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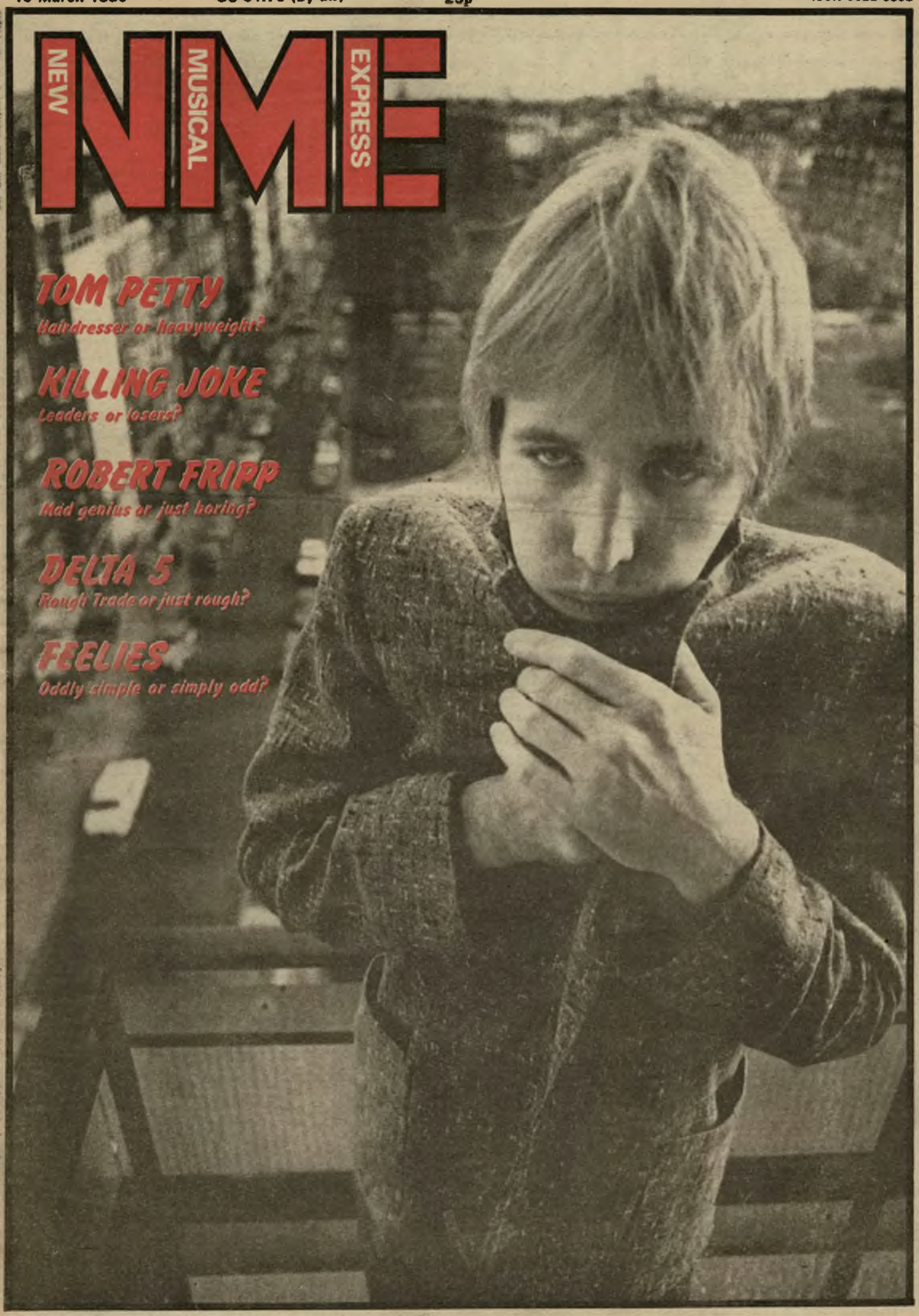
NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS



TOM PETTY
Hairdresser or heavyweight?

KILLING JOKE
Leaders or losers?

ROBERT FRIPP
Mad genius or just boring?

DELTA 5
Rough Trade or just rough?

FEELIES
Oddly simple or simply odd?

Tom Petty models new Springsteen chic apparel. Pic: Anton Corbijn.

NME CHARTS

Week ending March 15, 1980

UK SINGLES

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in chart	Highest position
1	(1)	Atomic	Blondie (Chrysalis)	4	1
2	(6)	Together We Are Beautiful	Fern Kinney (WEA)	3	2
3	(4)	Take That Look Off Your Face	Marti Webb (Polydor)	4	3
4	(11)	Games Without Frontiers	Peter Gabriel (Charisma)	3	4
5	(2)	I Can't Stand Up For Falling Down	Elvis Costello (F Beat)	4	2
6	(12)	So Lonely	Police (A&M)	4	6
7	(3)	Carrie	Cliff Richard (EMI)	5	3
8	(7)	And The Beat Goes On	Whispers (Solar)	6	5
9	(19)	All Night Long	Rainbow (Polydor)	2	9
10	(13)	Hands Off She's Mine	The Beat (Feet)	3	10
11	(5)	Coward Of The County	Kenny Rogers (United Artists)	7	1
12	(22)	Turning Japanese	Vapors (United Artists)	2	12
13	(—)	At The Edge	Stiff Little Fingers (Chrysalis)	1	13
14	(8)	Rock With You	Michael Jackson (Epic)	6	6
15	(9)	Ghost Riders In The Sky	Shadows (EMI)	6	9
16	(—)	Dance Yourself Dizzy	Liquid Gold (Polo)	1	16
17	(23)	Cuba	Gibson Brothers (Island)	3	17
18	(10)	So Good To Be Back Home Again	Tourists (Logo)	5	10
19	(26)	Do That To Me One More Time	Captain & Tennille (Casablanca)	3	19
20	(14)	Captain Beaky	Keith Michell (Epic)	5	6
21	(15)	Baby I Love You	Ramones (Sire)	6	10
22	(—)	Working My Way Back To You	Detroit Spinners (Atlantic)	1	22
23	(20)	Stomp	Brothers Johnson (A&M)	3	20
24	(16)	Living In The Plastic Age	Buggles (Island)	6	15
25	(17)	Alabama Song	David Bowie (RCA)	2	17
26	(25)	Tonight I'm Alright	Nareda Michael Walden (Atlantic)	2	26
27	(—)	Hot Dog	Shakin' Stevens (Epic)	1	27
28	(—)	Singing The Blues	Dave Edmunds (Swan Song)	1	28
29	(—)	Echo Beach	Martha & The Muffins (DinDisc)	1	29
30	(—)	Warhead	UK Subs (Gem)	1	30

UP AND COMING:

Kool In The Kaftan — B. A. Robertson (Asylum).
Love Injection — Trussel (Asylum).
Poison Ivy — Lambrettas (Rocket).
Another Nail In The Heart — Squeeze (A&M).
Rosie — Joan Armatrading (A&M).
Hello I Am You Your Heart — Bette Bright (Korova).

UK ALBUMS

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in chart	Highest position
1	(8)	String Of Hits	Shadows (EMI)	18	1
2	(2)	Regatta De Blanc	Police (A&M)	21	1
3	(1)	Last Dance	Various (EMI)	6	1
4	(3)	Pretenders	Pretenders (Real)	8	1
5	(15)	Eat To The Beat	Blondie (Chrysalis)	22	2
6	(4)	Kenny	Kenny Rogers (United Artists)	5	4
7	(7)	Tell Me On A Sunday	Marti Webb (Polydor)	3	7
8	(5)	Get Happy	Elvis Costello (F Beat)	4	2
9	(—)	Greatest Hits	Rose Royce (Whitfield)	1	9
10	(14)	Golden Collection	Charley Pride (K-Tel)	5	10
11	(11)	Too Much Pressure	Selecter (Two Tone)	3	3
12	(10)	One Step Beyond	Madness (Stiff)	17	2
13	(9)	Short Stories	Jon & Vangelis (Polydor)	7	5
13	(13)	Outlandos D'amour	Police (A & M)	38	7
15	(12)	The Specials	(Two Tone)	18	7
16	(—)	Reality Effect	Tourists (Logo)	1	16
17	(16)	Light Up The Night	Brothers Johnson (A & M)	3	15
18	(25)	Metal For Muthas	Various (EMI)	2	18
19	(6)	Off The Wall	Michael Jackson (Epic)	23	3
20	(27)	The Nolan Sisters	Nolans (Epic)	4	12
21	(28)	Rock & Roll Juvenile	Cliff Richard (EMI)	12	1
22	(—)	Down To Earth	Rainbow (Polydor)	14	7
23	(—)	Greatest Hits	K C & The Sunshine Band (TK)	1	23
24	(23)	The Wall	Pink Floyd (Harvest)	12	4
25	(26)	Permanent Waves	Rush (Mercury)	7	8
26	(—)	[illegible]'s Day	Mike Rutherford (Charisma)	1	26
27	(20)	Flogging A Dead Horse	Sex Pistols (Virgin)	3	20
28	(—)	On The Radio	Donna Summer (Casablanca)	5	20
29	(—)	Tears And Laughter	Johnny Mathis (CBS)	1	29
30	(24)	Abba's Greatest Hits Vol 2	(Epic)	17	1

UP AND COMING:

Big Smash — Wreckless Eric (Stiff).
Mad Love — Linda Ronstadt (Asylum).
Take One — Shakin' Stevens (Epic).
Lady Samantha — Elton John (DJM).
Freedom At Point Zero — Jefferson Starship (Grunt).
Against The Wind — Bob Seger (Capitol).

US SINGLES

This Week	Last Week		
1	(2)	Longer	Dan Fogelberg
2	(1)	Crazy Little Thing Called Love	Queen
3	(6)	Another Brick In The Wall	Pink Floyd
4	(4)	On The Radio	Donna Summer
5	(5)	Working My Way Back To You	Spinners
6	(7)	Desire	Andy Gibb
7	(3)	Yes I'm Ready	Teri DeSario/K.C.
8	(9)	Him	Rupert Holmes
9	(10)	How Do I Make You	Linda Ronstadt
10	(12)	Too Hot	Kool & The Gang
11	(8)	Rock With You	Michael Jackson
12	(13)	Second Time Around	Shalamar
13	(11)	An American Dream	The Dirt Band
14	(17)	Refugee	Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers
15	(14)	September Morn	Neil Diamond
16	(20)	Special Lady	Ray Goodman & Brown
17	(18)	"99"	Toto
18	(25)	Ride Like The Wind	Christopher Cross
19	(22)	Heartbreaker	Pat Benetar
20	(—)	Call Me	Blondie
21	(24)	Give It All You Got	Chuck Mangione
22	(28)	Fire Lake	Bob Seger
23	(16)	Cruisin'	Smokey Robinson
24	(26)	Three Times In Love	Tommy James
25	(—)	I Can't Tell You Why	Eagles
26	(29)	With You I'm Born Again	Billy Preston/Syreeta
27	(19)	Do That To Me One More Time	The Captain & Tennille
28	(—)	Off The Wall	Michael Jackson
29	(30)	Back On My Feet Again	The Baby's
30	(—)	Baby Talks Dirty	The Knack

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

US ALBUMS

This Week	Last Week		
1	(1)	The Wall	Pink Floyd
2	(2)	Dame The Torpedoes Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers	
3	(3)	Off The Wall	Michael Jackson
4	(4)	Phoenix	Don Fogelberg
5	(14)	Mad Love	Linda Ronstadt
6	(6)	Permanent Waves	Rush
7	(9)	Bebe Le Strange	Heart
8	(8)	The Whispers	
9	(5)	The Long Run	The Eagles
10	(10)	Fun And Games	Chuck Mangione
11	(7)	On The Radio	Donna Summer
12	(15)	But The Little Girls Understand	The Knack
13	(12)	Kenny	Kenny Rogers
14	(11)	Cornerstone	Styx
15	(—)	Against The Wind	Bob Seger
16	(13)	The Rose	Original Soundtrack
17	(18)	In The Heat Of The Night	Pat Benetar
18	(—)	Light Up the Night	Brothers Johnson
19	(17)	Tusk	Fleetwood Mac
20	(21)	Ladies Night	Kool & The Gang
21	(24)	Love Stinks	The J. Geils Band
22	(22)	Keep The Fire	Kenny Loggins
23	(29)	Ray, Goodman & Brown	
24	(—)	American Gigolo	Original Soundtrack
25	(16)	September Morn	Neil Diamond
26	(27)	Big Fun	Shalamar
27	(20)	In Through The Out Door	Led Zeppelin
28	(—)	Bad Luck Streak In Dancing School	Warren Zevon
29	(23)	Gold & Platinum	Lynyrd Skynyrd Band
30	(—)	London Calling	The Clash

