid)

15

Week ending July 31, 1964

1 A Hard Day's Night — Beatles (Parlophone)
2 It's All Over Now — Rolling Stones (Decca)
3 Do Wah Diddy Diddy — Manfred Mann (HMV)
4 I Just Don't Know What To Do With Myself — Dusty Springfield (Philips)
5 Call Up The Groups — Barron Knights (Columbia)
6 On The Beach — Cliff Richard (Columbia)
7 House Of The Rising Sun — Animals (Columbia)
8 Tobacco Road — Nashville Teens (Decca)
9 Hold Me — P. J. Proby (Decca)
10 I Won't Forget You — Jim Reeves (RCA)

Ron and Russ tune in to the GPO's dial-a-tune service for three minutes of fun and games with a catchy new chart entry called 'Beat The Clock'. Dig that beat, Ron!

disco

* denotes 12"

+ denotes import

1 Looking For Love — Fat Larry's Band (Fantasy) * +
2 Feel the Real — David Bendiff (IGM) * +
3 Strategy — Archie Bell (Philadelphia) * +
4 Unchained Melody — Clem Curtis (RCA) *
5 Hands Down — Dan Hartman (Blue Sky) * +
6 Found A Cure ... Ashford & Simpson (Warner Brothers) * +
7 Betcha — Usofa (White Label) *
8 Sing A Happy Song — The O'Jays (Philadelphia) +
9 Sweet Lady — Chain Reaction (Jam) * +
10 Caribe — Turnblack (Island) *

Chart supplied by Quicksilver Soul Source, 36 Henway Street, London, W1.

reggae

1 Our Reggae Music — Brown Sugar (Studio 16)
2 Princess — Albions (K&K)
3 Born To Love You — Derek Arlan (Hawkeye)
4 Like You Girl — Al Campbell (JB)
5 Plastic Smile — Black Uhuro (D.Roy)
6 Barnapas Coffins — Lone Ranger (Hit)
7 Down Jam Down — Bim Sherman (Hit & Run)
8 If You Knew — Hortense Ellis (JB)
9 Goodbye Little Man — Sister Love (Cool Rockers)
10 Like A Fool — Cool Notes (Voyage)

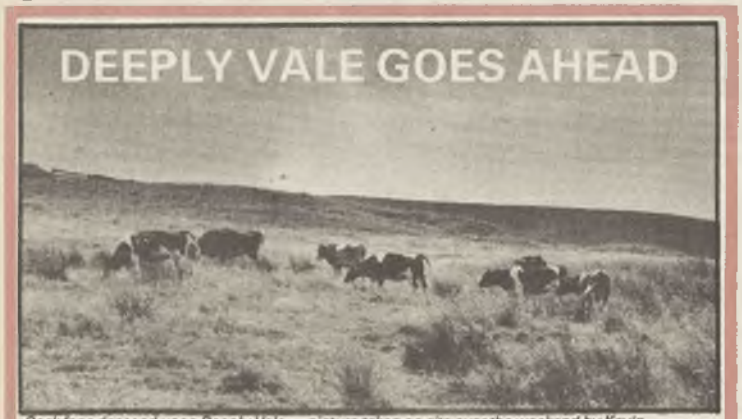
Chart supplied by Joe Gibbs Record City, Lewisham Way, SE1

NEWS

Chic, Al Green, Hagar, Loudon, Rickie Lee — AMERICAN INVASION DATES p.4/5

EDITED BY FRED DELLAR

DEEPLY VALE GOES AHEAD



Rock fans descend upon Deeply Vale — picture taken on site over the weekend by Kevin Cummins, who warns would-be fest-goers to take their Ordnance Survey maps. "I think the locals are 100% against it and are really unhelpful," he reported. "I couldn't find any squatters — this is the best I could do!"

FRIDAY PROVED a day of triumph for the organisers of the Deeply Vale People's Free Festival as the event was given the official go-ahead.

At one point it seemed that the Festival could be running into trouble as the land licensee Mr G. Neave threatened to apply for an injunction to prevent the organisers setting foot on the site. But the Festival committee immediately sought in turn to obtain an injunction against Mr Neave and the farmer who had grazing rights to the site. After a hearing at Manchester's High Court on Friday morning, the committee were able to read a solicitor's statement that: "As a result of an out-of-court negotiation between all the parties, the proceedings were resolved by consent orders of the court. As a result of the order made by the court today, the Deeply Vale Festival will go ahead as planned."

Festival organiser Cliff Jackson said: "On Thursday the police were trying to move us down the valley away from the site — but as soon as the result of the case was heard on Friday, everybody just moved in. It's a shame there's been so much trouble — there was really only one man objecting — all the other farmers in the district have been really helpful and we've really got a good vibe going."

This statement was in direct contrast to that made by Mr Neave before the court hearing, when he told *NME*: "All the local farmers are up in arms and fighting fit, and it looks as though blood will be spilled!"

Since the go-ahead, the Festival organisers have been inundated with calls from bands wishing to play at Deeply Vale and a second stage is now being set up in order to allow as many bands to play as possible. But there is no chance that any new bands will be allowed to perform on the main stage, where a huge number of acts, including Victor Brox, Here And Now, Spizz Energi, Misty, John Cooper Clarke, Keith Christmas and many others are scheduled to appear.

However, the organisers would welcome a call from any big name band willing to offer their services in aid of the Southall Children's Fund. Helpers willing to provide film shows or help with children's entertainments are also required — while local visitors are asked to donate as much wood as possible. All offers of help should be made to the organisers on 0706-847508.

● The Pop Group, who were due to play at Deeply Vale, have been forced to cancel this and all further gigs, following an accident involving bassist Simon Underwood, who badly injured three fingers on his left hand during a bout of horse-play with fellow band member Gareth Sagar.

After 'ZEP PLAY GIG SHOCK', it's ...

Zep LP surprise

— plus final Knebworth details

THE NEW Led Zeppelin album, the band's first studio recording since 'Presence' in April, 1976, is now scheduled for worldwide release on August 20.

Titled 'In Through The Out Door', the album was recorded at Abba's studio in Sweden and features the following tracks: 'In The Evening', 'South Bound Suarez', 'Fool In The Rain', 'Hot Dog', 'Carouselambra' and 'I'm Gonna Crawl'.

However, despite reports in other publications, Abba do *not* appear on the disc — "Not unless they crept in afterwards and added some overdubs on our tapes!" commented a Zep spokesman.

Meanwhile, promoter Frederick Bannister has booked The Commander Cody Band to make up the bill at the Led Zeppelin Knebworth gigs. Ronnie Wood and Keith Richard's New Barbarians are now playing on August 11 only, appearing just before Led Zeppelin's closing spot, but no further band is being added to the August 4 concert.

The final line-up for August 4 therefore is (in running order): Fairport Convention, Commander Cody, Southside Johnny And The Asbury Dukes, Todd Rundgren and Utopia, Led Zeppelin; while on August 11, Chas and Dave open, to be followed by Commander Cody, Southside Johnny, Todd Rundgren, New Barbarians and Led Zep.

The nearest station to Knebworth Park is Stevenage and a coach shuttle service has been arranged between the station and the Park. Visitors are advised not to alight at Knebworth. For motorists, Knebworth Park is situated directly off the A1 at the A602 Stevenage South intersection. Pedestrians should make for Stevenage and follow the signs to Knebworth Park.

The camp site will not be open before 10 am on Friday (August 3) and owing to the limited amount of space, those people arriving with vehicles before 9.30 am on Saturday will be liable to a £1.00 parking fee. Stevenage Borough Council have arranged a special overflow camping site accommodating 200 tents, plus a similar number of cars and caravans, this being positioned at Roaring Meg Park, off Broadhall Way, Stevenage. This site will be available from noon Friday to noon Sunday at both weekends.

Finally — a small number of on-the-day tickets will be available.

Strangled voices in the pulpit as The Stranglers revamp 'Ugly' (now known as 'Godly') for their new LP. Pic: Chris Gabrin.

DEATH AND MAYHEM — HEAVY METAL USA

TWO PEOPLE died and three others were shot as violence broke out at two major American rock shows last week.

When 1,000 fans failed to gain admittance to the Journey/Thin Lizzy concert at Miami's Jai Afai, one heavy metal freak attempted to crash the police barrier in a car, getting himself and two innocent bystanders shot in the attempt.

And a gig at Cleveland, Ohio, where Lizzy appeared on a fearsome heavy metal bill featuring Aerosmith, Ted Nugent, Journey, AC/DC and Scorpions, brought more mayhem. One fan was shot while another drowned in Lake Erie, reportedly trying to escape when 10,000 excess punters rioted outside the gig.

A spokesman for Leber-Krebs, the Nugent-Aerosmith management, denied however that any riot had taken place. He told NME: "It was just some racial incident — Cleveland is a city of racial tension."

The same source maintained that the kid who drowned was "high on drugs", adding: "Any sane person would've taken off their shoes — maybe he just thought the bottom was nice!"

The gig itself, he concluded, was "a calm, mellow affair."

With a bill like that, how could it be anything else?

MEANWHILE reports that Midge Ure was to join Thin Lizzy as a full time replacement for Gary Moore were denied by Ure himself when he phoned NME from the States on Monday.

"I'm just helping Lizzy out," he claimed, adding that he would be appearing on the band's Australian and Japanese tours.

So why isn't he staying on?

"It's really not my sort of music — in fact, I'm joining Ultravox on November 1. I was due to join them as guitarist and singer in September but they've agreed to wait until I've finished my dates with Lizzy."

Ure also revealed that Lynott and Co. were thinking of pulling out of the Reading Festival — "because we've only got a 50-minute set together — which is all we needed in the States, where we were playing support." A full two-hour set, which the band would be expected to play at Reading, was beyond the makeshift Lizzy's capabilities, he felt.

Ure, who has been a friend of Phil Lynott's for several years, co-wrote 'Do Anything You Wanna Do', Thin Lizzy's latest single.

"Lizzy may not play Reading" — Midge Ure

Stranglers Raven on...

THE STRANGLERS, who last week announced the release of 'Duchess', their first single in over a year, have now scheduled an album for mid-September.

Titled 'Raven', it's the band's first studio LP since 'Black And White', which was released at Easter, 1978. Recorded at Pathe Marconi Studios in Paris, 'Raven' was co-produced by the band and Alan Winstanley and contains such tracks as 'Meninblack', 'Shah Shah A Go Go' and 'Genetix'.

A British tour for The Stranglers is still being finalised though it is now believed that the opening concert will be in Ireland on October 1. And while the band will be appearing at The Who's Wembley gig on August 18, a planned appearance at the Bilsen Festival has been nixed by the Festival promoters when the news leaked out that their "special guests" were Jean Jacques Burnel and Co. It seems that the local council had only agreed to the event being staged as long as no new wave bands became involved.

Jean Jacques Burnel recently completed his production chores on an album by Japanese band Lizard, while Hugh Cornwell's solo album 'Nosferatu' is also complete, though release of this has been delayed until November, leaving the way clear for 'Raven'. Meanwhile, Lizard, who have decided to concentrate their efforts in Europe, due to the virtual monopoly held by British and American bands in Japan, play their first London dates at The Nashville (August 3), Global Village (6) and Music Machine (7).

U.S. FORCES PREPARE FOR INVASION STRIKE

"Which way to Glasgow, buddy?"

From left: Sammy Hagar, Rickie Lee Jones, Al Green.

SAMMY HAGAR TOUR

AMERICAN Heavy Metal star Sammy Hagar arrives in Britain in September to play his first solo dates here since splitting with Montrose, with whom he was lead singer.

Leading a band comprising Bill Church (original Montrose bassist), Gary Phil (guitar) and Chuck Ruff (former drummer with the Edgar Winter Group), Hagar opens at Newcastle Mayfair on September 13 and then plays Manchester Free Trade Hall (14), Birmingham Odeon (15) and Hammersmith Odeon (16). Tickets at Hammersmith, Birmingham and Manchester are set at £3.00, £2.50 and £2.00, while the Newcastle gig is a one price only affair with seats at £3.00. A favourite with heavy metallists through records like 'Red' and 'Bad Motor Scooter', Hagar has a new album, 'Street Machine' released by Capitol to tie-in with the tour.

CHIC GIGS

CHIC, WHO played a one-off gig at the Hammersmith Odeon in January, are likely to play three dates at the same venue during October, though full details have not yet been announced. The group, whose 'Good Times' single recently entered the *NME* Top 10, have a new album, 'Risque' out this week.

RICKIE LEE JONES TOUR

FOLLOWING the success of her debut album and the chart single 'Chuck E's In Love', American singer-songwriter Rickie Lee Jones is to play four major British concerts, promoted by Barry Dickens and Rod McSween for I.T.B.

Backed by her own band — Neil Larsen (keyboards), Buzzy Feiten (guitar), Reggie McBride (bass), Art Rodriquez (drums) and Lenny Castro (percussion), most of whom are featured on her album — Rickie Lee plays Edinburgh Odeon on August 29, Manchester Free Trade Hall (September 5), Birmingham Odeon (6) and London Dominion Theatre (9). Ticket prices for the London concert are £5.00, £4.00 and £3.00, while those for the other dates are set at £4.50, £3.75, £3.00 and £2.25.

Tickets for the London date will not go on sale for another two or three weeks. However, postal applications are being accepted and cheques should be made payable to Rank Leisure Services and addressed to the Dominion Theatre Box Office, Tottenham Court Road, London W1, enclosing SAE.

Rickie Lee Jones' Warner Brothers album has been on the U.S. charts for 17 weeks and is one of the fastest selling albums in the history of the company.

AL GREEN FOR VENUE

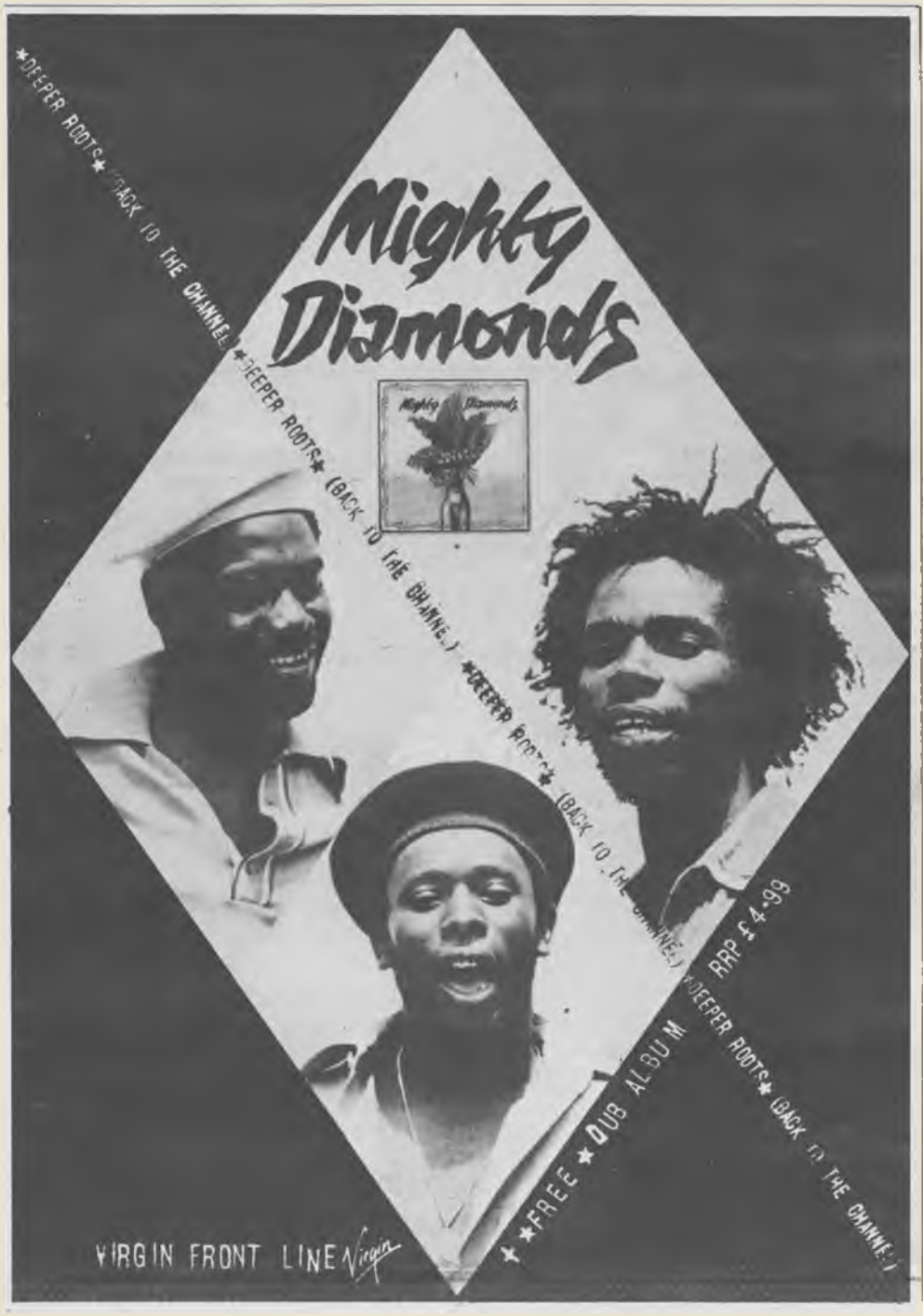
ON AUGUST 14 Al Green, creator of such hits as 'Let's Stay Together', 'Take Me To The River' and 'Tired Of Being Alone' commences a five-night stint at the London Venue. Green, whose last concert appearance in this country was over four years ago, will appear with a 13-piece American backing band. There will be one show nightly on August 14, 15, 16 and 19, while two shows will take place on Friday and Saturday (18 and 19). Tickets for the Al Green gigs will cost £4.50.

LOUDON LP, TOUR

'ALIVE ONE', an album which documents part of Loudon Wainwright's 1976 British tour, will be released on September 7 to tie-in with a 23-date visit by the singer-writer-humourist.

The album contains such material as 'Motel Blues', 'Suicide Song', 'Nocturnal Stumblebutt', 'Down Drinking At The Bar' and 'Schooldays' and was recorded at Birmingham Town Hall, London New Vic, Glasgow Apollo and Manchester Opera House, while more recent songs were added at a U.S. gig in October, 1978.

Wainwright's '79 tour opens at London's Theatre Royal on Sunday, September 9, and then plays the following venues: Oxford New Theatre (12), Manchester Free Trade Hall (13), Glasgow Apollo (14),



NEWS BRIEFS

PATRIK FITZGERALD has returned to performing acoustic sets and the band that supported him on his tour have broken up. Another tour is likely in the Autumn.

WILKO JOHNSON'S SOLID SENDERS play at the 'Rock In The Arena' gig in aid of the Save A Child's Life Campaign, to be held at Crawley Leisure Centre Arena, West Sussex on Saturday, August 18. Naturally it's a free gig for kids, though oldies but goodies will have to cough up £1.50 a time.

BLACK SLATE return from their tour of Scandinavia to play two London dates — The Marquee (August 8) and The Nashville (17) — before commencing a lengthy club tour.

HOT RODS' drummer Steve Nicholls was out of action last week after crushing three of his fingers in a door, just prior to the band's gig at Folkestone. Kevin Lamb, drummer with new band The States, proved a last minute dep.

JIMMY NORTON EXPLOSION, the band comprising Glen Matlock, Danny Kustow, Steve New and drummer Budgie, play tonight (Thursday 2), at High Wycombe Nag's Head, and tomorrow (3) at London Music Machine.

THE PIRANHAS, who are set to sign a long-term deal with a major label, play the following August dates — Leeds Cosmos (2), Manchester West Indian Centre (3), Bradford Queen's Hall (4), Birmingham Barbarella's (5), Ipswich Tracey's (7), Brighton Richmond (8), Scarborough Penthouse (9), Dudley JB (10) and London Marquee (11). The band's final single for the Attrix label will appear in September.

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS have a couple of gigs this weekend at Liverpool Eric's (Saturday) and London Hammersmith Palais (Sunday).

THE ADVERTS top the bill in a Year Of The Child benefit at Sheffield Top Rank on Sunday, August 19, also featuring local bands The Diks, Artery and The Negatives. It's promoted by Limited Edition and Future Earth Records and tickets are £1 (advance) and £1.30 (door).

ANGELIC UPSTARTS and The Monochrome Set will now support Adam And The Ants at London Strand Lyceum this Sunday (5). The two supporting acts previously billed, Protex and Toyah, have now withdrawn.

LOCAL OPERATOR, Cowboys International and Fingerprintz co-headline a Virgin Records bill at London Kensington Nashville on August 20 and 21. Operator also play London Camden Dingwalls (tonight, Thursday) and Manchester Factory (24).

COMMANDER CODY plays three gigs at London The Venue on August 10, 11 and 12, supported by singer/songwriter Lee Clayton.

THE B-52s, who played a Lyceum gig a few weeks ago, return to London this Saturday for an appearance at the Electric Ballroom. Support acts on the bill are Whirlwind and The Inmates. Tickets (£3.00) are available from Rock On and the usual ticket agencies.

VOYAGER have bought a 72ft boat, now moored in London St Katherine's Lock, in which they plan to embark on a tour of British coastal resorts.

Jim Walker

WALKER'S PIL POWER PACK

EX-PIL member Jim Walker has formed the Pack, a band comprising Walker (drums), Kirk Brandon (vocals), Simon Wenner (guitar) and Jonathan Wenner (bass). Signed to Rough Trade, the band have a single 'King Of Kings' readied for release. The Pack play a date at London's Porchester Hall on August 23.

Edinburgh Odeon (15), Newcastle City Hall (16), Derby Assembly Hall (18), Leicester De Montfort Hall (19), Birmingham Odeon (21), Coventry New Theatre (22), Sheffield City Hall (23), Portsmouth Guildhall (25), Bristol Colston Hall (26), Brighton Dome (29), Liverpool Empire Hall (October 1), Galway Leisure Centre (3), Cork Connallay (5), Dublin Stadium (6), Belfast Whitla Hall (7 and 8), Croydon Fairfield Hall (11) and London Palladium (14).

Loudon Wainwright

County counted out of E. Chairs

THE ELECTRIC Chairs have sacked vocalist Wayne County because, they say, "he is so wrapped up in his personal change, that he is not contributing creatively within the band." County is now said to be working with ex-manager Peter Crowley at Max's in New York, in order to earn money for further cosmetic surgery and completion of his/her sex change, while the Electric Chairs are at Berry Street Studios cutting a new album, which David Cunningham of Flying Lizards is producing.

Numan's Army gig for whales

GARY Numan's concert at Hammersmith Odeon on September 28 has proved an immediate sell-out, and the Tubeway Army leader has set a second concert at the same venue for September 27, the tickets remaining at the same prices, with ceiling of £3.75. All the proceeds from this second concert will be donated to the Save The Whales fund, and Numan's management, promoter and agency have promised to waive their fees as well.

UNDERTONES AT MORRISON GIG

THE BIG open-air concert on Saturday, September 1, at Edinburgh's 30,000 seater Royal Highland Showground, assumed a truly Irish flavour this week, as The Undertones and The Chieftains joined Van Morrison on the bill. The promoters, now expecting an influx of visitors from across the Irish Sea stated:

"We have arranged for tickets to be obtainable from Harrison's in Belfast and from Pat Egan's in Dublin and Cork, while special trains and buses are being laid on for the benefit of Irish visitors. Also, all children under the age of 10 will be allowed in free of charge if accompanied by an adult — we want to make this into a real family festival and not just another rock concert."

A special 'hot line' has been set on 031-226-3645 to deal with any queries regarding camping or trailer parking, while a special bus service from the centre of Edinburgh has been organised. Tickets for the Festival (£5 advance and £6.75 on the day) can now be obtained directly from various shops in Scotland, Pink Panther's (Carlisle), Virgin Superstore (Newcastle), plus such London outlets as the London Ticket Machine, London Theatre Bookings and the Virgin Megastore in Oxford Street. Postal applications should be made to Edinburgh Rock Festival Box Office, P.O. Box 103, Head Post Office, Edinburgh (SAE and *postal orders* only) or Edinburgh Festival Fringe Box Office, 170 High Street, Edinburgh 1 (SAE and *postal orders or cheque*). All postal orders and cheques should be crossed and made payable to "Regular Music Festivals". The Festival gates open at 12.00 am, the show getting underway at 1.00 pm.

Secret Affair (l–r): Ian Page, Dave Cairns, Dennis Smith, Seb Shelton. Pic: Mike Laye.

Secret Affair sign on

ARISTA have signed London Mod band Secret Affair to a deal which enables them to have their records released on their own I Spy label. Their first single under the deal, titled 'Time For Action' will be in the shops on August 17. The band's forthcoming 'March Of The Mods' tour with Purple Hearts commences at Scarborough Penthouse on August 10 and ends at Liverpool Eric's on September 1. Secret Affair are due to appear in a film called 'Steppin' Out', which documents the rise of the current Mod scene.

Fearsome Feargal Undertone

Norwich rock

ONE OF the biggest one-day rock'n'roll festivals to be held in this country takes place at Norwich, St Andrews Hall this Saturday (4). Six of Britain's best-known rock'n'roll bands — Matchbox, Crazy Cavan, Flying Saucers, Yakety Yak, Gina 'N' The Rockin' Rebels and Wild Angels — are taking part, along with local band The Confederates.

Quadrophenia brought forward

THE LONDON opening of *Quadrophenia*, the film based on The Who's album of that title, has been brought forward to August 15. The film, which is to be screened at The Plaza, Lower Regent Street, was originally scheduled to open in early September but, according to its distributors, the demand was such that the date has to be hastily revised. It goes on general release during September.

Late Show's last show?

DECCA revival band The Late Show have split — just after their fifth single was released. Titled 'Peppermint Twist', it's claimed to be just the son of thing that has caused the rift. Bill Clift, the group's singer-guitarist, told *NME* "It's all over because Decca wasn't giving us enough money and they also wanted us to do non-original material. They just wanted us to be a family band, which was something we didn't want. All of us are very disappointed."

The five-piece band had been in existence for around two years and signed to Decca in March, 1978. Now Clift, who writes most of the band's material, is rumoured to be starting a solo career.

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PASH MUSIC STORES, 5 ELGIN CRESCENT, LONDON W11

The originals and still the best: The Jam, who are currently recording an album at Virgin's Town House Studio in West London and have a single 'When You're Young' / 'Smithers-Jones' out on Polydor on August 17. The album is likely to appear in October coinciding with a tour by Weller & Co.

RECORD NEWS

● Chiswick Records have launched Big Beat, a new specialist label, as a companion to their Ace Records label Big Beat will concentrate on '60s recordings and other material of a specialist nature, leaving Ace to concentrate on '50s reissues. The label's first album release is set for late August and is by **Joe 'King' Carrasco and El Molino**, a Tex-Mex band from San Antonio that features ex-Doug Sahm sideman Augie Meyers on keyboards.

● Ice Records, who recently signed a licensing deal with WEA, release a new **Eddy Grant** single, 'Walking On Sunshine', on August 17. An album of the same title, containing a full length version of the hit single 'Living On The Front Line' is out on September 7.

● Vocalist/Actress **Toyah**, who appeared in the punk movie *Jubilee*, has what is termed 'an alternative play' record released this Friday (3). Titled 'Sheep Farming In Barnet' this Safari Records release is a 7" disc that plays at 33⅓ rpm, runs for over 20 minutes and is priced at £1.50. The disc contains six tracks and comes in a thick board, fully laminated, full colour picture sleeve. Toyah appears with her band at London Music Machine on August 17 and has an on-screen role in the forthcoming *Quadrophenia*.

● **The Damned**, just back from a month in the States, have had to delay recording sessions for their new album because they are "plagued with foreign diseases". This means the LP won't now be coming out until October, though hopefully a new single will be issued in September. The band begin a UK tour in mid-October.

● **John Porter's Clay** have finally released their four-track EP 'Speeding On' on the Nighthawk Records label in a picture sleeve and with an inverted title (it has to be held to a mirror to be read). It's been delayed by personnel changes in the band, who are still seeking a slide guitarist (enquiries to Convoy Island 68153).

● Akron-based band **The Human Switchboard** have a single on their own Square Records label, titled 'Prime Of My Life' now available through the usual import shops.

● **John Cougar's** new album, simply titled 'John Cougar', is being released by Riva on August 3. The album was recorded at Miami's Criteria Studios and was produced by Ron and Howard Albert. The album contains the track 'Miami' which has just been released as a single.

● Buck In Ham Palace', a track from **Peter Tosh's** 'Mystic Man' album, is being released as a single on the Rolling Stones label on August 2. There will be both 12" and 7" editions, each with a different mix.

● Self-styled new wave pop band **Roaring '80s** have a triple A-side single — 'Apparently'/'Cute In A Suit'/'Normal' readied for release by R.E.E.L. Records in late August or early September.

● A 12" single, 'Micro-chips and Fish'/'The Story So Far', by **Red Crayola** is being issued by Red Records in mid-August. The musicians featured on the disc include Mayo Thompson, Gina Birch, Laura Logic, Epic Soundtracks, Angus Gye and George Oban.

● **Chas and Dave** release a new album on August 3 and a follow-up single on August 10. The album is called 'Don't Give A Monkey's' and contains a number of studio items plus tracks recorded live in front of an invited audience at EMI's Abbey Road Studio. Among the guest artists appearing at the Abbey Road session were Eric Clapton, Albert Lee and Dave Edmunds. The single, 'The Sideboard Song', is a track from the album and is being released in a special coloured bag. Included in the first batch of albums will be a free EP comprising four rock'n'roll songs not included on the album but recorded during the live session at Abbey Road.

● **Davey Payne**, hornman with Ian Dury's Blockheads, has a solo single, 'Saxophone Man'/'A Foggy Day In London Town' out on August 3.

● **Slick**, who recently charted with 'Space Bass', have a follow-up, 'Sexy Cream' available on Fantasy Records on August 24. The song has been banned by many radio stations in the States, though Fantasy plan to allay programmers' fears by sending female models round to radio stations with small tubes of lotion labelled 'Sexy Cream'. Nat Freedland, artists relations man at Fantasy, claimed that he was surprised at the record's rejection, since more explicit songs such as Musique's 'Push Push In The Bush' had received considerable airings.

OUR PRICE TOP 60

LONDON'S ORIGINAL ALBUM CHART

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	R.R.P.	OUR PRICE
1	2	TUBEWAY ARMY—REPLICAS	5.00	3.75
2	4	SUPERTRAMP—BREAKFAST CUKMERICA	4.78	3.53
3	1	NEIL YOUNG—RUST NEVER SLEEPS	5.00	3.75
4	7	THE BEST DISCO ALBUM IN THE WORLD	5.00	4.20
5	21	ABBA	5.00	3.75
6	8	EARTH, WIND AND FIRE—I AM	5.29	4.04
7	6	E L O—DISCOVERY	5.59	4.24
8	12	POLICE—OUTLANDOS D'AMOUR	4.78	3.53
9	3	DIRE STRAITS—COMMUNIQUE	5.30	4.05
10	5	JONI MITCHELL—MINGUS	5.00	3.75
11	14	CRUSADERS—STREET LIFE	4.69	3.44
12	18	DAVE EDMUNDS—REPEAT WHEN NECESSARY	5.00	3.75
13	9	BLONDIE—PARALLEL LINES	4.78	3.53
14	15	DONNA SUMMER—BAD GIRLS	6.50	4.75
15	20	THE WHO—THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT	9.04	6.54
16	17	SPYRO-GYRA—MORNING DANCE	4.69	3.44
17	10	QUEEN—LIVE KILLERS	8.45	6.45
18	11	WINGS—BACK TO THE EGG	5.49	4.24
19	35	DIANA ROSS—THE BOSS	5.29	4.04
20	16	RICKI LEE JONES	5.00	3.75
21	24	ABBA—VOULEZ VOUS	5.29	4.04
22	23	SKY	5.25	4.00
23	22	BOB DYLAN—AT BUDOKAN	7.99	5.99
24	27	NILS LOFGREN—NILS	4.78	3.53
25	19	THE KNACK—GET THE KNACK	5.29	4.04
26	28	ROBERT PALMER—SECRETS	5.00	3.75
27	26	DAVID BOWIE—LODGER	5.49	4.24
28	25	AC/DC—HIGHWAY TO HELL	5.00	3.75
		JUDY TZUKE—WELCOME TO THE CRUISE	4.65	3.40
30				3.53

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	R.R.P.	OUR PRICE
31	NEW	COMMODORES—MIDNIGHT MAGIC	5.69	4.44
32	31	B.B KING—TAKE IT HOME	4.69	3.44
33	NEW	GARY BROOKER—NO MORE FEAR OF FLYING	4.46	3.21
34	34	SQUEEZE—COOL FOR CATS	4.78	3.53
35	38	ROXY MUSIC—MANIFESTO	5.31	4.06
36	43	GEORGE BENSON—LIVING INSIDE YOUR LOVE	7.50	5.75
37	44	KINTON KWESI JOHNSON—FORCES OF VICTORY	5.00	3.75
38	RE-ENTRY	GATO BARBIERI—EUPHORIA	4.78	3.53
39	36	STEEL PULSE—TRIBUTE TO THE MARTYRS	5.00	3.75
40	42	THIN LIZZY—BLACK ROSE	5.30	4.05
41	33	THIRD WORLD—THE STORY'S BEEN TOLD	5.00	3.75
42	37	SINCERELY—THE SOUND OF SUNBATHING	4.99	3.74
43	41	RICK WAKEMAN—RHAPSODIES	5.31	4.06
44	47	RAMONES—IT'S ALIVE	5.40	4.15
45	39	NICK LOWE—LABOUR OF LUST	5.00	3.75
46	46	CHARLIE—FIGHT DIRTY	5.06	3.81
47	57	SISTER SLEDGE—WE ARE FAMILY	5.00	3.75
48	29	CARS—CANDY O	5.00	3.75
49	58	AMERICA	5.29	4.04
50	40	BUDDY HOLLY—20 GOLDEN GREATS	5.29	4.04
51	51	ISLEY BROS—WINNER TAKES ALL	6.99	5.24
52	49	PETER TOSH—MYSTIC MAN	5.69	4.44
53	53	CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL—20 GREATEST HITS	5.29	4.04
54	45	HOT CHOCOLATE—GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS	5.29	4.04
55	50	LORD OF THE RINGS—O.S.T.	6.99	5.24
56	48	WAR—THE MUSIC BAND	4.99	3.74
57	56	GIBSON BROS—CUBA	5.00	3.75
58	54	KAYE WIND—PIXIES	4.99	3.74
59	60	JOE EGAN—OUT OF NOWHERE	4.80	3.55

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DUB IS TOMORROW...

The beard that launched a bag of hits: choose from Maturnbi, Janet Kay, Linton Johnson, The Pop Group, The Slits and more.

And DENNIS 'BLACKBEARD' BOVELL is the sound of today and tomorrow. IAN PENMAN talks to the UK's hottest producer and dub maestro.

IF there is music it's *DUB*.

Bass and drums co-habit along fluorescent sharp-shirt rows, lazy-hat late-night club walls. The DJ is taken over by the mixing desk, lines of levels all bright and unpredictable, electric spooks of sounds which resound throughout the hip-slipping night atmosphere, informal and nowhere near home. A singing voice shades imperceptibly into a 12" dub comparison — the moment is pure geometry, sizzling around rhythm, tone, tempo and texture — a new spider's web.

The *instant* is — technically — what dub is all about, and right now we happen to have some of the tastiest dub ever locked at large within the nation's heart, courtesy of one 'Silly Games', sung by Janet Kay and produced by Dennis Bovell. A rootsy reggae tune crossed over from the usual neighbourhood shops and clubs into the pop market's pressing-plant popular consciousness. Another quirky reggae sleeper, similar to but more seductive than 'Money In My Pocket', which wore off on one's nerves rather too easily for street comfort.

"Silly Games' is a little way different, and we can blame it on Dennis Bovell — British reggae player, producer, and cross-over instigator extraordinaire. Bovell is an ever-ready source of extra-classic presentation behind a resourceful number of contemporary beats. His mileage this year swings from the pop of 'Silly Games' and Pam Nestor's 'Hiding And Seeking', through lesser rock-known secret hits such as Errol Dunkley's magnetic 'A Little Way Different', onto people like Linton Kwesi Johnson, The Pop Group, and most recently, The Slits.

His infringement upon British listening habits shouldn't be underestimated, it definitely represents a subtle step forward for British reggae, a step towards better public dub knowledge — a step for the music out of the collector's mystery-existence previously afforded it.

Dennis Bovell is a *dub* producer. He takes tunes, applies a knowledge of recording technique and remerges with sounds called . . . *strictly dub-wize!*

The energies of simple song-making are scattered and re-directed by dub production, not shrouded. Dub goes to work deconstructing its subject material — a creation of spaces and stops, an exposure of musical structure and still a *dance* music. All dub functions in a similar fashion, but each dub has a style of its own, and each dub producer has a style of their own: in tune with technology. Dennis Bovell's has developed alongside his involvement in UK roots reggae, as founder member of the group Matumbi, who are currently on the verge of quite a good bit of international breakthrough themselves.

Bovell is currently engaged in finishing Ms Kay's new LP, polishing off Matumbi's next 'Point of View' album and single (which includes a talkover from I. Roy), and overseeing the final stages of the Slits epic, which he's just finished producing. He's also about to commence producing The Specials' album.

Mr Bovell isn't *soon* forward, but quite obviously already here. You're going to *have to* listen.

I met 'Blackbeard' — his Matumbi middlename — in the middle of a clammy summer's West End afternoon, tucked away in the back room of a publicist's beehive, away from the density and chatter of Babylon's sights and see-ers.

The nearest reference point to cling onto within Centrepoint's iconoclastic circumference was the local dub counter, *Maroon's Tunes*, around the corner with its door open and 'Creation Dub' (probably) crackling out with spite onto Frith's street of grim sex stores. Further up the river, Carnaby Street flowed blood red with tourist exchange rates.

At such times a summer single is a must, and who should be sitting opposite me as my lager fizzes lazily over a thick, rosy office carpet but Ms Janet Kay, who is in the process of being interviewed for Fleet St. My interviewee, meanwhile, is still in that world-famous West Indian process of 'soon come' — a euphemism for 'anything up to a week.'

Dennis Bovell is an ennervating balance between pure energy and utter relaxation. He bobs in off some sticky double yellow lines, and slides into a squeaky leather chair. I sit back, sweating, biorhythmically envious; different diets, I guess.

What is he doing at the moment, I enquire with trepidation.

"Well, I've made myself available to finish Janet's LP, 'cos we started it ages ago, all bits and pieces, about three months ago. The idea was to make an LP, but not just *make* one — spend some time on it. But now we got to hurry up and get it finished."

'Silly Games' was recorded quite a while back wasn't it?

"About eighteen months, two years, I'd engineered Janet's 'That's What Friends Are For', and played on 'I Do Love You', and engineered it — this was when I'd just got to know her."

You've just finished the Slits' album. How was that? How'd it compare with The Pop Group's?

"Ummm. It was different in the way that, The Pop Group I see as just *outrageous*. If I said, y'know, anything musically, 'You can't do that', something musically pretty distasteful, they'd say 'Right. *Why* is it distasteful? We wanna do it.' — and they would just do it.

"Mixing The Pop Group, I was saying 'We must have the levels out of the red, this is gonna distort otherwise.' They'd say 'Great!' — that was The Pop Group. Right, now The Slits, they want their tracks to come across with the amount of thunder and weight that reggae comes across with. It's the same direction as The Pop Group, the only difference is probably that it's boys and girls! You can't really say one is better than the other."

I've heard tell The Slits have a tendancy towards being a little *too* laidback, too cool . . .?

"They *are* very into reggae. They're into all sorts of music, but I'd say that reggae takes up about 40% of their listening.

"They get lots of ideas about sounds, and being not capable to play it was their problem, not being able to hear it at once and go straight into it, just play it, so they take a while."

Who approached you to do The Slits?

"Dennis Morris. He called me up and said he had this Slits thing to do, he was in charge of it as far as Island was concerned, and so he asked me if I'd like to be in on it. I went to Island to hear them rehearse, and they played me this tune 'New Town' . . . We went down to a little studio called Pathway and did some demos, and then down to Ridge Farm and did the LP, in eight weeks."

Is there anyone else you'd like to produce?

"I haven't got anyone in mind. I listen to a lot of New Wave groups . . . 'cos it's music, you can't ignore it, it's sounds, it's vibrations. It's whether you're able to get into it, 'cos human beings on the whole, anything they don't understand, they hate it; not because they really hate it, but the first concept you have of anything you don't understand is to hate. But if you give it time you might really dig it.

"Like Indian music — a lot of people hear it and go 'UUURRGGH!', but you sit them down for a while, or have them live in India for six months and they'd be really into it, they'd think *Western* music was crap!"

Do you reckon Public Image at all? Their approach to production?

"I like Wobble's bass lines! Well, like, with New Wave bands and dub — they're certainly doing it. Why not? Reggae is capable of incorporating any style of music. And so any other music can incorporate any other music as well. They've realised it, and started doing it, which is good."

ONE of those things, one of many coincidences bridging our late 1970s into the next big stretch, a pooling of relative sources.

The new youth-music/roots-music connection, that is. You can't just stick topical labels onto it, because not only are both musics stretching out into the public mainstream — the rhythm 'n' business — but they're twining together, converging like spinning tops from opposite ends of the room.

Dub is the offshoot of a reclaimed folk music, reggae. A Jamaican anthem, a complex of street hustle, religion, social activity and humid emotions, dub reflects its neighbourhood: corrugated, tropical, opaque, blistered. The shelves and stresses of dub aren't simple stoned by-products of a shady street industry; producers like Lee Perry, Mudie's, Pablo, King Tubby and Coxsone Dodd work in the extremes of their craft. The

☐ Flip for version.

...ORROW ROW OW W

☐ Blackbeard dub

environmental textures span the spiritual *ire* of the hills down — bass: 'whoooosh! — into the sea bed, and thence to a land far, far away.

The Great British punky generation latched into all of this, sensing something in common. Musicians like Dennis Bovell, Matumbi, Cimarons, and other UK roots outfits had all been playing for years before the 1976 commercial earthquake, but such a distinction is marginal, staid and historical. When the new youth music latched, it was into the music's *reaction*, its resonance in the turbulent new context: *'Step forward youth, for the Babylon a brute. . .'*

All concerned didn't like the idea of sticking to the sidelines of the spectacle that had been made of their culture(s). In this time, as we know by now, capitalism and its venal media siphon off cultural activity for use as the fashionable diversion of the hour. Mid-'70s white youth fired by too much time on speed and the dole —an anti-Christian rebellion! — made a nice contrast with Jah Music's labyrinthine mysticism, but the poles weren't that far apart: *'Run capitalist, I & I want socialist. . .'*

Each music grabs for lost ground. UK's West Indian community will struggle for a free expression of their culture, their citizenship, as will we sons and daughters of Anglo-Saxon or whatever descent. If the gear changes carry forward, a resultant disco mix of respective musical forms is likely and desirable in most every department: aesthetics, ideas, good times.

A national chart containing Public Image's many spendoured 'Death Disco' and Dennis Bovell's 'Dangerous' dub is an education in itself: formal sound barriers tearing back, new social rhythms introduced. . . *dub wize!*

"The British reggae sound started off as a mimic of the JA reggae sound, and the fact is their environment is totally different to ours . . . on 'Silly Games' I thought to create a new drum beat, inbetween disco and reggae. I was gonna make ten or twelve with that beat but I didn't have time . . ."

DENNIS Bovell is a reclaimed subject, born in Barbados and brought up in Britain; he's going back birthplace — home for the first time in thirteen years soon, when Matumbi tour the West Indies later on this Autumn.

He grins, and recalls a childhood musical memory, hearing his father's vocal quartet and mockingly imitating the sounds with his sister. Unaccompanied singing, he adds, is something he'd still very much like to record.

Did he, I ask, have a 'proper' musical education?

"Half a proper musical education. When I was at school I did double bass, and bass is about the instrument I play best, right—" he now plays lead guiter in Matumbi, incidentally "— and I went to lessons to play bass, but I could play guiter before that, y'know, just by ear, and it was very difficult for me to get into reading music, 'cos I'd just hear it once, and I'd know what it was anyway, so that ridiculed the use of a bit of paper. I had the ability to hear a piece of music and repeat it.

"I played in the school orchestra and stuff, but then I got fed up with playing the double bass with a bow. It was awful, I mean, it made some really great sounds, right, but I just thought it was a bit restricting. I wanted to pluck it with my fingers. So I blew that out and started playing the organ in chapel at dinnertime. The music teacher was young, he was willing to do anything, we got on really well together, and he'd let me go into the music hall and play the piano and stuff.

"From there I just started making up my own little tunes, and 'producing' them in that way, y'know? When I was about thirteen, we had a pop group together, playing bubblegum things, and then had a band called Stonehenge that was in the Hendrix vein, then Matumbi after that, which started when Stonehenge finished, '70, '71. . . I started getting into ska, rocksteady, and I thought, great, I could do rock licks on top of ska and rocksteady, carried on from there.

"I used to hang out at DIP records — all those Rama things, like 'Who Seh? Go Deh!', 'Lego! Ah-Fe- We-Dis', 'Yu Learn', 'Scientific Dub-Wize', all that lot, and I just sort of put them together with friends. I chucked it in for a bit 'cos it wasn't really making any money, and more interest was going into the band."

Dennis Bovell unfolds the divergent aspects of his past like a perfectly arranged guide to the moral, linguistic and historical features of the homegrown reggae scene, a great help to anyone stood standing outside the range of the music's powerfully intimate framework of buying, selling, hanging around, and so forth. What is sketched in are the temporary landscapes of social and power relations in which things happened, people rose or fell: the flatfoot hustle.

Had the student Dennis Bovell listened to dub at all? I opened as an entry into a projected topographical rockers survey.

"Oh yeah, definitely. I used to play a sound-system. How old are you?"

Nineteen.

"Oh, this is before your time then. In 19 . . . ummm, 69, I started playing a sound-system" (a kind of Machiavellian dub disco event, very large, very loud, for those uninitiated amongst ye) and this sound system was called 'Jah Sufferer Hi Fi'. You think of any reggae club that there's ever been since about 1960 and 1974, and I played there.

"And at that time, Jah Sufferer was the heaviest sound system there was, it was even heavier then Coxsone" (a kind of King in sound system mythology) "and I'm not just saying that, that's the truth. It was two thousand four hundred watts — can you imagine that? About forty bass bins, 'bout forty mid-range, and about fifty or sixty treble tweeters, right? It was incredibly loud.

"It was DJ-ing that, and hearing all these dub sounds, and at the same time Matumbi were playing all the black clubs, and we used to get records up from Jamaica that there would be sort of only one or two copies of around: ex — *clus* — ive — the meaning of 'dub-wize'!

"That sound system taught me a lot about music. I used to be DJ-ing seven nights a week, right, all over London, all over England. . . it broke up in the end, 'cos, you heard about the Cricklewood Twelve? Well, in 1974 something happened at this club called the Carib Club, and all the police got beat up, people got beat up. They put the finger on me, said that I started all the trouble 'cos I stirred up the people to fight, which was totally untrue. And I got three years, appealed, served six months in Wormwood Scrubs — for nothing. I came out, and I thought, well, it's no good trying to fight the system that way. I've had it as far as sound systems go.

"I started concentrating on *making* music for sound systems, just playing it. Even when I was playing the system, I was still making tunes; we used to go down the studio and make tunes just for the sound system, acetates, and that was *dub-wize*, y'know? You'd play it, and say 'If you want to hear this tune again you'll have to listen to this sound system! We used to play at, like, the Metro in Ladbroke Grove and get two thousand people every Friday night. All the kids used to love it, it was great. But, as with everything else, they just broke it up.

"Probably because. . . sound systems are *loud*, y'know?"

YES, the proper separation of treble and bass strains in an especially constructed dub track does make most rock and roll live action seem a little withered, flat and mono-dimensional in comparison. The shooting snare lines and lumbar-breaking bass swells leave sufficient to the imagination, whilst indifferently grandstamming more vulnerable bits of flesh, skin and bones. A dub yu, a dub yu, all fall down.

"If you have a track going, you still have that tempo there even if you take everything else out and leave maybe one thing. James Brown was really into a dub thing — the whole band would be playing something and it would *stop!*, and the guitar would still be there. I wouldn't like to say who did that first, James Brown or dub, to take out one instrument from the track, right out."

What stage was dub at when you were cutting tunes, playing the sound system?

"It wasn't actually dub to begin with, it wasn't called 'dub'. There were 'versions', that'd be on the other side, just an instrumental track. Then you started getting whole tracks of bass and drums, all the way, bringing the rhythm in. . . and out again, then delay echo started coming into it, and stuff.

"Even when you're mixing a dub, engineering, you've got an idea of what instrument you're gonna put in, but it just goes and on every dub it's different.

Have you consciously developed your own style of dub?

"I've always been conscious of developing my own style, or we, Matumbi have. Being able to identify the producer of a track as soon as you put it on, y'know? That is *his*, or *he* had a hand in that, you know as soon as the track goes on, the feel of it. On a Bob Marley or a Toots or a Burning Spear track, you know who it is as soon as you hear the drummer, before you even hear the voice. . . and we just wanted that for ourselves. Probably we've been successful in doing that, but I dunno if we've got where we're wanting to go yet, we're still looking, y'know?"

How do you approach a dub, what's the actual process?

"That depends really on what the track itself is doing, musically and lyrically. 'Cos what I usually try to do is to create a mental picture to coincide with the lyric of a track. Like, say the track is something to do with running — *'You run and you run and you run'* — well then I go: *'run-run-run-run-run'*, and then a couple of other things like that, and for me that will signify the running. Then just let the dub do it from there, you just feel it, vibe it totally. You think, Oh, I'd like to hear some organ there, a little bit.

"Everyone's got a dub mind. If you were at a dub desk you'd mix it differently than I would. But the thing is to mix it in a way that everytime somebody hears that particular style of dubbing, the way you bring the instruments in, they'll know it's you."

How long does one dub take? I elbowed in, packing up the Marmite sandwiches and thinking about booking time, pronto: Kings Tubby and Shorty move over!

"Well, you could do like three takes of one turn, all at the same level, and you might catch some really good sounds in all of them. So you just edit all three of them together, and throw the rest away, get a really amazing dub. Other than waste what you've done already you just don't stop and edit, and carry on."

There's a difference between British and Jamaican dubs?

"Definitely. The British reggae sound started off as a mimic of the JA reggae sound, and the fact is that their environment is totally different to ours. What they will want to sing about is totally different to what we will want to sing about, and perhaps the only thing that we all want to sing about is Jah. . . y'see? Jah is our only connection.

"They created reggae, always remember that, so ours is just an extension of their vision. Originally, I wanted to bridge that gap by being able to produce music that sounded as though it *was* Jamaican. It was successful a few times, I'd have a tune and everybody would think that it was a JA track until it was released. Then I thought, it's really good to be able to do that, but it doesn't give you an identity of your own, so I stopped.

"On 'Silly Games' I thought, if we could change the beat, or create something different to what Jamaica is doing, maybe they'd appreciate it, If for a change we changed the style. They had the flying cymbal, then the rockers, then the walking drum. . . When I was doing 'Silly Games' I thought to create a sort of new drum beat, inbetween a disco sound and a reggae sound. I tried it and done it; I was gonna make ten or twelve with that beat, but I never had the time.

"I've got a couple of things on the dub album I'm working on at the moment with that beat. . ."

And then the voice chuckles off into an impersonation, but won't say anything more about the new dubs.

"Dub is purely recording techniques, just fooling around with tape recorders — you could fool around with them for ever, and each time you do something it's gonna be different.

"I don't think anyone can say: this is where dub is going now. It just goes there : nobody knows tomorrow, and dub *is* tomorrow."

Morrow orrow orrow orrow orrow rrow row row ow ow ow w!

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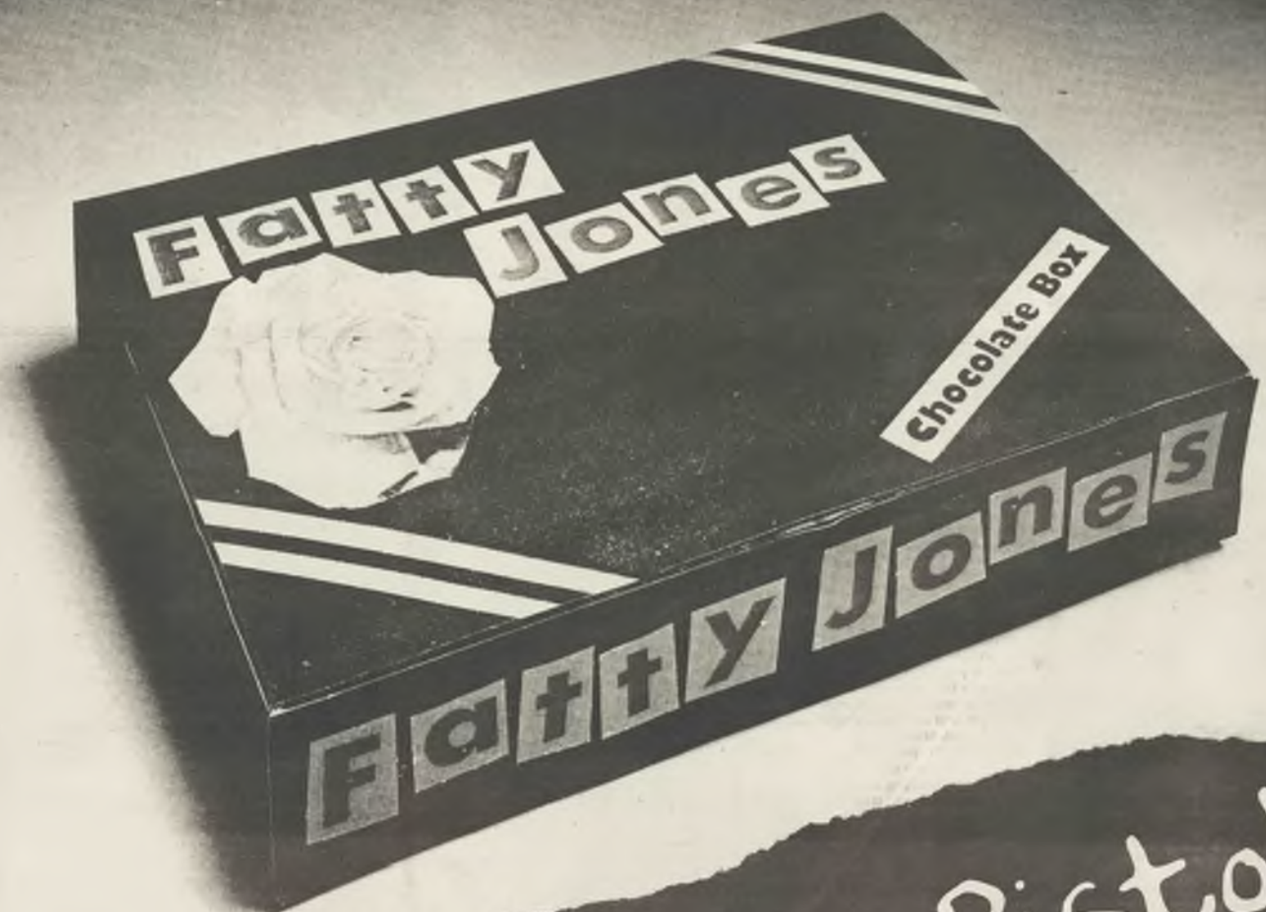

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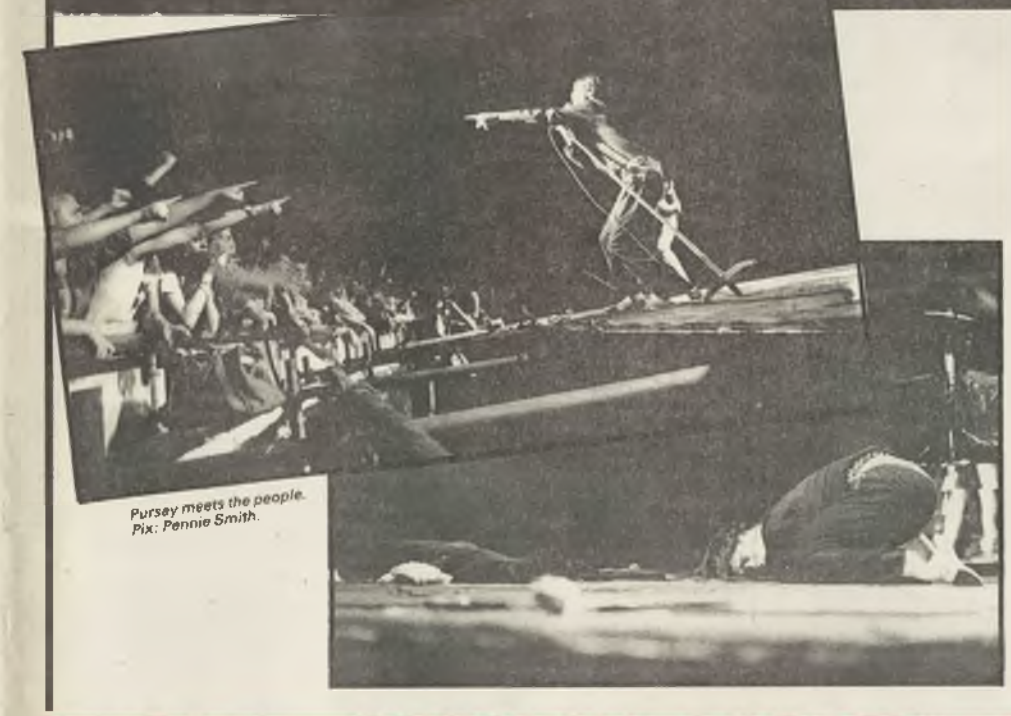
Virgin

THRILLS

RIOT AT THE RAINBOW



Pursey meets the people. Pix: Pennie Smith.

Sham's last stand ends in shambles

Sham 69's farewell show at London's Rainbow Theatre on Saturday was halted after just five songs when a riot broke out. JOHN HAMBLETT gives his view of the affray — and below, JIMMY PURSEY gives his.

THE DIMLY LIT Rainbow Theatre is almost full of people, many of whom could be loosely described as 'skinheads'. But there are skinheads and there are *skinheads*, and the difference between the two is sharp and well defined.

Skinheads are revivalists, their main concern is with fashion and appearing to be affiliated to a hard-line youth movement. *Skinheads* are brutal. They appear to be political extremists, aligning themselves with the National Front and the British Movement, although it has been suggested that if wearing Tufty Club badges was as antagonising they'd be happy to do that too.

Most people here, whether skinheads, mods, or loosely interested parties of no strict denomination, have come to witness and be a part of Sham 69's farewell concert. The *skinheads* have double-booked the hall; *they* are here to stage an alternative happening.

After an unexplained technical hitch the fire curtain is raised to the bombastic surge of 'Also Spake Zarathustra' and the stage is obscured by a layer of dry ice fog. Sham walk on, and as the fog dissolves they launch into a hectic and hard version of 'I Don't Wanna'. Equally hectic versions of 'What Have We Got', 'Red London', and 'That's Life' follow. The playing is tight, bordering on crazy, and the sound is clear and precise. Strangely, Pursey's normally long between-songs raps are kept to a minimum, and he appears more tense and nervous than at Glasgow, the scene of Sham's last 'farewell'.

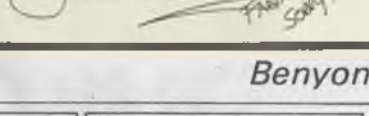
The band are counted into the intro of what will be their fifth number, but as Dave Parsons catches the beat something else catches his eye and he runs across the stage, closely followed by Pursey.

Bent over the makeshift barrier a young fan is prone under a vicious assault from three 'security men'. Parsons and Pursey intervene, finally dragging the youth onto the stage. In an effort to deflate the mounting tension Pursey

■ *Continues over page*

PURSEY'S POEM

My manager said
"It's going to be fantastic
They're crying out for you
The stage was set for
The final fling
But out in the audience
They didn't realise what was happening
The curtain lifted my eyes
Saw their faces and they saw mine
They knew and I knew that was the
Very last time Sham 69 would fall in line
The bouncers looked like sheep that
Could hear a wolf a-calling
The audience looked like the boy that
Cried wolf and no-one was listening
And I, me, the band and all
Were only there to play rock'n'roll
At Glasgow the fantasy was seen for real
Sham could play and I could feel
At London it was all so cold
The place, the record company £ notes spiel
The kids fighting, singing not giving a fuck
What's wrong Jimmy Pursey please tell us all the truth
Did the nightmare hurt you?
Or did your dream come true
That when you become Joe Public
They tell you sorry son
That's us not you.



THE DYLAN QUIZ: YOUR STARTER FOR TEN

What is a Dylanologist?

. . . And why were so many members of the species sighted in Manchester over the weekend? Thrills sent its Dylanologist-ologist to find out why the six white horses were delivered to the penitentiary . . .

● *Dylan quiz answers next page.*

AN EASY ONE to start with: *What were the four songs that were removed from the 'Freewheelin' album?*

Four hundred and fifty Dylanologists are in the Portland Hotel, Manchester, Friday night sinking deeper into the ultimate Dylan quiz.

At the Bangla Desh Concert what song did Dylan perform in the afternoon that was dropped from the evening show?

Tension is developing between the two organisers of the world's first Dylan conference. Amiable Englishman Richard Goodall drops into the background as bombastic (and slightly thick) American Brian Stibal wrestles with the proceedings. Stibal is the proprietor/publisher/editor/stapler of *Zimmerman Blues* and he is under some strain.

You can hear his syntax cracking as he announces that featured guest speaker former Dylan producer Bob Johnston cannot be present.

"It is apparently a situation that cannot be circumvented on account of his ongoing ear infection."

He also announces his magazine has just had to change its name to *Changin'* on account of a personal request from Dylan for a name that was less backward looking.

By Saturday afternoon a panel discussion of unreleased recordings is approaching stratospheric complexities of trivia.

A questioner wanting clarification of the tapes of Dylan backed by the Grateful Dead is clarified by the information that they don't exist. A heated discussion then ensues about whether the Albert Hall bootleg was recorded on May 26 or 27, or even at the Albert Hall at all. And the hypothetical song 'Church With No Upstairs' continues to worry people despite the fact that no-one has ever heard of it. Eventually the panel are stunned into silence by the revelation of an *electric* version of 'Desolation Row'!

"Can someone on the panel tell us why we paid sixteen pounds for *this*?" asks an angry conference attender.

Genial Bob Shelton (author of a legendary forthcoming book about Dylan) views the proceedings with compassion. "These are all my children," he beams.

Which Dylan song is mentioned in the movie Annie Hall?

"I think you have to learn how to accentuate the positive," murmurs Bob Shelton, amazed at the depths of fanaticism and deranged academic energy raging around him.

The positive is provided by folk singer Mary Asquith, who gets a big ovation: she performs moving, unaffected versions of Dylan and traditional material — a welcome reminder of the musical roots of this strange feast of friends. Upstairs delegates are wallowing in the multi-media orgasm room amidst a "selection from materialism (sic) showcasing the dichotomies of Dylan's career."

Sunday's proceedings are unexpectedly lifted by a virtuoso performance from Christopher Ricks, professor of English at Christ's College, Cambridge. For two hours he leads a practical exercise in Dylanology at breakneck speed through territories of rhyme, alliteration, assonance; describing Dylan as "undoubtedly the best contemporary user of words in America, now that Robert Lowell and John Berryman have gone", and concluding: "I don't idolise the man. He is only as good as Shakespeare who after all made many mistakes . . ."

Upstairs John Cooper Clarke crouches at the back of a small, airless room (comically called the Lowry Suite) peering through his shades at video images flickering away. And on the TV a priceless videotape of Dylan's 1965 San Francisco press conference pears back at him.

A friendly guard from Rent-A-Goon announces, "There's plenty of room down the front."

"Thanks, I just came to do some pickpocketing," says John politely. The video recordings of the Bangla Desh Concert, the John Hammond show, Dylan and Earl Scruggs, Dylan duetting with Johnny Cash (who has been described by Ricks as "a massive argument against penal reform"), and even a brief snatch of *Eat The Document*, make the Lowry Suite a popular if lethal environment.

Downstairs Stibal is explaining that fellow Dylanologist Stephen Pickering is "a pile of shit. He just wants a total monopoly of Dylan, and he's psychopathic. He's putting the word out that my magazine is really a Nazi front."

Everyone went home happy. There's nowt so queer as Dylanologists.

MICK GOLD

THRILLS

Journalist Of The Week

People like the Stones and Eric Clapton are the musical offsprings of the jazz and blues movements: they admired their talents and copied their habits.

Many of the later crop of rebels, the Punks, copied only the bad habits, like drugs.

Judith Simons
Daily Express pop correspondent

The Lone Groover — Benyon

ON TELEVISION

ON RECORD

TOM WAITS

The magical Tom Waits seen last Thursday on BBC 2's 'Tonight in Person' is to be heard on his classic album 'Blue Valentine'. K53088 asylum

SHAM RIOT

■ *From previous page*

leads the band into 'Angels With Dirty Faces', duetting with the young fan.

Unfortunately the *skinheads* now have the cue to launch their own event, and with puzzling speed several of their number clamber onto the stage to confront the security men. Obviously anxious bouncers usher the band off-stage and begin to lower the fire curtain. Pursey however has different ideas, and struggles to stay at the mike and talk the situation out. Eventually Pursey is dragged backstage and the fire curtain is lowered. This leaves a long, narrow margin at the front of the stage which is rapidly breached.

An anonymous voice over the PA asks the people to leave the stage and is greeted by a predictably insolent response as more and more youths climb into the overloaded space. A plea by Pursey has little effect. Meanwhile the majority of the fans strike up a chant that begins as "OFF THE STAGE" and grows into "WHO THE FUCKING HELL ARE YOU?". Eventually the stage is cleared and the band reappear.

After an angry outburst from Pursey the band re-track over 'Angels With Dirty Faces'. Pursey gets the words wrong. Then follows what is possibly the best version of 'Borstal Breakout' the band have ever played. For the first time it seems that some of the lean, muscular prowess that characterised the Glasgow performance had been transported to London.

Suddenly, mid-way through the following number Pursey stops singing. A *skinhead* has climbed back onto the stage, and his mates try to follow, causing more brawling as the audience try to stop them.

Pursey smashes the microphone onto the boards, turns, walks back to the drum-kit, picks up the bass drum and smashes that onto the stage. Turning towards Dave Parsons' mike he shouts something about not wanting to face this for the rest of his life and walks off. Sham have been onstage for about 20 minutes. Some farewell.

Outside the air is strangely mild. It would be the perfect night to walk down Seven Sisters Road were it not for the blanked-out parades of deflated youths and the watchful gaze of the uniformed dog handlers.

Perhaps a postscript should be added here . . . like who's gonna take the blame?

But as far as I can see, the only explanation for these brutal and frightful outbursts is the seemingly unavoidable fact that a certain section of this town's youth has a morbid fascination with violence, and, for whatever the reason, they will go out of their way to find it. If they can't find it they'll create their own, whether at a football match or a Sham 69 gig.

To blame Jimmy Pursey is ludicrous. The fact that he blames himself is sad.

JOHN HAMBLETT

More Stones sleaze in pipeline

HO-HUM, another year, another book (or two or three) on the subject of The Rolling Stones.

Well, 1978 saw scandal a-plenty with Keith Richards' Canadian heroin bust and Jagger splitting from his missus — and even now yet another murky saga is unfurling with Anita Pallenberg, illegal guns and a teenage boy shot through the head in bed . . .

All of which means that The Rolling Stones are still most decidedly 'hot copy'.

Check this month's *Playboy* and you will find an article entitled "Ladies and Gentlemen . . . The Rolling Stones", with a subtitle "Memoir by Tony Sanchez". In the piece under scrutiny, Mr Sanchez makes no bones about the fact that he was basically a drug dealer — primarily cocaine — to members of the band, those members being principally the late Brian Jones, Keith Richards and, to a lesser extent, Mick Jagger.

The *Playboy* piece is in fact an extract from a book Sanchez has concocted entitled *Ups And Downs With The Rolling Stones*, which will be published by William Morrow in the States.

Tony Sanchez is only one of apparently several names the Spaniard has gone under; he was always known simply as 'Spanish Tony', and was apparently born into a life of poverty in Spain.

Connections are hazy, but Sanchez got his real break when he fell in with the crowd that made up the entourage of art dealer Robert Fraser.

Fraser was a close friend of the Stones — he was involved in the notorious *News Of The World* instigated bust of 1967 when heroin capsules were located about his person (his person being located at Keith Richards' house at the time).

Spanish Tony (left) with Keith at Richards' French Riviera villa.

Sanchez first got in with Brian Jones, dealing pharmaceutical cocaine and becoming a confidant of Jones' during the traumatic years during and after the late Stone's affair with Anita Pallenberg.

When Jones left the band, Sanchez struck up a strong friendship with Keith Richards who, by this time the paramour of Pallenberg, had discovered the joys of cocaine sniffing himself. Sanchez became closer and closer to Richards until he was placed on a weekly retainer in order to be Richards' proverbial right-hand man.

His stoney facade of ruthless silence seemed so secure to both Richards and Marshall Chess (former Rolling Stones Records' boss) that they entrusted a print of the notorious *Cocksucker Blues* film to him — a move that the Stones organisation were later to bitterly regret.

As the '70s progressed Sanchez started to become a mite greedy. This, coupled with a definite falling-out with Anita Pallenberg, soon caused him to be slowly but surely regarded as expendable.

Soon enough, the shit hit the fan. With Keith Richards busted in Toronto, his freedom in jeopardy, Sanchez chose to sell the most scabrous stills from *Cocksucker Blues* — as well as showing the entire film to the *N.O.T.W.*

Since then Sanchez remained quiet but that was only because he was furtively searching for a collaborator and buyer for his 'memoirs'.

***Ups And Downs*, the finished product, should be out soon with all the good old sleaze on The Rolling Stones.**

The Pallenberg saga publicity aside, the book — or at least the extract gratis *Playboy* — appears to be as feeble as it is seamy.

For voyeurs only.

NICK KENT

ANSWERS TO THE DYLAN QUIZ

(1) *Freewheelin':* 'John Birch Society Blues', 'Ramblin' Gamblin' Willie', 'Let Me Die In My Footsteps', 'Rocks And Gravel' (2) *Bangla Desh:* 'Love Minus Zero'. (3) *Annie Hall:* 'Just Like A Woman'.

"It makes you realise why they didn't cut much ice back in the '50s, doesn't it?"

Left I: Alan Gill

Right I: Dave Hughes

street/Say hello to the Freedom Fighters/And then

THE TEARS OF DALEK I

Thrills delves once more into the strange and complex world of Liverpool rock '79 style . . .

WHEN PETE FRAME gets to grips, about five years hence, with the intricacies of the "New Merseybeat" family tree, chances are that slap bang in the middle will be the name of The Dalek I Love You Group. This bunch — whose name was apparently an amalgam of two suggestions, "The Daleks" and "Darling I Love You" — have included among their number members of such latter-day fashionables as Orchestral Manoeuvres and Teardrop Explodes, and form part of the tentacles of which reach out, via the catalytic Big In Japan, to The Slits, Original Mirrors, Pink Military Stand Alone and probably a half-dozen others by now.

I find it all a bit complicated, so Dalek I's David Hughes pre-empts Frame and draws me a rough family tree. I still find it all a bit complicated.

Dalek I are the remnants of The Dalek I Love You Group, and to these ears the most promising of all the new Liverpool bands, even though they now number only two, multi-instrumentalists, Hughes and Alan Gill, who between them handle various keyboards, guitars, basses and percussive doodads.

A few weeks ago, they released their first single, 'Freedom Fighters', on Phonogram's Vertigo label. A prime example of living-room music construction, it features catchy, interlinking little riffs over a plodding beat formed by combining elements of both drums and drum-machines and Gill's calmly urgent vocals. Ingeniously simple but infuriatingly infectious — rather like an adult Human League on speed — 'Freedom Fighters' is one of the year's best singles so far, and from what I heard of their other material, there's plenty more where that came from.

It's quite out of the ordinary nowadays for a band to get a deal with a 'major' without first going through the A&R clearing-house-syndrome of the small labels. How, I wondered, had Phonogram heard of them, as they'd all but abandoned gigging?

"Through a tape we did for Eric's (the Liverpool club/label), with us on one side and Ded Byrds on the other," explains Gill. "The Ded Byrds didn't want us on," adds Hughes, "'cos they thought *their* sales would carry ours. But when it was recorded it was the other way round, so Eric's decided to lob the Ded Byrds off. Anyway, Phonogram heard the tape, but by that time Andy McCluskey formed Orchestral Manoeuvres, and Dave Balle left for Big In Japan (and more recently Teardrop Explodes), and when Phonogram picked up there were only us two left."

Lucky lads. Still, signing with a major isn't without its drawbacks, as Hughes points out:

"They had really strong ideas for us — they were going to turn us into something different. Some of the early sessions were great, arguments and everything. They'd probably have dropped us straight away, but they'd already spent the money on us and were just concerned about finishing *something!* The actual sessions which produced the single were supposed to be demo sessions — we were supposed to get about eight numbers done, but because of all the arguments we didn't. They even tried to change the chords on 'Freedom Fighters', 'cos they're not 'standard' . . ."

Although the band held out over their music — some things *are* sacrosanct, after all — they were presented with a *fait accompli* when it came to their name:

"It got shortened to 'Dalek I' by Phonogram, without them telling us. I remember them suggesting it in the studio, while we were recording the single and next thing we know, we get letters back saying 'Dalek I', y'know? We had to put our names down so we could cash the cheque!"

That, mind, could be counted as one of Phonogram's better ideas. With that typical lack of imagination displayed by all large record companies, they appear to be hyping the band along the lines of the "strange, mysterious modern music made by aloof aliens" line (yawn), presumably in the hope of tapping the Bowie motherlode like second-hand music-salesman, Gary Numan.

Nothing could be further from reality. Hughes and Gill are, on their own admission, just a couple of ordinary guys who happen to enjoy making music — "like Jan & Dean", as Gill points out with some fondness.

This emphasis on "ordinariness" carries over into their lyrics. 'Two Chameleons', the b-side of their single, draws a touching parallel — sentimental without being patronising — between the prettifying behaviour of both performer and audience, an authentic *Saturday Night Fever*, whilst 'Freedom Fighters' itself takes a wry look at sham politicising, the antics of student politicos as seen outside the blinding light of their own conscience-salving back-patting:

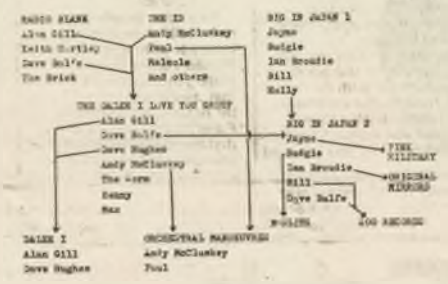
"Now I'm walking down my street/Say hellow to the people that I meet/What's this I see?/Looks like a group of vandals/Say hello to the Freedom Fighters . . . / . . . And then when they arrest them/They shout down all 'cop' names that they have heard on the TV/I hear them shouting out/'Fascist pigs, pigs, pigs, pigs . . .'"

An unpopular point of view, no doubt, but a refreshing one. They decline to comment on the actual song, although Hughes does have a few words to say about political stances in music:

"I just don't understand how group like The Pop Group can actually be so sure of their political stance so early on in their life. We haven't the qualifications to actually say, y'know. 'Everything else is wrong except for this'. The stance is the most important thing in a lot of cases — you have to have some sort of stance to get any credibility. If you *are* doing that, the political stance should come out in the lyrics, but not, like, be *told* beforehand . . ."

ANDY GILL

THRILLS



Dalek I family tree by David Hughes

Capital Jazz Win Or Lose?

NOW THAT the suntan's fading, the cash-flow's been computed, and the dust's begun to settle on Muswell Hill, the organisers of the first Capital Jazz festival admit it wasn't exactly a stunning commercial success.