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

5 YEARS AGO

Week ending March 11, 1975

1 If ... Telly Savalas (MCA)
2 Bye Bye Baby ... Bay City Rollers (Bell)
3 Only You Can ... Fox (GTO)
4 The Secrets That You Keep ... Mud (Rak)
5 Make Me Smile ... Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel (EMI)
6 My Eyes Adored You ... Frankie Valli (Private Stock)
7 Pick Up The Pieces ... Average White Band (Atlantic)
8 Shame Shame Shame ... Shirley & Co. (All Platinum)
9 Dreamer ... Supertramp (A & M)
10 I'm Stone In Love With You ... Johnny Mathis (CBS)

10 YEARS AGO

Week ending March 11, 1970

1 Wandering Star ... Lee Marvin (Paramount)
2 I Want You Back ... Jackson Five (Tamla Motown)
3 Bridge Over Troubled Water ... Simon & Garfunkel (CBS)
4 Let's Work Together ... Canned Heat (Liberty)
5 Instant Karma ... Plastic Ono Band (Apple)
6 Years May Come, Years May Go Herman's Hermits (Columbia)
7 Love Grows ... Edison Lighthouse (Bell)
8 United We Stand ... Brotherhood Of Man (Deram)
9 Let It Be ... Beatles (Apple)
10 My Baby Loves Lovin' ... White Plains (Deram)

15 YEARS AGO

Week ending March 11, 1965

1 The Last Time ... Rolling Stones (Decca)
2 It's Not Unusual ... Tom Jones (Decca)
3 I'll Never Find Another You ... Seekers (Columbia)
4 Silhouettes ... Herman's Hermits (Columbia)
5 I'll Stop At Nothing ... Sandie Shaw (Pye)
6 Game Of Love ... Wayne Fontana & The Mindbenders (Fontana)
7 Come And Stay With Me ... Marianne Faithfull (Decca)
8 Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood ... Animals (Columbia)
9 I Must Be Seeing Things ... Gene Pitney (Stateside)
10 Goodbye My Love ... Searchers (Pye)

The hep-cat now standing — well doing his best — at khazi number seven is Mr Shakin' Stevens. This week he stands at number 27 in our chart. Shakin' is pictured crooning 'Harpic Hotel' whilst putting the finishing touches to seeing his name up in lights. For some reason this touching scene was deleted from the raunchy 'Oh Boy' TV series. This has been number 34 in our 'Stars At Home' series . . .
Pic: Chalkie Davies

REGGAE

(1) 51 Storm Pt II ... Little John (Owyer)
(2) Bucket Bottom ... Prince Allah (Freedom Sounds)
(3) Hotel Fee ... General Echo/Maddo (Greensleeves)
(4) To Love Someone ... Paul Daukins (Arawak)
(5) Lady Of Magic ... Bunny Maloney (Moodiac)
(6) The General ... Dennis Brown/Ranking Dread (DEB)
(7) Lovers Rock ... Sugar Minott (Black Roots)
(8) African Tribesman ... Earl Zero/Mickey Dread (Sufferers Heights)
(9) Sitting On The Hillside ... Horace Andy (Earthquake)
(10) Hard Times ... Pablo Gad (Burning Sounds)

Chart supplied by Danny Kool Records, 94 Dean Street, London W1.

DISCO

(1) Stomp ... Brothers Johnson (A & M)
(2) Sizzling Hot ... Chuck Sizzler (Arista)
(3) Love Injection ... Trussel (Warner Brothers)
(4) Right In The Socket ... Shalamar (RCA)
(5) And The Beat Goes On ... Whispers (RCA)
(6) In The Stone ... Earth Wind & Fire (CBS)
(7) Holdin' On ... Tony Ralio (Pye)
(8) I Can Feel It ... Stop (Pye)
(9) Just A Touch Of Love ... Slave (Warner Brothers)
(10) Tonight I'm Alright ... Nareda Michael Walden (Warner Brothers)

Chart supplied by HMV Records, Oxford Street, London W1.

INDIES

1. Food For Thought ... UB40 (Graduate 6)
2. Beer Cart Lane ... Fiddlers Dram (Sid 221)
3. Car Trouble ... Adam and the Ants (Dun 10)
4. Where Is Captain Kirk ... Spizz Energi (RT504)
5. Judy In Disguise ... Silicon Teens (Mute 004)
6. This Is Lovers Rock ... Eargasm (Ear 26 and Ear 726)
7. Alternative Ulster ... Stiff Little Fingers (RT004)
8. Tribal Look ... Toyah (Safe 22)
9. Victims of the Riddle ... Toyah (Safe 15)
10. Down By The Waterside ... Wilko Johnson (ROCS220)

Supplied by Spartan Records, London Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 7HQ

NEWS

EDITED BY
DEREK JOHNSON

Holly campaigns for THE RIGHT TO BE ITALIAN

HOLLY & THE ITALIANS — who, as reported last week, were forced to drop out of The Selecter's tour because of unfavourable audience reaction — have been hurredly lined up for their own headlining concert series. They quit the Selecter package, because they play "different" music from the other acts on the bill, and were therefore not appreciated — so they have named their own headliners 'The Right To Be Italian Tour'.

More dates are still being lined up, but those confirmed so far are Swansea University (tonight, Thursday), Birmingham Aston University (Friday), Newcastle University (Saturday), London Tottenham-Court Rd. YMCA (March 18), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (20), Retford Porterhouse (21), Bristol Polytechnic (22) and Nuneaton 77 Club (23).

● The YMCA is rapidly developing into a major London venue, and subsequent bookings include Wreckless Eric (March 21) and Girlschool (28). Eric is supported by The Crooks who, as a result, have had to cancel their gig that night at Fulham Greyhound.

Jam join Rainbow birthday season

THE JAM have agreed to headline the outstanding concert in the 50th anniversary week at London's Rainbow Theatre. As reported last week, Madness were originally booked for the opening show of the series on April 1, but subsequently withdrew. However, The Jam are not appearing on that date — instead, they come in at the end of the series on Easter Monday, April 7. The support act is The Records, and tickets are on sale now priced £4 and £3.50.

The first concert on April 1 will now feature Judas Priest, who move forward from their original date of April 5 — when John McLaughlin is now starring, instead of the previous day. So the revised line-up now reads Judas Priest and Iron Maiden (April 1), Whitesnake and Saxon (2), The Stranglers (3), John McLaughlin and Al di Miola (5), Average White Band and Billy Connolly (6), The Jam and The Records (7). There is now no show on Good Friday (4).

The birthday concerts, which have been lined up by Umbrella Productions, are to be sponsored by world-famous jeans manufacturers Levi Strauss & Co — the first time an international company and a rock venue have joined forces in this way. Levi's will also make available a five-album boxed set containing 60 classic rock tracks, plus a bonus LP of the London Symphony Orchestra playing classic rock — this will sell at about £16 through regular mail order outlets, though purchasers of Levi clothing will be given a £5 discount voucher.

Nashville: Albion bid may save it

A LIFE LINE has been handed to London's Nashville in West Kensington, which is threatened with closure as one of the capital's leading pub-rock venues. As reported last week, The Nashville's brewery owners have put it up for sale, because it's been losing money — possibly due to the recently imposed ban on youngsters under 20. But now the Albion Agency, which has booked all the gigs into the venue for the past four years, has stepped in with an offer to buy it — and if negotiations are successful, gigs will continue there.

An Albion spokesman told NME: "It's by no means certain that we shall get it. Other offers have been recieved, including at least one for re-development. But we're hoping the present owners will look kindly upon our bid, in view of The Nashville's reputation. If we are able to purchase it, we have plans to incorporate a recording studio on the premises, but it would definitely stay as a rock pub. And we've also devised a solution to the under-20's problem."

Albion are also compiling a Nashville live album, for release on their own label. It's already more than half completed, and among acts who have contributed so far are The Tourists, Rico, 999 and The Inmates.

Subs front man CHARLIE HARPER

UK Subsistency

UK SUBS have been set for a string of dates by the MAM Agency, to aid promotion of their new chart entry, Gem Records' single 'Warhead'. These include their previously announced charity show at London Camden Music Machine this Sunday (16), which will now feature both an afternoon and evening performance.

Other dates are Retford Porterhouse (tonight, Thursday), Scarborough Penthouse (Friday), Leicester Polytechnic (Saturday), two shows at Middlesbrough Rock Garden (April 5), Dumfries Stagecoach (6), Ayr Pavilion (7), Aberdeen Music Hall (9), Dundee Maryatt Hall (10) and Grangemouth Town Hall (11).

The Subs have recently returned from an extensive European tour with The Ramones, followed by their own concert series in Holland. They're now being lined up for a major British tour in May, to coincide with the release of their new album.

SMIRKS, MILITARY, VIBRATORS TOURS

THE SMIRKS, having just completed an extensive tour with The Charlie Parkas, have now lined up another series of dates in and around London. During the coming week they play London North-East Polytechnic (tonight, Thursday), Camden Dingwalls (Friday), High Wycombe Nags Head (Saturday), Fulham Greyhound (Sunday), Croydon Crawdaddy (March 18), Langley College (19) and Kingston Polytechnic (20). They return North for the Sunderland Polytechnic Rag Ball on March 22.

PINK MILITARY have finally emerged from the studios, after recording their debut album 'Do Animals Believe In God?', and are now lining up a full tour to coincide with the LP's release in May. Meanwhile, they have two London gigs this week — at Camden Dingwalls (tonight, Thursday) and Kensington Nashville (Friday).

THE VIBRATORS are also just out of the studios, having recorded a new single for Rat Race Records — still untitled, but believed to be their stage favourite 'Disco In Moscow'. They have London gigs at West Hampstead Moonlight Club (this Friday and Saturday), The Marquee (March 18) and Fulham Greyhound (28). Other dates are being added, including a short tour of Wales and the West Country.

999 have taken their 'Biggest Prize In Sport' tour to the States, where they've just opened a string of 75 coast-to-coast dates, which they claim to be the longest tour by a British band in recent years. For the first month they're playing with The Dickies, and the highlight of the visit is a headliner at the 3,000-seater Santa Monica Stadium, which has already sold out. In their absence, their new single 'Boys In The Gang' is released on March 28 — the B-side features two live tracks, 'Brent Cross' and 'I Ain't Gonna Tell Ya', recorded at London's Nashville.

THE PURPLE HEARTS, already set for London Music Machine tomorrow (Friday), are to play two nights at London Marquee Club on March 24 and 25. These are a warm-up to a comprehensive UK tour, starting in early April and finishing in late May, details to follow shortly. As reported, the band's debut album 'Beat That' is issued this weekend by Fiction Records.

THE RUTS have been forced to cancel the last two dates of their tour — at London Camden Electric Ballroom (March 22) and Bristo; Locarno (23) — because singer Malcolm Owen is to have a throat operation. The band apologise for the inconvenience to all ticket-holders, whose money will be refunded at the point of purchase. Replacement dates will be arranged as soon as possible.

THE ANGELIC UPSTARTS have acquired Glyn Warren as their new bassist, replacing Ronnie Wooden, and he'll make his debut with the band when they headline a British tour in mid-spring. Meanwhile, their second album 'We Gotta Get Out Of The Place' is issued by Warners on April 3 — it contains 11 new self-penned songs, plus the classic Animals title track, which is also their new single (out this weekend).

POP GROUP & PATRIK IN BENEFIT CONCERT

THE POP GROUP, the Patrik Fitzgerald Group and The Raincoats appear in a benefit gig at London City University on Friday, March 21, in aid of the Advisory Service for Squatters. Tickets are £2, and are on sale at the venue, Rough Trade, Small Wonder and Honky Tonk. The concert marks the debut of Fitzgerald's new group featuring himself on guitar, piano and vocals; Colin Peacock on piano, synthesiser and guitar; and Lester Broad on sax, flute and percussion.

Other dates for The Pop Group include Bristol Trinity Hall (March 20), Leicester Polytechnic (25) and Manchester Ardri Club (27). They coincide with the March 21 release of the band's second album 'For How Much Longer Do We Tolerate Mass Murder?' on Rough Trade's Y label. On April 10 they begin a six-day Scottish tour, co-headlining with The Slits — who also play Aylesbury Friars on April 19 in their own right.

BRUM BEAT BOOM — A NEW PACKAGE

WITH BIRMINGHAM currently staking a strong claim for recognition as the country's foremost breeding ground for new talent, three more of the city's up-and-coming bands — The Quads, The Gangsters and The Thrillers — are going on the road in a package tour billed as 'Brum Beat'. The Quads, who recently signed for EMI through their Big Beer production deal, will re-promote their single 'There's Never Been A Night'; ska nouveau specialists The Gangsters are pushing their new single 'Wooly Bully'; and The Thrillers, though still largely an unknown quantity outside their home area, are being hotly tipped for success.

First confirmed dates are Retford Porterhouse (tomorrow, Friday), London Camden Dingwalls (March 18), London Kensington Nashville (21), Birmingham Digbeth Civic Hall (22), Wolverhampton Lafayette (23), Nuneaton 77 Club (25), Cardiff Top Rank (26), Peterborough Wirrina Stadium (28) and Dudley J.B.'s (29). Further dates are being set, then The Quads undertake their own headlining tour in April. A wider-reaching UK tour for the whole package is being lined up for late April into May.

YOUR NME

SORRY, but as you will have noticed, it has been necessary to increase the price of NME to 25p. It's the old story of constantly rising production costs making this unavoidable. Rest assured, though, that we shall be striving hard to bring you the value for money you've come to expect from the world's largest-selling rock weekly.

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PASH MUSIC STORES, 5a ELGIN CRESCENT, LONDON W11

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The new line-up (left to right): WARD, DIO, IOMMI, BUTLER

Sabbath opening late next month

BLACK SABBATH are now officially confirmed for a British tour in mid-spring, opening in late April and continuing into May. Dates are currently being finalised by promoters Straight Music and will be announced in a week or two. It will be their first UK outing for two years, and it introduces their new line-up of ex-Rainbow vocalist Ronnie James Dio, Tony Iommi (lead guitar), Geezer Butler (bass) and Bill Ward (drums). The new-look Sabbath have their long-awaited new album 'Heaven And Hell' released by Phonogram on April 18 — it's their first since 'Never Say Die' 18 months ago, and it showcases Dio's additional contribution to the band, since all the lyrics were written by him, Dio, of course, replaces Ozzie Osbourne in the line-up.

Baez charity gig

THE NEAR-LEGENDARY Joan Baez next week pays her first visit to Britain since August, 1978. She's flying in at short notice to play a charity concert at London Rainbow next Wednesday (19) in aid of Humanitas (the International Human Rights Committee) in association with Response. Tickets are on sale now at the box-office priced £6, £5 and £4. Promoters are Umbrella.

OFF THE RECORD

● Voyager's new single is 'Keeping The Music Alive', issued on March 21 by Mountain (through RCA). It's from their album 'Act Of Love', due out in May.

● The new album by one of the most renowned names in reggae, **Burning Spear**, is issued on April 11. Titled 'Hail H.I.M.', it was recorded at Tuff Gong in Jamaica and appears on the Spear label (through EMI), with a limited edition at the special price of £3.99.

Quo's Greatest can hardly miss

LATEST compilation album to emerge as a potential chart-topper is a collection of Status Quo's greatest hits titled '12 Gold Bars'. Although the LP has obvious sales appeal, Phonogram is launching a £250,000 advertising campaign to promote it still further — an incredible sum at a time when we're assured the record industry is in recession! The money will be spent mainly on numerous TV commercials, plus national Press advertising, as well as more orthodox trade Press ads. Tracks featured on the LP are:

Rockin' All Over The World, Down Down, Caroline, Paper Plane, Break The Rules, Again And Again, Mystery Song, Roll Over Lay Down, Rain, Wild Side Of Life, Whatever You Want, Living On An Island.

Emmylou Harris also has a hits compilation out this week, a 16-track set called 'Her Best Songs'. It's on the K-Tel label, which means that it's assured of TV coverage — and of course, Emmylou is due over next month for the Wembley Country Music Festival at Easter.

HIGH NUMBERS CLASSIC

Pre-Who single set for reissue

TWO ORIGINAL tracks by The High Numbers, circa 1964, are reissued this week on the new Back Door label (distributed by Phonogram). The A-side is the classic 'I'm The Face', which was the group's first single and was adapted from Slim Harpo's 'Got Live If You Want It', and it's coupled with 'Zoot Suit'.

The significance of this single is that, a year after these songs were recorded, the High Numbers became The Who. At the time, however, 'I'm The Face' failed to make any impression — only about 1,500 copies were pressed, and it was soon deleted. In recent years, it has become one of the most sought-after collector's items, with copies of the original Fontana pressing changing hands at between £150 and £200. But now the sound of The Who's formative period is available to all.

Back Door also release the single 'Prefab Hearts' by five-piece Australian band **The Reels**, specialists in what they call "manic music".

● Virgin release the first single by **The Members** for several months on March 21, coupling 'Romance' and 'The Ballad Of John And Martin'. Their second album follows shortly.

● A novel, possibly unique, single issued by Rocket this week is by **Phil Davis** and **Gary Shail** — two of the stars of *Quadrophenia*. Titled 'Blown It' and penned by Davis, it's sung by him on one side and by Shail on the other — each version being a different treatment of the same song. It was produced by Steve Harley.

BEAT'S FEET IN SIZE 12

● **The Beat's** current double A-side single 'Hands Off She's Mine'/'Twist And Crawl', on their own Go-Feet label, is now also available in 12-inch form — on which both sides run for nearly five minutes each.

● **Orchestral Manoeuvres'** single 'Electricity' (on DinDisc) has been changed from the originally recorded version to the mix on their recent album — because they *prefer it*! All pressings from now on will carry the LP version.

● The follow-up to the hit single 'Underpass' by **John Foxx** will be a double record featuring four tracks — 'No-One Driving', 'Glimmer', 'This City' and 'Mr No'. The first is a brand new version of a song from his 'Metamatic' album, and the other three are new songs. Selling at the price of an ordinary single, it's issued on March 21 by Metal-beat (though Virgin).

● **Judas Priest's** new single, from their upcoming album, has now been named as 'United' for release on March 28. The B-side features two live tracks recorded in Tokyo last year, 'Evil Fantasies' and 'Delivering The Goods'.

Multi-track cheapo single releases: Madness, Lene

MADNESS have a new single issued by Stiff on March 21. It's called a single because it sells at 96p, but it consists of four tracks and plays at 33 rpm. Overall title is 'Work Rest And Play Madness', and it features a re-mixed version of 'Night Boat To Cairo', plus three new songs — 'Deceives The Eye', 'The Young And The Old' and 'Don't Quote Me On That'. All were produced by Clive Langer and Alan Winstanley.

LENE LOVICH also has a 96p release from Stiff, though in her case it's a double single containing six-tracks. The A-side is 'What Will I Do Without You', coupled with 'Joan'. The four songs on the second record were recorded live at London Lyceum on February 3 — 'Monkey Talk', 'The Night', 'Too Tender (To Touch)' and 'You Can't Kill Me'. It's in a gatefold sleeve and comes out this weekend.

JONA LEWIE has a new one on Stiff, too — though this time it's an orthodox single! Title is '(You'll Always Find Me In The) Kitchen At Parties' backed with 'Bureaucrats', and it's issued on March 21.

● Matumbe's lead singer **Bevin 'Baggs' Fagan** has a solo single 'Wish Upon A Star' out this weekend on the band's own label (through EMI), in both 7" and 12".

● Coinciding with Island's release this weekend of two original ska albums 'More Intensified! Volume Two' and 'Club Ska 67' (already reported), come two more ska singles. The first is 'Train To Skaville' by **The Ethiopians**, backed by 'Dr Dick' by **King Perry** and 'Hold Them' by **Roy Shirley**. The other is 'Rub Up Push Up' by **Justin Hines & The Dominoes** coupled with 'Copasetic' by **The Rulers**.

● Rialto Records issue a new single by **The Planets** on April 11, 'Secret'/'Mile High'. It's preceded on April 4 by 'Everybody's Got To Learn Some Time' by **The Corgis**.

BOB MUGABE and The Wailers

BOB MARLEY & The Wailers' new single, not surprisingly in view of its topicality, is 'Zimbabwe' — rushed out this week by Island. It's taken from their album 'Survival', the title track of which appears on the B-side. A 12-inch discomix version will be available from March 21, and this will also feature 'Africa Unite' and 'Wake Up And Live', again both taken from 'Survival'.

● A new **Billy Joel** single 'All For Leyna' is released by CBS this weekend, as a prelude to his UK visit at the end of the month. His album 'Glass Houses' is also out tomorrow (Friday).

NEW GENESIS ALBUM

THE NEW GENESIS album is set for March 28 release by Charisma, to coincide with their massive sell-out British tour. Titled 'Duke', it consists of 12 new songs, all penned by Phil Collins, Tony Banks and Mike Rutherford — either separately or in conjunction. It's their first LP since '. . . And Then There Were Three' two years ago, and the first 125,000 copies will sell at £4.99, before it reverts to the regular price of £5.49. Tracks are:

Behind The Lines, Duchess, Guide Vocal, Man Of Our Times, Misunderstanding, Heatbeat, Turn It On Again, Alone Tonight, Cut-De-Sac, Please Don't Ask, Duke's Travels, Duke's End.

A section of the original TCHAIKOVSKY album sleeve

Tchaikovsky nut cracker

BRAM TCHAIKOVSKY have had to change the title of their new album for the U.S. market. In Britain and elsewhere in the world it's called 'The Russians Are Coming', and the sleeve depicts members of the group in the guise of Russian cosmonauts. But it was felt that this would cause widespread offence in America, due to the country's attitude towards Russia following the invasion of Afghanistan. Although the title was prompted by the band's Tchaikovsky name, which has led to them being dubbed The Rocking Russians by the U.S. Press, they've decided to re-title the LP 'Pressure' in the States.

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JUDIE 'N' JOAN: UK JAUNTS

JUDIE TZUKE, who made a profound impact on the charts last year with both her debut album and single, sets out next month on a major headlining UK tour — taking in 23 leading venues around the country. She'll be performing material from her first LP 'Welcome To The Cruise, as well as from her new album 'Sports Car' which Rocket release in April to tie in with her concerts.

Dates are London Drury Lane Theatre Royal (April 13), Brighton Dome (14), Portsmouth Guildhall (15), Bournemouth Winter Gardens (16), Guildford Civic Hall (17), Torquay Princess Theatre (18), St Austell New Cornish Riviera (19), Bristol Colston Hall (20), Oxford New Theatre (21), Manchester Apollo (22), Glasgow Apollo (23), Edinburgh Odeon (24), Newcastle City Hall (25), Middlesbrough Town Hall (26), Leeds Grand Theatre (27), Sheffield City Hall (29), Liverpool Empire (30), Leicester De Montfort Hall (May 1), Derby Assembly Rooms (2), Wolverhampton Civic Hall (3), Birmingham Odeon (4), Croydon Fairfield Hall (6) and Ipswich Gaumont (7).

Box-offices open tomorrow (Friday), and postal applications are also being accepted by all venues. Tour promoters are Andrew Miller and Noel D'Abo. Judie will be backed by her regular five-piece band.

Tzuke, Armatrading on the road

JOAN ARMATRADING begins an extensive UK concert series at the end of May, as the final leg of a comprehensive European tour. She's so far set for 20 major dates, but others are likely to be added, more especially in London. Promoted by Umbrella, the schedule comprises:

Southampton Gaumont (May 24), Poole Arts Centre (25), Leicester De Montfort Hall (27), Southport Theatre (28), Birmingham Odeon (29 and 30), Newcastle City Hall (June 1 and 2), Edinburgh Odeon (3), Aberdeen Capitol (5), Glasgow Apollo (8), Manchester Apollo (8), Sheffield City Hall (10), Brighton Centre (12), Oxford New Theatre (13), Coventry Theatre (14), Bristol Colston Hall (16 and 17) and London Hammersmith Odeon (18 and 19).

Most box-offices will be selling tickets from next Monday, but check local Press for exact details. Prices are £4.50, £3.75 and £3 at all venues — except London (£4.75, £4 and £3.25) and Poole (all at £3.75).

Joan is at present recording a new album in New York, and this will be released by A&M to coincide with the opening of her tour.

Whitesnake strike hard

WHITESNAKE, already set to open London Rainbow's anniversary concert series on April 2 (see page 3), will be headlining a full British tour in June. After their Rainbow gig, they leave for a major tour of Japan, where they're assured of an enormous reception in the wake of Deep Purple's triumphs there. On their return, they prepare for their UK outing, for which these dates have so far been confirmed:

Leicester De Montfort Hall (June 2), Southampton Gaumont (3), Bristol Colston Hall (4) Edinburgh Odeon (6), Glasgow Apollo (7), Hanley Victoria Hall (9), Birmingham Odeon (10), Manchester Apollo (13), Newcastle City Hall (18), Bradford St. George's Hall (20) and Sheffield City Hall (22). More dates are being finalised and will be announced shortly.