What with its meagre publicity, exorbitant weekday ticket prices, and some loosely-matched bills, the news comes as no surprise to *Thrills*. We contacted one of the festival's promoter/sponsors, Andy Hudson, for the post-mortem report.

Hudson claims the festival clocked a grand total of 30,000 people, which was about 2,000 per day down on the number needed to break even. Despite this, he's certain there'll be another one next year.

When asked why the event wasn't more widely publicised, he asserts "we took some advertising space in every single musical publication including your own. There's always room for improvement on advertising, but it was the same advertising that got 10,000 people for Saturday that got only 2,500 on Tuesday.

"I've come across people who said the site was too far away," he adds, "or just too inaccessible, but I've met very few who didn't know the festival was actually happening. It was basically a London audience."

He says they reached people outside London by taking out space in big regional papers, and that all the provincial radio stations carried at least 10 promotional spots. But the bulk of the publicity was through Capital Radio itself.

Wasn't it presumptuous to assume that the dedicated jazz fan would hear this information through Capital?

"No, I think it's interesting that there were a number of people there who'd never been to a jazz festival before, and — because of the awareness driven home by Capital — decided to go along and had a fantastic ball."

Did they intend to bring in some more contemporary acts in the future?

"I think we'd move more towards what the Americans call 'fusion' — jazz/rock, Latin, Willie Bobo, Lee Ritenour — that part of the show we shall probably develop."

Had he thought of consolidating all the rock'n'roll and blues acts onto one consecutive bill?

"No. If you don't hold that spectral approach to the music, you wouldn't come across music you would otherwise have never encountered."

Wasn't it a little steep not to offer a reduction on the £6 weekday tickets when the average person could only catch the last three hours of music after work?

"No, that's too complicated. But we might change the format and do evening concerts in the centre of town. Avant garde jazz especially doesn't lend itself to a vast arena, but we'll certainly keep the Ally Pally site for the weekend."

Had he any comment to make about his personal financial loss?

"I was a shareholder in the profit," concludes Hudson, "and there wasn't any. Effectively, it seems I worked my bollocks off for five or six months for nothing."

MARK ELLEN

THRILLS

Benyon

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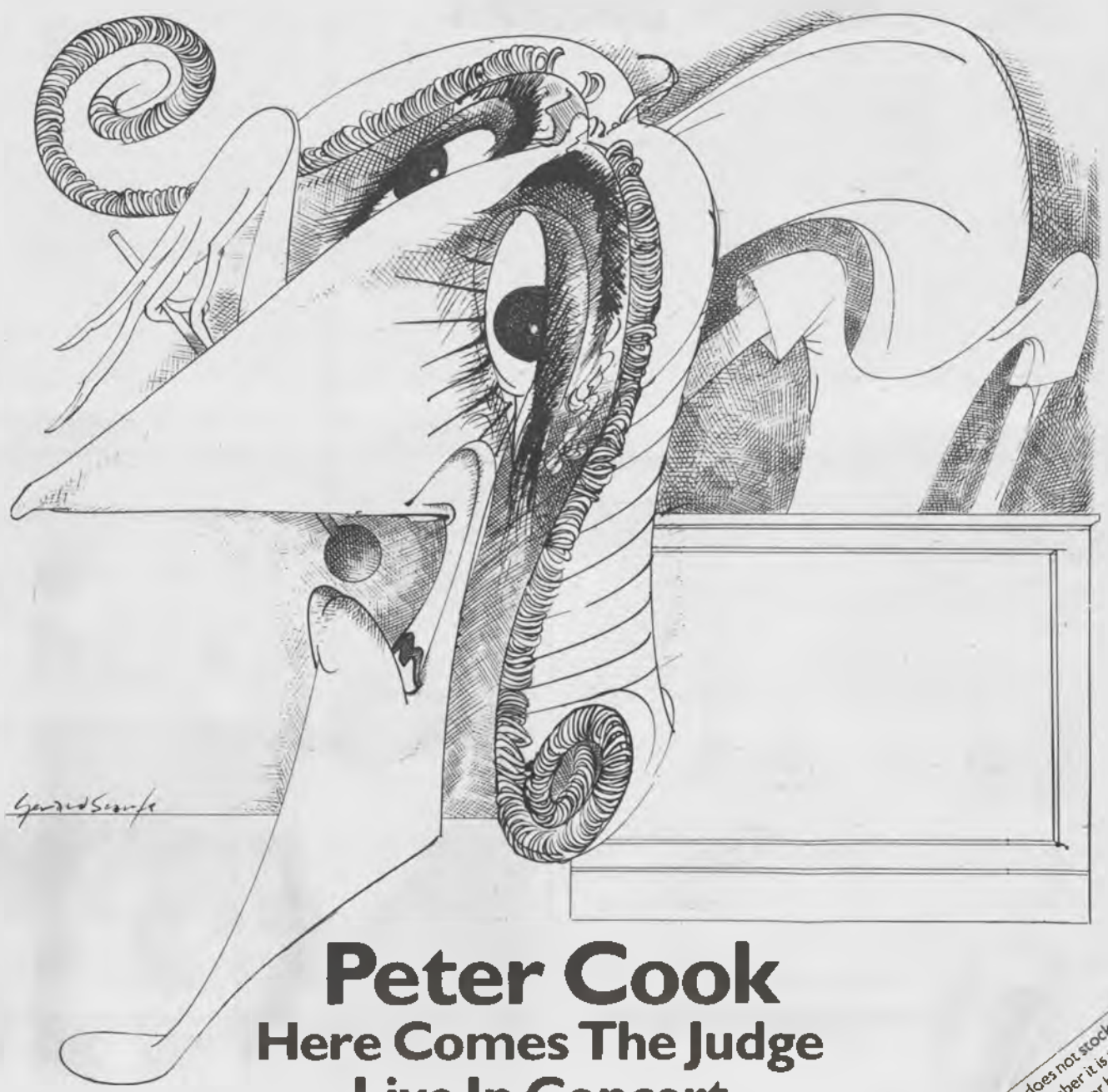

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JONI ON DEAD WHALES AND CHARLIE MINGUS

TO MARK the release of 'Mingus' — a recorded collaboration with/and tribute to the late jazzman — confessional poet/songstress Joni Mitchell is to make an appearance in the September issue of jazzer's Bible *Downbeat* magazine — reflecting her new found jazz kudos, if not the fact that she was the last musician to work with Charles Mingus.

"I got word through the grapevine that Charles had something in mind for me," she tells writer Leonard Feather. "He had an idea to make a piece of music based on T. S. Eliot's *Four Quarters*. He wanted me to distill it down into street language and sing it. I told him I'd rather precis the Bible.

"Some time went by, and then April last year I got another call from Mingus saying that he'd written six songs for me and he wanted me to sing them and write words for them. I went out to visit him and I liked him immediately. He was devilishly challenging."

Mingus was then in the final stages of his illness, virtually paralysed and confined to a wheelchair. Joni met him a few times then spent ten days with him and his wife Susan visiting a faith healer in Mexico, by which time it had become too difficult for him to speak.

He was never to hear the completed album which at one point was to have been called 'A Chair In The Sky', and which one can't help feeling caught Joni at the hop.

Mingus' death turned it into a eulogy, a far more weighty statement to make than a mere collaboration. Joni made several attempts at it — with the likes of Phil Woods, Tony Williams and Gerry Mulligan — before settling on versions of the music recorded with the august Weather Reporters.

"Charles and I differed musically; we shared things but differed in some ways. He had an aversion to electric instruments, and was very much a purist.

"I'm a basically acoustic player and understand that attitude, but I never was prejudiced against electric instruments. The first sessions were closer to what Charlie wanted. They swung more. In some ways you could even say that I sang better, because the time was more solid. But something was missing. To me, they could have been cut 20 years ago, they didn't contain something we know now."

Mitchell, who now owns up to the fact that Lambert, Hendricks And Ross were her 'Beatles', plans to take a jazz-inclined band out on her next tour, consisting of guitarist Pat Methany, percussionists Don Alias and Alex Acuna, and bassist 'Modest' Jaco Pastorius.

"Charles felt that with an electric instrument you couldn't get dynamics, but Jaco completely defies all that. He gets more dynamics than any bass player. He's phenomenal. He's an orchestra. He's a horn section. He's a string section, he's a french horn soloist . . ."

Any last words about Mingus?

"Sue told me something beautiful today . . . Charles died at the age of 56 in Mexico. The following day he was cremated. That day, 56 whales beached themselves on the coast of Mexico, and not knowing what to do with them, the people there burned them. So 56 whales were cremated the same day as Charles!

"There was a lot of mojo in his life, and there's a lot of mojo in my life, too."

NEIL YOUNG

THRILLS

Joni: mojo and Mingus

The Man Who Didn't Know Too Much

THE POSSIBILITIES of a court action prevents us from naming the guilty parties, but here's a little story involving some of America's most recent megastars . . . A band who, despite everything they play turning to platinum, have yet to achieve what they reckon to be rock's supreme tribute — being bootlegged.

Ladies, limos, coke, champagne, mansions, and money just couldn't, it seems compensate for this slight on their performing prowess, and for months this disgruntled group pestered their manager to discover *why* they hadn't been bootlegged.

They put it to him that their support acts had more unofficial releases on sale than official!

Finally the manager couldn't stand any more. He personally hired an expensive mobile recording unit, taped a couple of sell-out shows on their last tour, mixed the results down to a double album's worth, and set about fixing up a clandestine rendezvous with California's Mr Big of the bootleggers.

"How much will you give me for these killer tapes," the manager hissed from behind his hand, hoping to cover his original costs.

Shock, horror!! Not only would Mr Big *not* pay for the tapes, but he wasn't even interested in putting them out for nothing.

"Nobody wants a bootleg by this band," he declared. "If it was the Stones, Zeppelin, The Who or a hot new wave band, then I might just be interested."

"But you don't understand," gasped the manager in blind panic. "I've just gotta get this album out at any cost."

Anyway, the story goes, after considerable wheelin' and dealin' Mister Big did reluctantly agree to handle the album — but only on condition that the manager would pay (upfront) all the costs of pressing, packaging and distribution and, throw in another $5,000 for his trouble.

And even then, he offered no real guarantee that anyone would buy it.

"That doesn't matter," said the manager — just so long as I can show the group they've been bootlegged."

No less than 25,000 double albums were pressed and sleeved.

Then, before they could be put into circulation, the FBI swooped on the secret Californian warehouse, arrested Mr Big and his staff and confiscated 12 tons of bootlegs including the hot-off-the-presses 25,000.

The group are still without a bootleg to their name . . . and it's estimated that their manager is something in the region of 60,000 dollars out of pocket!

ROY CARR

THRILLS

Don't believe the story, kid. That sixty grand was just a tax loss.

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NME1

Derrick Morgan modelling typical titter

Win a Blue Beat pork pie hat! (And Ska records to match.)

CALLING all tougher - than - tough Rude Boys and Girls. Like the mahn once said, time's no longer than rope and this is the sound that goes round, so here it is again . . . the sound of '60s Ska Music.

There's reason to believe many of you might think 'Madness' is the name of the hotter-than-hot new group, 'The Guns Of Navarone' the title of a war movie, 'Penny Reel' the pseudonym of an *NME* writer, 'Phoenix City' a Soho amusement arcade.

True. But they were also the titles of a fistful of classic Ska singles by Prince Buster, The Skatalites, Eric Morris and Roland Al & The Soul Brothers.

Further, your first brush with the roots of Ska culture might come from recently checking out the attitudes of such New Age men-with-a-mission as The Specials, Madness, Selecter, Dexy's Midnight Runners and the newly-formed Guns For Hire.

Whatever, the beat of the blues dance is once again shakin' the nation to the foundation.

In the '60s Island Records released 100s of classic Ska singles on their then familiar red and white label. And to stimulate the resurgence of interest in the seminal sound of JA, Island have dusted off no less then 16 tracks for an indispensable compilation album entitled 'INTENSIFIED!'

Not only that, but Island have coupled two immortal Roland Al (Alphonso) & The Soul Brothers titles, 'Phoenix City' and 'El Pussy Cat' as an introductory single.

Rude Boys don't care, and so we here at *NME* are putting 25 copies of 'Intensified!', five copies of the single, and fistfuls of 'Rude Boy '79', 'El Pussy Cat' and 'Teenage Ska' mini-badges up for grabs.

And not only that: to the outright winner goes a genuine Porkpie Blue Beat hat and a pair of wrap-around shades.

This time out we ain't asking you to caption no cuckoos. Instead we want you to adopt the role of a music-biz mogul who (for once)

really knows what's happening on the street!

All you gotta do is:

1. Suggest a title for a (possible) second Ska compilation.
2. Suggest an appropriate name for a modern Ska/R&B influenced band.
3. Suggest the name for a new club.

And who gets what at prize-giving time?

First prize: A factory-fresh copy of 'Intensified!'. A copy of the 'Phoenix City'/'El Pussy Cat' single. A set of three mini-badges *plus* a Blue Beat Porkpie hat and a pair of wrap-around shades.

The next four runners-up each receive the 'Intensified!' album, the 'Phoenix City' 45 plus a set of three buttons.

The next 20 runners-up will be mailed a copy of 'Intensified!' and a set of three badges.

All you have to do is write your three suggestions in the spaces provided, add your name, address and hat size and post it to arrive no later than August 14, 1979, to:
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This competition is open to all readers resident in the UK, Eire, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, except employees (and their families) of IPC Magazines Ltd., the printers of New Musical Express and the staff of Island Records. The Editor's decision is final and the result will be published in the future issues of NME.

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HAT SIZE.....

1. Title for a Ska compilation album.....

.....

2. Name for a modern Ska/R&B influenced band.....

.....

3. Name for a new club.....

The perils of jet-set chic

WHATEVER happened to Metro? Can it be all of two years since we winced at those terrible album promo pics — depicting them as the epitome of languid, jet-set chic.

Yes it is. And singer Peter Godwin — ever so tactfully — has just told me that my superficial impression of Metro as, um, a bunch of posers was a little unjust . . .

"You see," he explains, "I like style and hate fashion. The advert for that first album was a joke that turned sour. The idea was just to get dressed up not to look like the usual rock musicians of the day — long hair, denims, macho poses.

"But it alienated a lot of people."

To recap: 1977 saw the release of that debut album. A largely unremarkable affair by most accounts ("it was done from the living room, as it were, not from any experience of playing live") it did yield one fine single in the guise of 'Criminal World'.

Metro at that time comprised Godwin, guitarist Sean Lyons and Duncan Browne, complemented by session men.

Browne left soon after and is now to be seen adorning the front of his 'Wild Places' album, the epitome of — you guessed it — languid jet-set chic.

Lyons and Godwin, meanwhile, lay low and set about reconstruction. Conscripting bassist Tony Adams, guitarist Colin Wight, and drummer John Laforge, Metro were back in business.

The band are now with EMI, with a new album, 'New Love', and the attendant 45, 'Girls In Love'.

If anything, these suggest the group to be peddlers of a classy up-market pop/rock crossover, strong on composition, urban imagery and dark romance — but short on rock'n'roll feel.

Lyons agrees it's "blander" than they'd intended — too smooth and polished.

Godwin: "It was a bit disappointing, it doesn't capture the energy of the live sound at all.

"It swung from one extreme to the other because we started off with a really rough album, but not rough in the good sense. Then we got somebody else in who tried to put that right. In trying to compensate he maybe went too much the other way."

But back to that question of image. "Too much emphasis gets placed on the packaging," says Godwin, "and the artists are always held responsible for it, when often it gets out of their hands."

Metro are aware that the best way to dispel misconceptions is to get out and play — to which end they recently landed a coveted support-slot on the Dire Straits tour, offering experience they're eager to consolidate.

"Or else," somebody suggested, "you could take a picture of us inside an Yves St Laurent shop, tearing all those expensive clothes into shreds!"

PAUL DU NOYER

THRILLS

POLICE COMP RESULTS

AFTER EXPERIENCING more headaches than a guy trying to sell blackmarket tickets for a police ball we can now publicly name the guilty parties in our recent *Arrest A Police Collectors' Item* caption-the-cuckoo competition.

Namely, the winners of the 20 king-size badge-shaped promo picture discs pairing The Police's first two A&M hits, 'Roxanne' and 'Can't Stand Losing You.'

The entries came fast and furious and, in far too many instances, filthy!

However, the first prize of a picture disc, a copy of The Police's 'Outlandos D'Amour' album, plus a heavy-duty Police-logo key-ring is awarded to Phil Small from Stockton, Cleveland — whose entry is shown above.

The first five runners-up, who each cop a picture disc and keyring are: Mark Newberry from Potton, Beds., with the caption:

Andy: "I thought you said this was one of London's most popular tourist attractions?"

Stu: "Sure, ain't you ever heard of Marble Arse!""

Next, S. N. Morgan from Keynsham, Bristol, with:

Andy: "Tasty Tarts!"

Stu: "Foster Grants."

Phil Small's winning entry

Third comes Sammy Smith from Halewood, Liverpool, who suggested:

Stu: "Ello, Ello, Ello, what's all this then?"

Andy: "It just started off as a peck on the cheek, officer!"

J. Stafford of Holly Bush Vale, London NW3 caused a few chuckles, with:

Andy: "Cold arse, warm heart!"

Stu: "Nearly right."

The last person to win both a picture disc and a keyring is Jerry Cirillo from Swansea, whose caption read.

Andy: "It tastes like a Michelangelo!"

Stu: "No. It's definitely a Bottomcelli!"

Fourteen other contestants each won a Police picture disc. They are: Bill Young, Glasgow, Scotland. Martin Scott, Weymouth, Dorset. Ian W. Robertson, Glasgow, Scotland. D. Kahn, Lancaster, Lancs. John Lee, Portsmouth. Paul Sheldon, Attemborough, Notts. John Heesome, Billinge near Wigan.

Les Bazley, Chard, Somerset. Simon Ravenel, Leek, Staffs. Dick Crosher, Manor House, London N4. Patrick Dyer, Ryde, I.O.W. Bill Phillips, Edinburgh, Scotland. Goretti Murray, Hayes, Middlesex. Joan Wallace, Bottom, Lancs.

Important: Will the winners allow at least 10 days for the delivery of their spoils.

THRILLS

Blackmail Corner: victims exposed

AND ONCE again, welcome back to the section of our show when we blow the whistle on the unfortunate turkeys pictured last week in silly hippy garb singing Mondo Ludicroso Krishnoid lyrics at a festival: "Jesus always loved us/Scattered us in stardust/singing Hare Krishna . . ."

Those of you with the requisite number of functioning braincells will remember that these speciments were the frontmen of a group called Skyco, and that we asked you for their names and a "Where Are They Now?" Absolutely nobody wrote to us to say that they'd sussed these geezers out, so it only remains for us to stifle our giggles and hip you to the fact that Skyco are now Squeeze and that the twerps in the photo are ultra-cool streetcredibility-oozing working-class heroes Chris Difford and Glen Tilbrook.

Tee hee, what a howler, split me sides, get us a glass of water couldya oh deary me etc etc etc. Now who's up the junction, ehhh?

THRILLS

ROXY

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Polydor Ke$ha

"If genius is pain, then Oldfield's a masochist."

Sounds.

"Mike Oldfield does not rest on his laurels. They rest on him, triumphantly."
Evening News

"...a hard act to follow but then his biggest problem always was having to compete with his own past achievements."
Melody Maker

"Taken as grand-slam rock-classical fusion extravaganza or an exercise in achieving a perfect sound balance from a difficult combination of instruments, this was a remarkable achievement... the climax was stirring and exciting, and as impressive a blend of rock and classical instruments as one could hope to hear."
The Guardian

"Carefully prepared though the concert obviously was, it turned out to be an unaffectedly joyful, even zany, evening."
The Observer

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THE LAST LOWELL GEORGE INTERVIEW

By PETE ERSKINE

13 April 1945 — — 29 June 1979

Pic: Michael Putland

POOR taste is universal. It may also be news. This started out as a social call (or, at least, pleasure mixed in with a little business) and ended up as an exclusive of the very worst kind.

Siesta time, Los Angeles, Friday, May 11, 1979. Lowell George, guitarist, vocalist and founder of Little Feat broke off from mixing his band's farewell album to answer a phone call from England.

We exchanged information as to chart placings of his recently released solo album, 'Thanks I'll Eat It Here'. At the time it was number 82 here.

"Great," said Lowell, with genuine enthusiasm.

Had he seen any reviews? Well critical reaction had been "kind" at home, he noted, with just a trace of disappointment in his voice.

Apart from an unusually perceptive *NME* review, 'Thanks' had been met with a predictable kind of disappointment here — epitomised in a line from the *Sounds* review which ran: "BUT WHERE'S THE GUITAR, LOWELL?"

After my having related this, a brief silence ensued. Then Lowell asked, poignantly: "Yes, but what did you think of the *singing?*" Because Lowell reckoned it to have been his best to date — despite the fact that just as many people had *always* reckoned his singing was great, right down to the version of Howling Wolf's 'Forty Four Blues/How Many More Years' that he could never bear to listen to because he felt it was too "gauche". But then Lowell George always was an anachronistic sort of person.

'Thanks I'll Eat It Here' had taken something in excess of two and a half years between its inception and completion — so long, in fact, that by the time he came round to writing the liner notes (a traditional Lowell role), George had forgotten who'd played on what. It was supposed to have been the repository for all the Lowell songs that couldn't have fitted in with Little Feat's style in later years, plus all the great Lowell George songs that he'd been holding back from the previous three Little Feat albums — in favour of encouraging a more 'democratic' approach to playing and writing within the band — thus freeing him to pursue his ambitions towards the development of his singing and production.

Although Lowell had insisted otherwise. "The reason the solo album took so long," he'd explained, "was simply that I've had other, more pressing commitments to the band — whether touring or producing albums. . .

"But, despite that," he continued, "its the first album I've ever delivered within the record company schedule. I mean, it doesn't sound dated to me, if that's what you're getting at. . .Most of the tunes were simply things I'd always wanted to record — especially 'I Can't Stand The Rain' and Allen Toussaint's 'What Do You Want The Girl To Do?'."

But whilst I'd tried to suggest that, in the light of the diverse peripheral influences with which Lowell would surround himself in private — Japanese koto, South American folk tunes and classical lute pieces — I'd perhaps expected more variety and originality, he merely seemed to pretend not to hear, preferring instead to impart the information that 'Himmler's Ring' is a Jimmy Webb biography of the former head of Apple Corps publicity, Derek Taylor.

And so the remaining half hour of the call passed almost unseen, with Lowell explaining how he'd been putting in ten hours a day at mixing sessions and about how healthy he felt (and, indeed, sounded). Until — too late, much too late — old memories of Lowell's expertise at the art of evasion began flooding back.

Seven weeks later, he was dead.

LOWELL George's greatest contribution to the grand scheme of rock was not his guitar playing — as peerless, zany and, as one colleague put it, "imperious", as it was. More important is the fact that Lowell George was the finest contemporary white blues performer and writer anyone has yet to see, Van Morrison notwithstanding.

Meanwhile, however good parts of his solo album may be, George's name will always be linked with that of Little Feat, with whom he produced his finest work — the quintessence of which must have been his definitive rendition of Allen Toussaint's 'On Your Way Down'.

Little Feat formed early in 1970, after Lowell had ended his brief recording career with Frank Zappa's Mothers Of Invention. He was credited with having contributed rhythm guiter and vocals on a track called 'Didja Get Any Onya', which opened the Mothers' 'Weasels Ripped My Flesh' album.

The story has it that Zappa encouraged him to go out and form his own band after George had approached him with a tune he'd written called 'Willing'. Zappa's bass player, Roy Estrada, left to join him. Around the same time an ambitious young keyboard player named Bill Payne had been pestering Zappa's Bizarre label for a chance to audition for the Mothers, when a kindly secretary, after informing him that the band were touring somewhere in Europe, happened to mention that a couple of ex-Mothers were looking for a keyboard player. Ritchie Hayward, recently departed from the Fraternity Of Man, was contracted as drummer.

Shortly afterwards the band was signed to Warner Brothers and recorded a debut album which the record company kept on 'hold' whilst issuing a double 'A' side single comprising Payne and George's 'Strawberry Flats'' and George and Estrada's ''Hamburger Midnight''. Ed Ward, the then singles reviewer on *Rolling Stone* went apoplectic claiming it to have been "the best thing I've heard in 6 months." As much on the strength of that review as anything else, the album was released in the States.

'Little Feat' is in itself patchy. It did however establish the patent for a group sound that melded the strongest elements of New Orleans snap-and-backbeat shuffle — the kind of stuff pioneered by Allen Toussaint and The Meters ever since the Lee Dorsey 'Working In The Coalmine' days — and an updated, hardnosed, head-on collision with the blues. The former is exemplified in the opening cut, 'Snakes On Everything', the latter in Lowell George's timelessly raw, metallic rendering of Howling Wolf's 'Forty Four Blues/How Many More Years', with Ry Cooder playing slide.

And then, of course, there was 'Willing', again with Cooder on slide. Too many people seem to regard this as the Lowell George anthem — to the extent that in later years it seemed to become his personal albatross. On one level it may be appreciated as a poignant hymnal to the Great American truckdriver; on another it has come to be regarded as a personal statement of doggedness on the part of the author.

One of the better cliches is that a band either makes or breaks it on the strength of their first two albums and with 'Sailin' Shoes' Little Feat most definitely Made It, and then some. Eight out of the 11 tracks were Lowell's. The title track and the cleaned-up version of 'Willing' went on to become perennial Feat classics, whilst George's singing on 'Cold, Cold, Cold' remains a daunting yardstick by which other white singers with aspirations towards singing The Blacks will have to be measured. 'Cat Fever', one of two Payne compositions, also drops a few hints as to where Payne's directions were leading — and they weren't walking the same road as Lowell's.

"The way I started was that there was this girl across the street, when I was about five years old," Payne told a fanzine called *Nugget* a few years back, "she started taking piano lessons, and at that age I thought if she can do it, then so can I. So it just happened. It worked out *great* . . ."

Payne aside, 'Sailin' Shoes' consummated the sound that was to dominate Little Feat in their heyday — although it wasn't to be recognised or appreciated by either the public or their record company until they'd recorded at least three more albums.

" 'Sailin' Shoes' was a bit too diversified to be digested properly," Lowell George observed some time later, "that's why it didn't sell."

'Dixie Chicken' consolidated the band, and well-nigh damned them, as musicians' musicians or critics' favourite.

Paul Barrere was brought in to augment Lowell's guitarwork — after having been rejected as a bassplayer ("because he simply couldn't cut the mustard," according to Payne) in the embryo band. Roy Estrada departed to be re-christened "Orejon" with Captain Beefheart's Magic Band in favour of Kenny Gradney, who, along with percussionist and congaplayer Sam Clayton, had recently found themselves refugees from the Delaney and Bonnie debacle.

It is 'Dixie Chicken' that includes that great George epitaph, the masterful contemporary blues 'On Your Way Down'.

AT which point the band broke up, dissipated from an interminable cycle of playing support to inferior acts in cellars and roadhouses across the U.S. — not to mention their (and, more especially, George's) predilection for what might best be called 'supportive substances'.

Payne went off to join the Doobie Brothers, switching in mid-tour to the keyboard role in Bonnie Raitt's band. The entire band sold itself as a job lot to Zappa's new Discreet label for a one-off with an L.A. Rita Coolidge-clone called Kathy Dalton. "Merely," in the words of Ritchie Hayward, "to pay the grocery bills." Hayward also claimed to be so disgusted with the resultant album that he winged his copy off the top of the Hollywood Hills.

Rumours also suggested that during this period there was a plot afoot to replace Lowell with the former Vinegar Joe co-singer Robert Palmer, whose debut solo album owed not a little to the Feat sound (in fact half the band were involved, uncredited, in those sessions). After all, Palmer had 'guested' on the road with Little Feat, he had a pretty face, and, by the rest of the band's definition, he could be said to be 'reliable'.

However, someone over on the West Coast, someone high up in the record company (Mo Ostin maybe?) evolved the idea of giving the band One More Chance. Warner Brothers invested enough money in the idea of re-forming Little Feat that — possibly out of desperation — they went back into the studios and cut 'Feats Don't Fail Me Now', which contained at least two more standards, George's co-authored "Rock And Roll Doctor" and his 'Spanish Moon'. The remaining cuts saw Barrere and Payne emerging to a greater degree, whilst George continued in the production role he had assumed with 'Dixie Chicken'.

At the same time, under the guiding light of Ostin, Warners packaged the band up with one headliner — the Doobie Brothers — and a bunch of other hopefuls like Graham Central Station and Tower Of Power (who'd already figured strongly as expert horn contractors and arrangers on 'Feats'). The package toured Europe as the Warner Brothers Roadshow and Little Feat simply cleaned up, much to the embarrassment of the Doobie Brothers.

Success brought with it certain 'advantages' — one of the band's entourage was closely related to one of the biggest cocaine dealers in L.A. — and certain disadvantages. . .

Way back Lowell George had been quoted as saying — "I'll probably get both autonomy and privacy since I don't plan to be a star". As it happens, he got neither. Instead, at the time of the band's follow-up album, 'The Last Record Album', he contracted hepatitis of such a debilitating nature that the final studio album, 'Time Loves A Hero' contained only one of his songs, 'Rocket In My Pocket', a pretty inconsequential piece by his standards. This left the rest of the album wide open for skillful but disparate neo-jazz noodlings of Bill Payne and a scattering of pleasant enough pieces from Paul Barrett, who was always a better guitarist than songwriter.

All of which brings us to the anti-climatic four-night Rainbow concerts, some of which wound up on the tragically drag-heeled 'Waiting For Columbus' double live album. Whilst *Whistle Test* footage of the band playing 'Long Distance Love' some months before at least vindicate the visual impression of a band suffering from acute cocaine-induced anorexia, the Rainbow gigs showed them as tired, bored, ill-looking and uptight, with Lowell resorting to strange behaviour and the almost cynically obvious ploy of climaxing each set by throwing his maracas into the audience.

By then, it had all simply become a stage act

◆ Continues over

Pete Erskine wrote regularly for NME from 1973-76. He championed Little Feat during this time, and became a close friend of Lowell George.

Lowell

◗ *From previous page*

— and Lowell and Ritchie Hayward, at least, were far too intelligent and humane to actually believe in the hoax.

Talking to Lowell at the time, he seemed more concerned with an 'offer' he'd just received from Dylan to join forces with him. Not that I think for a minute that he believed anything would come of it; it was just that, from where he stood, sick, tired, disillusioned and crippled by all night sessions courtesy of certain 'generous' parties, it was a convenient temporary panacea.

HENCE, of course, the general assumption, as rumour became transmogrified into fact, that even before Little Feat had packed their belongings for further dates back across the waters, they'd broken up.

According to the man himself this didn't happen until April of this year: "While I've been out mixing down this last album," he explained "Bill and Paul went out on the road with a lady called Nicolette Larson. What happened was that the band ended up picking up more press than Ms. Larson."

Nicolette Larson, it should be pointed out, is one of Neil Young's ex-ladies; for some reason (am I being naive?) she picked up a raft of press in *Rolling Stone* and suchlike organs and is being put forward as the latest in line for lady-in-waiting to Linda Ronstadt. Fran Payne (nee Tate), Bill's equally ambitious lady wife was also in on the act, along with the omniscient Ted Templeman, who also happened to be producing Ms. Larson.

"Well, like I said, the band started picking up rave reviews," Lowell elaborated, "until one day someone from Warner Brothers happened along and signed them up. The next thing I know about it is that Bill comes round to tell me that, as from now, it's official that Little Feat have broken up."

Payne begins to look like some kind of contemporary Iago figure, but the irony is that Lowell seemed to suggest that this is exactly what he expected from Bill: "We've always worked on the assumption that, as a band, any members has always been free to, ah, pursue his own solo projects, and that at any moment any of us might quit, temporarily."

Meanwhile one noted the interesting fact that, of all the members of Little Feat, Bill Payne has been the most active in pursuing — or, excuse me, being pursued for — outside sessions. In fact, it's hard to remember a time when the man wasn't fully employed — which is more than can be said of any of the others in the band.

"Well, yes," Lowell admitted, "I always expected Bill would want to leave. . ."

But not like this? "No. The other thing is that Paul still hasn't called me up to say he's quit. . .

"Is my pride hurt? Well, "Lowell continued, "I really don't know — I must admit I got pretty tired of everybody waiting for me to make the major decisions — and then turning round and seeing me as some kind of ogre. . .

"For years now they've seen me as an ogre."

To illustrate Lowell went on to claim that he'd begun to receive reports that Bill and Paul have been — and here, it seems appropriate to use Lowell's words — "bad rapping me to people in the record company for what they have called my 'excessive behaviour'."

SINCE those last Rainbow concerts it seems to have become general knowledge that internecine disputes within Little Feat used to be an almost cyclical occurrence. If the above is true, however, this is the first time that such squabbling (for that's all it has been in the past) has allowed itself to take place outside of the immediate 'family'.

From personal observation, the above sounds and seems feasible enough. We already know about Bill, whilst it's always been an open secret that Kenny Gradney and Sam Clayton were piqued at the band's initial lack of commercial success, to the point where it was once suggested to me by a close advocate of the band that they had actually resented 'loss of status' after the limelight of their previous association with the much-hyped Delaney and Bonnie.

Lowell once told me in a mischievous moment that Gradney had a secret ambition to be some kind of pin-up stud figure. Certainly, neither he nor Clayton were averse to the attentions of the ladies. Any ladies. As for Barrere, he could be a good guitarist and sometimes a reasonable singer, but he always had about him a certain crassness — and an undisguised greed for Things Hedonistic.

Which brings us to Ritchie. He was always the one I initially thought that I'd hate to cross. Although I once did. And was forgiven. He and Lowell had the same kind of craziness, the same fetish for bikes, the same complete and utter committment to total immersion in the music. Lowell and Ritchie, aside from anything else, were the best musicians in the band — with no apparent ambitions towards anything else.

It has also become pretty clear that each had intentions of working with the other again and that, but for geography (Ritchie was in Canada earning grocery-money with Joan Armatrading at the time of the split) and hurt pride, those intentions would have been realised — especially since Ritchie played on Lowell's solo album.

Pic: Chalkie Davies.

"The main problem was that the guy was prodigiously overweight for a man of his age and vitality."

So who did Lowell take out on the road for his solo tour then? The line was too bad to catch all the names at the time, although I did pick up on Fred Tackett, guitarist, co-writer and long time friend of Lowell's. The others, it transpires, were mostly 'unknowns': Peter Wasner and Eddie Zip, both on keyboards, Mondo Conpean(?) on bass, Maxine Dixon, who appears on the solo album, on back-up vocals and Don Heffington on drums.

A strange, rather morbid, coincidence lies behind his choice of horn section. He apparently picked up Jerry Jumonville and Lee Thornberg from The Hunt and Tony Sales band (formed after the latter two quit Iggy Pop's band). The day Lowell died, Tony Sales was involved in a car smash which has left him in a coma ever since — as of last week doctors were still dubious as to whether he'd live.

However, we are digressing. It was pretty impossible to gauge Lowell's pre-solo tour expectations. But one thing's for sure — he wasn't his normal off-the-cuff self. Dry, yes, but. . .

"I am, as you know, under contract to Warner Brothers as a solo artist. . . and in order to get the right degree of, ah, promotional support and sponsorship from them for the album I have worked it out that I have to go out and perform a minimum of 21 dates. . ."

It was almost as if the situation was being portrayed as a polite form of blackmail.

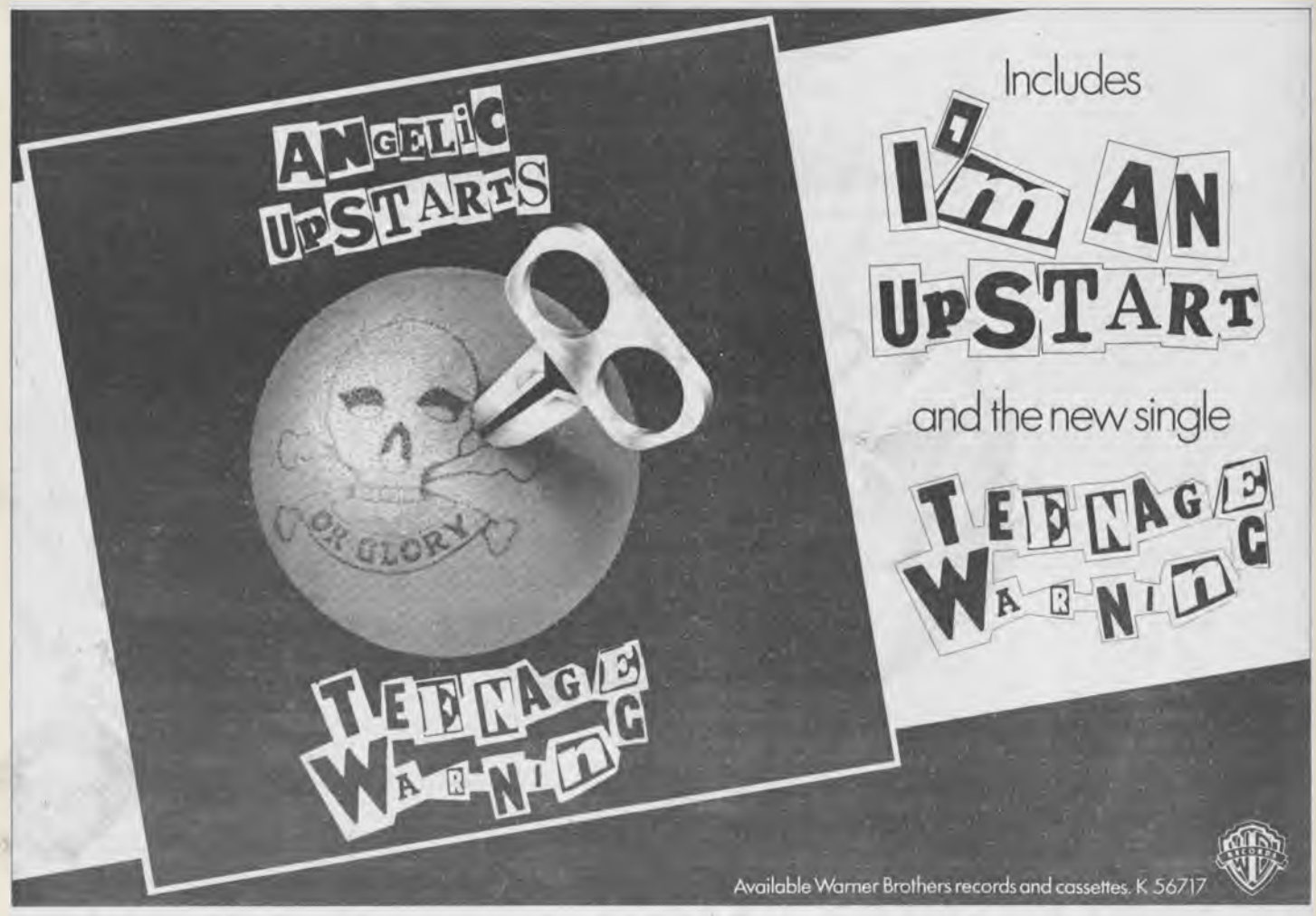
"Indeed, it's pretty much a cat and mouse game."