Tickets are available now by postal application to the respective box-offices, priced £3.50, £3 and £2.50 — except Leicester (£3.25, £3 and £2.50) and Hanley (all at £3.50) — please enclose SAE.

Liberty-United release a new Whitesnake EP on April 11, featuring 'Fool For Your Loving', coupled with 'Mean Business' and 'Don't Mess With Me'. The company says it will be packaged in an unusual bag using a new artwork technique, never before attempted — but they're keeping us in suspense about its exact nature until it's issued. The band's new studio album will be released to coincide with their June tour.

BUGGLES PLAN STAGE DEBUT

BUGGLES, currently figuring in both singles and album chart, have been enjoying such success on the record scene that they've now decided to go into live action. They are currently busy getting together a touring band, and plan to set out on the road by way of some warm-up gigs in Germany in early June — and these will be followed by selected dates around Britain. An Island Records spokesman commented: "It's still a little premature to give details, but it's definite that Buggles will be on stage in late spring or early summer."

Fats Domino in London festival

FATS DOMINO will be one of the stars of this year's London Jazz Festival, to be staged by Capital Radio at the Alexandra Palace for three days from Friday, July 11. Domino was scheduled to appear in last year's event, but had to back out, and was replaced at short notice by Chuck Berry — but he intends to make amends this time around.

Several of the stars who appeared in the 1979 festival will be returning this year — including B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Herbie Hancock and top jazzman Dave Brubeck and Dizzy Gillespie. Capital say they'll be announcing the full line-up shortly.

● Capital are also pressing ahead with their plans to promote this year's Knebworth concert. Preliminary consent has already been granted by the authorities and — subject to final approval — it will be staged on Saturday, August 30. The bill is already being put together, and details are expected in the near future.

Radio 1 cutback: the real reasons

RADIO 1 is cutting its airtime from March 31 because, under the BBC's current policy of economies, it can't afford to pay all the fees demanded by the Phonographic Performance Society for the playing of records. The BBC had applied to have its "needle time" increased, but the PPS has responded by imposing further restrictions.

New releases will suffer most because, until now, they have been exempt from the needle time allocation. They were regarded as reviews, and all records coming within that category were granted free air-time. But now the BBC will have to pay for the broadcast of most new releases, at the standard PPS rate of £180 per hour, and they will be included in the needle time allowance.

To counter this, Radio 1 will be opening an hour later in the mornings — at 7 am — which means that Dave Lee Travis loses an hour of his breakfast show. And the channel will close at 7.30 pm on Saturdays and 10 pm on Sundays.

Apart from DLT's curtailment, the effects are the dropping of *Discovatin'* and the *Steve Wright Show*, and replacing the *Sunday Request Show* with *Star Special*. Alexis Korner moves to 7 pm on Sundays, followed by *Sounds Of Jazz* (8-10 pm). On Radio 2, *Album Time* is chopped, as is the *Album Of The Week* feature.

ROUND-UP

Fern Kinney spring visit

FERN KINNEY, currently riding high in the charts with her single 'Together We Are Beautiful', comes to Britain in May for a series of concerts. She appears as special guest of The Stylistics at London Tottenham Court Rd. Dominion (May 4), Manchester Ashton Tameside Theatre (6) and Bristol Hippodrome (11). Other dates are being negotiated for the remainder of her three-week stay.

Coghlan's Diesel in action

DIESEL, John Coghlan's occasional band, will be back in live action this spring — now that Status Quo have had to postpone their scheduled world tour until October, because of Rick Parfitt's cartilage trouble. Diesel — this time comprising Coghlan, Bob Young, Jackie Lynton, Mick Moody, Andy Bown and possibly Dave Markee — begin a series of gigs in the Channel Islands on March 20, with subsequent mainland dates to be announced shortly. Quo reunite in May to start work on a new studio album.

Ian Hunter tour, double LP

IAN HUNTER BAND are being lined up for a British tour later in the spring, details to be announced shortly. Meanwhile, Hunter has a live double album 'Welcome To The Club' issued by Chrysalis on April 4 — three sides are live, recorded last November at Los Angeles Roxy, and including some classic Mott songs; the fourth side features three new songs penned by Hunter and one with Mick Ronson, plus a duet with Ellen Foley on 'We Gotta Get Out Of Here'.

Top Irish band for London

THE ATRIX, the four-piece Dublin outfit regarded as the influence behind many of the newer wave Irish bands, play their first major UK date next Monday (17) when they head a St Patrick's Night show at London Victoria The Venue. Also in London they visit the Acklam Hall W10 (March 20), School of Furniture (21), Kensington Nashville (23) and North-East Polytechnic (25). To coincide with their visit, Spartan have imported 5,000 copies of their single 'The Moon Is Puce', a No 1 hit in Ireland.

Cody's two at The Venue

COMMANDER CODY and his band, already set for an appearance in the Country Music Festival at Wembley Arena on Easter Monday (April 7), subsequently headline two nights at London Victoria The Venue — on April 8 and 9. Support act is The Moonlighters, who will have a single titled 'Midnight In Memphis' issued to coincide. Cody's next single, not yet scheduled but featured by him at Knebworth last year, will be 'Two Triple Cheeseburgers Side On Fries'.

Otis Rush for Roundhouse

OTIS RUSH, one of the most renowned of contemporary blues singers, makes his first British appearance for several years next Wednesday (19) — headlining at London Chalk Farm Roundhouse in the blues night at this year's Camden Jazz Festival. Also on the bill are London-based African band Jebule.

Sky setting May concerts

SKY — the group featuring guitarist John Williams, plus Herbie Flowers, Francis Monkman, Tristan Fry and Kevin Peek — will be undertaking another UK concert series in May, following the sell-out success of their debut tour last year. First confirmed date is at Croydon Fairfield Hall on May 15 (tickets £5.50, £4.50 and £3.50, available from March 19), and the rest of their schedule is expected in a week or two.

Flying Saucers over UK

FLYING SAUCERS, currently enjoying success on the crest of the rockabilly wave, are at present filming a spot in an upcoming movie called *Rockabilly Uprising*. And between location work, they gig at Aberdare Paymaite Club (tomorrow, Friday), Bedford Kempson Rovers FC (Sunday), Bournemouth Tiffany's (March 20), Kings Langley Ovaltine Club (22), Rayleigh Croce (24), London Catford The Squire (27), Berkingside Old Maypole (29) and Mansfield Civic Theatre (31).

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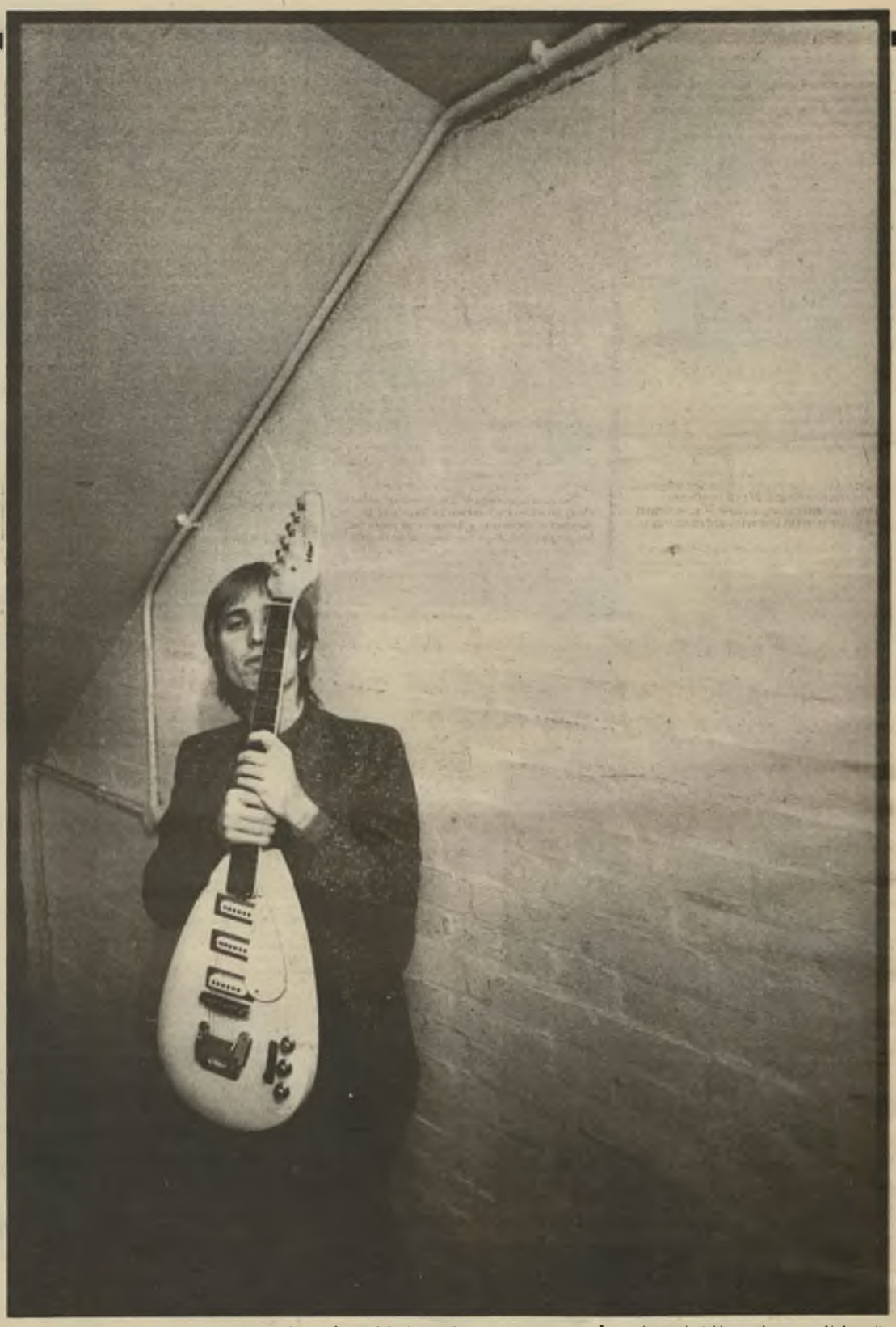

THE PICCADILLY Hotel in Manchester is an anonymous modern structure slipped neatly inside a multi-storey car park — an injection of glass and concrete at the core of a wraparound helter skelter. The ethos behind such a building is entirely American, the accent on efficiency and impersonality.

A desk clerk surveys the lobby with a glazed smile. "You're welcome," he parrots awkwardly at every satisfied customer. "You're welcome". The expression grates absurdly. I look carefully at the man's nose, it doesn't appear to be growing.

Around the bar we have some stars tonight, local boys. The hotel is host to a ceremonial dinner and testimonial booze-up in honour of footballer Joe Corrigan. There's much hearty banter and slapping of manly shoulders as the famous players mingle with their tight knit mafia of show biz personalities and a selection of thick set men in penguin costumes who resemble off-duty policemen. As snippets of conversation drift nearer it becomes apparent that they are policemen.

A very large gentleman wheezes towards the bar. He identifies himself loudly as Bernard Manning, all purpose TV comedian and personage. Mr Manning, fresh from the cover of the morning tabloids where his imminent death was gleefully forecast, gathers his cronies around him and guffaws.

"Aye oop lads," he addresses the bar in general. "Aye oop, bloody press boys have got me bloody dead! Lose seven stone? Seven pounds more like." The Bar erupts sycophantically. Mr Manning's diet is obviously in abeyance. He's a card.

Across the lobby another party of informally dressed young men amble out of the door and get into a large coach. They aren't footballers though. One of them is very blonde, good looking in an angular, undernourished way — pretty you might say. The football mafia stare at the intruders and muffled comments pass between them; personal comments and sexual allusions. Fat pink faces distort into a dreadful hallucination and their gaze turns to photographer Anton Corbijn's metal suitcase. Perhaps he's from the *Daily Mirror*, perhaps we're snooping on their private 'do'. Anton, who is Dutch, doesn't have the faintest idea of what's going on.

He's lucky.

THREE HOURS later a crowd of youthful Mancunian citizens are filing out of the Apollo in high humour. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers have just finished the second night of their British mini-tour

It had begun slowly. The audience was quiet, rarely letting polite enthusiasm extend into any celebration. Petty chastised them gently. Were they all on mandies? But by the end of the evening the Heartbreakers have

won their reaction — a genuine one. They play four encores, including superbly weighty versions of the Everleys' 'Girls, Girls, Girls' and Eddie Cochran's 'Somethin' Else'. The freshness of their attitude coupled with the quality of their . . . what the hell . . . *musicianship* is gratifying rather than surprising.

Tom Petty's most recent album, 'Damn The Torpedoes' is placed at No. 2 in the American charts, it may knock Pink Floyd off that wall any day now. He has two singles somewhere in the Top 30 and a third one waiting to join them in the wings.

For now Tom Petty has arrived and all that entails: the cover of *Rolling Stone*, features in *Newsweek*, media pressures, what is euphemistically termed *'heavy'* management.

But it wasn't always like this. Petty languished out 1974 in the backroom at Shelter Records, a label with a funky backwoods image, a small rosta of idiosyncratic artistes and a homely method of promotion that suited J. J. Cale, sunk Dwight Twilley without trace and upset Petty's increasingly ambitious programme.

Prior to the Heartbreakers Petty fronted a local Gainesville, Florida band called Mudcrutch, a group he describes as too "peculiar for the time, there was such diversity in the material there was no way we could survive."

Mudcrutch eventually pared down to the Heartbreakers leaving behind an unreleased album and one single 'Wild Eyes/Depot Street', the latter being a slight reggae tinged tune guaranteed to attain instant obscurity in 1975.

The first Tom Petty album proper, released in 1976, was a curiously adventurous project for an unknown group, coming at a time when American airwaves were overstocked with complacent metal and pompous soft rock regurgitations.

Eagles, among others. The album responsible for all this, 'Damn The Torpedoes', has hoisted him above The Cars, Cheap Trick, The Knack. MCA couldn't be happier, Tom is *their* boy now — even if he is signed to a subsidiary label, Backstreet, overseen by the youngest tycoon in the business, Danny Bramson, a 27-year-old whose first album has sold over one and a half million copies.

TOM PETTY sits in his seventh floor hotel room overlooking Knightsbridge and smiles to himself. He is a very happy man indeed.

Any advance warnings as to his tempestuous personality seem far fetched now, alone together in a room. Petty drinks coca cola and I drink his Jack Daniels. He's on the wagon these days, having recently had his tonsils removed, a nasty goodbye to useless nodules when you're 28.

"I came here a bit before Doc's orders," Petty drawls pleasantly. "Hospitals are dreadful places. I had three months of a really painful throat. I couldn't smoke cigarettes, have a joint, nothing. I haven't been that clear-headed for years. Some of my closest friends say it improved my character a great deal."

He chuckles and reaches for a Benson. "I can't live like a boy scout. As Mark Twain said when they told him to give up cigarettes or die, life ain't worth living without 'em."

The consequences of the operation offered Petty an ultimatum which he hasn't quite heeded — there was a danger that more live singing would effect his voice permanently and the British tour was severely truncated.

"I'd prefer to do the extended tour because I like playing here — it's more of a challenge. In America we've gone from small venues to large halls overnight. Here they don't know the album. I get more satisfaction out of

he isn't particularly interested in the colourful areas between experimentation and challenge. He professes a liking for Devo "in doses" and The Clash album in its entirety. His tastes are orthodox but his reasoning is honest.

"I'm out of touch really. One of the bad things about this so-called success is if you go to see somebody you can get bothered to the point where you don't enjoy it . . . it's an ordeal. I try not to take it too seriously. I didn't expect it to be quite as manic, the people running after your car and crawling through your windows. It isn't *so* bad; it's what I always wanted too, I guess. They don't want to hurt you.

"But if I go to a club there's so many music company types, so many LA scene makers, they can spoil your private life. If I see a new band I find it hard to be objectively involved: it's impossible to go somewhere and make up your own mind."

Generally he admits that there is a change in America for the better. "America's come a long way, I'm proud of America. If I'm gonna wave the ole US banner I admire Cheap Trick and Neil Young for being loonier than anyone else. The main thing is you can go to towns which were dead three years ago, places like St Louis, and there're hundreds of new bands all writing their own songs and all finding some kind of audience. That never happened before, unless you played Top 40. Now there's all these new audiences, that's healthy.

"Don't ask me what the music of the '80s will be though, just more of everything."

IN TOM Petty's book it's evident that anything that's rock and roll is fine and his comparatively recent success dictates a spirit of diplomacy. In 1976 Tom Petty straddled the divide between old and new with a knowing sneer. He was the up and coming gunslinger, he was going to be

"We decided to let our hair grow 'til it's down to here and they're starting to call us punks in America. It was absurd, these stupid labels. That's the time when they don't even know what a punk *is* in America and one day I just said to a guy, as a joke, 'If you call me a punk again' I'm gonna cut ya'. They took it seriously and printed it, big headlines, 'Call Tom Petty a punk and he'll cut you'. So now I get kids comin' up and asking me why I'm so down on new wave and I have to tell 'em — 'Fuck, I invented that new wave here for all you know'. I've always wanted that cleared up 'cos of the animosity it caused.

The truth is that I'm glad we were here in '77. I used to laugh myself sick at The Sex Pistols' antics. Every day you could buy a paper and there was something outrageous going on."

PRIOR to the release of 'Torpedoes' Petty's artistic life was shrouded in despair and depression. Any chance he had to capitalise on constant touring and a highly accessible image was threatened with extinction by a series of deadly law suits.

"Our first album didn't break until a year after we came here. We'd re-negotiated a contract that said if Shelter was sold we'd the right to leave. That happened. Shelter was sold by ABC to MCA in one of those huge mergers that are happening every day. We assumed that we were then free and MCA said we weren't.

"Well, being kinda stubborn I agreed to deliver an album but wouldn't take any money from them. I spent my own money making it and it was a very expensive record to make. Partly because of the law suits it took ten months. Then in the middle of recording MCA sued me, Shelter sued me, my publishing company sued me and so did a few other smaller people. MCA's a big dog for an individual to fight. I had nine lawyers

"Now I get kids coming up and asking me why I'm so down on new wave and I have to tell 'em I invented the new wave here for all they know."

"We were midway through recording and the US Marshalls were coming to the studio to steal the tapes. We had to hide all the boxes."

The band toured Britain during the height of the new wave explosion and were bemused to find themselves labelled in a similar category. It was a backhanded compliment that recognised Petty's talents for offering something new by bracketing him with the punks, even though his own tastes veered more towards the classic period of LA rock, stopping off to pay homage to Bob Dylan, Neil Young and the mid-'60s influx of Atlantic soul and Stax R&B staples, his acknowledged favourites.

A second album, 'You're Gonna Get It' received a more muted response, too much more of the same thing.

Throughout last year Petty and the band were involved in a celebrated law suit with their current company MCA. There were no tours, an album recorded with Jimmy Iovine was put on ice by the American High Courts and the singer declared himself bankrupt.

And now, ironically, Tom Petty finds himself in the position of being a hugely successful commodity, a face, living up to the expectations imposed on the likes of Bruce Springsteen.

He's managed by Elliot Roberts, who handles chores and buys the stamps for The

winning an audience round."

In Birmingham and Manchester the Heartbreakers were almost starting off from scratch. Rows of seats at the rear remained empty and it wasn't until halfway through the show that the fans livened up. Petty insists that the set is designed that way anyway.

"I don't like bands with one sound that they play all the way through. I like textures, it makes people appreciate the slower stuff. It's not a rumbunctious pace, it would be so easy to come out and rock and cause a riot. That's too simple. We're toying with the idea of playing more country songs now. Not Californian country rock which became a bad word, it means drivel now."

Like The Eagles?

"Well . . . . . they're good at what they do, I think they're a good band." This doesn't quite ring true. "Oh, they're the kings of that genre, we're managed by the same people. They don't mean anything to someone in England though, that's fair. It's the same with The Beach Boys, they moved me but they don't have a lot to say to a kid in London . . . . why am I defending the Eagles?"

I ask Petty if he has taken stock from the aftermath of the new bands. It's apparent that

different his way. If most of his songs were about girls, the ins and outs of sexual relationships, rock and roll mythology, then his manner of presentation was assured to the point of arrogance.

His stage talk was deliberately incoherent and sullen, his vocabulary was straight off-the-bat baseball parlance ("This is a song that I wrote about dis girl" or "This one's about your general screw-up"). He shared Bruce Springsteen's love for the romantic image and the street cool sass, always hep enough to stay close to the street but not dumb enough to get stuck on it.

"Well, we were the first American band who weren't punk who were doing that stuff, three minute songs that weren't mush.

"Now the first album doesn't sound as weird at all. I said a lot of things then that I regret, I was always shooting my mouth off. I was a big fan of a lot of that though, I've always supported the lunatic fringe because that's where it's all gonna come from. When we were here people always approached us as punk and we'd say 'No, we're a rock 'n roll band. We didn't fit that category'. Then all we heard was punk this, punk that and we said 'Fuck punk!'

contesting each case. While that's happening I've got constant offers from other record companies that would make me blush to tell you here.

"It reached the stage where it was almost funny. If I sing a song do I own it? Me, the band and Jimmy Iovine (producer) were midway through and the US Marshalls were coming to the studio to steal the tapes, confiscate everything. We had to hide all the boxes, smuggle things in and out. I had to go on the stand and evade issues like, 'Where are the tapes? What songs have you written? Recite the lyrics'.

"I refused to do that. All they could do was beat me up mentally until I did it their way.

"Eventually I convinced the judge to let me go on a Californian tour so I could make some money. The MCA lawyers were telling the judge I couldn't do it because I'd incur all these debts and I couldn't show any security. So I said to the judge, 'But judge there is no security in rock 'n roll', and he laughed and let me do it."

The resulting dates — the 'Law Suit Tour' (also known to posterity as the 'Why MCA Tour?') — culminated in two sold out shows in

Continues over 4

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PETTY BOY

◂ From previous page

the Universal Amphitheatre, a large hall owned by MCA: an irony not lost on Petty. The booking agent and boss of the theatre was one Danny Bramson who intervened between artist and company.

So was Petty satisfied with the outcome of his litigation?

"They didn't realise how serious I was. I spent half a million dollars of my own money, sold everything I had to get what was rightfully ours. It saved the group morale-wise because I never believed that record would make it."

In America Petty maintains he has little or nothing to do with company men, preferring to let Bramson, Roberts and his English partner, Tony Dimitriades, represent Heartbreakers' interests. This managerial independence left British MCA somewhat in the dark with their new golden boy, and the fact they didn't provide any tour support for the band's five British dates did nothing to cement the relationship.

PETTY'S attitude towards the media is ambivalent, in line with the increased responsibilities that accompany mega-stardom.

There had been frantic last minute negotiations between relevant parties to finalise this particular interview, and while the star of the show accepted the questioning in good humour I got the distinct impression that future media encounters would be charted out on a long term graph. Bruce Springsteen doesn't talk to newspapers, neither does Neil Young, nor Joni Mitchell or Bob Dylan — and a man who stands every chance of joining and perhaps even surpassing all those luminaries isn't going to be spreading himself thin ever again.

It's obvious from talking to Petty that success demands a formal organisation to support it. In the past the band were "stricken with dreadful laziness, never used to be able to rehearse or take any time in the studio". Not any more. The production partnership of Petty and Iovine will be repeated in the summer and the two have a habit of calling each other daily to chart out the future.

Iovine has been in demand as a producer for several years now, numbering John Lennon ('Walls And Bridges'), Patti Smith ('Because The Night') and Bruce Springsteen amongst his clients but none of them is as potentially explosive as Petty is now.

The Heartbreakers' attention to detail encompasses a live show that sprawls majestically over nearly two hours — usually they're ready to quit before the audience. The set gives every impression of being spontaneous and loose, but is actually arranged to be the complete opposite. Where in the past Petty denied any involvement in theatrics and choreography he is now in full command of every nuance. His own vocal performance is a staggering combination of The Byrds-like country delivery that is usually associated with his material, but it takes in a complete gamut of cross-references to the classic singers — Jagger, Bowie, Van Morrison, even Redding and Pickett.

Drummer Stan Lynch and keyboards rock Benmont Tench excel on harmonies. When Petty and Lynch duetted on John Sebastien's 'Stories We Could Tell' the results would have nonplussed all those who hitherto refused to take the band seriously — The Everly Brothers didn't come into it.

The band's renditions of Solomon Burke's 'Cry To Me' and the Isley Brothers' 'Shout' are equally convincing, non-originals being integrated amongst Petty's own songs to give the act a sense of power and authority.

The only aspects of Petty's show that rankle now, and the elements that prevent him from aspiring to greatness are the slightly silly raps that the singer uses in between numbers. They work for one night but become predictable after three. That and guitarist Mike Campbell's occasional stage runs which do nothing to increase the dignity of the group. Campbell just looks too nervous to carry off the role of dangerous performer and Petty's natural upstaging unsettles their balance as a rhythm and lead team par excellence.