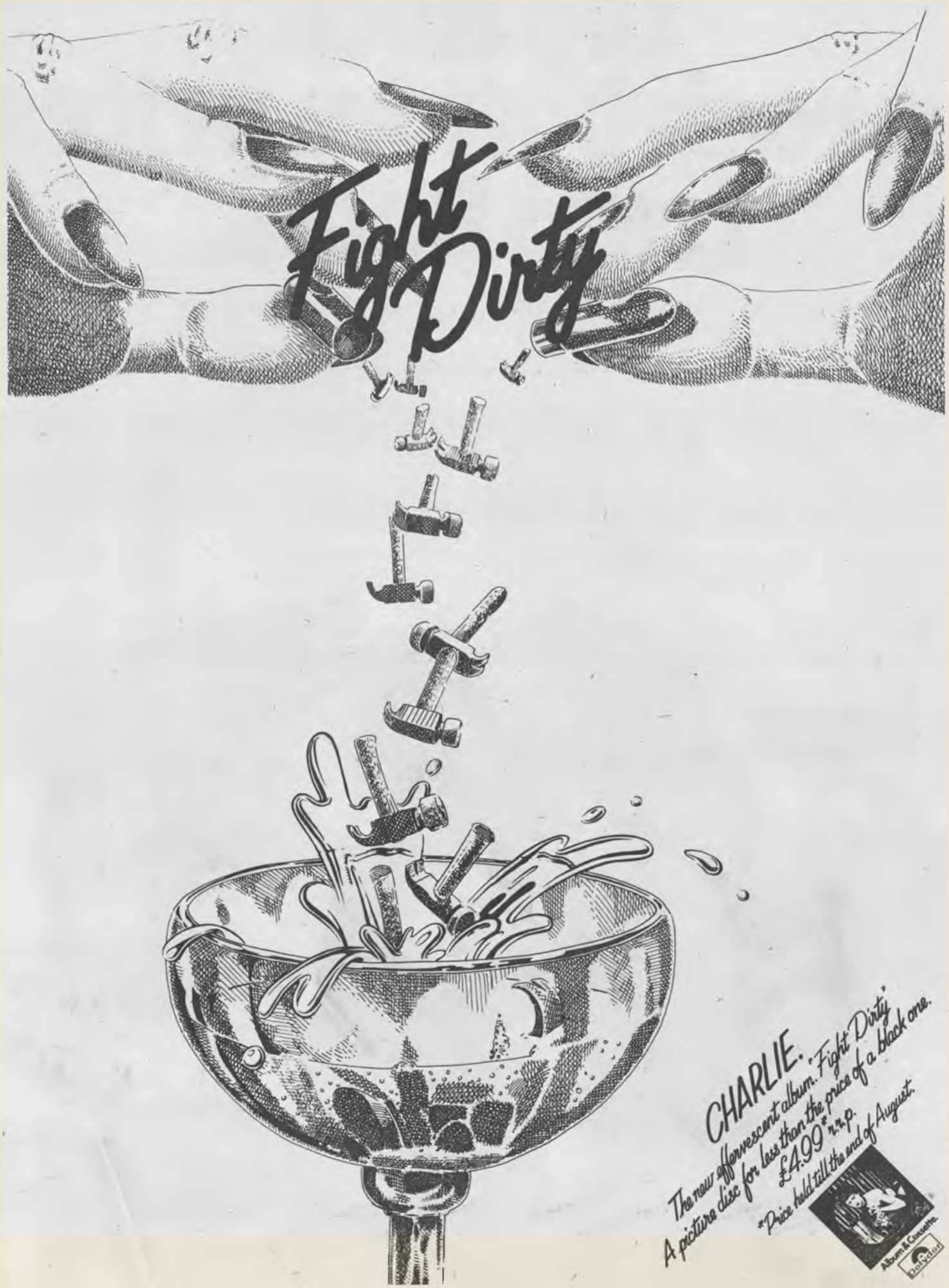
As far as Ritchie Hayward was concerned— and he has said, subsequent to Lowell's death, that "it was something he simply had to do" — Lowell did not sound over-keen on the idea. All the same according to the 'rave' reviews, once he got out there he apparently had a ball. However, it seems as if, after years of hiding behind the workaholic justification of Being Involved In Production, George was simply afraid of the the possibility of having to face up to himself without the cocoon of a band, albeit sometimes a truculent one in which to seek refuge.

The cause of death was not drugs. I simply refuse to believe that. The main problem — obvious to anyone with eyes to see — was that the guy was prodigiously overweight for a man of his age and vitality. And as far as I know he always was overweight — which leads one to suspect that he probably suffered from some kind of glandular disorder. Because it wasn't gluttony. Neither I nor anyone I know ever saw the guy eat.

And no way was Lowell George a tragic figure, either. His was not an incandescent live-now-pay-later career like those of Joplin or Hendrix; he was too interested and involved in activities and concerns outside of The Life. He, more than anyone else I have ever met within (or, for that matter, without) The Music Business, could always be relied on for The Overview. He was and is universally loved, and I have yet to hear a bad word against him.

Most of all, I can still hear him laughing. This was after all, the man who penned the immortal line: *"Tripe my shorts"*.

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PUNK IS DEAD!!

Shock Claim By Rising Mod Stars

SHOCKED?!! STRUCK Dumb!?! The first time ever I clapped eyes on Secret Affair I almost doubled up in disbelief. What was going down on the stage of Camden Town's Music Machine that night was brazenly pulverising all the unwritten laws of rockbiz logic.

Were my ears deceiving me or was this really the bolt-from-the-blue metamorphosis of the year?

Gradually the seemingly impossible realization sunk in . . . from the ashes of the washed-up old-hat New 'Powerflop' Hearts had grown one of the hottest unsigned bands I'd seen in ages.

They had the following to bear that out too. A legion of moddish devotees, most of them obviously East-enders. Many of them preferred to go by the name of Glory Boys, taking their cue from one of the Affair's brash, flash anthems.

Sometimes you just can't keep a secret. And sometimes you never can tell.

Not that Ian Page has any visions of retaining the obscurity of the cult hero for too long. Indeed, for the former mainspring of a band who were one of the most embarrassing artistic and commercial failures of last year, he certainly doesn't lack confidence. His front borders on arrogance.

"A lot of people say that of all the Mod bands we're the most likely to be successful," he tells me, spitting out the words with speedy enthusiasm.

"They say we've got the greatest crossover potential. But it's simpler than that. It's just that we are the best! It's nothing to do with being commercial or anything like that. Our songs are good songs whatever the classification."

The songs — written in collaboration with guitarist Dave Cairns — are vastly superior to anything the New Hearts ever mustered. But it is not only as a songwriter that Page (aka Ian Paine) has grown up. As a singer he has improved beyond recognition. And for all his wearisome egotism, he possesses the vocal chords that, given half the chance, would charm the buttons off the cuffs of the collected mohairs at a Marquee 'mod nite'.

So much for the singing. Secret Affair are also a potent dance-floor force with Cairns' rock-orientated lead breaking the icing on the cake of the strictly Stax and Motown style rhythms of drummer, Seb Shelton and bassist, Dennis Smith.

With Shelton and Smith having been snaffled from two more of last year's clubland loser bands — the Young Bucks and Advertising respectively — it is hardly surprising, even though they've only been gigging since April, that Secret Affair are noticeably more proficient than the majority of their peers.

And now, as if to emphasise the 'new-wave soul' tag they were landed with by on-the-ball, glossy modzine *Maximum Speed*, they have begun using guest saxaphonist, Chris Gent, for both live work and studio activity.

Dave Cairns succinctly sums up the result as "a sandwich of sounds":

"What we're trying to get is the rhythm, the dance parts, of old soul and Tamla records and combine that with some of the anger and frustration of today through our more contemporary lyrics. We like the music of the sixties, but you can't talk about '60s things today.

"If you listen to the radio, you can tell that disco is on the decline. They play a lot more Tamla Motown and a lot less disco. And that's what we are — dance music that isn't disco."

SECRET AFFAIR were born within a few weeks of the New Hearts splitting up, with Page and Cairns indulging in a flurry of songwriting activity to counter their disillusionment and cynicism towards the music business. The New Hearts had made just two massively forgettable singles for CBS; 'Another Teenage Anthem' and 'Plain Jane'.

Explains Dave: "By the time we split, we were totally demoralised. There had been a real division between us two (Cairns and Page) and the rhythm section. We'd wanted to go less powerpop and more '60s pop.

"Dave and I were forced together," continues Ian. "Just after the New Hearts split I went around his house and we started writing some songs. The first song we ever wrote together was 'Glory Boys'.

"After we'd written that song, we decided exactly what we were going to do, what we were going to sound like and everything. We actually said then that we were going to be more like a 60's mod band. But we didn't know then that this whole mod thing was going to come about.

"Then we did our first gig, supporting The Jam at Reading . . . and Mods! It was all a real shock to us!"

The set they play today boasts ten Page-Cairns originals plus a couple of slightly dodgy Tamla covers, the Temps' 'Get Ready' and Smokey Robinson's 'Going To A Go-Go'. The originals — songs like 'Time For Action' and 'Let Your Heart Dance', both scheduled as future singles, and 'My World' — are infused with instantly memorable hooks and some intense, heartfelt lyrics, most of which are written by Page.

"A lot of the songs are about how we hate the music business," he smiles wryly. "But I also write about being a Mod and being conscious of the fact that you don't like what's gone before. Trying to prove that punk was wrong.

"Everyone of us and all our followers hate what's become of punk. For me, the full stop was the first Clash album. I still love that record, but that's where it stopped for me. Punk only succeeded as a fashion and now it's time for a change."

TAKE THAT with a pinch of salt. Most of Page's animosity towards punk probably stems from the sour grapes of the punk audience's almost total rejection of the New Hearts and everything they stood for. And how he can brand punk a total failure when it still patently means so much to such a large chunk of the rock audience just escapes me.

More worrying, however, were his irresponsible comments in a London evening paper last week about the likelihood of Mod-punk gang warfare. The last thing we need, with so much good music around, is another full-blown summer of hate, along the lines of the punk-Ted battles of '77.

But just at the moment I was beginning to think Page's attitudes were well wide of the mark, he came out with one of the best things I'd ever heard him say — even if it was just about fashion.

"The Mod thing now is nothing like the old Mod thing in the 60's. Then, all the Mods had plenty of money. But the Mod thing now is about a lot of working class kids without much money aspiring to be as good, as sharp as someone with all the money. They're suited subversives . . .

"In that way, it's the antithesis of punk. Most of our audience are the suit and Fred Perry merchants. Not even your usual Parka jobs.

"But if a punk came to one of our gigs, we wouldn't tell him to fuck off. But we'd like him to listen to what we've got to say; it's time for a change. It's time for action."

"You've got to have change," echoes Dave. "It's a new sound that we've got. The clothes are the only throwback. There again, punk was pretty negative in a lot of ways. In fashion terms, the Mod thing is better because you've got a framework to work within.

"But you're still trying to look better than the kid next to you, within that framework.

"Even though the fashions will always be a bit revivalist — and any Mod will admit that — the lifestyle is very '70s. The dancing. It's the only real alternative to disco. The only other thing you can dance to in that way."

There's only one thing stronger than their misguided distaste for punk and that's their perfectly understandable aversion to the seamier side of the music business. Experiences with the New Hearts and the mistakes that were made first time around have left Ian and Dave determined to do as much as possible off their own bats this time.

To this end, they are self managed and have just produced and recorded their own single. And again, it was a phone call from Ian himself, not the customary agent or middle man, that first brought me into contact with the group.

"We're trying to prove that we can do it exterior to the music business. You can run things yourselves and do it your own way.

"When we formed the band we were just so pissed off, so cynical that we decided that if we couldn't make it on the strength of just being a good live band then we wouldn't bother.

"Me and Dave are in complete control of everything that happens. There's no managers or middle men at the moment."

BASSIST Dennis Smith played me a rough mix of that self-produced single backstage at the second of Secret Affair's recent string of Sunday evening gigs at the Marquee. The weakest song in the set 'Soho Strut' makes up the flipside but the stomper on the A-side 'Time For Action' is destined to become one of the debut 45s of the year, complete with the multi-tracked blast of Ian's trumpet fanfares and Chris Gent's sax. Ilford's answer to the Memphis horns?

"We've got all the sounds we want on the single," says Ian. "A really slapping, solid rhythm, the rocky guitar and the melodic vocals. And at the end we've got twenty of the Glory Boys chanting and clapping in the studio.

"There's a very strict division between what we sound like live and in the studio. Live, we concentrate on anything that makes people enjoy themselves; rocky guitar and plenty of raps with the audience.

"In the studio, we're more interested in experimenting with sound. We're not interested in trying to get the same sound as on the stage. We use a lot more instruments in the studios. I play a lot more trumpet.

"Before we did the single, I spoke to a lot on engineers to try and find out how various aspects of the Motown sound were achieved. As it turned out, having found out how to get some of the sounds, we set everything up in the studio and found we were able to do something different with the same basic sounds. We definitely didn't want it to sound like an old record.

"Most of it is down to the rhythm sounds — snare, handclaps and tamborine. But we've managed to get a lot out of it. I reckon we've managed to get a new musical style.

"If the single gets into the charts, I reckon it could be really influential. It could have a real effect on what people are doing."

There you have it. Eastside Ian and the Glory Boys. An epic single in the pipeline and a band who — provided Ian Page can keep his feet on the ground — could just turn out to be as important as they think they are. Stay tuned.

Left to right: Dave Cairns, Dennis Smith, Seb Shelton, Ian Page. Pic: Mike Laye.

BUT POSING BY BRICK WALLS IS STILL ALIVE AND WELL

SECRET AFFAIR "could just turn out to be as important as they think they are."

By ADRIAN THRILLS

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GLOUCESTER: AUDIO SONIC, 33 BELL WALK, EAST GATE SHOPPING CENTRE, GLOUCESTER
HALIFAX: SEVEN & HEARD, GEORGE SQUARE, HALIFAX
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HATFIELD: MARLEQUIN, HATFIELD, LONDON SW1 (NEAR)
HEATHROW: PHILIPS TRAVEL, 5 PARLIAMENT SQUARE, HERTFORD
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MANCHESTER: PICCADILLY RECORDS, PICCADILLY PLAZA, 9 PARKER STREET, MANCHESTER 1
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A TEDOAR LTD. PRESENTATION

SINGLES

Ferry: And my last disco record sold this many" Pic: Kevin Cummins

The Poison In Our Pop Society

Minister of Credibility, Sir TONY PARSONS lashes out at restrictive disco practices.

THE SINGLE

AMERICAN ECHOES: Las Vegas *(Mercury)*. Ready when you are, Mister De Mille ... A gilded palace rises from the barren, burning desert where nothing grows, a debauched, green felt Disneyland devoid of windows and clocks, for sin never sleeps. THE TEMPLES OF MAMMON!!

Cue a host of high rollers shooting crap doted on by cocktail waitresses who keep them coming, legions of big losers skinned and sweating by the roulette wheel, a multitude of blue-rinse extras wearing a heavy duty work glove on their right hand looking like they just eat their young assaulting slot machines as far as the naked eye can see and there you have it, the decaying glory that was Elvis Presley's Elba.

"Ooooh, Las Vegas, ain't no place for a poor boy like me, / Every TIME I hit your Crystal City, / You'll KNOW you'll make a wreck out of me. / Ooooh..."

"Las Vegas" is a country cracker, flash and shattered. American Echoes — I never heard of them either — perform it competently enough for a pass mark. It was written by Gram Parsons and he was to music what Montgomery Clift was to movies, the *real* heartbreaker who got overlooked by rockulture's masonic lodge Hall of Myths and Martyrs for something a little more ... obvious.

"Well, spent all night at the dealer, / Just trying to get ahead, / Spent all day at the Holiday Inn, / Just trying to get out of bed. / Ooooh..."

Parsons got kidnapped on the way to his own funeral — his corpse and coffin splashed all over with petrol, blue paper lit and retire — but some nights when the moon is full and the wind is right his ashes can be heard in the Sands and the Sahara laughing through their teeth while such stiffs as Icepick Willie Alderman, Greasy Thum Guzik and Horse Face Pete Licavoli (my favourite) turn over in their solid concrete places of rest, groaning.

"Well, the Queen of Spades, she's a friend of mine, / The Queen of Hearts, she's a bitch. / Some day I'll make up my mind, when I find out which is which. / Ooooh..."

Nevada State Law prohibits pawnshops in Las Vegas from accepting spectacles, deaf aids, dentures, glass eyes and false limbs. Next to the exercise yard in the State Prison, they built a casino for the inmates. Home of the sucker industry, a heart of gold lame, fairy tales can come true, it can happen to you. Gram knows. Listening to this song you'll see every old Elvis movie passing right before you eyes, he's up there, The King, hair swept up and back into pentecostal flame, rubbing rivets with Juliet Prowse, Ann-Margaret and Rita Moreno, baby blue Messerschmitt parked in the drive and a Big Mac on morphine years away, having fun, fun, fun in teenage heaven.

"Ooooh, Las Vegas, ain't no place for a poor boy like me, / Every TIME I hit your Crystal City, / You'll KNOW you'll make a wreck out of me ..."

Viva Gram Parsons: what happened? Ooooh ...

THE B-52's: Rock Lobster *(Island)*

ROXY MUSIC: Angel Eyes *(Polydor)*. The B-52's have got the kind of imagination we used to credit Poly Styrene with. They sound like an All-American Roxy Music, an experimental David Johansen, Pere Ubu being ingenuous — you could charm snakes to it. The only problem they might have is the same as Lene Lovich — everybody so busy appreciating the camp joke that they miss realizing how good they are. Brittle success. Zebra skin stilettoes are this month's gingerbread plaits.

Bryan Ferry's appeal was always a clumsy charm covered with one coat of slick. So obviously an upwardly mobile old phoney it was endearing, he could have done advertising work for coffee granules. His two finest moments are the 'Sign Of The Times' single and the video for 'Trash', when Roxy Music came out of abeyance — he ran up some steps, posed for a moment at the top, someone off camera threw a hand mike to him, he reached out, caught it ... and *grinned*. When he started singing, it went downhill, but in that split second he knew he had held the catch the expression on his face was like something off *Pathe News*, entertaining our boys in the front line (of course, he should have done 'Where The Boys Are' instead of 'It's My Party' on his 'These Foolish Things' album, but I guess it's too late now). You would have to be a very hard-shelled sort of person not to feel a degree of affection for Bryan. He still looks like an anorexic shark dipped in vaseline, he's still got that coat of glib gloss, but there's no getting away from it, these days the likeable fake rake is more feeble than funny.

'Angel Eyes' would suggest that these days he composes with the sales graph and slide rule. Remixed from the 'Manifesto' version considerably less successfully than was 'Dance Away', 'Angel Eyes' is all measured concerns about Beats Per Minute, bouncing bass and drums romping off together in healthy repetition. It's tinny and tacky, not exactly disco but too close for much concern about violations of the Trade Descriptions Act.

Bryan, bonnie lad, stop being an RSO — the people bought 'Dance Away' in vast quantities because of the line *"You're dressed to kill and guess who's dying"*, not because they see you as a thing Gloria Gaynor. So just get down and stay down. It is better to have a girl on your tom-toms than on your packaging.

THE TUBES: TV Is King *(A&M)*

ROOT BOY SLIM AND THE SEX CHANGE BAND: Dare To Be Fat *(Illegal)*. Hippy burlesque shows. The Tubes come across like a HM bull session, all Ted Nugent breaking wind while discussing socio-political problems at home and abroad. Fey Waybill sings about television and bears a remarkable resemblance to a member of the Flat Earth Society ranting in Speaker's Corner because the screeners on the phone-ins know him by now and have got him on their crank list. Don't you think you may be *overreacting* a little here, Fey? You sound so concerned and intense about something so inconsequential it makes a person think you just want to have a moan. Next you'll be setting yourself on fire because they're putting fluoride in the water. If I forgot your birthday, would you sulk, pout, sign a petition? Damn, damn, damn. Why can't a woman be like a man?

Sincerely, friends, The Tubes have such a high regard for their integrity soon they'll be looking at Re Styles thoughtfully when they have a "rap" about cutting back on their overheads some more. Fey, old sport — out of the pulpit and back on the platform boots where you belong. Here you remind me of an old bloke I used to see when I was a little kid. He wore a raincoat the colour of gangrene, glasses, silver-white hair and a sandwich board he carried up and down Oxford Street. He was campaigning to have all protein taken out of food because it causes lust in the heart. I still see him today — it didn't get him a hit record either. Step lightly, Fey, or on the next tour you'll be hanging out with that old bloke instead of Hugh Strangler.

Root Boy Slim and the Sex Change Band are still very firmly fixed in the TITS and ASS stage, always a winner with the crowd, ha! Root's TITS and ASS are SAGGING and DROPPED respectively, fact fans. Slob-chic is almost impossible to pull of convincingly unless you're John Belushi. Mostly, its practitioners are disgusting gross-outs swilling down pints of your finest cough mixture, landlord, and letting themselves go because everything apart from getting particles of sick on their shoes is too much effort. They're unhappy because they know if they tried to impersonate a zit popping it wouldn't look as good as when Belushi does it.

Anybody interested in the boring part, the music? YOU BETCHA LIFE WE ARE, TONE!! Oh, all right ... Root here alternates between Jagger editing a problem page with a mouthful of grits and Barry White stabbed in his bloated gut by fatal wounds from an erection caused by his poster of Squire Mallen. The band just want to be the musical equivalent of wafer thin mints.

EARTH WIND AND FIRE: After The Love Has Gone *(CBS)*

JIMMY JAMES: Now That You've Gone *(Pye)*

PEACHES AND HERB: We've Got Love *(Polydor)*

BARRY WHITE: September When I First Met You *(20th Century)*

AVERAGE WHITE BAND: When Will You Be Mine *(RCA)*

PHILLY CREAM: Motown Review *(Fantasy)*

KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND: Do You Wanna Go Party *(TK)*

REAL THING: Boogie Down (Get Funky Now) *(Pye)*. It's a fairly recent development, but disco is most definitely in dire need of three things these days: intelligence, identity and some good tunes. The gross majority of disco now has no more claim to vitality, unpretentiousness or instant classic status than the indifferent rock music its town criers claimed it would clear the system of.

E, W & F go slow; thousands will do an endless smooch to it. The only thing it may be useful for is for a few youngsters to fall in love to. This is the best thing music can do and all you who wonder what the recent fuss is about, you and your peers been going to these places for *years*, you will know it's true. E, W & F are as usual as enrapturing as reading someone else's horoscope. crafty, colourful diddicoy-mystics of the discotheque. Put some table cloths over their heads, give them a few goldfish bowls, call them Madame Rosa and stick them at the end of a pier for the public to use at their leisure.

Barry White, George McRae, Real Thing, KC, you name it, all these people who were joybringers instantly recognisable within the first second of the record starting in the early '70s, all of them — here and absent — they've lost it now the lot of them, a bunch of staid, samey wankers. Chart-proof today, **Barry White** is still the sensual, sexually aware and understanding Inter City loco, but — what a letdown — it's a long, arduous journey, the buffet is shut and he's off the rails before getting there. Shoot, missed that tunnel again, Sail! KC and the Sunshine band are shambolic — and undisciplined workout and everybody too far gone to even summon up the merest twinkle of that long gone funky horn.

Jimmy James almost gets the hang of mock-sincerity, and some thoughtful person has written the word *rapport* for him, so it should sell well amongst all those old unmarrieds about town looking for an equally sincere, sensitive one-of-their-own-kind also dying for a relationship.

Real Thing are as honourable as someone breaking open a blind box; they've truly found their cliche-niche, 'Boogie Down (Get Funky Now)' could be a retard reciting chunks of a phrase book for people he believes to be of a lower intellect than themself.

Peaches and Herb, AWB and **Philly Cream** all demonstrate how disco acts have been responsible for making the climate right to bring back *Hair*. Ageing hippies everywhere, you can feel safe, smug and snug as you ring in the '80s smoking Afghan Black at *The Muppets Movie* because all that amateur hour unravelling of the universe your old lady weaned you on is out of the mail order psychology and philosophy courses and back in the latest sounds. When you're down and troubled and you need a helping hand ... you've got a Freud, ain't it good to know?

Remember McFaden and Whitehead *"I know you know someone who has a negative vibe"*? And who could forget *"We were Bjorn, Bjorn to be alive"* NOT ME! Now when was the last time you heard a rock band get away with such banal banter? I tell you, these people make The Ruts look like Anthony Trollope ... AWB could be a krishna mantra

Singles

◊ *From previous page*

choreographed by Stigwood instead of George Beatle.

Peaches and Herb are upbeat, boasting *the* most bored drum I ever heard and a way with words so right for today: *"We've got beautiful togetherness with that magical ingredient of love, / A beautiful, beautiful vibe"*.

Nice one **Philly Review**: *"JKF has been shot / We miss him a lot / He always knew what to do / Nobody wears dungarees / Now they're jeans if you please / Ain't no more rock and roll / On the road, it's disco."* Disco, you become more pitiful every minute. Uncle Tommy, can you hear me?

CIDY BULLENS: Desire Wire *(UA)*
DWIGHT TWILLEY: Dwight On White (Shelter). Hey, y'all wanna go down Derivative Drive? No, piss off — I hate all these museum pieces who spend their wretched lives picking up the right licks and sticking them in the wrong place: Gen X, ho, ho! They're always described as "true pop sensibility, classy little songs, play up team" and must have been born on an import record from Boston. Cindy Bullens looks like a haddock that thinks it's Keith Richards and wanders around Carole King's 'Tapestry' thinking she's recreating 'Private Number'. The axe hero as Edna O'Brien. Twilley has a velvet suit but no function. His main regret is that he is not one of the pretty boys in Cheap Trick. He makes Tom Petty look deep. Both these people suck their cheeks in.

DOLLAR: Love's Got A Hold On Me *(Carrere).* It could be Mickey and Minnie Mouse under the skirting board enjoying a savoury bit of brie together. Doller were real plain Janes in Guys and Dolls — feathers all fluffy and brown. Then they left and told all the dirty details that went on behind the scenes to the press, kept dying their barnet a tartier shade of blonde and notched up two big hits. You *are* a swan! Now they've lost their way, I fear. If they'd exploited their assets fully they could have been the new Mynah Bird. What a waste.

SPEEDOMETER: Tonight, Tonight *(Arista)*
M.O.D.: M.O.D. *(Vertigo).* You want credibility? M.O.D. are fronted by an East End docker's son most lucid — I want you all to study the eye for detail, economy of expression and respect for the way a sentence should scope in the line *"Purple Hearts a tanner The Flamingo"* — and his name is D. Cook. His identity is David Essex. His song tucks its thumbs into a Peter Jay, Bespoke Tailor, Southend-On-Sea two-tone mohair waistcoat and manages to refrain from an urge for strumming most of the time.

In comparison, Speedometer suck — I can tolerate neophytes as long as they keep their mouths shut until they can come up with something useful: Speedometer never will. They are old Power Poppers, all cockney sparrah travesty and more *ham* than a hog farm. As such, they should fit in well with all the other fat frauds looking at New Mod as their passport to fulfilment of their petty ambition: people who write and sing about Mod in the loud voice of a sly gumbie, a disturbingly high number (geddit, oh!) of them seem to be some ten years older than the teenage tickets down the Lane on a Sunday morning.

I can't think of a cult better than Mod for going all the way with (for about two years) if you want freedom of expression and fun. I can't think of a more unsuitable one to tag along with if you want fortune, fame and a Name. Of course, if you kids were *real* Mods you wouldn't be Mods today — you'd go get something of your own a long way from its menopause. Nothing disgusts me more than all these ugly face-aches who try holding on to 1976 and all that (none of them were even there). But I guess it's going to keep happening because everything that's come along to replace it has been too ... slow.

Face it, suckers — PUNK: LOSER AND STILL CHAMPION.

ROCKERS TIME

Dell Spence & Lee Hayden of Capital Letters get sticky fingers.

LAST SEPTEMBER **Capital Letters** exploded into the reggae forefront like a late summer thunderstorm with their cataclysmic 'Smoking My Ganja' single. Almost a full year later, they've finally followed it up with a double A-side **'UK Skanking'/'Run Run Run' (Greensleeves 7" & 12")** and thankfully, the wait's been worth it.

On 'Skanking', the midlanders are certainly showing a mellower, more restrained side than on that debut 45, but the quality quotient has hardly sunk one iota. The only thing that's hard to decipher is whether the Lyric — *"UK skanking is cool but it never match up to JA style"* — actually comes out for or against British reggae; first listening suggests the latter, though the only interview I've ever read with the band would indicate their full-blooded support for the UK scene. Sort that one out if you can!

'Run Run Run', on the other hand, is easier to fathom. It's neither the Ann Peebles song of the same name nor a timely tribute to Sebastian Coe, but a haunting anti-police song, with the band's two female background singers adding some arresting call-and-response vocals.

The Morwells are a group enjoying a run of truly moving records and **'The Hold Us Down' (Greensleeves 12")** is no exception. Heartfelt sufferers' rock and an impeccable vocal performance, though the Ranking Trevor toast leaves much to be desired — a pinch of originality t'rinstance?

Another goodie is **Leroy Smart's 'Pride And Ambition'**, the first release, another 12", on Clapham's newly-formed Dub Vendor label. It's a re-cut of a classic song originally done by Smart himself for Bob Marley's Tuff Gong label in the early '70s. This new version is aimed squarely at the disco-reggae market with snappy, snazzy horns and the omnipresent syndrums, but for those who prefer something rootsier, the original cut, complete with a **Big Youth** toast, is on the B-side. The fact that both versions are equally impressive is tribute enough to the strength of the song, and Smart's fine voice.

In a softer lover's rock vein comes **Sister Love**, a girl harmony set-up, with **'Goodbye Little Man' (Cool Rockers 12")** and **Hortense Ellis with 'If You Know' (JB Music 12")**; on both the vocals are accomplished enough but the songs are insubstantial and forgettable.

The men fare only slightly better in the same stakes. **Al Campbell's** interpretation of **'If Loving You Is Wrong' (Warrior 12")** is no patch on Ms. Millie Jackson. **Cornell Campbell**, however, is a far more soulful crooner. Though he suits the

Reggae Roundup by ADRIAN THRILLS

genre perfectly, he might have done better to pick a more recent standard than the Marcels' archaic **'Blue Moon' (JB Music 12")**.

Atop most of the reggae charts at the moment is **The Lone Ranger's 'Barnabus Collins'** on the GG lable. Now, **Island** have seen fit to give the slab of light-hearted nonsensical toasting the wider distribution it warrants. It's a cautionary tale: *"Barney's not a ref or a cricket umpire/Say Barney is a wicked and dreadful vampire!"* Not the sort of guy I'd invite along to any party of mine.

Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare are at the controls on **Black Uhuru's 'Plastic Smile' (D-Roy 12")**. Next to Sugar Minott, Uhuru currently seem to be the fastest-rising JA starlets around. The fact that the two of them also seem to release far more records than just about everyone else is probably no more than mere coincidence.

Whatever, 'Plastic Smile' is one of the best examples of their craft to date, and the flip is a worthwhile re-cut of one of the sides originally cut a few years ago by Uhuru for producer Niney, **'Guess Who's Coming To Dinner?'** (Natty Dread, who else?)

Uhuru are also now being produced by **Dennis Brown**, who has a couple of singles doing the rounds himself on the various pre-release outlets. **'Cup Of Tea' (DEB)** again finds Mr Brown in a spiritual mood. It's *harder* than most of his recent pitiful 'Words Or Wisdom' album, but devotees would be better advised to wait for the forthcoming 'Joseph — Coat Of Many Colours' LP, where this is destined to crop up.

Finally, in the wake of the new rudies, reissued **Prince Buster** sides are swarming like greenflies. A cash-in for sure, but at least they jog the old brain cells to the fact that Buster was one of the most creative producers and all-round influential people in the history of reggae. Flooding the market at the moment are the reactivated Blue Beat label, who have put out a handful of 12" disco 45s in the past few weeks. As could have been expected, they are of mixed quality, juxtaposing the mighty with the mediocre.

Buster's only English chart hit was, of course, **'Al Capone'** (sorry, Ker-pawn!) and it might even stand a reasonable chance of repeating the feat, were it readily available on seven-inch. It's still backed by the original B-side **'One Step Beyond'**, which features some of the sleaziest, smokiest, sweatiest sax ever committed to a recording studio. The latter, incidentally, is being neatly covered by the North London group Madness.

Speaking of which, The Prince's original version of the song which that band have taken for their name crops up again on 'Three Of The Best'. As such, **"Madness"** is one of his finest moments, with dazzling horns, insistent four-square offbeat piano and Buster demonstrating the more militant, directly political side of his grunted, yelped lyricism: *"Propaganda ministers, progaganda ministers/I've got an aim in view/I'm gonna walk all over you.*

" Not so appealing is **'Big Five'**, where wit fails to compensate for dumb sexism. The song, however, is backed by the **Folk Brother's** celebrated **'Caroline'** with Buster displaying his talents solely at the mixing desk. A honky-tonk calypso built around a piano motif much closer to New Orleans R&B than Ska.

Meanwhile, **'Pick Of The Bunch'**, again on Blue Beat, spans the widest chunk of the man's career via its four tracks — an early '60s ska workout, **'Cleopatra'**, two slower Rock Steady numbers and a dubby Revolutionaries' instrumental in which our hero finally moves into the '70s.

If you don't fancy forking out the two quid plus for one of the above, then **Roland Alphonso's 'Phoenix City' (Island)** might be worth your attention. Despite the title, it's not a football song from the North American Soccer League, but a seven-inch trailer for the forthcoming Island ska album.

Lion courtesy Dub Vendor.

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j.r.r. tolkien's "the LORD of the RINGS" A

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SILVER SCREEN

The China Syndrome

Directed by James Bridges
Starring Jack Lemmon, Jane Fonda and Michael Douglas
(Columbia)

Jack Lemmon stares aghast as the entire cast and crew of The China Syndrome *go nuclear.*

Nuclear Power 2
Wet Liberals 4
Jack Lemmon 8

The China Syndrome is so called because it was once wishfully thought that, if the core of an American nuclear reactor were to undergo what the jargonauts like to call a "melt down", the resultant glob of radioactive gunge would burn and burrow its way through the Earth until it surfaced somewhere in an unsuspecting China. In fact nothing of the sort would happen, since the glob would almost certainly precipitate a sizeable nuclear explosion the moment it made contact with the outside atmosphere.

But that's as may be. What's not in doubt is that *The China Syndrome* is a film about a near-disaster at a nuclear power plant in California and that, shortly after the film opened in America earlier this year, the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Pennsylvania, USA, developed a fault in the cooling system around its reactor core and, despite the efforts of technicians on the site, threatened for several days to either take a great chunk of the surrounding state with it when it went completely out of control or, at the very least, sprayed the area with unacceptably high levels of radioactivity.

Arthur Koestler, that tireless chronicler of coincidence, may or may not have been impressed by both this sequence of events and the fact that the film's script happens to mention Pennsylvania in an associated context, but the American public certainly were; the film played to packed houses the length and breadth of the nation. What price, I wonder, another major mishap at the UK's Windscale, Cumbria, plant to tie in with the film's release here next week?

The China Syndrome is not an impartial movie; it's firmly biased against nuclear power and its social, ecological and political implications. (Although she only became involved with the film after her own idea for a screenplay about a TV journalist had been combined with another that concentrated on the nuclear issue, Jane Fonda is one of the American anti-nuclear lobby's prime public movers).

How much this bias affects your attitude to what is often an agreeably tense, fraught film will partly depend on which side of the nuclear fence you've perked yourself. Advocates of nuclear energy have been as angered by *The China Syndrome* as opponents have been pleased by it but, although I think nuclear power is an abominable and irresponsible energy option, one to be avoided at all costs, I was still bugged by the way in which the film really only bothers to detail in any depth characters that are essentially, if not actually, sympathetic to its cause. Such prejudice is predictable enough, but none the better for it.

The blithe, unctuous press officer at the nuclear plant, the moguls of the power company that operate it and take any number of risks and short cuts to ensure the plant goes "on line" on schedule, the ineffectual head of the TV network who refuses to put film of an emergency at the plant out on the air — these and too many others like them are presented as cut-out identikit villains, obvious targets obviously hit (or perhaps, in the last analysis, missed).

As a result, the film's credibility frequently dives lower than President Carter's recent ratings. *The China Syndrome* attempts to make several worthwhile points about the uses and abuses of both nuclear power and the power of the press, but it does so in a way that's at least as blinkered and twisted as the code of practice it would like us to believe is rigidly adhered to by those at whom it wags a rather self-righteous and very self-satisfied finger. Things are never this simple, and the film's lapses into typically Californian, concerned, committed liberal clichedom are often grievous, if not just plain dumb. (All these wunnerful, sensitive, thinking, feeling peepul — ugghh).