IT'S CLEAR that despite talk about group democracy this is Petty's show.

"The others all have cliques of fans who come to see them but I'd stand out if I was the bassist, being blond and all. I think they're happy just to get the money. Benmont gets a much better shot on this last album.

"We've always been cast in the twelve string sound; those Byrds comparisons. I know we sound like them at times, and God knows I've tried not to, but I get a bit tired of hearing them now. I don't think Roger McGuinn can do all the things people say he can. We're entirely different musicians really. Of course I'd be interested to see how he did 'Here Comes My Girl'.

"But he phoned me last year to ask if I had any songs for him and I couldn't come up with one that was suitable."

One of the smartest things Petty ever did was to appear on the 'No Nukes' benefit on the

Continues page 59 ▸

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8	NEW	BILLY JOEL – GLASS HOUSES	5.29	4.04	£1.25 OFF
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54	41	THE BOOMTOWN RATS – The Fine Art of Surfacing	5.05	4.05	£1.00 OFF
55	49	WARREN ZEVON – Bad Luck Streak in Dancing School	5.00	3.99	£1.00 OFF
56	40	SQUEEZE – ARGY BARGY	4.99	3.74	£1.25 OFF
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The English cad — a typical study. Pic: Michael Putland

Thrills!

AT THE CROSSROADS

Ferry's French Soap Opera TV Debut

IT HAD to happen. The latest rock star to display his dubious thespian skills is the poseur's poseur, Bryan Ferry.

But not for our Bryan the glamour world of the big screen. He has just made his debut in a French equivalent of *Crossroads*. The show, entitled *Petit Dejeuner Compris* (loose translation — Bed and Breakfast) is a soap opera about the trials and tribulations of running a hotel in Paris.

Ferry, playing himself and described as *"Un grand rock star — comme Les Beatles"* makes his mark by baking an — uh — exotic cake which gets the majority of the cast totally wasted, including the hotel patron and his dog.

He then sets about seducing the patron's wife and in a touching bedroom scene confides that he used to be "poor, mixed-up and pretentious" (!) and that he used to take himself so seriously but it's others who do that now. He also gets very wistful about his Durham mining community origins even though he speaks perfect BBC English throughout.

A sucker for the old 'little boy lost' routine, Madame Le Patronne, after bursting into tears at the tragic monologue, falls willingly into the Bryatollah's arms, only coming to her senses much later when her husband rescues her from his clutches during a Roxy gig at The Pavilion. Everyone then lives happily ever after — at least until the next instalment.

An interesting debut role, *n'est pas?* But on the evidence of this performance Ferry has a long way to go before he causes Noele Gordon any sleepless nights.

JAMES WILKINSON

Thrills!

PiL Press On In USA

Lydon/Levene Press Conference

Above: Levene helps Lydon belch his disapproval. Pic: Joe Stevens

Right: Billy Gibbons Pic from Chester Chronicle

AMERICAN press conferences are strange affairs. A record company presents its proteges before a mass of representatives of everything from Punkzines like *Slash* to the *L.A. Times* all working at cross purposes.

Into such a set-up last week at The City, a new wave disco in San Francisco, walks half of Public Image, John Lydon and Keith Levene. Disreputable London meets Smooth California.

Two years ago, The Sex Pistols played their final gig here at The Winterland, inspiring a West Coast punk tradition, bands like The Mutants, The Humans, The Dead Kennedys. But two years later we have one John Lydon (nee Rotten), who isn't responsible for his progeny and appears to despise it and much else besides.

Lydon and Levene are here to set up gigs in New York, L.A. and San Francisco coinciding with the release of 'Second Edition' (not in a metal box). Plus, they've been set up for this press conference.

"Typical. They put us up here on a pedestal and it's too small for the chairs. Oh, how we suffer," says Lydon in his best bitter irony. "This is definitely not my doing. This is Warner Brothers Records."

The prevailing mood is one of fear and embarrassment. They both intimidate, hovering too close to nihilism for most people's comfort. No-one knows how to take the cynicism or the arrogant commitment of these two, so the Press laugh nervously while John lays down the law with a self-confidence on a par with Ali's.

Why no touring?

"We'll be doing occasional gigs according to our whims and fancies. This is one band no-one dictates to — ever. No routines. There's no enjoyment in that."

Why this promotion?

"There is no point in hiding in 'closets' and being 'arty'. It is essential that everyone is aware that this band exists."

Why?

"Well there's no competition is there?"

Various other apocalyptical statements on the state of the Arts are issued while the Press squirms. "We don't consider rock 'n' roll at all. Rock 'n' roll is shit. It has to be cancelled. It's vile. It's gone on for 25 years, it's dismal." Occasionally the

■ *Continues p.13*

ELVIS

Clonely Make-Believe

ELVIS Lives! He's 23 years old and hails from Audlem near Crewe!

His name is Billy Gibbons and, for the second year running, he's walked away with The British All-Comers Elvis Presley Mime Competition to the cheers of over 3,000 Presleyophiles at Leicester's De Montfort Hall.

Dressed to perfection in a salmon pink box-shoulder jacket, black silk peg-pants, white bucks and white guitar, Gibbons' ensemble was magnificently off-set by his sculptured blue-black barnet, as he rocked out vigorously to 'Ready Teddy'. And with the fans casting their verbal votes he romped home like Red Rum.

"I *don't* think I'm Elvis," Gibbons later declared firmly, adding that those contestants who believe themselves to be The Hillbilly Cat incarnate (and they do exist) are invariably the most unskilled at their trade. Furthermore, Gibbons isn't into the prize-money that can be earned on the mime circuit.

"I don't make my money off Elvis," he claims. Indeed, from his tone one gets the impression that to do so is regarded as contemptible. "I make my living from drumming with The Rhythm Hawks. That's where my future is. I just want to make people happy with my little tribute to the greatest performer of them all."

The Mime Contest was in fact just part of a larger phenomenon — a nine hour Elvis convention. With the British Fan Club standing at 35,000-strong and still growing, it's clear that for the fans, Elvis is a life-long commitment. Fickle they are not, but neither are they totally blinkered in their devotion.

Said one Norwich fan who had brought along his entire family, "you can trust an Elvis fan not to rip you off, because they'd be letting him down!"

ROY CARR

Thrills!

The Lone Groover — ***Benyon***

USA Grammy Awards

GOD TRASHES ALL COMERS

SO YOU thought the *Daily Mirror/Nationwide Rock And Pop Awards* were bad? In the mutual back-slapping stakes the American Grammy Awards (or the "Oscars of the Record Industry" as the organisers like to call it) are in a different class.

If there was one small spark of interest in the whole ceremony it came not from the announcement of the actual winners but from the unprecedentedly pious manner in which they received their awards. Well-known evangelist Bob Dylan led the way, accepting the award for best male rock vocalist by saying "the first person I want to thank is the Lord." Zimmie also thanked his producers Jerry Wexler and Barry Beckett "for believing".

A dewy-eyed Dionne Warwick, winning for Best Female Pop Vocalist said "I want to thank God *(Is this God chap a well-known producer? Ed)* for giving me the voice to win this award." Even Charlie Daniels sanctified the assembly with "God bless y'll." The Doobie Brothers, previously believed by many experts to be extinct, nevertheless won four grammys including Record Of The Year (for their single 'What A Fool Believes'). They kept up the mood of the evening by thanking The Brothers Warner.

Rickie Lee Jones won for Best New Artist, holding off the ferociously strong challenge of The Blues Brothers, Dire Straits, The Knack and Robin 'Mork' Williams. Jones, boppin' and jive talkin' for all she was worth, did an effective parody of a beatnik part in an early '60's movie. She didn't mention God at all.

Debbie Harry didn't win anything but she did hand out an award and trade one-liners, and side glances at the cue-cards, with George Burns (titular star of tacky film *Oh, God* coincidentally enough).

'Highlight' of the evening came when Barbra Streisand and Neil Diamond brought the house down by singing 'You don't send me flowers'. They didn't win anything either.

RICHARD GRABEL

St Bobo

Both Pix: Jill Furmanovsky

Dylan in penguin suit shock

Harry, Burns. Burns is wearing the glasses.

More American nonsense

Is this the way

MORMON soothsayers, who for years have been issuing their baleful lament on the subject of world apocalypse, are finally getting through to the rank and file U.S. citizen.

Americans of every description are digging, stashing, blockading and arming themselves for the day of reckoning. The day when Good fights it out with Evil and all that remain shall be the faithful.

The new faithful are called Survivalists, people joined together by nothing except a firm belief in the imminent collapse of American society and the days of blood and rage that will follow.

Unsurprisingly, a whole army of entrepreneurs has risen up to provide such necessaries as survival stores, newsletters and tip sheets, one of which sells for 125 dollars a year to 17,000 subscribers, a syndicated TV show providing calamitous scenarios and the means to outlast them and, for the hard core, a range of specially-tailored weaponry.

Even (especially) the conglomerates are getting the hang of it. Pacific Telephone has a radiation-proof defence bunker in Sherman Oaks, Calif, while Levi Strauss is building an emergency base with a communications system, a generator, temporary offices and a stash of food. IBM has equally elaborate plans, but is not telling.

The new survivalism can in part be traced back to the communalists and hippies of the sixties. A breed that sought the posture of perfect DIY seclusion from the world and in that seclusion nourished and disseminated the kind of paranoid visions that are currently all the rage.

Among the early literature in the field was the *Whole Earth Catalogue*. It's founder, Stewart Brand sees survivalism as a violent distortion of his original thesis.

"I've been fighting that frame of mind for twelve years," he told *New West* magazine. "It makes people go into this self-sufficiency mode. It's paranoid. It's catching and it doesn't work. It's the opposite of what you have to do to survive. To survive you've got to have friends."

Nips split — Now The Truth Can Be Told

Wot us? Lie? Give us a break. Pic: Andy Calvert.

NOW WASH out those lacerated earlobes with soap and water and hear this! The story on the news pages of last week's *NME* regarding the untimely demise of that fab gear pop combo The Nips was a trifle disingenuous.

In reporting the split of the band fronted by Camden's legendary punk Shane O'Hooligan, we quoted a statement alleging dissatisfaction with zilch record company promotion as the prime reason behind the break-up.

This was, er, not strictly true, the real reason for the split being good old fashioned musical and personal differences: in other worlds, the band hated each other all along, not to mention the music they were playing.

Matters came to a head at a recent gig at Billy's Club in London's Dean Street when guitarist Blondie Douglas, after ceremoniously trashing his axe, announced that he was quitting. Shane retorted by saying that he, too, had had enough at which bassist Shanna Bradley also handed in her notice, leaving just drummer Mark who didn't much fancy carrying the standard single-handed and left to join another band.

"We were just sick of each other and I hated the music The Nips were playing," says Shanna. "Shane and I just weren't communicating. We were just beating each other up all the time."

But things are not as bad as they at first seem. The band were due to re-unite on Monday night for a farewell gig at the Rock Garden and Shane, self-styled King Of The Bop and veteran of chewed-earlobe-at-Clash-gig fame has plans to form a new band.

ADRIAN THRILLS

thrills!

More Pil

From p.11.

questions get more than embarrassing. "Are you a punk?" is met with sneers of incredulity and loud beer belches into the mike. "Call us what you like. I've been called a lot of things in my life. I'm a pretty good target for people's particular bickerings and hate and their ridiculous egos. I'm used to it. I just do what I want and as long as I can get away with it, I'm smiling."

John explains their recording process: "We do it when rock 'n' roll bands cancel. We get in at half price."

Various questions drive John to the rhetorical answer. "Do you want me to tell you what to think?". To choruses of "Yes", he answers: "Buy 7 or 8 copies of the record then." Then there're periods when things degenerate to a *Jackie* level. Lydon is forced to counter that Joe Strummer is his favourite comedian and *Crossroads* his favourite TV programme, which leaves everyone vacant. Periodically he is obliged to employ his famous crushing stare to wither a particularly vacuous question.

Yet the two seem extraordinarily naive about the American Record Biz. It's news to them that it's up to the Record Company to get on the radio and up to the radio to sell albums. And John can't understand why Warners are only pressing 50,000 copies of 'Second Edition'.

Simple. They don't understand it and it won't sell. After all, PiL do want to destroy the record business as it stands. Mutual incomprehension is the order of the day.

Are you The Grateful Dead of the '80s?

"Yes," in chorus.

Bring back Bill Grundy for sensitive interviews.

JAMES HENRY

Lowry

"I'm afraid we're too late. Ligger mortis has already set in."

You Wanna Riot?