All of which is doubly unfortunate as *The China Syndrome* tackles the sticky problems of unpicking the workings of a complex technology (in this case, nuclear) very well. The various crises at the plant and their causes are explained visually — through the faces and reactions of those involved and the wavering meter readings on the panels in front of them. Unnecessary jargonese ("ongoing crisis situations", etc) is sensibly avoided, an approach completely in key with James Bridges' zippy, uncluttered, assertive direction; my heart hasn't pumped as loudly in a cinema for years as it did in the film's final, climactic stages.

Fonda's playing is reasonably interesting as it follows her gradual, largely accidental, progress from ambitious but thwarted soft-newscaster to reluctant heroine, but suffers from the film's sometimes lame 'comments' on media manipulation. Douglas, whose face is whole bag of chips off father Kirk's block, is not so convincing; his grumpy, 'radical' obstreperousness as Fonda's cameraman seems peculiarly stereotypical.

But both these performances wilt beside Lemmon's, whose part represents the only occasion the film comes to grips with the human issues involved in it. Lemmon plays the manager of the nuclear plant. He's a straightforward man, completely involved in his work and proud of his and the nuclear industry's achievements. His eventual decision to risk his career and his life in exposing the power company's cover-up of events at the plant is highly, and credibly, motivated. Lemmon's wry, philosophical features lend themselves supremely well to portraying this decent, honest, sympathetic man who's suddenly forced to choose between personal and professional ethics.

Without Lemmon, *The China Syndrome* would be little more than another exciting, but empty, film — an odd mixture of sometimes sensationalist disasterama and glib post-Watergate paranoia. With him, and despite all its splashing black on white and vice versa, it sketches in some very delicate, very believable grey areas. Most importantly, it reminds us that technology is not infallible.

It's a pity the film is ideologically so weak at the knees, but then scriptwriters aren't infallible either.

Angus MacKinnon

Everything happens on the boulevard– and the boulevard happens at night.

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SMILING MEN WITH BAD REPUTATIONS

They came. They played. They conquered.

Then they vanished, while whole new species sprang up to populate the rock universe. Now LED ZEPPELIN return, and want their old room back. JIMMY PAGE waves the rent book.

By CHRIS SALEWICZ

OF ALL the old superfart bands it is certainly Led Zeppelin who have been and still are the most reviled by the New Wave.

Whatever jerk-off socialite absurdities Jagger may have got himself into, The Rolling Stones have at least always had one of the prime punk archetypes in Keith Richards. The Who, meanwhile, have the ever-perceptive Townshand, a man who appears to have gone through something of a personal rejuvenation that seems to be a direct result of his encounters with Punk.

For whatever reasons, though, the manner in which Led Zeppelin have consistently presented themselves has made the band's name synonymous with grandiose excess. Even the almost equally guilty Pink Floyd have at least had the decency and sensitivity not to quit these shores just for the sake of saving money.

Don't sell your soul for silver and gold, as Les Perry once said. If rock'n'roll is essentially an all-encompassing roots culture, then obviously any musician who isolates himself away in some snail retentive tax exile life-style is neither responding to his obligations nor in harmony with those roots. Also, his initial purpose and motivation must be doubted.

The Clash's Paul Simonon summed up pretty well the total lack of respect that the new bands feel towards Zeppelin. *"Led Zeppelin???* I don't need to hear the music — all I have to do is look at one of their album covers and I feel like throwing up!"

IN SOME ways part of the reason for the venomous loathing directed at the band is not just because they've let themselves down, but also because you know deep well that Jimmy Page at least — like many of the new Punk icons a former art student — certainly knows better.

"I've read about many records which are supposed to have turned me on to play rock'n'roll," the guitarist told New York's *Trousers Press* in September, 1977, "but it was 'Baby, Let's Play House' by Presley . . . I heard that record and I wanted to be part of it; I knew something was going on. I heard the acoustic guitar, slap bass and electric guitar — three instruments and a voice — and they generated so much energy I had to be part of it. That's when I started."

Yet, in the same way that the death of the original, classic rock'n'roll punk the previous month by the publication of the article could have been seen as a serious warning of the false paths and box canyons into which Babylon could misroute rock'n'rollers, it also appeared at the time that perhaps the whole mighty edifice which Led Zeppelin had erected itself to be was starting to crumble away as inevitably as the Malibu Beach Colony will one day slide into the Pacific Ocean.

By the middle of the year when the two sevens clashed, the belief that the whole Led Zeppelin operation had got it all more than a little bit wrong appeared to be being backed up by concrete facts. The band appeared to be in a state of crisis. In artistic terms they seemed to have reached an absolute nadir. Following the turgid 'Presence' LP released in the Spring of the previous year there'd then been, six months later, the critically lambasted 'The Song Remains The Same' film and double soundtrack album. Even this emphasis on double records — two out of the three LPs the band had put out since they'd formed their own Swansong label had been two-record sets when none had been released before — suggested attempts to mill their market for all it was worth whilst fighting a rearguard action to forestall an inevitable end.

Perhaps more to the point, though, a general atmosphere of personal doom and gloom appeared to surround the once apparently invincible Zeppelin. The lengthy US tour undertaken by the outfit in the Spring of '77 seemed ill-fated from the outset. It was to have been the band's first live work since 1975 when vocalist Robert Plant had been severely injured in a car smash on the Greek island of Rhodes during a year of British tax exile. It was ominous then that the first dates were cancelled when Plant developed a throat infection.

Jimmy Page himself was also believed not to be in a good state, an assumption fuelled by the news that the full time services of a doctor were being employed to care for the guitar hero. Now Page denies that the medic was there to look after him alone — "We had a doctor to look after all of us, period. It was a bloody long tour" — with the same ease that he dismisses reports of his having been wheeled around between gigs on a wheel-chair — "I may have done that for a laugh — not seriously. No, no. That wasn't happening at all."

In addition, manager Peter Grant was said to be severely depressed following a divorce. Matters appeared to reach what seemed to be an inevitably unpleasant culmination when, following a Bill Graham-promoted San Francisco gig, one of the promoters's security men was badly beaten up by Grant, drummer John Bonham and one John Bindon, a Zeppelin employee.

IF SOME form of near-tragedy during the tour had seemed unavoidable, however, it was yet to wreak its worst toll. This happened some two weeks later when Robert Plant's five-year-old son died of a sudden mystery virus infection and the tour was abandoned whilst the grief-stricken singer flew home.

Now, of course, all these incidents may be seen as random happenings, as the chance intervention of fate. However, if you believe that you create your own fate and that human beings do not exist in isolation from one another and from the universe but are part of a far greater, interacting scheme in which actions and activities scheme in which actions and activities of the past create those of the future, then all this begins to look rather different.

Certainly, Jimmy Page's interests in the occult suggest that he should believe in such a cosmic overview. Indeed, there are those who would claim that it is solely down to Page's interests in these matters that such a tragic atmosphere has surrounded Led Zeppelin in no latter years. Personally, though, I don't think that Jimmy Page has inked a pact with Satan. To think like that is mere superstition — and that's taking into account certain rumours which have floated about the music business the past 18 months or so that there are even certain members of the Zeppelin entourage themselves who lay the blame for these assorted misfortunes on Page's fascination with Aleister Crowley.

When it comes down to it, though, I don't really think that there's been some clear-cut metaphysical holy war of good and evil waged on the rock'n'roll boards the band has been treading the past ten years. In fact, it's probably that outside interest which has kept the guitarist's head relatively together during the most successful years of the band. The occult, after all, is concerned with knowledge and plumbing one's own mystic depths for certain truths that are beneficial to the whole of humanity. Yes, of course, it can be used in a malevolent manner, but to view all occult activity as the work of the Devil is a red herring laid down by Babylon and therefore in the work of the tricky Devil himself.

I think, though, that Jimmy Page is very confused. His confusion doesn't stem from his occult interests but, I feel, from the very nature of Led Zeppelin itself and his position with regard to the band of which he is undoubtably the leader. Indeed, when we met last Friday evening in the Swansong offices on the hottest day of the year, it became glaringly obvious that Jimmy Page was totally comfortable, and, at times, positively exhilarated when talking about these extra-curricular activities.

It was noticeable, however, that when the conversation changed to the subject of his band he appeared frequently to find eye contact exceptionally awkward. Now, it's quite possible to blame that on the fact that in the isolated, self-enclosed existence in which Jimmy Page dwells he probably doesn't have that much verbal interchange with people outside his own sphere. Also, like many musicians who're far more at ease when living out their fantasies onstage, he may well be slightly nervous. Mind you, although a hermetic, fairly nerveless lifestyle is part of the whole Led Zeppelin problem anyway. Page's behaviour does suggest that he is not always totally convinced by his arguments — and Page is an adept in the art of being a media salesman for his band whilst at the same time revealing little about himself; check how many times the word "Knebworth" gets mentioned in this piece.

IT'S THE very nature of Led Zeppelin itself that is the problem. Let's not mince words, it's always been regarded as a "heavy" operation. There has been a slightly odd vibe about it.

Now, of course part of the nature of rock'n'roll is the manner in which it allows people involved with it to live out their childhood Cowboy & Indian fantasies. So I don't know whether Peter Grant really is a figure from the fringes of the underworld or whether he just enjoys people thinking that he is. I suppose it doesn't really matter (though in a way it does) because I've no doubt, as Page himself comments later on, that certain of the behind-the-scenes music industry figures with whom he has to deal, particularly in the States, actually are dodgy characters. So maybe it gives him an edge over them. (Unless they're also all just living out their fantasies — in which case it all gets a bit complicated and self-perpetuating, and a bit pointless too).

"The whole point of the bit in *The Song Remains The Same* film," Page tells me when I ask him about this, "where Peter plays a gangster was just to send up all that and show how it was just a joke anyway."

Nevertheless, I counter, there was the slight problem with the security guy in San Francisco. There's certainly confident in his voice when he replies "I didn't see it, you know, so I can't say exactly what happened. There were no million dollar law-suits put out on me, y'know."

"But," he continues, "you must remember that Bill Graham has a very heavy reputation, that all his security people have a reputation for heaviness. As for Peter . . . Well, he's a very big guy and, if people are coming up to him all the time and calling him a bastard and telling him to piss off to his face, then he's probably going to react accordingly."

Alright, fair enough. But let's not forget that John Bindon is currently in Brixton either awaiting or serving a sentence for a subsequently commuted manslaughter — an incident which wasn't connected in any way with Led Zeppelin. Once again, judging from his reply to being reminded of this, there's no doubt that this genuinely troubles Page, much more out of real concern for Bindon, I feel, than for any unhappiness about him being linked with Zeppelin. It's a pity I forget at the time, but I'd like to have also got his reaction to Nick Kent's claim that John Bonham once threw a drink over the hapless writer for a negative review.

But that's by the by, I suppose. It seems more important to tell the guitarist that, whether he's aware of this or not, an oft-expressed opinion on Led Zeppelin has been that the problems Robert Plant has faced have been something of a thermic backlash that Plant, as the most accessible and open band member, has had directed towards him.

Page seems very shocked by this. "I don't think that's so," he replies slowly, almost as though slightly dazed. "If what we were doing was really evil then . . . then I suppose we'd just put out lots of records and try and make loads of money . . . I hope that's not so."

SOMETIME about the middle of last Friday morning I'd had a call from the Swansong press office. Could I arrive maybe an hour before the interview was due to begin? That way I could be given an earful of the new Zep warning. I can't pretend the idea exactly thrilled me to the bones, especially in the light of the last studio album 'Presence', which I find utterly unenjoyable. If I felt the same way about the new, as yet untitled, LP it could mean a chilly start to an interview.

By lunchtime, however, the potentially awkward situation had been resolved by Jimmy Page himself. A further phonecall passed on the information that the guitarist felt it pointless for me to hear the record as it was, apparently, "a separate entity" — from what I'm not certain. Obviously it did cross my mind that maybe he was thinking the same way as myself and saw a little gain in the songs being numbered some time before the record was even released.

Perhaps predictably, when the record did come to be mentioned he was full of enthusiasm for it. The titles of the new numbers are: Side 1 — 'In The Evening', 'South Bound Suarez', 'Hot Dog'; Side 2 — 'Carouselambra', 'All My Love', 'I'm Gonna Crawl'. The Knebworth bashes will feature "at least two songs from the new album plus several numbers from previous LPs that haven't been performed live in the past. What can I say?

I was also asked for some idea of the sort of questions I'd be asking. As I was at that time deciding on these for myself I couldn't really help out there. Besides, would this not have detracted from the natural spontaneity of the occasion? I was, however, informed that questions about the death of Plant's son and about Aleister Crowley were strictly taboo. This did not augur particularly well, especially when, whilst waiting for the assistant editor chap from the *MM* to finish his rap with Jim, photographer Adrian Boot emerged from that session to inform Penves and myself that Page was "doing a Chuck Berry" and ignoring most of Watts' questions. The guitarist was also apparently none too happy about Boot's snapping needs.

In the event, of course, Page gave Penves plenty of pic-taking time to prior to our encounter. Also, as far as my interview went, Page and I just started talking conversationally (but not before he made a rapid attempt to flog Knebworth) rather than adhering to any strict question and answer form. This situation lasted for much of the interview.

Page was drinking pints of lager from a straight plastic glass and chainsmoking Marlboros. So was I. It was probably down to a combination of the booze and the hot weather, but the conversation quickly became very speedy. Maybe we were also blocked on the carbon monoxide fumes wafting in through the open window from the early evening rush-hour traffic three floors below on the Kings Road.

What with the roar of London Transport Roadmeisters stopping just past the offices and the constant rumble of jets on their way to Heathrow overhead, it was often hard for either of us to make out what the other was saying. Though his enunciation is very clear indeed. Jimmy Page's soft Surrey accent — the family business is Page Motors in Epsom — makes him perhaps the most quietly spoken interviewee I've ever come across. Even so, I was pleased that he didn't pull the slumped-out whispering wimp number that I'm told is one of his favourite interview techniques. Not once, I think, did he lean back on the couch on which he was seated next to the window.

No doubt exacerbated by the booze intake — Jim is fond of the odd tipple, I'm told — perspiration poured off of his forehead in large drops, frequently lodging for a few moments in his close-to-shoulder length hair. Coupled with the collarless striped white shirt he wore, he didn't look very different at all from when in the late '60s he laid down the ground rules for the classic pre-Raphaelite, faintly androgynous British rock star. He actually looked younger than when I'd encountered him a couple of years back. Only the lines around his sometimes troubled eyes gave any indication of age.

THE Selling Of Knebworth began right from the very outset. I don't think you really like doing interviews, do you, I ask? "Well, (laughs) it depends. I don't mind if the questions are alright."

You look incredibly well.

"Well, I looking forward to . . . to Knebworth, actually. We've done a lot of rehearsing and checked things out. We've actually been down there and worked things out relative to the actual site."

It must seem odd with it being such a long time since you've played onstage . . .

"Well, it did at first . . . But then again it's like a natural amphitheatre, so I should imagine it's actually quite a good gig to be at. I went to Blackpool, but that was a bit of a sea of bother. But it was great to see Dylan."

Phew, that was close. The Zim to the rescue. At least we can talk about Bob Dylan for a while. This might be handy. Maybe if I mention to Jim that I met Dylan last year when he went to an Alton Elie gig at the 100 Club and that he told me how he preferred the vibe in England to that in the States, and also in Germany from where he'd just returned, then we can get onto this matter of Punk and The New Wave without too much discomfort.

Instead, though, Page mentions his surprise that Dylan had played in Nuremburg. "I couldn't believe him doing that. They played the place where they had all the big rallies. He must have come out of there feeling very strange. I know I would and I'm not even Jewish."

He hasn't heard of Dylan's conversion to Christianity. "Oh, that's very interesting. Especially after that Nuremburg thing. When did that happen? Quite recently?"

Oh, about six months or so ago, I think.

"We met his mum once, actually," Page tells me, "It was about the third tour and we were in Miami, and the typical Miami woman comes up with the spectacles and tinted hair bit and she says 'Oh, I hear you're a group. My son's a singer. You've probably heard of him — Bobby Dylan. He's a good lad,' she said. "The strangest thing she said of all was that he always goes back to his . . . You know, the school turn-out when they got their degrees and things. He always goes back to that . . . Which is obviously a side of Dylan that many people would be actually shocked about. He's probably very orthodox in some areas where you expect him to be very bizarre and anarchistic."

Logically, I suppose, the matter of meeting Dylan at a reggae gig leads to

Continues ▶

Pix: PENNIE SMITH

"It's not like we felt we had to change the music to relate to any of the developments that have been going on . . . There's no tracks with disco or anything."

◀ From previous page

discussion of matters Rastafarian. Jimmy Page is far more au fait with it than I would have expected.

"Yeah, it's very interesting: the lost Tribe Of Israel and all that. It was at the time when Haile Selassie died that I wondered 'What's going to happen now?' because there is this big thing that he's invincible and that he would never die but obviously," he chuckles," he could give up his bodily form if he wanted to — that was the loophole.

"But it *is* fascinating."

We talk about Egypt for a minute or two. Page's trip to Cairo had, indeed, been the subject of some quite splendid rumours. On the first leg, I think it was, of that last ill-fated Led Zeppelin US tour it was said that one night he'd been watching TV when the screen became filled with flashing lines. Immediately, so the tale went, he cancelled the next dates and flew off to Egypt. The conversation didn't lead into my mentioning that and, besides, I'm fairly certain I once read a fairly through refutation by the guitarist of that story.

Thoughts of Cairo seem to make Page feel very happy. "I didn't want to come home," he smiles, "it was so good. I didn't go for long enough, though. I went at the end of an American tour and with every day I was there family ties in England were pulling more strongly. I just thought, 'oh, I'll be back soon' and haven't made it yet. I'd certainly like to see The Valley Of The Kings near Luxor.

"I haven't been to many Arab countries, but I've been to Morocco and there and in other hot countries there's this constant hub-bub, but in Egypt it's just so tranquil. It really is quite an experience. Let alone the pyramids."

Equinox, the Kensington occult bookshop that Page owned and which specialised in the works of Aleister Crowley, is closed these days. The lease expired and, besides, "It obviously wasn't going to run the way it should without some drastic business changes and I didn't really want to have to agree to all that. I basically just wanted the shop to be the nucleus, that's all."

His interests in the occult haven't in any way diminished, however. "I'm still very interested. I still read a lot of literature on it."

I mention that last time I'd gone past *Equinox* a small sticker that someone had placed on the door had attracted my attention. "For the real truth about the changes in the Church of Rome," it had read, "write to the following address". The name and address of a priest in Mexico was given. We talk about the Rasta belief that it was at the Pope's insistence that Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in order to prevent Haile Selassie organizing the Christian church in such a way that would have reduced the Catholic church to the second largest Christian church in the world.

"I know the Pope definitely blessed the bombers going to Ethiopia," says Page, "that's a fact. My lady went to the Vatican. She said it's like Fort Knox, a completely separate state. A highly guarded treasury. And they have all these links with suspect organizations ...

"The whole image of the Pope being borne around St Peter's on a throne doesn't even bear thinking about. They had some programme on TV about the Vatican and they got through to one of the heads of the business division. And he was asked if it wouldn't be an act of faith to give all this wealth away — if your faith was sufficiently high and strong then obviously this wouldn't really affect the church. But he was dumbstruck. So obviously," he laughs, "he didn't have the faith."

As reported in *Thrills* some weeks back Jimmy Page has had some involvement with community politics up in Scotland where he owns Crowley's former home, Boleskine, on the shores of Loch Ness. After, against much opposition on the local council, a harbour wall utilizing raw materials had been built under the guidance of the local job recreation scheme Page, largely as a result of previous similar activities within the community, was involved in the final unveiling ceremony. The local Labour man, he said, jumped on the platform at this event in a predictable attempt to make political mileage.

"I just got up and said 'I'm not here for any political reasons whatsoever but just from my own endeavours as an untrained musician. And it's just sheer determination that's been employed here against a good eighty per cent of the council who wished them to have no encouragement whatsoever."

One is not particularly surprised that the politician appeared to milk the event for his personal aggrandisement; it is the nature of such a breed of people to behave in that manner, no matter what political party they belong to. It does seem interesting for a moment, though, that, when I enquire as to whether the council members were operating in a truly reactionary manner, Page seems a little uncomfortable when he realizes that I regard "Reactionary" as being synonymous with "Tory".

Maybe that's by the bye. Page has, after all, been involved up there in other battles with officialdom. "The Hydro board in Scotland were putting in this scheme which wasn't of benefit to anyone except for a small percentage of local labourers — although, in fact, most of them were being brought in from places like Manchester and Liverpool.

"What it was going to do was pump power at peak times to the South. It wasn't going to benefit the Scots at all. And for this they were going to put pylons up all over the place and mess up the loch. There were no pylons there whatsoever before. And I just didn't think it was on. For them, of course, it was purely a financial investment. It was really a revelation to see how these things go on. So corrupt.

"But we managed to force a public inquiry whereby it was put under the Secretary of State. They really put you through it at those things. It's like a court of law. They try and throw so much mud at you. "Although it does seem that in London these days if they're pulling down buildings to put up new ones they are trying to keep the old facades. It makes it much more palatable. At lease you don't get things like that too much," he waves in the direction of the World's End council housing project.

"But," he continues, "so often people just get apathetic and think there's nothing they can do. At least sometimes you can uncover a bit of unsavoury business that's going on. I do really care about these things. I don't particularly go around doing a load of public campaigning, but both those things were there on my doorstep. On the other hand it can help if it *is* on your doorstep because it gives your protest much more credibility."

BY NOW I'M feeling a bit confused by Page. I rather like him. Even though I have the reservation that when he pointed out of the window at the housing development he was perhaps more concerned with aesthetic niceties than with the bureaucratic contempt and condescension with which it is decided that human beings should have to live in such monstrosities, it still seems that his spirit is very definitely in the right direction. Yet how is this compatible with the lumbering dinosaur that his rock band have become?

Well, Jimmy Page is essentially a conservative person. He is also a Conservative person. A Capricorn, he has much of the rather hidebound love of tradition and status that can be a characteristic of that sign. He could do with a bit of overstanding of things. He voted Tory at the last election, he says. "Not just for lighter taxes — I just couldn't vote Labour. They actually stated that they wanted to nationalize the media — so what possible criticism of them would you be able to have."

Although I believe all politicians of whatever creed to be largely self-seeking egotists, I point out that, as the City already has effective control of both Fleet Street and ITV, then the Tories already control the media. Page doesn't seem that convinced.

He voted Tory at the previous election too, he tells me. "I voted Conservative then because I believed in Heath. And I still believe that Edward Heath was a very honest man. He was too honest to be a politician, in fact. Wilson was very slippery, but a good politician. But I suppose that's politics."

Actually, I'm not surprised Page rates Heath, a man who was certainly superior to the deplorable Thatcher. Page has much of that same laissez-faire mercantilist attitude to life that Heath favoured. The only problem with espousing that particular political philosophy is that it can permit you to piss on a lot of people in the name of freedom. I'm not suggesting that Page necessarily behaves in such a manner, of course. A better clue to his attitude to such matters comes in the same series of *Trouser Press* articles from which I took the Presley quotation.

He's talking about the song 'Hats Off To Harper', on the third Zeppelin album: "(Harper's) 'Stormcock' was a fabulous album which didn't sell anything. Also, they wouldn't release his albums in America for quite a long time. For that I just though, 'Well, hats off to you'. As far as I'm concerned, though hats off to anybody who does what they think is right and refuses to sell out."

In the light of this quote, and another, more ambivalent one relating to the New Wave, I ask him if he'd ever in younger days inclined more to anarchy.

"Well," he replies with due deliberation, "anarchy's alright if you can see where you're going afterwards. Although I don't see any point in destroying things just for the sake of it. It's the easiest way out. It's hard to have an optimistic goal and strive towards it — that's really hard work. "But, yes, anarchy can certainly be an answer to a situation if there's no other answer."

Quite understandably the Establishment always presents anarchy as being very negative when, in fact, it's more concerned with a positive spirit . . .

"It's difficult," Page nods, "at the time when Hitler came into power in Germany during the '30s, he appeared to be stabilising the economy and giving people more work and was emerging as a very patriarchal figure. The Germans felt that everything was going to be alright. Yet underneath was this fundamental plan — be it evil or whatever.

"And at the time when Hitler came in there'd been a form of anarchy existing. So, yes, you just have to see at the end of the day what's really gone down."

AND SO, BOYS and girls, we come to that section of the interview when we talk to Jimmy Page about New Wave music. Even though he seems to consider Dire Straits a New Wave band, Page is perfectly aware that there are punk bands and punk bands who aren't really punk bands. He has heard The Clash and appears to rather like them. He warms very much to the mention of Ian Dury. "Yeah, he really imparts such a great feeling, doesn't he? Makes you feel so good. That was certainly the first thing that struck me about New Wave music — that it was sheer adrenalin pouring out. Real energy just tearing to get out."

But how did the beat group Led Zeppelin relate to it? They were presumably aware of what was going on. I remember Page and Plant going down the Roxy to check out The Damned once.

"We were aware of it," he nods, "but it's not . . . I mean, music is like a 360 degree circle from which some people may drop out to let others come in. And there are obvious examples of that — say, the feeling that Free generated and which was replaced by Bad Company. Also, the raw blues, going back to the early Fleetwood Mac days. Well, now you have George Thorogood. And Herman's Hermits are replaced by The Bay City Rollers.

"Bands like us and — I hate to say it but . . . The Floyd . . . we're off in our own little bits. It's always open for anybody who's really raw and earthy and who makes sheer rock'n'roll music. Even though much of the New Wave had the political content . . . I mean, The Damned — I was absolutely amazed by the power that was coming out of them. Though they didn't really fit into the New Wave movement as such.

"Nevertheless, there are categories. But it's all relative; anyone who plays good music and is expressing themselves with an instrument or on vocals has got something to say. It just depends whether you can relate to them or not. And that also depends on whether your musical tastes are narrow or very broad."

And certainly from what you're saying you would claim to be able to relate to New Wave . . .

"Yes. But I can also relate to classical music — and you wouldn't find *them* saying that . . ."

Oh, don't count on it. I'd think you'd be very surprised.

"Oh . . . well . . . good . . . well, they ought to."

I think if you went round to the places of a few punk musicians you'd be very surprised by the width of listening material you'd come across . . .

But equally, and I think this must be said, of all the Old Fart

bands certainly Led Zeppelin, for whatever reasons, are the most loathed . . .

"*Really????*" Jimmy Page sounds quite startled.

'Fraid so . . .

"*We-e-ell* . . ." he pauses for several moments," . . . people write to us, you know, and a lot of younger people who I'd never have expected to have got into us have said that they got really fired up by the energy of New Wave bands — and they still like New Wave bands — but they got interested in the actual musical content and wanted to go one step further which is how they discovered bands like us . . .

"And . . . uhh . . . I'm not sure whether that's going to last or not," he laughs, not altogether confidently, "but it's quite good if you can keep turning people on."

Didn't you ever worry, though, over the past months whilst you were making the new record and planning the Knebworth thingy that it might be like throwing a party for which no-one turns up?

"Yeah," he laughs again, more confidently this time, "but no — because when we'd finished our album I knew at the time that it didn't matter if it didn't come out for nine months afterwards because I knew that I could rely on the fact that Led Zeppelin *hadn't* dated — the actual identity of the band is still there. There's a fresh approach which can still give it an edge.

"I had my reservations at one point about playing a date like Knebworth. But in the end it all went hand-in-hand with the LP, when that was finished I did actually stop and take a breath and I thought 'No, it's alright. We've moved on sufficiently to be able to see the next horizon' . . .

"We're not sounding complacent, I hope. There's a lot of hard work still to come obviously. It's not like we've felt we had to change the music to relate to any of the developments that've been going on. There's no tracks with disco beats or anything. But I think some of the numbers are some of the most immediate we've done anyway.

"Like I say it's not a new musical form but there is still something very fresh about it."

BUT, PRIOR TO doing it, were you not perhaps apprehensive? I'm not talking about how you'd do in the States, where obviously you're still going to sell loads of records. Presumably it still does mean something to be still respected in your own country . . .

"No, sure. We were concerned about it being good. And we were pleased to hear that the actual environmental area of the stage was good. But if the playing hadn't been feeling right, I would've worried. But that feels alright so I'm pretty sure it'll be good . . ."

But I wasn't really talking about Led Zeppelin To Play Gig Shock Horror. I was actually wondering whether maybe you were concerned you might make this platter and no-one would buy it in Blighty . . .

"Well, we were worrying about too many other things at the time. I was worried more about whether we were still going to gell. Having felt something special towards the band for that amount of time and still wanting that feeling to be there without . . . without being quite sure it would be. But then we got together a few times to play and could see that it still was . . . well, it was a very good feeling.

"The LP really is a bit of a by-product. To me Knebworth is far more important . . . Because people can buy the LP and we won't see how they're reacting to it. But," he laughs, "I will at Knebworth. The LP's a frozen statement which can be always referred to, but Knebworth's going to be different."

Do you actually see much of each other?

"No, not really."

Robert Plant and John Bonham don't live in London, do they? They live up in the Midlands, yeah?

"Yeah, they live pretty close to each other. No, I mean, we don't have monthly get-togethers for the sake of it."

Now, look, you've been involved in community politics up in Scotland, but should it necessarily stop there? For whatever reasons, Knebworth is a huge gig. But a couple of weeks back The Clash — who are quite a big band these days; their last LP entered the charts at number two — did a couple of gigs for orphans. Have you ever thought of doing something like that?

"We did that — about the third year of the band. And we got fucked for it. Previously we'd played places like Manchester Free Trade Hall and the Albert Hall and we'd had all these letters saying 'Why do they let their fans down? Why don't they play the clubs any more?'

"So we said 'Yeah, let's play clubs!'. And it was chaos because people couldn't get in. So the next barrage was 'Why are they so selfish doing small clubs?'. So the supply-and-demand thing becomes a problem. So from then on we were faced with a sort of dilemma. But then again it became a challenge to see if we could try and make it work on a large scale.

"Don't get me wrong. I'm the first to admit it can get too large, but something like Knebworth can be a challenge because you know it's worked in the past. But we couldn't do that. We tried — when we'd done the LP, we were trying to work out where we could get in and play. But then we thought 'Are we running away from something?' And we weren't.

"It was almost like denying what you were. And you've got to be true to yourself."

Hmmm . . .

"I know what you mean, but it just gets impossible to do unless you play four weeks at the Marquee."

But you're supposed to be a rock'n'roll band. Why don't you just *play*? Look, it's not that hard: The Clash did two dates at the Notre Dame off Leicester Square. It wasn't publicized — only by word of mouth. They played new songs, tried out new sets, made money for charity. So it obviously *is* feasible . . .

"I'll give you an example of a band that I don't think could play the Marquee: Status Quo."

What an odd thing to say. I'd rather have hoped that Page would consider Zeppelin to have a slightly different awareness to the dandruffy riffers. But of course, counter, they *could* play it if it wasn't announced as such . . .

This is ignored. "And I know they've played Wembley — so, if fifteen per cent of those people tried to get in, it would be chaos. So you see the problem."

Not really.

MY NEXT QUESTION is inter-related with a lot of things about which we're talking — just how important is the institution of the music business to you? Do you feel that Led Zeppelin is part of the great corporate conglomerate?

"Obviously. Yeah. But to them you're only a matrix number. *We* sweat the songs out, though."

But is it down to just letting the shareholders have bigger dividends? You're a musican, right? I think that's what you feel you are . . .

"Yeah, but don't you see that we're only as good as whatever we come up with. Say we didn't put out another LP . . . Well, we've probably done really well for our record company but, if we did that, they'd probably come right down on us. I think it's probably really ruthless behind the scenes. It comes down to things like Kinney owning car-parks and things.

"I voted Tory at the last election not just for lighter taxes — I just couldn't vote Labour . . . I voted Conservative before because I believed in Heath."

You imply, I suggest to Page, you don't care about the record company. But, by acceding to those demands to play those huge venues — and in a way they're subconscious demands you're making on yourself — you're just perpetuating the whole thing . . .

"I see what you mean — though I'm not sure you see what I mean. The problem is trying to supply the demand of the people who want to see you. You can only gauge that, I mean, it is a rather nice feeling deciding on this huge date and not being quite certain that there's enough demand and then finding you can play a second one the same size.

"Anyway, at this point in time we just want to get back into playing music. And we will be doing other dates. I don't know where: not necessarily in England. We've been talking about playing Ibiza — just getting in there and playing. Just so we've got a chance of trying out new ideas and new riffs and arrangements and songs."

So do you not think that Led Zeppelin has become part of some huge thing that's got totally out of hand?

"Well, if it has it certainly won't in the future because we'll be playing places like Ibiza."

Was there a stage that you reached with Led Zeppelin when it became important just to make money?

"No. Never. No, because we've been our own worst enemies over that. But you wouldn't see it like that now. But at the time we put out our fourth LP we had the worst reviews of anybody. And to put out an untitled LP at that time was considered professional suicide. It probably doesn't seem it now. But then . . ."

Are you very materialistic?

"Well, I dunno. Yeah, I suppose I am a bit. But on the other hand, even though I have material possessions, the most important things are books, studios and records. If I had to get up and run that's what I'd try and take," he laughs.

Do you think that you personally have perhaps unavoidably become caught up in the Whole Great Swell?

"I don't think I have. No, no. I haven't. Otherwise I wouldn't have opened up a book shop. I'd have opened a boutique or something where I could really make money. *Equinox* was never designed to make lots of money but just to tick over so it could publish books."

Do you think people have ever taken advantage of your having such desires?

"Quite probably. Yes," he replies in a certain tone.

But you're a reasonably happy human being?

"Well," he seems momentarily uncertain now, "as happy as the next one." Then he gives a spirited chuckle, "I think I'm pretty fortunate in that I'm able to do what I'm best at. It's a pretty fortunate position to be doing what you really want to do *and* turning people on."

But you've made tapes with people like Keith Richards. Obviously you must have wanted to make records with other people . . .

"Yeah, I did. But in the end it comes down to playing with the people who I really like to play with."

JIM NOW TELLS me that he must leave in a few minutes as he has to meet Charlotte, the lady with whom he lives and by whom he has a five-year-old daughter, Scarlet. This is unfortunate. We were just getting going, it seemed to me. It's a pity also that interviews with members of Led Zeppelin are inevitably set in the anonymous Swansong offices, thus providing writers, and therefore readers, with little comprehension as to how the band members actually live. Even the Stones seem to have woken up to the fact that both journalist and band benefit from less clinically set-up situations. But I suppose that's all part of the Led Zeppelin problem anyway.

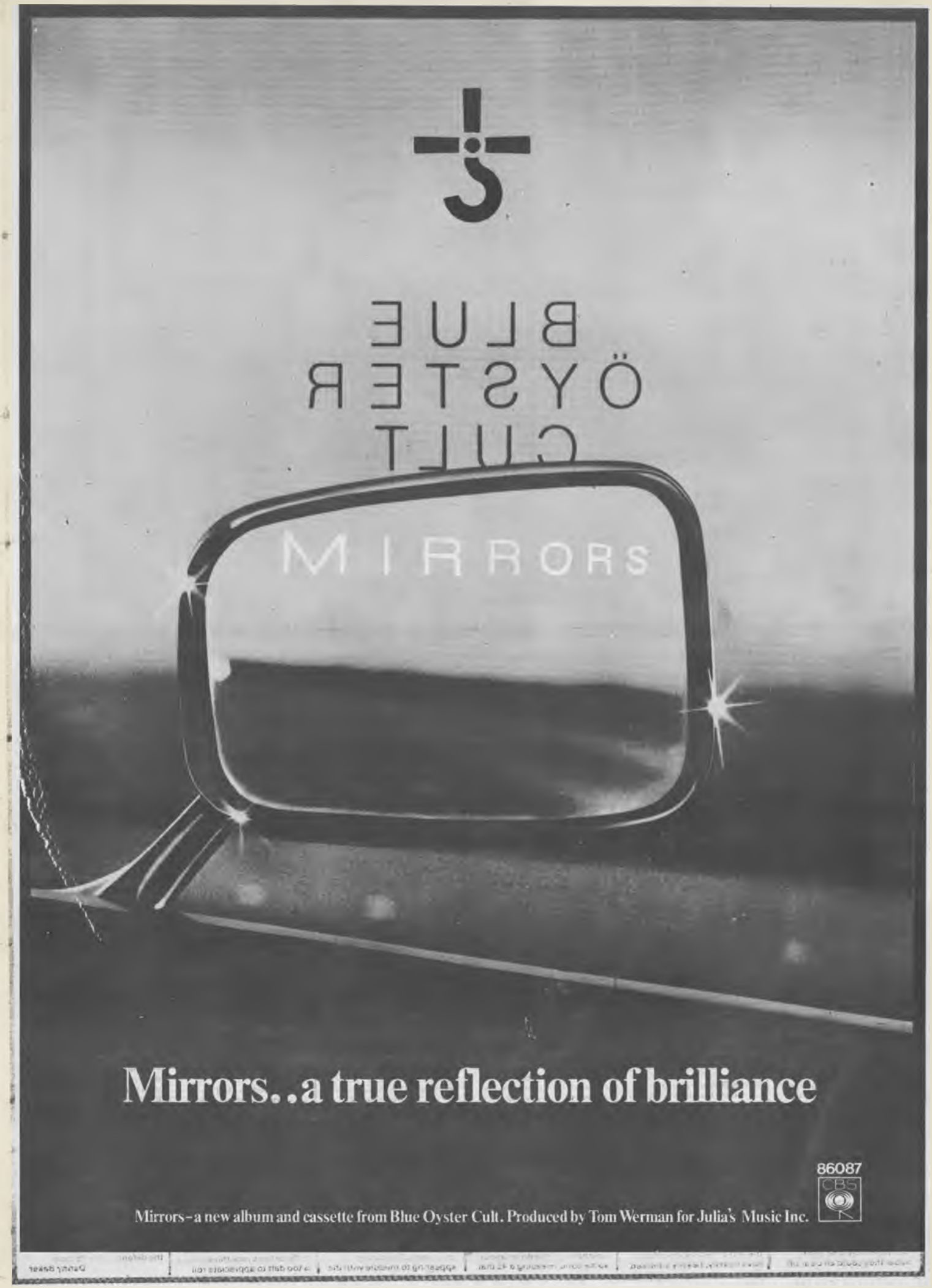
There were many other things I'd like to have asked Page: what have he and the other three band-members done for the last eighteen months or so, for example? Whose records has Page been playing recently? Why doesn't Swansong sign any hot new acts?