AMONG the debris ridden backstreets of Shepherd's Bush, London's unlikeliest art gallery is playing host to an exhibition of work by rock illustrator extraordinaire Tony Riot.

The Car Breaker Gallery, housed in a squat with lighting donated by the Institute of Contemporary Arts, is an appropriate setting for Riot's gritty portraiture. His work has appeared in *NME*, *Melody Maker* and *Time Out* among other pieces. Most is black and white portraits/caricatures of such rock causes celebres as The Ramones, Costello, Dury, Lydon, Lou Reed, Gen X, Specials and others, his graphic wit inspired and informed by a genuine enthusiasm and appreciation of les styles du roots rock.

There's also a wall full of a new development; full colour caricatures of politicians — Brezhnev looking like a Ukraine thundercloud, one-eye Enoch with RAR badge, Teddy Kennedy with rippling chins — which shows up some of the Fleet Street political cartoonists for the ordinary fellows they are.

There's also a Selector portrait which Riot hopes to see marketed in poster form in the near future.

And if you want a Riot of your own, all the work on display is for sale, at something less than regular art gallery prices and something more than the Blondie poster in the corner newsagents. "How much is that one?" asked a visitor to the opening night. "Well, how much you got on you?" replied the artist.

NEIL SPENCER

The exhibition runs until 28th March at The Car Breaker Gallery, 4 Bramley Road, London W10.

the world ends?

Friends? The new survivalists practise gunnery at special ranches, they verse themselves in the anti-guerrilla tactics employed by the white farmers of old Rhodesia and they spend, spend, spend. Three hundred and sixty dollars for a caseload of tuna fish, 80 dollars for a radiation-proof suit, 16,000 dollars for a stash of Mountain House freeze-dried food.

After The Crash, a book written by Dr. Geoffrey Abert has already become a classic of the genre. Published in 1979, it suggested 1982 as the most likely crunch year (a date often cited).

Abert offers a timetable for catastrophe leading to the total unravelling of society by 1985. His 12 'factors' can be arranged in any order but together combine to achieve the desired result. They are: extended strikes by public safety or transportation unions; city-stopping winter storms; earthquakes in two major centres; the collapse of three big banks; three cities bankrupted and year-long double-digit inflation.

So far there are more armchair survivalists than the committed kind, but typical of the "hard" breed is Bob Sloane who gave up his white collar life in Richmond, Calif to move to a small Oregon town wedged behind mountain roads and dirt tracks that, at a snitch, can be shut down to the rest of humanity.

At the first dire signs, Sloane and his fellow townsmen plan to over-run the local National Guard Armoury and stock up with tanks and heavy weapons.

"The people would start streaming up here," he says, "and at first they would be welcomed. But then you'd have a total breakdown of law and order ... at that point we'll band together and shoot them."

Next to Sloane you get the survivalist types who want nothing more than a tan and to be left well alone. And there's the beauty of Survivalism. The ultimate in catchall fadism. Big enough to hold fire chiefs, bankers, Mormons and crackpots bosom to bosom. The all-American hybrid that offers nothing but future time.

ANDREW TYLER

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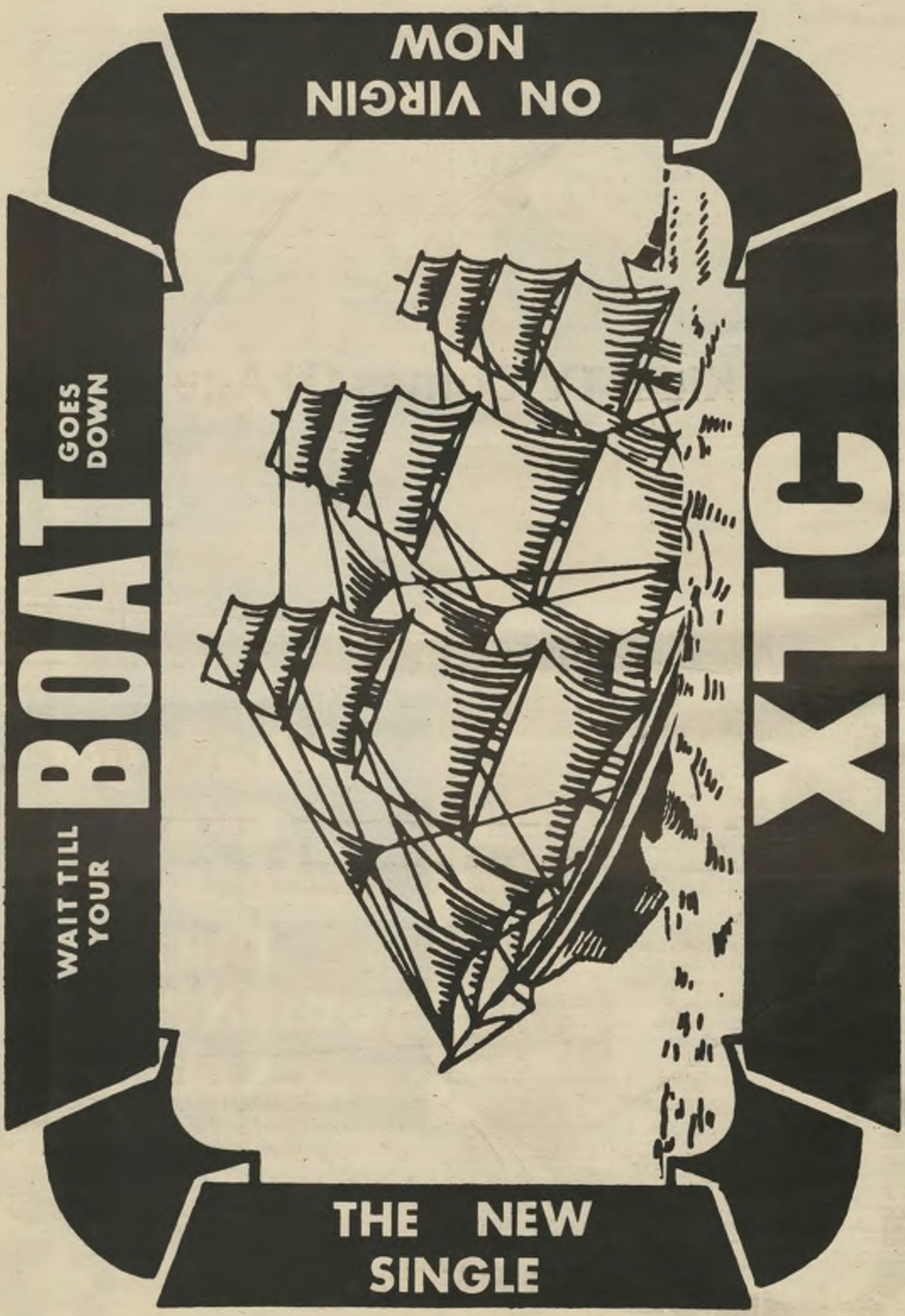
ON VIRGIN
NOW
WAIT TILL
YOUR
BOAT
GOES
DOWN
XTC
THE NEW
SINGLE

Kids' TV Comes Of Age

DANGEROUS VISIONS

Danny Baker rejoices in Grange Hill — and the decline of the Old School

LET'S take a look at 'young people's' TV, shall we, children? Through the . . . the square window . . . (harp glissando and fade).

That section of TV that creeps from 4.15 to 5.40 has never been too much more than an undemanding parade of light condescension and hints on what to do with egg boxes and Domestos bottles, punctuated with slapdash Hanna-Barbera gang cartoons — (always the same old plot about a bunch of counterfeiters dressing up as ghosts to keep the locals away) — and jolly decent British serials wherein bunches of dashed decent youngsters got themselves involved with Men's Matters under the guidance of a soppy over twenty-five male lead.

The only two dimensional people I can ever remember seeing — and avidly appreciating — were in that long lost and dearly missed import *Lost In Space*. (Here's a fiver that says you can't remember how the theme tune went). Ah, Zachary Smith, where is thy delicious treachery nowadays?

Music has always been kept to the occassional brass band accompanying nervous baton twirlers from Leeds or else the traditional Roy Castle playing the kitchen sink and tearing around a line of percussion (just once I'd like to see him fall to make the kettle drum finale).

We were never allowed to get involved, never allowed glimpses of anything tarnished, never allowed in on the jokes, never allowed to grow up. I mean, even today they cover up the brand names on those models-from-rubbish routines as though the impressionable young things will believe that cardboard petrol station can *only* be fully operative if constructed with genuine discarded *Kelloggs* corn-flake packets. Besides, nobody I know ever made the sodding things anyway. *Blue Peter* was strictly *square* daddy-o, only worth watching to see if the guest lion cub would piss all over the studio floor.

The first break with the clampdown came with *John Craven's News Round*. Though still strictly 'for the kiddies' this five minute, twice-weekly interlude was the first pointer from the Beeb that we weren't all totally obsessed with hideous old John Noakes' bully beef rambling and that some scholars had actually heard about that earthquake in Iran.

As it happens, the best part of tea-time telly was hooting at it with friends and predicting the outcome of 'impossible' cliff hangers or when 'Chrissie' would fall down and, whimpering, clutch her ankle just as the masties were chasing her and 'Steve'.

This sort of numbskull, insult script is still rampant in a disastrous slab of bilge called *The Tomorrow People* in which a selection of grossly inept ageing teen actors run around looking concerned in a science fiction hokum that in its costumes and set budget must get change back out of a fifty pence piece. (Naturally, there's a goofy but intelligent 'pet' computer that, in this case, looks like a polythene bag with a 9 Watt bulb inside).

Still before I get carried away, let's get to the meat of this piece. 'Kids' telly appears to have taken an irrevocable and major step forward in *Grange Hill*, a weekly drama set in a comprehensive school and as real and unflinching as you could possibly hope. Now this school isn't the comfy old wizard pranks and drawing silly pictures of 'sir' on the blackboard type issue. No, *Grange Hill* lives.

The kids swank, they sauce, they cry, the hop it, they fight, smoke, swear and steal. They talk back to teachers, they 'lose' bits of uniform — 'Me mum sez this is the only clean shirt she could find ser, straight' — write their own notes, get away with it, and all in all accurately map out what it's like to be putting in time at one of the state's fabulous education centres. That the series can effortlessly sketch real school living without pandering, condescending or sensationalizing is stunning.

In the course of *Grange Hill*, everyday life for schoolkids is only glammed up because of the obvious high incident rate you're forced to write to keep the instalments hanging in there. But it's the little couplets that impress, the dignity with which the audience — a very considerable one of course — are treated. For instance when one of the character girls was moody in class because of her period the dialogue between her and her understanding, but unsympathetic classmate was just enough to comment that young girls do meet with little consideration in schools during that time of the month but it never made it into a huge 'concerned liberal' deal. The scene was over in a matter of five sentences, wham the point was made, the hand reached out from the TV if you like, and the episode moved on.

You can't tell me that the girls — and less confidently, boys — watching didn't appreciate someone writing about and *for* them instead of glibly at and down at them. Then again, the incident probably went by as the normal, seeing as how the series has been running for some time and is fervently watched by nine out of ten under fifteens.

The other ten per cent? Well yes, it's our old friend the responsible outraged parent governing the switches here. Indeed, the BBC hosted a *Grange Hill* debate as a finale to the last series (term) which

■ *Continues over*

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More Dangerous Visions

■ From previous page

ended recently. I got home early and tuned in all ready for the heated affray but sat saddened as I watched what possibly signalled the beginning of the decline for *Grange Hill*. Rather than have an Us against Them straight argument we had the parents on film sporadically, archly and inflammatorily pitted against a clutch of, in the main, posh-speaking kids being talked down to by an actor and actress posing in a school room.

Oh come on, Beeb, this manipulation is hadly worthy of the series standards. The 'debate' was a calculated effort at whipping up emotions on behalf of the 'defencelass' series against those stuffy and rule making wet blanket fogeys. *Yeay Grange Hill* it went, then disgustingly, as the credits rolled, advertised the growing range of products on sale concerning their lovable chums.

In that shameful moment, the Beeb revealed themselves as both stuffy parent and two faced 'crusader' for schoolkids rights with both sets of eyes on the piggy bank.

No doubt *Grange Hill* does upset a good many parents, but as the debatees pointed out, either they've been away from school too long to remember or else they don't like to think that that's *their* Johnny and Judy up there and that the kids laugh so much not because the funny boy made a face behind sir's back, but because he just gave the old bastard two fingers right in the face . . . and can they ever identify with that!