As it is, though, I only have time to touch on some of the more, uhh, "controversial" topics that are raised in the first section of this piece.

A large part of the original strength of Led Zeppelin surely stemmed from the energies and ideas Page derived from his lengthy session work in the '60s. Now, though, it seems that all that has been exhausted and there is little new creative input to replace it. Page's views on the music business show a startling lack of original thought and clarity. Mainly, though, they suggest, as I mentioned earlier, confusion. And it's by perpetrating that state of chaos and confusion that the music business is able to persist in its Babylonian and fatuous desire to be part of the vast de-humanized, cynical corporate state. Grrrrrr . . .

On the other hand, compared with certain of his contemporaries, maybe he's not faring too badly. I ask him if he feels isolated and cut-off. He claims not to feel that now, though admits to having been in a pretty weird state round about the time of the band's fourth LP.

"Of course," he adds, "it can do very odd things to you, the whole guitar hero bit. Look at Eric Clapton. Peter Green . . . Well, that's the obvious example. Jimmy Page: well, I don't think I'm doing too badly," he laughs, with a fair amount of confidence.


BLUE
ÖYSTER
CULT
MIRRORS
Mirrors..a true reflection of brilliance
86087
Mirrors–a new album and cassette from Blue Oyster Cult. Produced by Tom Werman for Julia's Music Inc.

ALBUMS

Alright, Dan — but is this one Bernard Edwards? Pic: Tom Sheehan

CHIC
Risque *(Atlantic)*

Chic no freak

The best rock'n'roll album of the week is given a fair hearing by DANNY BAKER — his shoes like it, too

This time I really feel entitled to smile.

You may have noted that, in the past, this reviewer has been more than a little kind to records that doctors have termed 'disco'.

Well, to lay whatever it is you do lay on the line, I must confess that a lot of the time I felt a tad less than fully confident that my buckets of praise were absolutely justified. I mean, I certainly meant every last adjective, but as to whether they were doing anybody any favours, y'know, whether my particular passion was impressing any reader enough to check out something other than haggard old rock'n'roll — well, I don't know about any of that.

Were my weekends swamping my music to exclusion of all else? Just immaterial fiddling while 'real' music burned — in both senses. Is one Red Crayola worth a dozen Sister Sledges? Do chickens have lips?

God, what a drastic state to get into — does the music I like stand the rock'n'roll validity test. But then of course you see it all properly and it hits you that you're talking labels, labels, labels.

Disco *is* rock'n'roll because, like the obscenity laws, there are no set lines as to quite where we wear which hat, and if we can say Vivian Stanshall, Human League, Dave Edmunds, Good Missionaries, Van Halen and Clash are all rock'n'roll then be hanged if disco should be deemed some queer (sic), pathetic, less intelligent form of pap.

It doesn't deserve its own sections, its own magazines, its own special lens through which to be viewed. It's right in there, Tom, right in there with you and all your realities (ha hah!).

So let's de-classify it right here and now. Let's all take our fingers from pinching our hooters and take a deep sniff of rock'n'roll's black "buck" sheep. Maybe soon people will realise that in those grooves there are bods in shirtsleeves, working late at the studios, screaming at each other, explaining to the drummer that if he'd stay sober they could all clear off and finish up early — y'know, people working at pop music. Why it's just like the Buzzcocks!

OK, so not all the time. So some of the time — quite a lot really — a bunch of gum chewing sessioneers rattle off pro rata from the dots in front of them. But that's why I waited for a Chic set before spouting off like this. So long as 'rock'n'roll' carries its own caste system, so long as there is an 'intelligence' structure, so long as there is snobbery insisting that whatever David Bowie does is automatically more valid than the tomfoolery of Earth, Wind and Fire, then I shall feel irritated enough to bore you by holding up the value of rock's less pretentious, less concerned, 'poor' relations.

In the USA right now, rock fans — you don't believe all that baseball fan guff do you? — are holding mass disco record smash-ins. Just another fine example of the 'alternative culture' mirroring its old man.

Disco doesn't suck, stifle, manipulate any more than r'n'r itself, but unless rock can look down on some other part of youth culture it can't slap backs and wallow in 'how far it's come', 'how well it's doing' and 'how fortunately exclusive its members are — a breed of harassed survivors struggling to keep the club restricted to 'real and worthy' artists and appreciators.

John Peel's show is a good case. Now — and I'm not sucking — I like Peel and his shows but there are stacks of times when his comments on the rest of Radio One output have heavily, heavily smacked of Peel the spokesman for a smug, know-all clique of martyrs who've graduated 'away from all that'.

OK, I'm not going to pretend that daytime radio isn't run by a bunch of cretins who have a monopoly on what we're forced to hear. It's tragically true that a handful of discs have a stranglehold on matters each week. Only a fool would think British mainstream radio a delight.

But there is the horrible temptation to see The Corporation, The DJs, The Attitude and The Music as all part of the same evil. You shouldn't hate a record because 'the enemy (HA!)' like it.

Ideally of course all things would be proportionate and, like I say, Chic records would be thought no more inferior than the new Ian Dury, Swell Maps or Roxy Music. But then, ideally, my cousin Cliff would occasionally buy a round. Such is the set up.

But listen. Disco is not Tony Blackburn, just like Rock is not Alan Freeman. After all, if the media doesn't represent rock music, why do you assume it has disco sussed just because the watered down tip of the iceberg gets the playlist nod. Jesus, if TV or radio ever got together a *real* disco programme, one with a cutting edge and power and presentation — well, then we'd see. But then that's rock's argument too.

In 'our culture' things are very different. With 'us', rock'n'roll is the ruling watchdog, ever terrified to go too close to the outer edge. Journalists write drivel about some band releasing a 45 that is 'pure, seminal pop music' — usually just an ordinary, melodic guitar jingle — without ever realising that disco is today's pop music.

The reason The Buzzcocks get called the best pop band is because they fit in with what rock understands as pop music, an idea that is being constantly outdated by the teenage British public.

That is who governs the pop music and *not* rock'n'roll purist notions. And please, none of that 'manipulated brainwashing' guff. That argument is a shallow cop out that bigots use against disco because they feel rebellious and safe whilst sprouting it. The BBC has little idea from where the next chart hit will be slung at them by the dancefloor kids. Most of the chart making disco singles have all been played and subsequently re-requested in the clubs many weeks before their sales justify the Corporation's interest. Witness 'Ring My Bell', 'Rock You Baby', 'Get Down', 'Space Bass' etc, or the total failure of force-fed *TOTP* standards like the last Showaddywaddy single or Dame Edna Everage's plug. No, the name game is getting increasingly harder to wash with punters. Singles are a pound now, and that produces selectivity in the most flamboyant buyer. Never forgetting, of course, that such great disco will never reach the higher positions for many reasons — the main one, I feel, being the practise of British record companies re-editing killer imports for seven inch consumption and often appearing to meddle with the bass/treble registers.

So — another disco defence that probably isn't needed at all. There's no proper 'blame' to shift. People will still find Johnny Thunders interesting and Bernard Edwards will remain unknown. But I get a chance to say — altogether now — this is this.

Let's take Chic off the ice and talk about a great album.

It's great because it has power in its bass and dance in its guiters. It is intelligent and hard working, possessing humour and sex appeal.

Chic pulsate with New York drive, they stir admiration for their song-structuring and impress with their playing. It was recently said that Chic sound so satisfied and bourgeois, something I find totally baffling. That description would fit swish like Patrick Juvet or Diana Ross — even rubbish like Amanda Lear — but Chic are too much of a living outfit, they sweat too much and remain raw enough. They sound anything but bored and machine-like.

Chic could be used to backdrop any 'street' movie whereas Sylvester, George Benson or even Earth Wind and Fire would jar like a Roger Moore accent. (Not that there's any real similarity otherwise between any of them.)

No, Chic are that James Brown riff in modern times. They repeat it, always altering and building, and hang the extremely desirable Alfa Anderson/Luci Martin vocals right up front where they can do the most harm. And some of those lines rock thinks disco is too daft to appreciate roll around in there too.

"*I've got so many things in life to do/Fly into space/Or maybe save the human race/But I'll never get my chance/Cause all I do is dance/Mama told me my brains were in my feet . . .*"

Depressingly, however, on the ferve lyrics it's still the woman as a-come-running-faithful-girl. Even if two of the songs deal with Her having had enough of His ways and left the jerk, and a third ('Can't Stand To Love You') has Her plotting His demise: "*The way you've treated me/You'd think I were into S&M/Well I can't deal with it/And you won't get away with it*"

But they aren't nearly as damning as 'I Will Survive' and maybe Alfa and Luci should pen their own words in future. The only real 'Call I'll come running' lyric comes in 'Forbidden Lover' although — and this is no real excuse — it is mere nursery rhyme chanting and certainly powder puff by heavy metal/disco ballad/'down on your knees Banshee' norms.

Yeah, lyrically Chic should keep to what they excel at and are best known for. Their feverish dancing pleas like 'La Freak', 'Yowzah Yowzah', 'Do Do Da Do Dance' or 'Good Times' (the opening track here).

The group are the vehicle for two incredibly gifted musicians in Nile Rodgers, the ace pace flicking rhythm guitar, and Bernard Edwards, who is the world's greatest bass player bar none and that's fact etc. Between them and the explosive outfit they've gathered together and who enrich their ideas — even their string section is a permanent Chic crew — Chic are currently making some of the most exciting and strongest music available in any field or civilisation.

If it matters, they're one of the more universally popular groups here at the office. And 'Risque' is an album to make your feet sweat, make your heart beat. Gripping, pumping like a miner's handshake, Chic Music.

If disco should ever need to go on trial — well, with Chic, the defence rests its case.

Danny Baker

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Holy modal music

ANGUS MacKINNON comes back from The Crusaders a chaste man

Randy Crawford — seems like a nice girl

THE CRUSADERS
Street Life *(MCA)*
RANDY CRAWFORD
Raw Silk *(Warners Import)*

Although the speed with which the song's been gathering airplay has only been matched by MCA's slowness in releasing it as a single, the opening, title track of 'Street Life' and its distinctive vocal by Ms. Randy Crawford must be among the main reasons for The Crusaders' current UK chart action. But the success of 'Street Life' is doubly gratifying; it just happens to be the band's best album for some time.

The Crusaders have spent much of the '70s anticipating Next Big Things — they were playing jazz- and R&B-based funk long before it became mass-marketable — but have still had to compromise to reach the wider audience their dogged pursuit of excellence entitles them to: a ludicrous predicament for such forthright musicians to find themselves in, but a predicament nonetheless.

'Free As The Wind' was as bland an album as they come and go; at least it achieved its end, crossing The Crusaders over and hoisting them high into the U.S. charts. Last year's 'Images' was better, not nearly so glossily air-brushed, even though it let slip that the band were still counting the cost of the departure of founder member and trombonist Wayne Henderson after 'Those Southern Knights' and guitarist Larry Carlton after 'Wind'.

Ms. Crawford's appearance on 'Street Life' could have been dictated by the need to lighten the lead load carried by pianist Joe Sample and saxist/bassist Wilton Felder, by the success of Sample's songwriting with lyricist Will Jennings on B.B. King's last two albums, by any number of things — it really doesn't matter; the results are their own justification.

The song is sheer soul, its slow, lush intro suddenly jumping into Crusaders supa-funk, its strings and horns carefully scored by Sample and never allowed to over-reach themselves. Crawford's performance, especially her scat on the long, springing coda, is unsettling intense; Felder's main tenor-break, his scurried, serpentine phrases catching and then riding the song's rhythmic crests, is his best on the set. ("But is it *jazz?*", asks the earnest little Bag Man, notepad and sliderule at the ready. Go home, Bag Man, go home).

No Crusaders album would be complete without a couple of steady, stomping strutsh pushed and pulled into shape by drummer Stix Hooper. 'My Lady' lets Felder, who's doubling on bass, stretch and tweak the melody line like so much gum, also features unusual descant background vocals; 'The Hustler' wraps itself tightly around Sample's jagged counterpoint. Both pieces are two more reasons why The Crusaders do what they do better than the competition as they continue innovating effectively and intelligently within solid, staple frameworks.

The brisk, hip-swung 'Rodeo Drive' and mesmeric, bittersweet 'Night Faces' feature Alphonso Johnson on electric bass, his clipped, rounded phrasing instantly recognisable. It's a shame Johnson hasn't got the touring bass space with The Crusaders; he's achieved little since leaving Weather Report and has never really been given due credit for establishing the harmonic bass style now dominated by all-purpose egomaniac Jaco Pastorius.

Guitarist Barry Finnerty, who takes steady, safe solos on three tracks here, will however be touring with the band; he's more flexible and so more suitable than predecessor Billy Rogers, but at this rate seems unlikely to be able to eclipse Carlton. We'll see. As for Sample, I'd have liked to have heard some acoustic piano somewhere on 'Street Life', but the man's delicate fluency and melodic imagination, especially on the Latin-lilted 'Carnival Of The Night', almost make amends.

'Street Life' is mighty music though and, if only more of their peers conducted themselves with the dignity and application of The Crusaders, then we might see more action instead of all the fusion-funk nothingness that seems to stretch from here to eternity.

As it is this band — well, it's really all down to Hooper, Felder, Sample and friends — are still giving object lessons in how to make Great Black Popular Music after over a quarter of a century together. I hope they make that quarter a half.

And from the superb to the sublime — Randy Crawford's own album is her third, its title peculiarly apt.

Ms. Crawford's what copywriters like to call a singer's singer — i.e. she's sophisticated — and much of her work's not inconsiderable appeal stems from the way she offsets a phenomenal, jazz-jived technique (and her or her producer's cast of superior backing musicians) against a soul-stripping ability to emote, to tell it the way you hardly ever hear it told in these dreary days of endless pretty faces with utterly nondescript voices wavering over goosestep disco (e.g. Mr. Moroder's latest 'discovery' Suzi Lane, whose new Elektra album would mean nothing to nobody if it came in a plain white wrapper).

'Raw Silk' has Crawford accompanied by two separate studio bands. Check the credits and you'll see that both are hardened sessioneers to a man, but here they perform with a rare sensitivity — which is just as well and good, since a voice as special as Crawford's would be wasted over anything less than total instrumental support.

So let's hear it this time for pianists Dave Grusin and Leon Pendarvis, guitarists Greg Poree and John Tropea, bassists Abraham Laboriel and Will Lee, drummers James Gadson and Rick Marotta. Alright, men, you can fall out back to the hit factories now.

The material is typically choice; writers include William and Jerry Butler, Clyde Otis and Brook Benton, Allen Toussaint, Ashford and Simpson, Marvin Gaye and others. String, horn and woodwind arrangements, often the bane of this sort of baby, are by Pendarvis, Toussaint and Ian Freebairn-Smith; they're kept trimmed and tacit, help the songs establish themselves rather than hinder them. There's only one real lapse, and that's the awkward over-reggaefication of 'Endlessly'; it almost works, but that ain't enough.

And the best of the bunch? Why not take the embittered 'I Hope You'll Be Very Unhappy Without Me', in which Crawford extracts an emotional maximum out of an extremely unsentimental lyric, the retrospective 'Just To Keep You Satisfied', a forlorn ballad, 'Nobody', a defiant and unadorned blues, 'I Stand Accused', a highly strung snatch of testifying, 'Declaration Of Love', a gentle, self-deprecating song from Toussaint, one of the singer's songwriters of our time — in fact, why not take the whole album?

'Raw Silk' is a classic in every sense. It relies on firm, traditional virtues, ones that have been either obliterated or pushed aside in recent years, to make itself heard above the fretful baying of the pseudo-soulsters. It's rather old-fashioned, I suppose, but pleased and proud to be that way. It's also currently in the U.S. 'jazz' charts, so don't come telling me it doesn't matter much to anyone that they don't make too many like this anymore.

Meanwhile, in their wisdom, WEA UK have at present laid no plans to release 'Raw Silk' over here, despite the fact that Crawford will be supporting The Crusaders when they visit in September.

What devotion to the cause this is coming from a company who've just blown away millions on promoting pure packaging in the form of a questionably 'Best Disco Album In The World'. (The possibility that any self-respecting follower of good disco might already have most of the album and will certainly prefer to keep what he or she's got on non-compressed 'real' releases doesn't seem to have figured in WEA's calculations).

And so it damn well goes; and how naive of me to ask any big record company to place quality above quality, even just the once. But try to track down 'Raw Silk' (U.S. catalogue number BSK 3283) if you value such little foibles as refinement and integrity.

This kind and class of music is as intensifying as it's uncommon. See you on Cloud Nineteen.

Angus MacKinnon

STARJETS
God Bless Starjets *(Epic)*

Starjets are four young dudes from Belfast who crossed the water in early '78.

Since their arrival on these shores, they have sent some impressive ripples through the rock universe, earning their reputation as a very proficient high-octane power combo.

They recently supported Stiff Little Fingers' round-Britain roadshow, and were last seen knockin'-'em-dead on their own headlining tour, garnering praise-aplenty in the process.

'God Bless Starjets', conceived, written and performed exclusively by the aforesaid (no synth-strings attached) with the same degree of flair they display onstage, marketed by the CBS machine, is sadly marred by its hamfisted and hurried production.

At their best, Starjets play fast up-front punk-rock driven at full-throttle and fuse it with strong, varying melody — the outcome of which reminds me of more possible influences than I care to mention.

Throughout, the songs are bolstered with a host of slickly-slotted hooklines, some truly intrepid shifts of tempo (as in 'War Stories', a ditty that cruises along in second gear and ker-chungs into overdrive at the slap of an F), and their most distinctive trademark, the irresistible four part harmonies (executed to a tee on 'Run With The Pack', a rockabilly specimen where The Beach Boys team up with any 59 nasal rockers of your choice).

The lyrics are succinct and neatly constructed, and while not overtly political, the persistent themes of youthful optimism-born-of-exasperation are a tad monotonous, even depressing.

'God Bless Starjets' was brought into the world by a back-street caesarian operation. Starjets should have gone into extra time to incubate a more solid selection of material and get a licence to control their own destiny, so that they can at least avoid the plutz of having future albums produced by numbers.

Rick Joseph

B.B. KING
Take It Home *(MCA)*

You can't make a sow's ear out of a silk purse, but it is arguable that albums like this are not the ideal showcase for the talents of the Main Man in question.

Following on from last year's 'Midnight Believer', the present record represents the further results of B. B. King's studio collaboration with The Crusaders — Wilton Felder, Joe Sample and Stix Hooper. And while second helpings of anything this good are to be welcomed, some of us would prefer a work that's more B. B. and less Crusaders in character.

The fact is that as all those ace LA musicians came crowding in, the blues slipped quietly out the back way, only to remain resolutely Out To Lunch.

Of course, the Blues Boy has never been too much of a traditionalist, and he must owe much of his mass-acceptability to a readiness to incorporate the smoother elements of jazz or funk whenever the time seemed right. And however slick the end-product it's difficult to see any venture involving that voice and, above all, that guitar turning out bad. It's just that I like my blues depressing — the slower, the dirtier, the meaner the better — and B.B.'s upmarket excursions tend to come as a disappointment.

This album still has its moments, and enough of them to make it worthy of anyone's attention. Amongst the best of these are in the opening track, 'Better Not Look Down', where Lucille, the legendary guitar, is given a freer reign than usual and curls beautifully around the song in what I can only describe as a spritely dawdle.

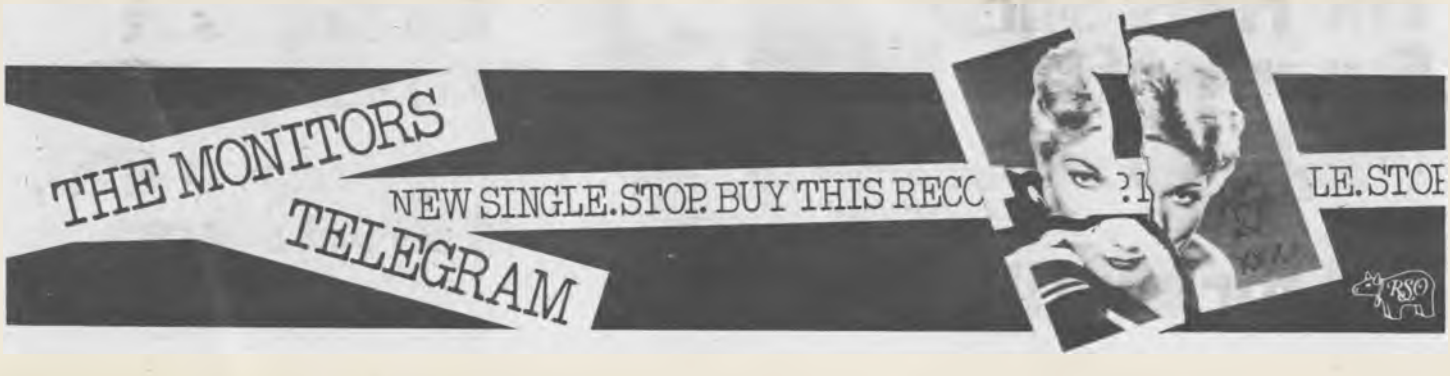
Lyrics are again by Will Jennings, wryly pointed songs of experience that by and large seem to suit their singer well — even if their occasional wordiness poses him the odd problem of phasing.

Personal favourites include the engaging daftness of 'Better Not Look Down' (wherein B.B. find himself implored for words of wisdom by the Queen of England) and 'Tonight I'm Gonna Make You A Star' in which he pursues the popular woman/guitar analogy over a slinkily insistent beat.

And in an album positively stuffed with musical talent, including guitar work by Dean Parks and Paul Jackson and sax by Larry Williams, special mention should be made of Felder's sax playing on the final 'Take It Home', another excellent track.

The final effect of all the auto-funk and general razzamatazz might be to obscure the genius at work within — but, thankfully, they'll never conceal it.

Paul Du Noyer



IMPORTS

On first hearing, **Frannie Golde's** 'Frannie' (Portrait) didn't seem to amount to much. Just another early-hours-at-the-disco job I thought as I munched my rice crispies.

Later, doing the whole test-bed bit, I opted for a change of mind. For it occured to me that the songs all possessed distinct melodies; that the string writing, by one Althy Galuten, was subtle and sparse, as distinct from the usual swoop and swamp undercoat provided by the usual flow of production line fodder. And Frannie herself sounded reasonably therapeutic — not at all unlike Dusty O'Springfield in fact. I decided to dig deeper.

The credits revealed all. From them I ascertained that Frannie Gold hangs out with Albert Hemmond and Tom Snow, the threesome loaning each other their pens when it comes to songwriting. And at some point in time this trio — along with a good little band formed from Gary Brown (sax), George Bitzer (Synthesizer), Hog Cowart and Chocolate Perry (bass), George Terry and Joey Murcia (guitars), Tub Zeigler (drums) and Joe Lala (percussion) — apparantly thumbed their way down to Miami's Criteria Studios to grab a little of whatever it was that rubbed off on the Brothers Gibb. That the end result is not that far removed from Gibbsville, is hardly surprising then. Especially as a "thanks to Andy Gibb and the Andy Gibb Hit Orchestra" comment bedecks the inner bag.

At this stage, you're probably ready to leer, jeer, sneer or cheer, depending on your resistance to the ravages of S.N. Fever. Me, I took an antibiotic at an early stage. Nevertheless, 'Frannie' mildly affects both my brain and my feet — and I quite enjoy the feeling.

Enjoying **Daniel Schell and Dick Annegarn's** 'Egmont' And The FF Boom' (Free Bird) is a somewhat more daunting task. Wayward folk-rock with jazz trimmings, the album is the sort that maybe Zappa would have made if he'd ever latched on to Steeleye and 16th century Flemish history.

"He's a naked little man with a feather up his arse," Annegarn relates at one point, presumably homing in on the Holy Roman Emperor (my history was never all that good!), while Schell twangs on his 13 string polyphonic guitar.

Intriguing stuff — but never satisfying. For the patina of folkiness often seems but a cloak for amateurism, while the schizophrenic nature of the work — flute flights and bongo bashes get segued between chunks of Flemish poetry, polyphonic songs from 1540 and dashes of chamber cello — makes it difficult to get to grips with, let alone sing along to. Perhaps, somewhere I've missed the point — that's always supposing that one was being made.

Even so, the FF Boom, like its sonic relative, is not for me.

Fred Dellar

This is the mod, er, world?

SECRET AFFAIR, THE MODS, BEGGAR, SQUIRE, SMALL HOURS
Mods Mayday '79 ***(Bridge House)***

Before the majors muscle in and (with their usual flair) mess up a good thing, the small indies continue to make the running.

In this instance, documenting Modrophenia manouevres.

Though on a bootleg fidelity scale of ten, this album — recorded amidst the pints and parkas at the Bridge House, Canning Town — checks in at a fraction under eight, any lack of technical expertise is compensated for by the overall rough-edged feel.

In all, five bands: Secret Affair, The Mods, Beggar, Squire and Small Hours are each afforded three tracks to strut their proverbial stuff. And, of the fearless five, it's Secret Affair who take full advantage and completely dominate the event, being one of the few Mod Mk 2 bands to realise that they're engaged in a renewal programme as opposed to a revival.

Whereas, with the exception of The Mods, the remaining bands in this enterprise display more enthusiasm than direction, flitting as they do between innumerable mid-60's forms and rarely mastering any, Secret Affair espise a maturity of style one doesn't expect from a band so early in their growth.

Nevertheless it's difficult to believe that up until quite recently half of the Affair (singer Ian Page and guitarist Dave Cairns) were actively involved with neo-new wave no-hopers, The New Hearts. But here, not only do they wipe the slate clean, they establish themselves as a band to be reckoned with.

This time around Page and Cairns have got the chemistry correct: great songs, excellent streamlined arrangements, masterful performances. Even though recorded au naturel (so to speak), Secret Affair have already defined their own group persona, graced with a high degree of instant pop sensibility that eludes bands with much greater reputations. Even at this early stage in their development, all that a studio and an astute producer can offer is a means of (technically) showcasing their virtues to everyone's advantage. Should they now choose to re-record their anthematic statement-of-intent 'Time For Action', plus the jubilant 'Let Your Heart Dance' and the staggering 'I'm Not Free (But I'm Cheap), 'Secret Affair might just have three successive chart singles on their hands.

Roy Carr

"I tellya — dem Mod creeps give me da willies." Peter Boyle and Donald Sutherland discuss the aesthetics of Lambretta-rock.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Waves ***(Bomp)***

Pressed in a shade like a bag of boiled sweets, 'Waves' is the second compilation from the Bomp label of Burbank, California. Bomp began as a rock magazine in '70 and became "an alternative music industry" in '74, touting singles by the likes of Iggy and The Stooges and Willie Alexander. They now vigorously uphold the new wave banner, and assemble bands in that category with the worthy ideal of giving them the exposure to secure a major record company deal.

In this case, the project outweighs the product. Bomp aim for a functional presentation of mostly characterless acts, and tirelessly over-emphasise their own role in the forefront of underground music. To the uninitiated, 'Waves' would leave the impression that all America is floundering beneath mounds of Beatles, Hollies and Kinks albums, or else trying to be Devo at the speed of The Dickies.

The album's one and only exceptional track is 'You're Much Madder Than Me' by the Akron-based Human Switchboard, but even here the effect is gained from filing down the backing rather than building any new textures. You're left with a skeletal pop tune laced with shrill vocals and a dinky farfisa organ, recorded over a year ago.

In the pop bracket, The Marshells play it safe and regressive; 'You Don't Care' sounds suspiciously close to Lennon's version of 'Ain't That A Shame'. The Invaders and The Romantics play it heavy and derivative with 60's rock 'n' roll 'n' pop, while 20/20 play it like The Dave Clark Five. The Flashcubes slot in with an atrocious slab of medicated goo called 'Christi Girl'; they're lucky to be allowed to play it at all.

Of the new wave set (I use the term loosely), about the best is "Dancing The Night Away' by dolequeue veteran Tommy Rock — a neatly-constructed, distant pop song, imaginatively produced by Kim Fowley. Permanent Wave sound like Lou Reed and Television, and make a bid for frenetically-paced credibility. A similar crazed thrashing underlies jj180 (Dickies, move over) and "Walking Out On Love' by Paul Collins, who has the distinction of having written 'Hanging On The Telephone', though you'd probably never believe it.

Classless and tasteless are Blitzkrieg Bop (English — the *shame* of it!), for stomping on Scott McKenzie in a worn-out pair of chords, and last, and least, are The Last, with the robotic 'We're In Control"— rock's answer to *Battlestar Galactica:* more input than output.

The last speak for the whole Bomp enterprise "in the belief that one has to go backward in order to go forward." But why go backward and stay there?

Mark Ellen

PETER GREEN

The Single
"IN THE SKIES"
PV 24
Taken from the Album "In The Skies"
PVLS 101

Creole available through CBS Records PVK

NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE

Thursday

Aylesbury Civic Hall: **T.C.O.J.**
Birmingham Barbarella's: **The Pretenders/ Interview**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **The Clinic**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Orphan**
Brighton Buccaneer: **Tokyo Rose**
Burntwood Troubadour: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Bury (Lancs) Deeply Vale: **People's Free Festival (for six days) — subject to disruption or cancellation**
Cheltenham Pery's: **The Fabulous Vamps**
Chesterfield Fusion: **The Zones**
Chorley Joiners Arms: **Mistress**
Colne Union Hotel: **Bedesian**
Derby Talk Of The Midlands: **Matchbox**
Edinburgh Astoria: **London Zoo**
Edinburgh George Square Theatre: **Simple Minds**
Gravesend Red Lion: **The Distreiners**
Halesowen Tiffany's: **The Pretty British**
Harrow Country Music Club: **American Echoes**
Hemel Hempstead Porters Club: **The Lobsters/The Sebrins Flow**
Heswall Alexander Hall: **The Shattered Dolls**
High Wycombe Nags Head: **The Jimmy Norton Explosion with Danny Kustow/Glen Matlock**
Hull Wellington Club: **The Specials**
Little Sutton Bulls Head: **Headquarters**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Rockin' Dopsie & The Cajun Twisters/Local Operator**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Lonesome Nomore/The Classics**
London Deptford Albany Empire: **Rubber Johnny/Neon Dior/The Lucy's/Love Bite**
London Edgware White Lion: **Tennis Shoes**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Charlie Ainley's Misdemeanors**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Nik Turner's Inner City Unit**
London Kennington The Cricketers: **Leary's Allstars**
London Kensington De Villiers Bar: **Gold Dust Twins**
London Kensington The Nashville: **The Good Missionaries**
London Knightsbridge Pizza On The Park: **Martin Taylor & Ike Isaacs**
London Marquee Club: **The Undertones**
London Notting Hill Old Swan: **First Aid**
London Oxford Street 100 Club: **Tribesman**
London Plumstead Green Man: **The Idiot Dancers/The Bears**
London Queen Elizabeth Hall: **Joe Egan-/Catherine Howe**
London Waterloo Royal Victoria: **Freddy's Featwarmers**
London W.1 Maunkberry's: **Ripple & The Body Snatchers**
London W.C.1 New Merlin's Cave: **Big Chief**
London W.C.1 Prince of Wales Conference Centre: **The Monochrome Set/Joy Division/The Teardrop Explodes**
Manchester (Dukinfield) Hiccups: **Private Sector**
Manchester The Factory: **Mesagena/Any Trouble**
Manchester West Indian Centre (RAR): **The Piranhas/Mesagena**
Norwich Cromwells: **The All Night Band**
Norwich Manor House: **Running Dogs**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Hormones**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gaffa**
Oxford Caribbean Club: **The Sonic Tonix**
Portsmouth Cumberland Tavern: **Pterodactyl**
Port Talbot Troubadour: **Adam & The Ants**
Poynton Folk Centre: **Mike Maran**
Sheffield Limit Club: **Low Lewis Reformer**
Southport Scarisbrick Hotel: **Lies All Lies**
Southport Tiffany's: **Radio Luxembourg Summer Roadshow**
St. Albans Horn of Plenty: **The O.K. Band**
Stevenage The Swan: **Hedgehog**
Willenhall Prince of Wales: **U.X.B.**
Willenhall The Cavalcade: **Ocean Boulevard**

Friday

Birkenhead The Gallery: **Alec Johnson Band**
Birmingham (Balsall Heath) New Inn: **UB40**
Birmingham Barbarella's: **The Small House/The Merton Parkas**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Bright Eyes**
Birmingham Elizabethan Days: **The Traitors**
Birmingham Golden Eagle: **The Crack**
Bishopbriggs Memorial Hall: **Friction/The Jorrocks**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Mad Chateaux**
Brighton Alhambra: **Dirty Weekend**
Broadstairs Folk Festival (for eight days): **Peter Collins/Bob Lewis / Blue Mountain Band / David Jex and many more**
Burnley Bankhall Miners Club: **The Pretty British**
Colchester Festival: **Fairport Convention**
Coventry Ryton Bridge: **Streetlite**
Dacre Banks Dacre & Hartwith Hall: **The Message**
Devizes Corn Exchange: **Zones**
Dudley J.B.'s Club: **The Quads**
Dundee Marriot Hall: **Carol Grimes Band**
Dundee Samantha's: **The Records / London Zoo**
Frodsham Hall: **The Shattered Dolls**
Goole Station Hotel: **The Accelerators**
Gosport John Peel: **Kay Russia**
Guildford Royal Hotel: **Last Orders**
Hereford Rotters Club: **The Denizens**
Kettering Windmill Club: **The Beersharks Band**
Kirklevington Country Club: **Simple Minds**
Lincoln A.J.'s Club: **The Invaders**
London Acton Kings Head: **Paz**
London Brixton Spiv Cafe: **John Archer**
London Camden Dingwalls: **The Photos**
London Camden Music Machine: **Jimmy Norton's Explosion**
London Camden Southampton Arms: **Jellyroll Blues Band**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Reg Laws / The Last Resort**
London Deptford Albany Empire: **Cabaret Voltaire / Spizz Energi / Modern English**
London E.C. 1 Hat & Feathers: **No Exit**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **The Jags**
London Homerton Chat's Palace: **The Buzzards / Oxy & The Morons**
London Hounslow Red Lion: **the Bombers**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **The Blues Band**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Lizard**
London Marquee Club: **The Undertones**
London Notting Hill Old Swan: **Redrite**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Greig & Nigel's Folk and Blues Night**
London Queen Elizabeth Hall: **Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Joe Lee Wilson**
London Southbank National Theatre Terrace: **Sarah Nagourney Trio**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **Central Line**
London Victoria The Venue: **Kokomo**
London W.C.1 Prince of Wales Conference Centre: **Throbbing Gristle / Remorome**
Manchester The Factory: **Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark**
Matlock Pavilion: **Strange Days**
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **T.C.O.J.**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **Low Lewis Reformer**
Milton Keynes Navigation Inn: **The Russians**
Newcastle Mayfair Ballroom: **The Pretenders / Interview**
Newport The Village: **Adam & The Ants**
Norwich Whites: **Frequency Band**
Oxford New Theatre: **Ian Dury & The Blockheads**
Oxford Oranges & Lemons: **Between Pictures**
Pontardawe Dynevor Arms: **Graham Larkbey**
Ramsgate Van Gogh: **The Record Players**
Rhyl (St. Asaph) The Stables: **Radio Luxembourg Summer Roadshow**
Sheffield Limit Club: **The Specials**
Sidmouth Folk Festival (for nine days): **Na Fili / Roaring Jelly / Tony Rose / Rattlle Stout Band / John Foreman / Strawhead / Kevin Mitchell and many more**
Southend Minerva: **Rockhouse**
Stoke Green Star: **Lies All Lies**
Torquay Pelican Inn: **Lip Service**
Wolverhampton Civic Hall: **Pressure Shocks**
Worthing The Balmoral: **The Tinsels**

Saturday

Aberystwyth Kings Hall: **Radio Luxembourg Summer Roadshow**
Bath Brillig Arts Centre: **Zones**
Bicester Nowhere Club: **The Romantix**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Reno**
Birmingham Hopwood Caravan Club: **Ezra Pound**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Strider**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **School Sports**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **The Afflicted**
Blackpool Norbeck Castle: **The Specials**
Bradford Queens Hall (RAR): **The Piranhas/Massagana/The Negatives**
Bradford Palm Cove Club: **Black Slate**
Bristol Clevedon Youth Club: **The Shattered Dolls**
Bristol Crown Cellar Bar: **Sneak Preview**
Cambridge The Alma: **Hedgehog**
Carshalton St. Helier Arms: **The Sunsets**
Cheltenham Whitcombe Lodge: **The Ruts/The Selector**
Colchester Festival: **Darts**
Cromer West Runton Pavilion: **The Small Hours**
Dudley J.B.s Club:**L Pressure Shocks**
Grantham South Witham Club: **Strange Days**
Harrogate Cock & Castle: **The Vye**
Immingham County Hotel: **The Alwoodley Jets**
Knebworth Park: **Led Zeppelin/Todd Rundgren & Utopia/Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes / Fairport Convention / Commander Cody**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Lies All Lies**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **The City Limits**
Liverpool Bulls Head: **Dark Heart**
Liverpool Eric's: **Stiff Little Fingers/Starjets**
Liverpool The Masonic: **Headquarters**
London Camden Music Machine: **Gillan**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Reg Laws/Slip Hazard**
London Cubies: **Tribesman**
London Deptford Albany Empire: **Spleodgenessabounds / James Lizard**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Bowles Bros.**
London Hammersmith The Swan: **Thieves Like Us**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **London Zoo**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **The Sinceros**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Doll By Doll/The Realists**
London Marquee Club: **The Undertones**
London Peckham Newlands Tavern: **Biffy Karloff Band**
London Plumstead Green Man: **Raised On Robbery**
London Queen Elizabeth Hall: **Clifford T. Ward**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Joe Lee Wilson**
London Southall Hamborough Tavern: **Between Pictures**
London Southbank National Theatre Foyer: **Sarah Nagourney Trio**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Big Chief**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **Central Line**
London Victoria The Venue: **Kokomo**
London Waterloo The Wellington: **Squire**
London W.C.1 Prince of Wales Conference Centre: **The Tiller Boys/ ProgVec/Ludus/Clock DVA**
Manchester The Factory: **The Pretenders/Interview**
Manchester Mayflower: **Invaders**

The official Knebworth pic of ZEPPELIN, and SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY (left)

Knebworth

IT'S KNEBWORTH time again, and this year's double event is rather special, because it marks Led Zeppelin's return to the UK concert platform after a four-year absence. And if you can't get in this Saturday, there's a repeat performance next weekend (11), for which tickets are still available. There are more details of arrangements and facilities on the news pages, but just a reminder that — in addition to Zeppelin — the first Knebworth concert also includes Todd Rundgren & Utopia, Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes and Fairport Convention (who also appear at Cropredy later the same day). Plus Commander Cody, who replaces originally booked Marshall Tucker Band.

NEW YORK GIG GUIDE

MONDAY (6): Central Park — **Ramones;** Westbury Theatre — **Diana Ross;** My Father's Place — **Delroy Wilson;** Sweet Basil — **Fadia Hakim;** Heel — **Cuttwheels;** Max's Kansas City — **Dave Van Tongen And His Toys/Marilyn.**
TUESDAY (7): Max's Kansas City — **Legionnaires' Disease/Twelites;** Village Vanguard — **Pharoah Sanders** (all week); Fat Tuesdays — **Stan Getz;** Hurrah — **Chelsea Funk Orchestra/Iris Lord and Divine Monochord;** Village Gate — **Stanley Turrentine** (all week).
WEDNESDAY: Club Lorelei — **Jerry Lee Lewis/Otis Blackwell** (2 nights); Max's Kansas City — **Fast Flyd And The Famous Firebirds/DC 10s;** Other End — **Great Fleamen And The Fleawomen;** Hurrah — **Villagestones/Human Switchboard.**
THURSDAY (8): Tomato — **Brooklyn Bridge;** Other End — **Great Fleamen And The Fleawomen;** Radio City Music Hall — **B J Thomas;** Max's Kansas City — **John Otway with Ollie Halsall/Billies;** Hurrah — **Tin Huts/James Blood Ulmer.**
FRIDAY: Central Park — **Talking Heads;** My Father's Place — **Rick Danko/Paul Butterfield** (2 nights); Tramps — **Screaming' Jay Hawkins** (2 nights); Max's Kansas City — **Cheap Perfume/Flirt;** Mudd Club — rock disco (2 nights).
SATURDAY (11): Max's Kansas City — **Model Citizens/Polyvrock;** Winter Garden — **Gilda Radner.**
SUNDAY (12): 9th St Cinema — **Ramones** in *Rock'n'Roll High School;* St Patrick's Cathedral — **Derek Whitcroft** (organ recital).

Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **The Ladybirds**
Middlebrough Rock Garden: **Simple Minds**
Norwich Boogie House: **The V.I.P.'s**
Norwuch St. Andrew's Hall: **Matchbox**
Nottingham Penthouse: **Writz**
Nottingham Sandpiper: **Adam & The Ants/Art Failure**
Retford Porterhouse: **Low Lewis Reformer**
St. Andrew's Stagecoach: **Carol Grimes Band**
St. Austell Riviera Lido: **Lip Service**
Stowmarket Royal Oak: **General R & The Meanies**
Stroud Leisure Centre: **T.C.O.J.**
Wishaw Crown Hotel (lunchtime): **The Pests**
Wombwell Reform Club: **The Accelerators**

Sunday

Birmingham Elizabethan Days: **Out**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Prime Donas**
Birmingham Shirley Red Lion: **The Crack**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre (lunchtime): **Exit**
Blackpool Stanley Park (afternoon): **Blues Deluxe**
Brighton Buccaneer: **Kay Russia**
Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): **Bill Scott and Ian Ellis**
Christchurch Jumpers Tavern: **Thieves Like Us**
Dumfries Stagecoach: **The Invaders**
Edinburgh Netherbow Centre: **Just The Job**
Huddersfield Albion Hotel: **The Alwoodley Jets**
Leeds Fforde Green Hotel: **The Pretty British**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Windows**
Leicester West End Club: **Strange Days**
London Battersea Nags Head: **Jugular Vein**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Low Lewis Reformer**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Remus Down Boulevard**
London Charing Cross Duke of Buckingham: **The Invisibles** (for four days)
London Clapham 101 Club: **The Merton Parkas**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Robert & The Remoulds**
London Finchley Torrington: **Soulyard**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Little Acre**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Girlschool / Hollywood Wires**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Ian Dury & The Blockheads**
London Hammersmith Palais: **Stiff Little Fingers / Starjets / The Vapours**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **The Sinceros**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Chelsea / Private Vices**
London Peckham Montpelier (lunchtime): **Blue Moon**
London Strand Lyceum Ballroom: **Adam & The Ants / The Angelic Upstarts / The Monochrome Set**
London Trafalgar Square St Martin's-in-the-Fields Crypt: **Saffron Summerfield**
London W.1 Portman Hotel (lunchtime): **Brian Lemon Quartet**
London W.C.1 Prince of Wales Conference Centre: **The Red Crayola / Scritti Politti / The Good Missionaries / The Transmitters**
Mold Theatre Clwyd: **Heatheliffe**
Newbridge Memorial Hall: **Zones**
Newcastle The Red House: **Hot Snax**
Newcastle-under-Lyme Tiffany's: **T.C.O.J.**
Newquay Central Hotel: **The Winners**
Norwich Whites: **Riff Raff**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Medium Medium**
Perth Wheel Inn: **Carol Grimes Band**
Poyntan Folk Centre: **Mrs Spinks / Galadrial**
Plymouth Breakwater Inn: **Lip Service**
Sheffield Limit Club: **Zones**
Sheffield Weston Park (open-air): **Artery / Parts / Stunt Kites / Xero**
Walsall Dirty Duck (lunchtime): **The Amazing Dark Horse**

Monday

Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Freebird**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **The Out**
Edinburgh Tiffany's: **The Invaders**
Fishguard Frenchmans Motel: **Radio Luxembourg Summer Roadshow**
Glasgow Ms Bar: **Scars/Thursdays**
Grangemouth International Hotel: **Trax**
Ilford Cauliflower Hotel: **Original East Side Stompers**
Liverpool The Crown: **The Clerks**
London Bermondsey Apples & Pears: **Stan's Blues Band**
London Camden Dingwalls: **The Passengers/The Prime Movers**
London Covent Garden Bunter's: **Sad Among Strangers** (for three days)
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Rent Boys/Central Line**
London Deptford Albany Empire: **Red Beans & Rice**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **The Blues Band**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Ian Dury & The Blockheads**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **The Donkeys**
London Kensington The Nashville: **rainbow/The Trendies**
London Knightsbridge Pizza on the Park: **John Hoelar & Jimmy Hastings**
London N.4 The Stapleton: **The O.K. Band**
London Putney Half Moon: **Tony O'Leary**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Penny Royal**
London Ronnie Scott's Club: **Dizzy Gillespie** (for two weeks)
Manchester Band On The Wall: **The Passage/Jimmy Red & Joe Lion**
Newcastle Madisons: **The Bombers**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Party**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gwalhir**
Oldham Queen Elizabeth Hall: **T.C.O.J.**
Ramsgate Van Gogh: **Keith Pearson's Right Hand Band**
Reading Target Club: **Interference**
Shrewsbury Lazy Acres: **American Echoes**
Southampton Holbury Old Mill: **Scissor Fits**
Southend Zero 6: **Musicians Workshop**
Staines Folk Club: **Saffron Summerfield**
Swansea Circles: **The Zones**
Torquay Pelican Club: **Bruce Woolley & The Camera Club**

Tuesday

Aberdeen Ruffles: **The Vexingmas**
Basildon Culpepper Country Club: **American Echoes**
Bath Tiffany's: **Whitewing**
Birkenhead The Gallery: **Geisha Girls**
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: **Brujo**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Killer**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Speed Limit**
Birmingham Thursdays Disco: **Edison Lighthouse**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **The Quads**
Brighton Alhambra: **El Seven**
Crawley Waters Edge: **Slice**
Derby Old Bell Hotel: **The Accelerators**
Doncaster Romeo & Juliet: **Liquid Gold**
Glasgow Mars Bar: **The Vahes**
Keighley King's Head: **The Vye**
Liverpool The Moonstone: **Blues Deluxe**
London Camden Brecknock: **The Injections**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Orgones**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **The Sunday Band**
London Fulham Greyhund: **Between Pictures/Robert & The Remoulds**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Ian Dury & The Blockheads**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Harry & The Atoms**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Rainbow/The Photos**
London Old Kent Rd. Thomas A'Beckett: **Stan's Blues Band**
London Tooting The Castle: **The V.I.P.'s**
Middlesbrough Madison's: **The Bombers**
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AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND SEE PAGE 29

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INGLISTON

PRINT

William Kotzwinkle: Words, Whims, Wit And Wisdom

(All this and not a sign of World War 2)

The Big K himself

SWIMMER IN A SECRET SEA
ELEPHANT BANGS TRAIN
FATA MORGANA
By William Kotzwinkle
(Corgi, 50p, 85p and 85p)

At first glance perhaps the most outstanding, bewildering feature of Kotzwinkle's work is the seemingly diverse and unrelated chart of its subject matter.

Remember, for instance, his *The Fan Man*. (Penguin), his most obviously hilarious, madly eccentric tale of a few days in the life of this planet's most shambolic, whacked-out cosmic loon. Read it, laugh like a hyena and then turn to *Swimmer In A Secret Sea*, a gentle, lyrically compassionate novelette concerned with a baby's cruelly short entrance into and departure from his would-be parents' reality. Read that and try not to feel deeply sad.

Horse Bardortise is the eternal optimist, the 'fan man' lusting after wayward virgin voices and living like a madcap in a reality that bears no relation to anybody else's; Johnny and Diane Laski, an artist and his wife, are two people who have been trying to make a baby for ten years, finally making it, only to have it still-born. A dope-addled hippy with a passion for Japanese, battery-operated, hand-held fans, and a tender couple with a dead baby, — were two novels, written by the same author, ever so totally unrelated in terms of style and content? On the face of it, the answer would have to be 'no,' but dig a little deeper and obvious similarities are there to be found.

Just as *The Fan Man* is a masterpiece of comedy, *Swimmer In A Secret Seas* is a masterpiece of pathos; both were created with a matchless sensitivity, and at the centre of both are people struggling dauntlessly to come to terms with a reality that is shaped and controlled by powers beyond their comprehension. In both books the characters are presented with compassion, victims of circumstance, personality, and perhaps strongest of all, Fate.

Nowhere are the black and white of Kotzwinkle's work more obviously drawn together than in *Elephant Bangs Train*. This is an early collection of short stories that dates back to 1971, and flips crazily through places, peoples and times like a silver ball-bearing on a giant neon pintable. Some are not really stories at all, and are more like cameos: short glimpses of rarely captured childhood that linger long after the stories end. Some are wildly colourful mystery tales that stand, suspiciously life-like against and in the face of all we perceive as the real world — almost surreal, and always totally enchanting.

However, no matter how widespread the surface gloss appears to be, through the hearts of all these stories runs the unmistakable moral philosophy of their engineer. No matter whether Kotzwinkle is writing about an elephant who feels obliged to do battle with a train, or an adolescent's first taste of the flesh, the environments he creates are perfect for the questions he wishes to ask and the emotions he has to communicate. In a way the settings and outward trappings of these tales are the material of a bespoke tailor; the real magic is how the end result becomes more than just a sum of its parts.

In Kotzwinkle's latest work *Fata Morgana*, all the aspects of his talent are fused across one mammoth and scenic, deep and spectacular canvas: the maner of fact and the rhetorical, the fantastic and the common place. Basically the story concerns the malodious crimes of evil-doing, time-warping man of mystery and super-crook Ric Lazar in turn of the century Paris, and the hazard-filled attempts of ageing detective Paul Picard to bring the villain to justice.

The tale is convoluted and mad. Layer upon layer of twisted, semi-transparent awareness is built on method and magic stylishly juxtaposed. Erotic closets open out onto deep and dark valleys that in turn lead back, via night-trains and rocking boats, to the archly lit salons of Paris. The characters exist as warm and flexible case histories through which freely flow time and situations, as well as thought and emotion.

In his quest to nail Lazar, Picard travels Europe, tracing the evil-doer's clammy past; his trail brings him into conflict with his own past, shows him fast-gone snatches of his future, and presents before him peripheral yet essential characters like the dope-smoking chief of police, the divine toymaker, the German whore, and the crazy peasant family, through whom he must climb to reach his goal.

As with all Kotzwinkle's work the setting, characterisation and timing are beautifully accurate. Like all his books it is absolutely readable. What *Fata Morgana* (and indeed all Kotzwinkle's work) has in common with all great literature is its deep insight and underlying moral strength. And, like all great storytellers, Kotzwinkle touches something deep within the reader, something that not only keeps the reader intrigued, but leaves its mark long after.

There's something else that makes Kotzwinkle great, and that's the way he transcends style. Used in this context, words like 'style' do not apply to masters, and categories only exist to make it easy for us to file away mediocre talent. William Kotzwinkle should not be filed away. He should be referred to constantly.

John Hamblett

LIVE!

Rock'n'Ry

Cambridge Folk Festival

Ry Cooder

Ash, the pleasant English Festival, bringer of glad tidings, balmy breezes, togetherness and dodgy hamburgers.

From every corner of the island, large bearded folk clutching beer mugs descend on Cambridge's sleepy Cherry Hinton suburb to frolic in the open air, compare jumpers, jig with Celtic abandon and marvel at the munificence of the local County Council — a symbol of everything that is British; it's a walking contradiction.

Consider, this body takes a sadistic delight in gathering all the nation's hillbillies under one sky, provides them with non-stop liquid refreshment, camping facilities, Maddy Prior and a one in a hundred chance of rounding up their eight quid weekend ticket to a cool three month stretch, courtesy of the nefarious and blatantly backward activities of Cambridge's infamous 'B' division.

If you like your Tolly Cobbold, laced with Dave Cousins, Dan Ar Bras, the Tannahill Weavers and Alex Campbell, then Cherry Hinton is nirvana; it's cool for kids and tourists and travelling bands. Some of the best entertainment is impromptu, jam sessions in the woods, just bring a banjo.

If, on the other hand, a near unassuaged diet of men singing through their noses and plucking unpronounceable ethnic instruments sends you screaming for cover then the CFF might only be a pig in a poke and a weekend in a cell.

The police presence at Cambridge is now so legendary it's almost laughable. Men in blue enact their public duties at the instigation of the festival organisers, nobody else asks them to attend. At night, sinister figures wander through the homely hordes flashing torches, looking for what? For trouble?

The stage comperes and some of the bands took to making feeble jokes about this lawful presence, they weren't the ones who had to worry.

The less quaint aspects of the festival were provided by the American contingent, Rockin' Dopsie's loose zydeco stomp, the Woodstock Mountain Revue's bluegrass and porch pickin', the Treum Bros.' guitar seminars inside the second tent, Doc Watson's flattop and the two solo showcases — Loudon Wainwright III and Ryland P. Cooder.

Catching Wainwright at an acceptable distance involved a labour of love that was beyond me. I watched from afar as Loudon ambled through his customary, shambolic, boozy routine, songs about waitresses' bottoms, hockey, drinking, boxing, TV, wet-eyed social comment, drinking, unrequited love and drinking. So-so stuff that works better in a club. Loudon relies on his lowest common denominator raps for these occasions and they pay the bill, but half an hour is plenty. Like the man said "My musical horizons haven't changed since I was fifteen." Cue ironic guffaws.

Even Ry Cooder fell victim to the atmosphere of drunken inertia. His first, afternoon, set was a drowsy affair, bedevilled by crackling sound and a steady stream of people who *had* to get to the front by the time the last of them had secured their vantage point Ry was finished.

He divided his material up for the occasion. The preliminary set was light blues, a mixture of intricate slide, driving mandolin and sweetly roughened shack favourites. The brunt of Ry's excursion into America's Southern musical lore came from 'Paradise And Lunch' — 'Ditty Wa Ditty', 'Tamp 'Em Up Solid', 'Fool For A Cigarette', a singalong 'Jesus On The Mainline'. Songs about sex and religion and the working man's lament, delivered in a gravel drawl with an understanding of the black and blues so profound in breadth and technique that Cooder defies pigmentation.

His evening show inside the smaller tent was an altogether more involving affair, the material was barbed, chock full of the man's empathy with the unsung heroes of blues history. Sleepy John Estes in particular. The songs he sung at night were measured by the dignity of the black rural cause, the grace that saves repressed people from despair.

Cooder doesn't make any big deal out of his status, doesn't need to temper his act to suit the occasion, never even mentioned his magnificent new album for the rock market, 'Bop Till You Drop'. Instead he gets on with it, chronicling the adventures of the outlaws, 'Billy The Kid', the ethos of the 'Vigilante Man' and the surprise guest, 'Police Dog Blues'.

His catalogue of laments is not marred by hatred or melodrama either. He puts across the message of wry protest in the original tongue. These songs are slices of folk history, 'FDR In Trinidad', the emotionally supercharged 'Goin' To Brownsville', the sad, black humour of Estes' spontaneous 'Blind Man Messed Up In Teargas' (a blow by blow account of the Washington DC debacle where the late, blind octaganerian was arrested for inciting a riot before the gates of Nixon's White House).

Cooder's style of steely bottleneck, matter of fact vocal ease, his love of the country blues mark him as a true upholder of tradition and a keeper of the keys. Ry Cooder is equal parts innovator, historian and master musician. It's a privilege to see him play and a moving experience at that.

The pity of it was that the festival programme only allowed for short sets. There was certainly no excusing the shoddy amplification. How can they mess up one man and a guitar? Next time I hope to see Mr Cooder somewhere befitting his stature. He finished with 'The Bourgeois Blues'; maybe even Cooder didn't know how funny that was in the circumstances. It's the meanest blues of all that leaves you hanging on for more.

Another triumph for integrity but a very frustrating lack of occasion.

Max Bell

The beard, the beer mug and the belly. *Pic: Stevenson*

. . . and the unpronounceable ethnic instruments. Pic: Stevenson

Ry Cooder: one man who didn't sing through his nose *Pic: Stevenson*

Dazed 'n' Abused

Led Zeppelin

Copenhagen

Adolf Hitler gave us a preview to World War II when he let his Luftwaffe loose upon Spain in the late 1930s. Well, last Monday Led Zeppelin gave us a preview to Knebworth when they tested their stage show on 2,200 defenceless fans in Copenhagen.

It was widely known that the gig was only a dry run for the real bombardment in England.

(Zep had turned down a couple of unannounced club gigs to allow them to wheel out the full force of their massive P.A., and the Danes saw the show sell out in just over an hour.)

Come concert day and trouble began early. The stage equipment failed repeatedly during assembly and Zep were unable to do a proper sound check. Then the lighting wasn't receiving the correct power and the crew sent out pleas for a mobile generator.

When they finally located one it still proved too weak, though it seemed like it would keep a medium size town in juice.

Lasers and lights fused all around, and the band decided they'd only use half their lighting after all.

So it was that, two hours late, Led Zeppelin strolled on the stage and, er, launched into an improvised tune-up, that gradually became 'The Song Remains The Same' — the most apt choice for the events about to unfold.

Yes folks, the songs do all remain the same — same arrangements, same effects, same stage movements.

Let me say at this point that I have never been a Zep hater — but the band *do* bask in the glories of 1974. Not for these chaps to acknowledge the changes the music world has undergone in their absence. They appeared sloppy and unrehearsed, sometimes seeming awkwardly lost, bewildered, stiff and reluctant to play.

The first hour of the set, which comprised mostly of agonisingly long guitar solos from Jimmy Page, showed just how stagnant Zep have become both musically and artistically.

OK, so Page is still a dazzling technician but his taste and ability to judge his own music has dropped below standard.

Other band members also proved shockingly inadequate on this showing. During 'Nobody's Fault But Mine' Bonzo Bonham reduced the proceedings to a drone with his thunderously insensitive drumming.

Later, during 'No Quarter', podgy John Paul Jones disappeared behind his stack of keyboards only to produce some of the most redundant, pretentious pseudo classical dribblings these ears have heard since Keith Emerson lost himself up an Alp with his ribbon Moog.

'Black Dog' and 'Misty Mountain Hop' were delivered in the most dutiful of ways. It became clear why their proposed gig in Iceland fell through — the Permafrost would have stolen the show.

A new song, 'Hotdog', supposedly tongue-in-cheek, came over like heavy metal rockabilly. After 'Rain Song' — which followed — the unavoidable laser beam show illuminated violin bow, dry ice, guitar bore from Page.

So all right, the lasers were impressive, but not when you consider that for this couple of minutes the whole shebang was delayed two hours?!

During the last half of the set the group began to loosen up and the mix became a little clearer, but there was no hiding from the excruciating volume and it was surely because of the noise that some 5,000-plus punters (my estimate) were seen drifting away.

And Robert Plant? Well, Plant can't be denied as an individual and dynamic vocalist, but he wastes most of his time just strutting the stage, posing under a spotlight and laying back while the others took turns at the endless solos.

After just over two hours we came to the final number — inevitably 'Stairway To Heaven'. It was only then that Zeppelin received something approaching enthusiasm from the audience.

And then we were left to ponder on the seriousness of Led Zeppelin's 'return'. Sure enough they want to reclaim their 'Number One Band' title back from all their imitators and spin offs, but a showing like the one in Copenhagen is pointless and ultimately damaging. They were no more than a quartet of sloppy, uninspired old men, a relic from the past. There was so little feeling inherent in the set that for the most part it was like watching a fully automated factory producing an endless string of chords that neither musicians nor audience cared about.

The only form of real excitement was when, just before they came on, the P.A. boomed out Dave Edmunds' 'Crawling From The Wreckage', and, well, that is just what we all did at the end after seeing Led Zeppelin collapse under their own weight.

Eric Kornfeldt

Pic: Wallgren

NOT JUST ANOTHER SINGLE

Duncan McKenzie

JUST ANOTHER MORNING

OUT NOW!

JUST ANOTHER CLASSIC

Kate and Cindy enact a stultifying predictability *Pic: Justin Thomas*

Durrr . . .

The B-52's
Sheffield Limit

UNDERNEATH all those glib phrases about a "'50s American trash aesthetic" and the like, what exactly *is* there to make such a fuss about? And just what's so great about that "trash aesthetic" in the first place?

Like The Ramones, The B-52's are an artfully-contrived cartoon band; a caricature which, in their case, owes more to romanticised, media-fed fantasy than anything else. Ever read Dave Berg's dreadful "Lighter Side Of . . ." comic-strip in *MAD* magazine, with all its hopelessly cliched youth-culture characterisations? Well, The B-52's and their beach-party chic stepped right out of it.

The B-52's, see, are The Archies!

Nothing wrong with that (well, there is, but we won't go into that too deeply . . .) The trouble is, a media fantasy can't exist outside the unreal confines of print and pictures. Sure, they'd fit in well on *Cheggers Plays Pop*, but seeing The B-52's live in a sweaty little club is like being told that Santa Claus doesn't exist: the spell is broken.

They *need* a screen, or at least a large, alienating, unreachable stage where you can't see that Fred Schneider's got cotton-wool in his ears, where you can't see that they're as imperfect, as warts-and-all as other humans.

Take a look at their album cover, and you see the gaudy fantasy. Take a closer look, and you'll see their clothes have been replaced by flat, uniform fields of colour: no wrinkles, crinkles, stains or blemishes on this lot, just clean, antiseptic, airbrushed two-dimensionality, impervious to reality.

Sure, they can "play" well; the album material's churned out with quite impeccable verisimilitude, and the sound, right from the opening blips and bleeps of "Planet Claire", is clean as a whistle. But that's not enough, and if you think it is, you've missed the point. The B-52's shouldn't be playing live gigs *at all*.

So, to get right back to the point: what *is* there, underneath the crunchy carapace of image?

Well, there's a bunch of songs with words like children's skipping songs which rely to a large extent on lists: there's lists of dances (Dance This Mess Around), lists of planets (There's A Moon In The Sky), lists of girls' names (52 Girls), lists of aquatic phenomena (Rock Lobster) and lists of volcanic phenomena (Lava), for starters. To my immense surprise, a song called 'The Devil's In My Car' — which opens like 'I Want To Hold Your Hand', by the way — *doesn't* have endless lists of cars; but then, I'm sure there's plenty of time to rectify that situation, eh, Fred?

And — get this — this harmless, minor-league infantilism has actually been compared to none other than *Captain Beefheart!* Which only goes to show how superficial some folks can be . . . On the credit side, the vocal arrangements are undeniably snappy, a smart paint-job covering rusty bodywork; and Keith Strickland's drumming and Ricky Wilson's guitar-work are quite superlative within the band's context, Wilson in particular possessing a right hand that'd do Diddley proud, and imagination enough to know how to use it.

But — and here's a major fault — they flog the formula to death. Everything's just minor variations on the same theme, resulting in a stultifying cumulative predictability by the end, a state of affairs not helped by the fact that all the songs seem to last for about two or three minutes more than they should.

Not that The B-52's need worry: the impenetrable crush of bodies in The Limit served as a fairly blunt indication that the band are no mere cult. They have arrived. In a year's time, they'll be as big as Blondie.

You want trash? Then, my boy, you shall *have* trash.

With bouffants on.

Andy Gill.

Adam & The Ants

LEEDS

Having long since considered Adam & The Ants to be irrevocably washed up, it came as something of a surprise to find them several vogue waves on. New Values and improved instrumental technique comprehensively internalised, the Ants have re-emerged from the garage fully re-conditioned and walking tall.

As usual employing the 'Metal Guru' pre-recording their return to the Leeds stage met with approval from those punters still dumb enough to eulogise *any* remaining unsigned outfit as possessors of 'integrity', but the Ants nevertheless played well enough to justify their Second Coming. Opening with 'Animals And Men' and 'The Day I Met God', they looked somewhat above the standard thud - and - blunder combo, the Iggy in Adam working overtime to give the act theatrical credibility as he lurked within, the shadows cast by a solitary yellow light.

Whether or not we need another band with total punk suss at this stage of the game is a different matter, but it's undeniable that 'Antmusic' has a complete grasp of all the formula's essentials.

Daubed in black grease, the rubbery, choreographically well-together Adam is evidently extremely proud of his trashy 'amoral' lyrics ('Catholic Day', for example, is routine banality, tiresomely 'sick'), although from a punk literacy point of view, it's probably not the winning or losing of the game that counts.

At the Fan Club (like any other provincial venue, something of a bastion of punk hard-liners), it was hardly surprising that the Ants scored so heavily with both the uncommitted and the band's itinerant army, the Leeds chapter of which is ludicrously strong. They nevertheless deserved everything they got.

Emma Ruth

Teenbeats/ Lambrettas

Camden Town

South coast Garagemod - A. Go - Go hits London! Two bands; one smirks, the other swings.

The Lambrettas, Brighton's self-proclaimed Beat Boys in the Jet Age, were first on. Unlike most new mod groups, they play a totally original nine-song set, with guitarists Jez Byrd and Doug Sanders trading lead vocals with each other and wisecracks with the crowd.

They snigger their way haphazardly through a witty bunch of songs, and do it well enough, but with a lot less panache than their townsfolk the Piranhas.

The Teenbeats are different kettle of kinetic energy altogether. Watching them in the Dublin Castle — where the 'stage' is on the same level as the dancefloor — is like having the Undertones performing in your front room.

They're a young and classy pure pop group. A five-piece from Hastings, their songs cover the predictable moddy trains of thought — 'Time For Change', 'Strength Of The Nation' — but their infectious joie de vivre lifts them well above the mire.

They also do a great cover of the Troggs' 'I Can't Control Myself', due for soonish release as their debut single on Safari records.

The Nips singer, Shane — the original kamikaze punk of bitten-earlobe fame and a man who knows his pop — rates them as one of the best new bands around. Who am I to argue.

Adrian Thrills

Spoilsports Gang Of Four Delta 5

TONIGHT at the Electric Ballroom, in a low-key, tentative kind of way, music took a small step towards the future.

It was an evening when risks were vindicated. Rock Against Sexism showed they could not only mount a large, central London gig, but succeed with an odd bill that mixed Spoilsports' casual soft-soul boogie with two sets of new wave abrasiveness.

It wasn't a *spectacular* success. The venue was only two-thirds full and a lot of the hard-core punk contingent vanished after The Gang Of Four's set; but enough people came and enough people stayed, happily bopping from seven till gone midnight.

A vital part of this praxis happened behind the scenes. RAS now command sufficient support and expertise to involve women in all facets of promotion. At this gig, women organised everything from security to sound-checks and the evening ran with flawless efficiency.

As for the music, those who came for a good time found it with a vengeance. Delta 5 and Spoilsports both impressed, and The Gang Of Four were magnificent — the best I've ever heard them. The evening began with Delta 5, who play cool, modern rock'n'roll. They use basic elements — chanting, repetition — to build simple, effective structures.

'Business (Mind You Own)', with its whirling vocal crescendos; the frantic 'Alone'; and the superb squeaky scattering on 'You' especially caught the attention, but their set was intriguing throughout. And their lyrics — straightforward statements which debunk rock's romantic mythology — confirm the impression of an astute, slightly sombre, but very promising blend of talents.

Next came The Gang Of Four, playing second at their own request as they thought in inappropriate for an all-male band to headline.

I've rarely seen a band work so hard or achieve such ferocious intensity. Andy Gill and Dave Allen prowl restlessly, Hugo Burnham attacks the drumkit, and Jon King careers across the stage like a demented windmill, pouring such a passion into the songs that his body threatens to rip apart.

They preview two new songs: the frenzied 'Contract' and a pulsing, analytical 'Nature's Not In It', described as "about how sex-life is *learned*".

After a blistering 'Damaged Goods', their set builds through a series of barely-controlled dynamics until a boisterous and cathartic encore of 'Rosanne' and 'Can't Stand My Baby' has the audience jumping about in gleeful abandon. A devastating set — inventive, incisive, utterly committed. Theirs is the irresistible political dance music John Lennon was always trying to perfect.

Spoilsports had the unenviable task of following; and for a while they were struggling. It took time for people to adjust to their relaxed, jazzy funk and they didn't help themselves by playing several slow numbers early on.

Later, things improved dramatically. Barbara Stretch began to sing as though she meant it, and the rhythm section — Isabel Thompson (percussion), Lesley Shore (bass), Sheelagh Way (drums) — who had hung a little too loose, tightened up appreciably for a closing section of smooth, punchy originals: 'Sadly Mistaken', 'Don'tcha Worry' and, best of all, the lovely 'Autonomous Boogie', a tenuous link between Sly Stone and *Spare Rib*.

At the end, all the bands came back to jam, abetted by various Mekons plus Tom Robinson on keyboards. Good politics, but a bit of a musical . . . curiosity?

Part of the proceeds from the gig were going to The National Abortion Campaign, currently fighting Tory M.P. John Corrie's Anti-Abortion Bill.

Although this gig was low-key experimental, and without the celebratory feel of their Albany triumph, RAS can be congratulated on another evening of noisy subversion and solid fun.

Graham Lock

Gang Of Four: two of them *Pic: David Corio*

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Swell Maps: an anagram for rock'n'roll

Swell Maps
Glass Torpedoes

Moonlight

Swell Maps sounds like an anagram. Their music sounds like an anagram too.

They play rock 'n' roll with all its pieces rearranged; with its centre turned outwards and its outside in. They're amusing, confusing, tiresome, and intriguing — and it's not easy to articulate why.

They're also very versatile, as revealed in such graphic detail on their courageous debut 'A Trip To Marineville'. Half the album consists of experimental sound-making that takes details and stretches them to extremes; the other is a series of explosive, bruised rock songs that compress vague observations and feelings and try to make them specific.

Wisely, it's the latter that makes up their live set.

Also, there's only four of them. The fifth Solihull songster, Golden Cockrill, who collects many a namecheck on the album, fails to materialise on stage.

So who thought silly names were a bit 'last week'? Epic Soundtracks thumps tubs with lumpy abandon and has a habit of launching into ferociously fast drum rolls that very nearly don't fit in. Jowe Head plays bass — large as life and at least twice as gormless. And bemused Biggles Books plays guitar, along with the haywire Nikki Mattress who sings but who's tone-deaf when it comes to tuning.

They shamble around stage swapping mikes and dropping insane asides with the kind of looseness that characterizes much of their material. These songs are already being slotted into the usual rockpress compartments, and of all bands to get lumbered with such restrictions, the Maps deserve it the least.

True, they use a sort of War Picture Library frame of reference — lyrics abound with Spitfires, gunboats, ammunition trains, midget submarines — but they're only images, and you can make what sense of them you want.

Swell Maps just aren't that cut and dried. If anything, you could call them facetious, and they make music to go with it. I honestly can't think of a single comparison with their sound except possibly the bristling urgency of early Buzzcocks.

Between the two acrid guitars, they lay down a thickpile carpet of fuzz, under which to hollow drums and a light, dead-simple bass fight for a breathing space. Now and again a guitar solo picks its way into the mix; a real rock 'n' roll guitar solo, with all the right phrasing but gloriously out of time and out of tune.

Their set is chaotic. They change words around, they break strings and start jamming, they even alter the entire shape of some of their songs. 'H.S. Art' makes a raw and exuberant basis — it's almost a statement of creed — and 'Spitfire Parade' and 'Harmony In Your Bathroom' follow as oblique pictures backed with fearsome, distorted rock 'n' roll.

A lot of their lyrics go by the board, which in every case is a tragedy, especially with 'Blam' and 'Midget Submarines' which are both right off the beach and infectious with it. This makes the clearest and hardest-hitting numbers the two manic chorus chants 'Full Moon In My Pocket' (another leaf from the aviator's handbook) and 'Vertical Slum', which contains the sort of ambiguities you could well apply to its authors: *"No more ways/To excavate you/No two ways about it."*

Swell Maps keep you guessing, and if they don't crack you up, you have a humour problem.

Support act Glass Torpedoes also make no bones about their rock 'n' roll roots.

Swell Map Nicki Mattress. Pic: Alain de la Mata.

They're a loose power-rock four-piece led by the pony-tailed Babra Donovan. They look young, talk Northern, and sound nervous as hell.

They too can turn a good tune — namely 'Going Down' and 'Morning, Noon, And Night', which are both rock numbers wrapped around incongruous Blondie-type goofy melodies with lyrics that twitter with teen romance. They even remember how to solo, and keep diving into sections of thrashing drums, plodding bass and whining lead guitar that make you feel the late '60s are tapping you on the shoulder.

They try to sound tight and commercial when they'd probably rather just Dance This Mess Around. For now, they're too cautious to swing either way.

Mark Ellen

John Harpur

Charing Cross Medical School

The stunning heat of John Harpur's debut performance was (not surprisingly), lost on this nurses' knees-up; Harper, looking serene but comical, crewed skull leering through mangled clothes, delivers a bunch of exciting and memorable songs that sparkle with wit and a spontaneity as compulsive as his appearance.

The few filched R & B riffs blend artfully, anonymously, into satiric songs dubiously titled — 'Hey Mrs. H.', and 'St. James's Infirmary' (the Standells chestnut).

The band generate action with Nick Straiton who plays lead guitar, Mike Sparks who manages the intricacies of a doubleneck bass and rhythm, Pat and Paul Tooley on drums and extra rhythm respectively. Between them, they recharge the currently flaccid entrails of circuit rock'n'roll, beating out

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James Ulmer. Pic: Julie Scher

James Ulmer: dancing on your head

James Ulmer
The Offs

New York

James "Blood" Ulmer at Hurrah was stunning. To hear a great jazz band take the conventions of rock — its rhythms, song structures and compositional sense — and proceed to both use and explode them, was an education and an enlightenment.

The building blocks of this music were the rhythms of funk predecessors like Sly and James Brown. But they are cast in a style that took up from where Albert Ayler or Ornette Coleman's 'Dancing In Your Head' left off.

As is so often true, the rhythm section was the essential beating heart of this band; Ronald Shannon Jackson (drums), a veteran of the bands of Coleman and Cecil Taylor, Warren Bernbow (drums) and Amin Ali (bass), Rashied Ali's son.

Jackson is the key, a powerhouse drummer whose style is so free-form you'd swear he was veering completely off the beat, but who actually keeps the rhythm firmly on track.

With the presence of a second drummer, Jackson was free to improvise in multiple directions around the beat, so that even the relatively predictable four-beat blues shuffles took on elements of the unexpected.

Layered around the free-time funk rhythms, Ulmer's guitar solos were understated displays of vituosity that made you feel there was prowess held in reserve. Some of the playing was adopted for the white rock fan's ears, a synthesis of blues and jazz progressions that recalled a more reined-in Jimi Hendrix. But occasionally Ulmer would cut loose into an improvisation with a beat and life totally his own.

If Ulmer's tickling of the imagination was this music's head, tenor saxophonist David Murray was its bad heart and soul. When Murray checked in it was shakin' time.

His playing is an intense, raucous counterpart to Ulmer's creative restraint, and it was Murray, repeating phrases with increasing fervour and kicking the band up ahead of itself, who got this rock and roll crowd dancing.

Following such an impressive display, The Offs didn't stand a chance. A San Francisco quintet, they specialise in reinterpreting reggae and soul music in a bashing, identi-punk mould. They took classics like The Slicker's 'Johnny Too Bad', The Heptones' 'I've Got The Handle', and The Velvet's 'Sweet Jane', and ran through a triple-time punk-rock meat grinder so that they came out shredded and mangled, devoid of emotion or meaning. Too Basad!

Richard Grabel

fluid danceable rhythms; the perfect canvas for Harpur's magnificent vocal range to slide with icy control through savage aggression to velvet, hypnotic croons.

Charlotte Wylie

Visitors
Barbed Choir

Glasgow

More young peole who need time and patience, but feel forced to rush, Visitors move cautiously, decorating spaces with sombre, quiet moods and laughter echoing from towers; build from the composure and invention of Wire, not, as I'd imagined from 'Electric Heat', their fine e.p., The Fall with a deep respect for early Pink Floyd. Imitation as effective access when filtered through individuality.

Flanked by the McVay twins ethereal calm, tall, strange and angular on bass and keyboards, Visitors grope in apt directions, displaying slices and blurred snapshots, as they express it. Eerie music, inexpert creakings merely enhancing; *Captain Scarlet & The Mysterons* directed by a young Ingmar Bergman.

White circles on the linoleum occupied earlier by Barbed Choir, filtering Banshees bleakly and without majesty, but hinting at promise with restraint and a singer fumbling with an embryonic post-fallout urban scavenger ambience. (Projecting fantasies again). (I see — Live! Ed.)

Glenn Gibson

The Realists

Rock Garden

The Realists are about concentrated pop. They write numbers of subtle construction; thoughtfully contrived and brittle melodies, all overlaid with an impressive and expressive variety of lyricism.

Visually unassuming, there's a certain restraint that's evident throughout their act, though any lack of live impact is offset by the quiet strength of the material.

And that material, written by Paul Astles (guitar and vocals) includes the neat Stiff one-off 'I've Got A Heart' as well as a clutch of similarly instant pieces; 'Keep Cool' being worthy of special mention. Maybe the best was the slower 'Queen Of Sorrow'.

Astles aside, The Realists are: Ralph Holden on lead guitar, drummer John Conroy, bass-player Peter Butler and Alen Dunn on keyboards. Tonight their sound seemed too discreet, or almost reticent, to class them as much above average. And yet, on this showing, The Realists hint at a potential for richness. Let's see if they'll exploit it.

Paul De Noyer

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DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!

Wanna buy a good pair of headphones without having to take out a bank loan? Bernard Futter shows you how it's done.

Excellent value at £20: Audio Technica ATH-3 'phones.

The urge to whack something into a vacant socket sooner or later proves irresistible to most hi-fi enthusiasts. That's probably how a lot of people first get acquainted with a subject we haven't dealt with before in these columns — headphones. With a jack socket right there on most amps, receivers, tape decks and even a few tuners, it's hardly surprising that headphones are generally the first bit of ancillary gear invested in.

Nobody would suggest that headphones offer a viable alternative to speakers but they do have practical advantages. 'Phones allow you to listen to records at mind blowing levels at any hour you choose and, what's more, they provide excellent isolation from external noises. Very useful if you live on a busy road.

For monitoring tape recordings 'phones are indispensable. For starters, try balancing a recording with the tape deck other than in the middle of a pair of speakers.

Because sounds do not first interact with room acoustics but are directed straight into the ears, 'phones do have a different sound characteristic to speakers. There is the illusion, which can prove off putting at first, that the stereo sound stage is spread out across the brain itself! Instruments in stereo are not as clearly defined as it's difficult to pinpoint sounds in between the extreme right and left sides and the centre.

Batcha' didn't expect to see me on this page.

Distortion levels, due to the small amount of drive power necessary, are generally very low.

This lack of distortion can impress with fine detailing but is also rather ruthless in showing up record surface noise and tape hiss. It must be said that for every three people who like the immediacy and intimacy with the music that headphone listening gives you, another one will find the experience a bit on the claustrophobic side.

The line up this month consists of five 'phones within a shop around price band of £12-£26. Tests were carried out with a wide variety of programme material utilizing Revox open reel and Aiwa cassette tape decks and a Linn record deck all fed through a redoubtable and very obsolete Quad valve amp set up. A junction box being necessary as they didn't have headphone sockets on amps in 1955! Comparisons were regularly made with a pair of Stax SRX electrostatic headphones. This was a bit unfair as these highly acclaimed units do sell at about £140.

Before going into the difficult bit about what these phones actually sounded like I'd better warn you that these are my subjective views only. You may well not agree but at least it may help you to compile a short list to listen to.

First up we have the HP-80's from Videotone at about £12. These are of Japanese origin and you certainly get a lot for your money. With a substantial padded headband and large earpads they weigh a heavyish 350 grams. As a result, comfort is not the HP80's strong point. On audition these 'phones turned in a pretty average performance although the price is very low. Without exhibiting any particular nasties, the music had a slightly dim and recessed flavour and was overall a bit lifeless.

Koss of the USA produce probably the widest range of 'stereophones' in the world. The K/125's figure near the bottom with a selling price of about £17. Finished in beige and brown they were not particularly comfortable, exerting quite a severe pressure on the ears and head. (Is the shape of my head 'normal' I ask myself?) Also the plastic mac type material used for the earpads quickly induced a malaise known as 'sweaty lug'. Listening tests soon separated the K/125's from the rest of the field. The sound was highly coloured and exaggerated — to my ears rather unpleasant. Even if you like a dramatic presentation the K/125's do not provide the answer.

Best known for their pickup cartridges and arms, the Japanese firm of Audio Technica are currently fielding a goodish range of headphones in the UK. The ATH-3's sell for around £20. With their moss green colour and 'military' styling they certainly look distinctive. They also scored very highly on comfort, being lightweight but positive. On auditioning the ATH-3's produced a very pleasant sound balance with good stereo separation. There was a slight lack of attack but many will appreciate the neutral and unfatiguing sound characteristic. Excellent value.

Beyer of West Germany is a name more usually associated with professional studio equipment. The DT-440's priced at around £26 are well constructed and very comfortable which was a little surprising given their largish size. Sound wise they sounded very accurate with very low colouration and good imaging. On all types of music they never fell below an excellent rating. These 'phones can be wholeheartedly recommended and are good value even allowing for the extra cost.

Completing the line-up at a price similar to the Beyer DT440's are the Japanese Coral E-88's distributed in the UK by Videotone. Coral are best known in the UK for two high quality but inexpensive moving coil pickup cartridges. The E-88's are made of plastic, but do, to their credit have a rigid feel to them. They are far and away the lightest of the units weighing in at a mere 85 grams. This contributed to a high comfort rating — it was easy to forget that headphones were actually being worn at all after a few minutes. Reproduction with the E-88's was reasonably good and best described as light and airy without being overbright. Some lack of attack was noted however. Cautiously recommended, particularly for comfort but they appear to be a bit overpriced taking into account their very basic construction and the superior performance of the Beyer DT 440's.

Details from:

Videotone HP-80's (TSP £12) Coral E88's (TSP £26) — Videotone, 98 Crofton Park Road, London SE4.

Koss K/125's (TSP £17) — Tape Music Distributors, 114 Ashley Road, St. Albans, Herts.

Audio Technica ATH-3's (TSP £20) — Audio Technica UK, Hunslet Trading Estate, Low Road, Leeds 10.

Beyer DT-440's (TSP £26) — Beyer Dynamic GB, 1 Clair Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

Bernard Futter

The Videotone Minimax II

AS REVIEWED IN THE JUNE ISSUE OF N.M.E.

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Impedance: 8 ohms nominal
Frequency Response: 80 20KHz + 5dB
Efficiency: 10 watts RMS pink noise gives 96dB at 1 metre
Finish: teak or walnut veneer with black trim
Size: Height 10" width 6" depth 9"
Weight: 10 lbs. each, 23 lbs. per pair packed

POPULAR HI-FI

"Sound output of these little speakers gave us the greatest surprise of the whole set. Despite their small size they produced remarkable bass which was clean, solid and with low colouration."

"Colouration in the midrange was the least of all the speakers tested. This was immediately apparent with some live opera from the proms which had some ambience and audience noise. Switching to the Minimaxs' from any of the others produced an open and natural sound as though something had been taken away. It had, the colouration had gone, and they rivalled the Monitors in this respect. We found that we were comparing the Monitors and Videotones very carefully indeed."

"On a value-for-money basis, these must be the best of the speakers tested, and they produced the lowest colouration with an almost Monitor like quality."

"Speakers compared: Minimax, KEF Cantor, Wharfedale Linton 4's, Philips 422, Jordan Watts Janet, Celestion Hadleigh, Mardean Hall 110F, Yamaha NS410, Scan Speics 512." — *OCTOBER 1974*

HI FI ANSWERS

"The problem here was solved in every sense of the word by a pair of speakers that, we had been reliably informed, were extremely good, yet small and inexpensive. 'Good' turned out to be hardly an appropriate word — 'astounding' might be more apt! The speakers gave our final system a real boost in quality for at these price levels it is normally accepted that they will be the weakest link in the chain by a large margin — but not so in this instance."

"Their modest appearance and price disguise their startling abilities. Never have we heard such a small speaker sound so big! Nor so good.

People who heard them couldn't quite believe that such a large performance came from such diminutive boxes and laughed with astonishment. The detail provided was of a very high order and whereas almost all small speakers suffer from a compressed sound and sometimes tendency towards a nasalness, the little Minimax 2's sounded both large and open in a manner we have not encountered before on any speaker of such low dimension (and dimension!)."

"That is the point when astounded listeners laugh in amazement, for with this speaker perched on top of sizeable Monitors and in a large room shaking to the frantic reproduction of a full orchestra, you can't quite believe your ears. And the speakers, well, they are Hi-Fi gems." *JANUARY 1975*

PRACTICAL HI-FI & AUDIO

"The first thing noticed about the Minimax 2's, even before they are heard, is the very high standard of construction, the cabinet feels as solid as a plank, and is finished in walnut veneer, which happens to match the tuner/amplifier."

"Specially, what they lack is the 'boxiness' normally associated with small loudspeakers and one is aware of very little colouration, especially on speech. The depth, clarity and open-ness of sound produced is quite astonishing. What's more they seldom seem 'strained' by wide-range programme material and massive orchestral/choral forces."

"With 'Dark side of the Moon' the loudspeakers performed remarkably well. There is one passage where the sound of a heartbeat is recorded over a musical piece, and few loudspeakers I have heard in the bookshelf category have been capable of reproducing this sound but the Minimax 2 units did so commendably well." *JUNE 1975*

GRAMOPHONE 1975

"In summary, I must recommend the Videosen Minimax 11 as having good overall performance for its size and claimed specification; its sensitivity is above average and its sound quite pleasant. It is very good value for money, and will fit without fuss into the modest of audio installations." *NOVEMBER 1975*

PRACTICAL HI FI & AUDIO

"On the whole, the balance was right, and there were no obvious 'holes'."

"What did impress me was the clarity of the performance, and the impression with eyes shut that one was in fact listening to far larger loudspeakers."

"Piano is handled with a minimum of bother, and tonal quality of reproduction is very good indeed, as was speech. Yes, these little loudspeakers have a very natural sound when reproducing speech, which is the stumbling block of many a system." *APRIL 1976*

WHAT HI FI

"If space is at a premium the notable compact nature of the Minimax's scores. And if the need is for some extension speakers to be used with a high powered amplifier the ability of the Minimax to take a lot of power and still sound good could be decisive."

Comparison (F's) — Minimax 2 — 56, JVC SK33 — 62, Celestion Ditton 11 — 65, Richard Allan Maramba — 80, Omar CR151 — 72. — *APRIL 1977*

POPULAR HI FI

"So, as anyone with a pocket calculator to hand can verify, the Minimax speakers are approximately one seventh of the size of the MA3's and surprisingly, the price is also about one seventh (£55 per pair against £400.50) But how do they compare in practice? Well, under normal conditions with not too much attention being paid to the finer details of the sound it was surprising just how little difference there was." *SEPTEMBER 1977 MINIMAX VERSUS MONITOR AUDIO MA3*

PRACTICAL HI-FI

"The little Videotone scored highly for such a small inexpensive loudspeaker. It came second in soprano overtones and piano purity, and second in violin overtones." *JANUARY 1978*

Comparison with Quad ESL, B & W DM6, JR Rogers JR149, KEF 104, Monitor Audio MA1, Nyghtingale NM1, Nippro PROST1, Spendor BC2, Rogers LS3BA

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LIVE EXTRA

John Dowie shows disbelief at making the Live pages

John Dowie Band

Manchester

"IT'S NICE to see good music getting the kind of leathering it deserves". Looking at John Dowie's band I see what he means. This bunch of old hands bring forth guffaws before they've even played a note. There's Bruce (sign on the dotted line) Mitchell from the 'Berts, on drums, plus straight man Simon White, Ian Morris from the Smirks, John (48 Chairs) Scott on guitar and a large rangy figure I know only as Big Red on fiddle. What a shambles! And, er, yes, what a band, for Red and John Scott are immaculate, and does Ian Morris really play with this kind of sheer attack with the ex-Beserkley Fab Four?

The ambiguous jokes start at the band. They never stop.

Like most humourists working in rock, John Dowie steers towards the vulgar jugular. Subject matter aside, however, here lies the most elegant wit operant in the medium. Perhaps too elegant. John Dowie's intonation is even, unhurried, unemotional. The lines are razor sharp. By the time the punch line rilly hits home, he's several strands further on. And for some with fashionable sensibilities, the targets lie a little too close to home.

'I'm a Jolly Taxidermist' posits a route to eternity for John Wayne. 'Get Stuffed' is the predictable message. There's an obvious political moral in 'Corpses Against The Nazis' ('lie down and be counted'), xenophobia in 'British Tourist' Parts 1 and 2, tales of horror and disbelief with 'She Bought a John Travolta Poster' and even tea and sympathy — 'It's Hard To Be An Egg'.

But it's on material tackling sex, and its attendant confusions, that John Dowie is virtually unrivalled. 'I Don't Know What a Dilemma is' is the oft-told parable about his meeting with an over-endowed gorilla. After the choice the gorilla offers, JD now knows what a dilemma is. 'Only Men Shave' is a tribute to Julie Covington — "It was nice to hear a song about menstruation on the radio". Yet for immaculate simplicity 'Premature Ejaculation' takes the Kleenex. "My baby put her head on the pillow/
"My baby turned the light down low/
She says 'Why don't you get started?'/
I finished half an hour ago!"

Or perhaps it's just the way he tells 'em?

Ian Wood

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THE BOX FROM BEYOND

by H.P. Saucebox

High up on the coast of Greenland there dwell a peculiar tribe of degenrate Eskimos, followers of a faith descended from ancient eons before this world was made. Not only do they perform human sacrifices but nameless rituals addressed to a hideous elder demon, whose name no sane man has yet heard spoken aloud. Amidst scenes of eldritch horror, bestial voices are raised and noxious evils summoned. Obscene carvings never fashioned by mortal hands are displayed to the light of un-dreamed of stars. It is devoutly to be prayed that these hideous ululations have not yet been answered . . .

The sole testimony to the contrary is the transcript of the delirious ravings of a Portuguese sailorman, one Juan Scortez, who died insane, refusing to utter but one nightmarish repetitive phrase "The Box . . . The Box . . . The Box . . . It lives . . . The Box" until the very moment preceding his death, when in one devastating moment of cosmic clarity, he articulated quite clearly the gruesome incantation, never meant to be declaimed from mortal larynx,

"Ph'nglui mglw'nafh KNEBWORTH R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn!"

The resonance of this phrase struck icy terror into my being, and I felt consciousness slipping away. For had not the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred written in the dark pages of the Necronomicon that these words could not be spoken until the Zeppelin were ready to return from the outer darkness, once more to hold all humanity in their blighted sway . . .

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CORRECTION TO last week's five page heading Frank Keylinks name should have been spelt K E A L E Y. Sorry Frank — Mike.

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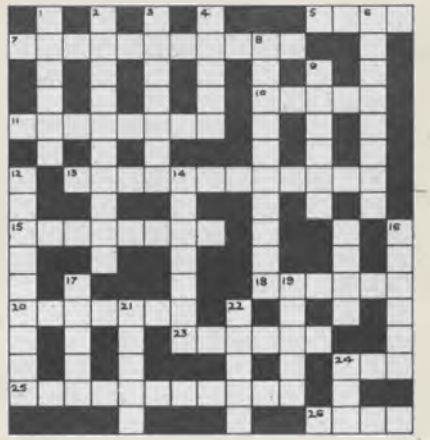

ACROSS

5 & 16 It's only rock'n'roll, and only one small step from fame to relative obscurity
7 Queen's 'greatest hits' collection (4,7)
10 When other groups rehearse, do they go for target practice?! (A Silly Season Special)
11 Through which EMI re-signed Glen Matlock after firing him as a Pistol (4,5)
13 Aka Sir Henry of Rawlinson End, former Bonzo's wag in residence (3,9)
15 Favourites at the police ball? Or a group that's a cut above the competition?
18 Four Seasons oldie, or a suburban tipple
20 Beserkeley moneybags?
23 See 17
24 They're in the wardrobe fighting!
25 Individually Pete Thomas, Bruce Thomas and Steve Naive
26 See 9

DOWN

1 Ms Jackson or Ms Small, the 'Lollipop' kid
2 Carnage on the dancefloor — Sylvester was never like this! (5,5)
3 i.e., dicks from LA!
4 Shows appreciation, catches something nasty!
6 Spector-produced girlie group who first hit with 'He's A Rebel'
8 Andy Ellison's band (5,5)
9 & 26 Hangs ram! Ha! (anag. 2 words)
12 Hit for The Knack (2,7)
14 & 19 A dalek's thing! (anag. 2 words)
16 See 5
17 & 23 Lizzy's American guitarist
19 See 14
21 Paul Anka standard, movingly interpreted by the former Sidney (2,3)
22 Baldhead of H. Chocolate
24 US-backed record conglomorate controlling acts as diverse as Neil Young and the Angelic Upstarts (inits.)

ANSWERS

Across: 5 Herbie Hancock; 7 Keith Richard; 10 Solo; 12 'Silly Games'; 14 Rickie Lee Jones; 15 Edwin Starr; 17 Robert; 20 Adam Faith; 21 Hot Gossip; 22 (Janis) Ian.

Down: 1 'The Kids Are Alright'; 2 'Light My Fire'; 3 Chris Farlowe; 4 Doors; 6 Stooges; 8 Hype; 9 Doll; 11 Black Sabbath; 13 Cortinas; 16 'Rat Trap'; 18 Tams; 19 Janis (Ian).

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GASBAG

This week: relax. YOU ARE NORMAL

I've just about had enough of your useless music paper. Every week I buy it hoping to read about new rock acts but all I see is punk, punk and more punk. Now I don't mind certain punk bands but I don't think enough bands have justified themselves to have pages dedicated to them. What happened to real musicians like Larry Carlton, Jeff Beck etc.? When Led Zep were the in thing you crawled up their proverbial backsides but as soon as they went 'over the hill' you found a new taste to pander to. What I expect from a good paper is informative information and a wide coverage of all aspects of modern music not just a one sided view. Jimmy Pursey and other juveniles are still wet behind the ears and as for the bloke who said he is an underrated vocalist all I can say is he is not a vocalist at all.

Another thing I don't like is the poor quality of journalism of your record reviewers. I refer in particular to that incompetent fool Harry George, who had the nerve to criticize the albums by Rickie Lee Jones and the Climax Blues Band. I don't mind constructive criticism but Harry George is not constructive. What are you going to do when the punk craze dies out? Send a letter of apology to Led Zeppelin. Believe me, when they play Knebworth all those people who have turned to punk in their absence will find out who the real Heroes are.

What I suggest you do is to obtain a list of all the people who are qualified to review albums and send the rest to a jazz or rock gig to improve their musical tastes and to open their ears to the other forms of music there are. The only punk band with any credibility are the superb Police. They play controlled reggae-rock and incorporate a lot of the styles to form an exciting and listenable sound. In 'Sting' they have a fine vocalist. Apart from all the slagging above, your paper is alright. You should call your paper Enemy as you don't make many friends.
STEVE KELLY, Hornsey.
We're just selective, I guess. — CSM
Now look. Why are you being so polite to this geezer? Whyntcha just tell him to PISS OFF? — A STROPPY BUGGER
He's a reader, ain't he? — CSM
No he's not. He's a — STROPPY BUGGER
Next! — CSM

We can't enter your Blockhead Competition because we don't know 30 words.
HAMISH AND KARIN.
Which 30 words don't you know? — CSM

Everytime anyone from *NME* (usually CSM) reviews a new Ry Cooder elpee, the writer in question usually rats on about Ryland P's integrity, solidarity, good humour and sheer nice vibes. Okay. But have any of your reviewers ever noticed that their hero's first album 'Ry Cooder' (WB 1971) is *slowed down* in its entirety?

If you have one of those crazy mid speed-type decks to hand, could one of your media types check the album out at the speed between 33 and 45rpm. I'm sure you'll hear what I mean (especially on 'Pigmeat'). You'll find that the whole set sounds *much* better. You'll also find that the whole sheebang (both sides) lasts about eighteen minutes.

Tim Hardin is also a genius but even he, at 24 minutes (total running time of 'Tim Hardin's Greatest Hits'), cannot equal Mr Cooder when it comes to thinly spread recorded jam! Integrity, shmintegrity!
BORING JAMES, Carlisle, Cumbria.
We think you're silly. Ryland simply has a RATHER DEEP VOICE and likes his tempos medium rare. If we were wealthy enough to own varispeed decks, we'd use them sensibly and make The Ramones even faster. — CSM

Huh, I always thought that Devo were decidedly untrendy. But what happens in your six page interview with them? Actually, I shouldn't say 'with them' seeing as Jerry Casale did most of the talking. He may be the prime culprit, seeing as the other members of the band didn't get much of a chance to give their views. Jerry Casale is a professional Trendy. He is not only pretentious but obscure too. God, it makes me sick. I thought they were against all that sort of thing, but it seems they (or Jerry Casale at least) typifies it. It's a shame, seing as their music is untrendy. Oh yes, and Paul Morley has a lot to answer for. He's usually positively untrendy, but he sounded really pretentious in the Devo interview. Snap out of it, Paul! Thank God for Danny Baker! Oh yes I thought John Lydon was superb on *Juke Box Jury*. And finally, a word to Jo V. Al and 'The Casual Posers' of Aylesbury! The Jam are not Casual Poseurs; they are positively untrendy.
A. PARANOID (Rock Against Trendies Movement), near Bedford.
You're having a go at me, aren't you? — A. NOTHER PARANOID.

Debbie Harry wears green shoes. You know what this means, don't you?
BRIEFCASE BITER, Reading.
Ummm . . . a shoe transplant? — CSM
Cold. Very cold. — BRUCE FORSYTH
You're both out to lunch. It means that if they're suede you've had it. — A VOYEUR.

So Jimmy Pursey thinks Magazine and their like are shit, does he? Pursey shoots his mouth off about fighting racism, but none of Sham were coloured. Yet Magazine's bass player is coloured and they haven't made a big deal about it. Doesn't Jim think this is fighting racism? Obviously not. Magazine have never released the same version of a track more than once unlike Sham — how this slipped Pursey's shallow mind.

He finds plenty of time to criticize the likes of Johnny, Howie and Siouxsie, etc. who by an odd twist of fate were all there at the start in '76 and are now creating music that is a far cry from their beginnings. Wasn't *change* one of the ideals? (Oops sorry, James came along once it had been made nicely viable). They made it possible for the parasites to get their shallow glory and was it not bands like Sham 69 that caused Howie to leave the Buzzcocks? *(I dunno. Wotzit? — CSM)*

The Pistolettes smell like a last attempt at fame, money, etc. Maybe someone should tell him that Magazine belongs to a future, which excludes him. Pursey's fifteen minutes ended in the Roxy and playing Johnny's role ain't going to put any clock back. Howie's fifteen minutes have just begun.
ISOBEL & ERIC.
And the pubs have been open for quarter of an hour. So what else is new? — CSM

Why should Nick J. of Bolton be the one to 'wise up' to the fact that reality is experienced on many levels when it was Paul Morley who first claimed reality as his own personal concept?

A normal person. Pic: ZED

ISOBEL McFAULL, Dunbartonshire, Scotland.
In your reality he may have done, chum. In mine he didn't. — CSM (s'easy if you make up the rules yourself).

I feel insignificant.
A. P. N. D. OCEAN, Billy Smart's Circus, High Street, China.
Are we twigging something here? — A MONTY CLONE

Abandon all your hopes. The mission is never accomplished.
ANONYMOUSE
I know things look that way a lot of the time, pal, but if you believe it you're sunk. You're not sunk, are you? — CSM

I get bloody sick of reading some of the stupid letters in *Gasbag* every week. People write in giving their so-called humour which is in fact just an attempt at a Monty Python style of humour. It makes me bloody weep. I'm sure that nearly every letter that gets printed is written by some bloody middle-class fart pretending to be a working-class intellect. We're sick of bloody middle-class socialists trying to (pretending to) help us ignorant workers. Why don't you try and attempt to print something realistic and basic, so us working-class dopes (who buy your paper and keep you lot in a job) can understand. I also get chewed off about the sodden ridiculous names given at the end of these letters, also your bloody sarcastic comments get right up my nose to the point where I do blow my nose on them.
REAL WORKING CLASS YOUTH, Newcastle.
Ah, so *you're* the real working class youth I've been hearing so much about for ahhhh, simply *ages* now. How *splendid* to actually *hear* from you! Now, what have you actually got to say? — CSM. Achooo! — REAL WORKING CLASS YOUTH

I thought the Clash were dead until I read Paul Morley's review in this week's *NME*. "Clash are alive", he proclaims, "dangerous.. the real sound.. rebellious.. rock 'n' roll.. hard rock group.. the Clash are alive." Probably their best review this year in the *NME*, but very significantly *the* key word is missing. You know the one. Punk. The Clash are supposed to be a punk band, remember? Paul Morley inadvertently (or, perhaps on purpose) forgets to use this word, thus banging another nail into their brass-finished, silk-lined coffin.

The Clash: *"You think it's funny, turning rebellion into money".*

Cress: *"CBS promote the Clash/but it ain't for revolution, it's just for cash".*

Punk, along with the Clash, is dead and gone.
PEDRO: "I am dead but punk is deader", Norwich.
Punk? Punk? I don't remember that. What was it? It's in the dumper! Gone! Down the toidy! Forget it, forget it, forget it! — RON FIELDS.
This is a very obscure elitist joke. If you don't get it, relax. You are normal. — CSM.

How can anyone say rock and roll is not worth dying for when over here we die every day for less (in ref to Brian Jones death) and there, too? Remember, do as thou wilt shall be the whole of thy law. Why is the spark being squeezed out of the new wave? When are Siouxsie, Clash, PIL coming to the States? The kids are all right.
DONALD LIERMAN, Flint, Michigan, USA. P.S. Your paper is the best.
The best what? — CSM

Dear Nick Kent, your observation at the tail-end of the ART-ickle on "MEN" was insignificant, but personal enough to warrant and allow me the following reply:

I am proud to be known as one of B. B. King's fans, admirers, devotees or whatever. I have missed not one of his performances in England, and have been lucky/privileged to see several in other countries. I have also had the great fortune to speak to Mr King on some occasions over the past seven years, either at venues he was appearing where, or on one occasion at a hotel I was coincidentally checked into. It is hardly worth taking the time to state that I have at all times found him to be a truly humble, genuine and sincere person.

My SOLE reason for being at the Alexandra Palace was to witness B.B.'s performance. (Saturday and other days). As for Chuck Berry (who disillusioned me when I was but a schoolboy) I would be no more concerned about seeing him backstage than I would from the front or the side. B. B. King's first show on Saturday was exemplary, excellent and uplifting; his second, miraculous and inspiring. Mr. Berry's "show" was crass, demeaning, insulting cheap, expensive, wretched, inconsequential, anti-climatic, and thoroughly boring.

At the point you, sir, saw me and didn't feel like saying "hello", I must confess I was ORLLEEEERIUSLEE DRUNK . . . and in my undoubted wisdom the only reason I required access to the backstage area was to kill, murder or maim "the object of my inebriated loathing." (Cynthia Lemon 1971.) I don't claim to know B. B. King any better than you, Nick, know E.C. & the A's. Don't give me any more stick & I'll tell you something really interesting about Bob Dylan. Yours very truly, Mr Costello's Bass Player.
BRUCE THOMAS, London W1.
Looking back, I probably was unduly harsh, but I can't argue with you about the condition you were in. In fact I spent several minutes' attempting to catch your attention and assist you in getting where you wanted to go. Your state of intoxication was such, however, that I swear you failed to recognise my presence at all. Hope to see you in touch with sobriety next time we meet — NICK KENT.

Ah jist coodnae unnerston a wurd John Cooper Clark sed in your artikle tha ither week.
HAMISH McSPORRAN, Scotland, Cleethorpes.
Y'whet is? — A PASSING SCOUSE
Qu'est-ce qu'il a dit? — GISCARD D'ESTAING
Huh? — JOE STEVENS
This is getting silly — CSM.

No one but a blockhead ever wrote music, except for money.
SAMUEL JOHNSON, Lichfield
And even the blocks get paid. Sad, innit? — BOSWELL

Girls can be normal too (no sexism here, readers!) Pic: JACK

Anyone in love with the normal world should flick their foolishness in the general direction of GASBAG, NME, 5/7 Carnaby St., London W1V 1PG. This week's custodian: CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY.

T-ZERS

AS *(Go — Ed)* the swarms seek out every last crevice in which to mass and irritate, *T-Zers* dons the heaviest Captain Oates threads, the only sensible protection against the great greenfly siege. So own up! Which one of you wise-ass promoters brought over these swirling little inconveniences on this Anarchy '79 Tour? Meals get ruined, folk go light-lipped for fear of finding themselves lunching 'pon aphid pate, and is there an eye on this increasingly green and nasty land that hasn't played host to one of these nauseating winged bogies? And so, despite all and armed with a family size can of 'Flit', *T-Zers* must get through! *(I said go — Ed).*

You send me, I'm gone, chief and as the nation trembles/scratches/yawns on the eve of **Zed Leppelin's** forthcoming manifestation, our man in the Swansong foyer with his glass to the door reports an innovative marketing plan by which the new Lep LP shall be delivered into your dishpan hands.

Y'see, the album comes in four different sleeves, and you won't know which one you've got until you've already forked over the bunce for the vinyl, since all copies will be shrink-wrapped in brown paper. Apart from the fact that any collector fanatical enough to want the complete set will have to purchase several dozen copies before they are certain of attaining this dubious objective, the possibility remains that it's simply a sneaky Swansong ploy to get rid of all those **Detective** albums still cluttering up the warehouse.

The album, by the way, is entitled 'Through The Out Door' and yes verily e'en as we speak, malicious and unsubstantiated rumours flood the capital (and — for all we know — the hinterlands) to the effect that these gigs represent some sort of Swan song for the reclusive millionaires.

Naturally, no dot would be credulous enough to lend any actual credence to such scuzzy gossip, but we'd be failing in our duty if we didn't pass them on. In fact, a virtual ocean of whispers surround the grand old masters — like the eternally youthful *(You sure? — Ed)* **Robert Plant** and the question of whether some of his finer thoughts are being with held for the time being until he can record his own plate. And what's this about a replacement drummer for **Bonzo**? Like we say, we'd be failing in our d. . . *(I SAID GO! — Ed).* . .

Remember the **Glen Matlock/Starjets/SLF** studio collaboration? Well, forget it. We heard from the fair lips of no less a personage than **Stiff Little Thumb Jake Burns** that all such tales are a load of hooey even if they do emanate from **Starjets'** publicist. He also informed us that **Stiff Little Fingers** have joined the wild and wacky world of major recording contracts with a Chrysalis deal on which the ink is still faintly dampish. . .

Not half as damp as the 'Quink' on the score for the new **Sham 69** single. **Jimmy Pursey** writes loudly: "I tell ya we recorded that — wallop — in 25 minutes". As long as that? "Yeah, one of our longer ones", quoth he. . .

Which leads us inescapably, inevitably and indubitably to said young person's ebullient outvibing of the entire population of the *Juke Box Jury* studio last Sat'dy, when even silent, taciturn and somewhat exhausted looking **Modest Bob Geldof** was verbally outgunned by the Hersham Huckster. Next week, he actually appears as a panellist. Can nothing stop this man?

So farewell Sham 69 . . . the curtain falls at the Rainbow last Saturday. *Pic: Pennie Smith*

Well, several hundred skinheads tried very hard at Sham's farewell bash last Saturday — you can read *Thrills* for the full report. Jim himself passed by NME offices the following Monday to present youthful but careworn Ed **Neil Spencer** with a signed memento of the Sham era, and express his dismay at events. "That's why Sham had to finish," he quoth, also suggesting that his enthusiasm for the Sex Pistols Mk 3 was not quite what it was a few weeks back. Spencer suggested a trip down the Amazon as a possible remedy for Jim's summertime blues . . .

The Kinks Are Alright: The elderly aesthetes observed running through **Pretenders'** 'Stop Your Sobbing' at their soundcheck in Atlanta Georgia. There is a reason for this but we don't know what it is. We can tell you, though, that **Sandie Shaw** has been known to hum 'Tattooed Love Boys' on her way home from work. . .

Bruce Springsteen, vocalist with R&B group **E-Street Band** *(Are you kidding? — Ed)* has recorded a track about the recent Three Mile Island nuke cock up. Called 'Roulette' the outfit have no plans for its release, natch, but should he dither too long we dare say that a **Mr Boot Legger** will begin to circle editions of it as with previous **Windscreen** laments lying low. These days though old man **Sluice** is a little less than smiling at **Boot** and ordering thorough raiding of all stores suspecting of harbouring his illicit product. . .

Gifted young people doing interesting things: virtually the entire complement of **Mekons** disported themselves at a **Gang Of Four** gig last Saturday fetchingly bedecked in what an onlooker described as "crisp white T-shirts and trousers" as a massive groundswell of muttering postulates their signing some sort of formal agreement with Virgin. Meanwhile, just to keep their hands in, the **Meeks** have scrapped their forthcoming single 'Rosenna' because they were unhappy with the sound. . .

Record babble: next month **Frank Zappa** will release the first part of his rock history trilogy 'Joe's Garage'. Part two will surface just prior to Xmas and the third sometime next year. Grizzled **Frank** was at one time to release a nine album set of similar notions through *Playboy* although on the advice of the Surgeon General the folly was abandoned. . .

Forthcoming **Weather Report** release a double with three sides of live material. . .

No reports of any recording of **Cheap Trick's** manager, **Kirk Dyer**, getting stabbed when a fan (?) leapt onstage while the group were going through the beltings in Texas. A security guard was also wounded. . .

We hope for **Kirk's** sake that **Stevie Wonder** don't decide to check out his hospital progress. The friend of the foliage has made rather a habit of playing the black angel to his friends. Soon after the recording of 'We Love You Pops', **Berry Gordy Snr** — the 'Pop' in question — dropped stone dead. The night before **Minnie Riperton** sadly expired **Wonder** visited her bedside to sing her a special song he'd written, 'Minnie Get Well Soon'. A wire has been dispatched to **Stevie** requesting that he immediately start work on 'Live Long And Prosper *(Censored — Ed)*' Censored! Gertchyou rotten sourpuss. . .

What a Clint he turned out to be: following last week's **Clint Eastwood** *Thrill*, it transpires that impresario **Robert Paterson** was merely *asked* by **Clint's** Hollywood agent to investigate the eponymous toaster's activities, and not recruited as an enforcer over brandy and cigars as **Paterson** had previously claimed. **Chris Gillett** of Panda (Clint's agency) states that **Paterson** had actually let loose with all sorts of injunction-type threats. With **Clint's** agent confirming that **Paterson** was only asked to investigate rather than enforce, can the dots conclude that RP was hoping to boost his status with ol' Malpaso? The answer is, of course, "Yup". . .

And now (hehheh) it's time to let you in on all last week's conceptual jokes (you may call 'em cockups; we call 'em conceptual jokes). The pic in *T'rills* last week purporting to **Phil Lynott** and **Gary Moore** was of course **Phillipo** with **Lizzy** drummist **Brian Downey**, who was playing the guitar just to piss everybody about. The "Steve 4 Chrissie" bit on page 8 was what happened when a fetching green tint suddenly turned black and obliterated all sorts of valuable **Pretenders** garf, and right here in *T-zerz* we pretended for our own inscrutable reasons that New York's groovy **Voodoo Shoes** had broken up when of course they hadn't. Now you know why we call 'em conceptual jokes (help!!!!). . .

On the advice of **James Richmond**, one of the board of Burbank City Council, California, a whole series of concerts featuring **Patti Smith, Todd Rundgren, Blue Oyster Cult** and **Roxy Music** were cancelled. Describing the events as "a combination of horrors", **Mr Richmond** was particularly upset at the information that, ". . .one of these groups discussed would attract a large homosexual crowd. I don't think that's what we want in town."

Patti Smith observed thus: "This is a dangerous precedent. . .As I do not judge the children of the councilmen and citizens of Burbank, let them not judge mine". **Ms Smith** is rumoured to be after the role of 'Fendora The Wise' in the remake of the biblical epic *Eggs Aplenty!* . .

This must be stardom (or something quite like it): the well-known group **Blondie** were attempting to leave the site of an open air bash in New York's Central Park when hordes of pop music fans did $5000 worth of damage to the limousines in which they were ensconced. **Bob Geldof** has already written a letter to *The Times* about it. . .

Smurfs 4 Specials: Lynval shoes how. *Pic: Stevenson*

Scott: That's It, I Quit

IT may not be immediately apparent to anybody other than the most conscientious students of the *NME* staff box, but last Friday an era came to an end. Jack Scott, *NME's* production editor for virtually a decade, laid out his final page, ceremonially checked in his ems-rule and said his farewells to the highly silly world of rock journalism preparatory to emigrating to Spain.

Jack Scott is not one of the names that readers most instantly associate with *NME*, but he was among the most crucial parts of the organisation. Amidst the chaos, tomfoolery, straining against the entire dark ages of journalism, crises of conscience, nervous breakdowns, occasional outbreaks of physical violence and Jack was the man who took on the production problems and made sure that *NME* actually came out. His quiet humour, impregnable calm, superhuman capacity for hard work and painstaking attention to detail provided a channel for the energies of the gaggle of crazies whose name you actually *do* associate with this paper.

Following in the footsteps of the Scott Hush Puppies are the Doc Martens of Dundee's own Stuart Johnston (who has already shaved off his tache and buckled down to it. Did we come out this week? Phew! Thanks, Stuart). We wish Stuart great success in the difficult role of *NME's* token sane, responsible person, and hope that he can keep his head while all about him are losing theirs and blaming it on him.

Oh, and Jack — if you find the proofs of *Info City* in your luggage when you unpack, the printer's messenger goes in twelve minutes . . .

Val E. Dictorian

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