Even if *Grange Hill* falls flat from now on, just one of it's cracking little episodes has been worth the entire miserable *Magpie* stretch — appeals aside — no matter how often Mick Robertson simpers over pop stars. C'mon Beeb, follow Thames' advice and pension off the *Blue Peter*, Keith Chegwins and Famous Five clones of the history books.

The old school is dead. The new school is out.

Competition Results

Just Another Stiff On The Wall

TRYING to select an outright winner of *NME's Just Another Stiff On The Wall* slogan competition has resulted in frayed tempers, tantrums and buck passing. Many entries were extremely witty and others extremely rude, but nobody scored the required hat-trick. So instead of one outright winner and an 'up-yours' to the rest, Stiff have expanded the original booty from 44 LPs and 39 45s to 52 LPs and 43 45s and selected winners and runners-up in three separate categories.

Category One: 'a rash and racy Stiff Slogan.'

The winner: Anton Pryczka from Pontypridd South Wales with *"Shuffling Firmly Forward."* C.P. Ridout from Bath came second with *"Aural Yoga For The Eighties"* and Dick Groves of Brighton gets a special mention for *"Stepping Stealthfully Forward With Stiff"*. E. McLeod of London also gets three singles for being down-right rude *"Stiff Slogans Stick."* The lads at Stiff said they'll try and raise the cash to buy you the entire Uriah Heep catalogue.

Category Two: 'an appropriate title for a Stiff compilation.'

It was a dead-heat for first place. Ian Smith from Wednesbury, West Midlands grabs the vinyl for *"Stiff, The Fine Art of Sufficing"* and Cambridge man Sean Munro for *". . . And Some Have Stiffness Thrust Upon Them."* Second prizes are on the way to another Brightonian, Julian Redpath for *"Rigid Moments"*, David Maageen of Kingswinford for *"Stiff Upper Hits"*. Stan Green of Wakefield, *"Flexible Selection"*. Andrew Clayden, of Waltham Cross for *"Lots Of Little Stiffs"* and from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Ed Waugh with *"More Drivel From The Vaults"*.

Category Three: 'a slogan for the '80s.' *"A New Beat For A New Decade"* states D Holman of Penge and hits the jackpot. *"Buy A Stiff Keep Music Grave"* writes Blackpudlian T P Hampton and comes second. A special mention goes to Neil Burrows from Nottingham with *"The '70s Gone, Stiff March On!" Actually, Neil we also dug your 'rash 'n' racy slogan.'*

All first prize winners each cop the following LPs: Lene Lovich 'Flex' plus Lene's promo-only 'Interview,' Wreckless Eric's 'Big Smash' double, Ian Dury's 'D.I.Y.' and The Feelies 'Crazy Rhythms.' Then there's a whole bunch of 45s: Madness 'Work Rest And Play,' and 'My Girl' Any Trouble 'Yesterday's Love,' Jona Lewie 'Kitchen At Parties,' Lene Lovich 'Angel' and the two single set 'What Will I Do Without You,' Rachel Sweet 'Fool's Gold,' Dirty Looks 'Lie To Me,' Wreckless Eric 'A Pop Song' and The GT's 'Boys Have Feelings Too.'

Second prize winners score four albums each: Current releases by Madness, Rachel Sweet and The Feelies plus either a Lene Lovich or Ian Gomm promo-only 'Interview.' These contestants worthy of a special mention receive current 45s by Jona Lewie, Dirty Looks and Any Trouble.

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Video Thrills The Rock'n'Roll Fart

Pic: Chalkie Davies

IN AN interview with New York's *SoHo Weekly News*, rock megalomaniac Todd Rundgren finally revealed why his albums have been so poor of late. It's because the former cosmic whizz-kid has been devoting his considerable energies to getting ready for the much-heralded video age instead.

Rundgren has been experimenting with video since 1972, and now owns a $2 million video studio in Bearsville, New York State, dedicated to exploring the artistic possibilities of the new technology. RCA, who sank $130 million into developing a commercial video-disc system, commissioned the Runt to make the first piece of 'soft-ware' for it, a video interpretation of Tomita's synthesised version of Holst's 'The Planets'.

As a pioneer in the foundling medium, Rundgren feels the potential is inevitably enormous. "I think we're going to see the same kind of explosion in video that we saw in the '60s with music," conjectures the hair-brained one. "People are ready for something different."

But it takes a special kind of person to give it to them; someone who has already mastered the technology, a Video Artist.

"All this — the computers, the consoles, the studio itself — just makes it easier for me to do my work. But, if I did not have the vision, I wouldn't be able to do anything with it."

Overcome by modesty. Our Hero decides to announce what shape the future will take. . .

"What we'll end up with eventually is a home terminal that is capable of playing a tape — or maybe even a magnetic card — as well as tapping into program banks outside the house. We'll all probably have a little console connected by fibre-optic cable to a satellite and cable system that will deliver what we want at the punch of a button."

Sounds absolutely marvy to us. Next week: Todd turns his studio into a shrine and explains the meaning of life.

BB BUELL

Thrills!

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SINGLES

12 STEPS FORWARD

ASWAD: Rainbow Culture (Island 12") Oh, how different you can get!! This wakes me right up, even if it's about the most genuinely melancholic piece of music here. When I reviewed the recent Aswad LP — 'Hulet' (Grove) — what should have stayed an earlelt recommendation turned through obscure twists into an all-oars-in slump essay about white receptivity and/or passivity with reference to critical purchase on black cultural expression. (Let out breath). So, now is a most fit and fine time for an anniversary, an endorsement of the appropriate feeling. Persevere for the lovelier subject? That album, this single, this group, are simply truer, better — and more 'accessible' than the average Rasta musical declamation, with no loss of 'commitment'. There's no reason for an unbeliever to run in fear of linguistics lag — although your living room hi fi could be in for some heartburn.

Hear that introduction: what seduction! Swim in the production (watching out for dub reefs) — courtesy manager and sound modeller Mikey Dread, not to be confused with that Salvador Dali of DJs with the same name. I would say that the namesake thing pales into insipience — 2nd hand at the controls. The 'Covenant' dubside of 'Rainbow Culture' is a gorgeous leafy landslide, wonderful swirlpool of stirred voices and blessed rhythmical opportunism & intravention. It's necessary to look out. This is available outside of lucky London, so no bleating about the capital's pre-release hegemony: fork off. Also: cymbals of the week!!

IRRUPTIVE, CATCHING, POPGUNS

(1) DEUTSCH - AMERIKANISCHE - FREUNDSCHAFT: Kebabtraume (Mute) The wonderful D.A.F. on the equally wonderful Daniel Miller's probably even more wonderful Mute label — oh tell me why Sillicon Teens 'Judy' didn't go *TOTP* — with the wonderfully titled 'Kebabtraume'. Spinning, top-light, effervescent, lots going on everywhichway without any of it being obviously taken from the shelves where people usually shop (dub, disclub, Canny, etc.) — rather a clever skim.

Nestles, nettles, knots & needles of bits of almost-a-chorus, nearly-a-break. Fausty vs. first PiL singley. Apparently the lyrics are about inferior alien sausage — deft rather than Daft? Given the way I feel about meals at the moment, think I'll write a song about chicken vegetarians. *(Ha!!! Are we to take it you're no longer a veg. eater, Ian?)*

(2) THE TEARDROP EXPLODES: Treason (Zoo) Don't be offput by commotions: 'Treason' has no reason to be registered as by a cliched Teardrop — ie those obstinate rear guards: 'modern', 'moderne', *'a la mode!*, 'Liverpool', 'Manchester', 'young men', etc . . . The repressed criticism that talks so has limited itself to shrugging its shoulders since it has no more to say than: *'but is it—'* oh! the clear cultured whine *'—rock and roll???'* It finds salvation in its own shoulder blades and deposits cutlery in other people's backs.

'Treason' is an emotional hit, whose chorus *ought* to guarantee popularity: *"Until you realise . . . It's just a story,"* in case you hear someone singing it and wonder what it is. In the dispiriting absence of The Police's screaming-out-45 'The Bed's Too Big Without You', this will do until the Sting comes home: anyone with a heart will not be able to resist the offer. It's got the changes and the doubts, and the catch-chorus which prepares you for the *other* catch-chorus to come, Joy Division's Love Will Tear Us Apart'. Honestly, you unbelievers will have to springclean prejudgements (I have!!) for these are *the* passionate songs of the hour, the ones to pine to: simple, culpable, irregular.

Side B is equally alluring, and it — 'Books' — has another seductive catchline: *"I've seen it in your eyes and I've read it in books / Who wants love without looks?"* Put your own ellipsis and inverted commas in.

(3) XTC: Wait Till Your Boat Goes Down (Virgin) The pearly signs glitter and revolve in an arid sky, supposedly signifying a variety of closed mannerisms, supposedly just elevated clothes-horses, bell pops; until your realise, they're all just saying *Fall in love with me!*

Unfortunately, sometimes signs are a bit actual, not simply imagined. XTC's *on*-intriguing *off*-annoying '24 hr. Whacky Chaps' scenery, for instance, is easier to accept when you're the *TisWas* side of 20; but we could be more than grateful they're off dull earth at least some of the time, walking on some paper moon or other.

That said, 'Wait Till Your Boat Goes Down' does suggest patterns of maturity — ie neurosis — spiking around in the *Crazy Milk* carton, although who'll say if it's the right percentage or not? If hits are drugs, 'Wait Till' could possibly have been cut with something too soft (and no, I don't mean as-in-plastic-knives) — but it is endearingly, if not instantly spacious, an international feel, less XTcc than one feared one would hear. I like it a lot: bright and not indulgent, offchance chords flying out the exit, isn't in too much of a happy, handclappy hurry — spurned in love by the sounds of it, feels awry.

ROLLON, SARTRE'S MARBLES!!

THE SLITS: In The Beginning There Was Rhythm / THE POP GROUP: Where There's A Will There's A Way (Rough Trade) The return of the Tomorrow People: another gaunt jaunt into their unaffected Otherworld sphere of naivete, the zombie repetition of old and pretentious phrases, high sounding protestations and lofty effusions. Flatly obvious bullshit one has learnt to expect from those intractable Barnard Levins of white - Western - conscience - bloc rock music, The Pop Group but one really is disappointed with the Slit sisters' fall to disgrace — their spiritual and managerial alliance with the Bristol Baezs has indeed rendered them more than a bit mutt and old Gurdjieff.

'In The Beginning' is an accomplished piece of lazy 'musicianship': sheepish, spin-dried funk. The flickety flak guitars and servant's bass provide platform as regular as redundancy for an Ari Up vintage whine. On and on and back and forth she washes like a stoned windscreen wiper, on and on about all the places and all the activities that contain the great God rhythm *("If we'd only known God is rhythm,"* etc.) — walking, talking and other standard social shortcuts for instance, the biggest deal being a Zen pearl, to wit, *"silence is a rhythm, too'*..

Oh they *mean it*, mon *(sic)*, I can only add my own little shopping list: bullshitting, imitating West Indian religions and patois, taking a long time over the manufacture of records, taking a long time stating the obvious, ranting on about rhythm but at no point opening up any 'new' rhythmical ideas, mucking record companies about and generally being a precious, artsy fartsy pain in the pants . . . All dese t'ings are rhythms too! Y'know!?

The Pop Group are, of course, pioneers in such inroads to wisdom — probably built them. I met their chief WASP prophet and lead singer Mark Stewart recently, just off the group's Portobello Rd. landing strip. The sackcloth was being drycleaned, but otherwise he was dressed as per usual — imitation Rasta up to the cavalry jacket and WW2 helmet — and lurched toward a friend and I with tears in his eyes and photos of Third World suffering in his paws — standard Pop Group album artwork, get them off the corporal, first barracks to your left as you go past Rough Trade. And we had them pegged as a right bunch of wallies! Our beer cans melted with shame; we went on bread and Valium for the rest of the wicked Western weekend, and at the end of this gesture, somehow — don't ask how or why; specification is another fiendish Capitalist trap — we, well, you know, sort of, like, *sensed* that the world was a kinder place.

Send them down the mines! 'Where There's A Will' is very much like Edwin Starr's daft old 'War', except probably more in earnest — or should I say, probably more white wet liberal hung up determinist shit? Trade in your CND badge for some Bertrand Russell badinage, get on down to the pacifist mumba jumbo disco, strictly chimerical militant, y'know?

In other words: all mouth and army surplus, no real political homework whatsoever. That might make the difference, make them evocative and provocative, as opposed to laughable, contemptible — but they're obviously too busy running around hardselling their inability to cope with ideologies — good, bad, or ugly — to do anything quite so vulgar. Their last single informed us — he typed, venting a cough which held back both bile and hysterical laughter — that we "are all prostitutes". Yes, none more so than The Pop Group — selling their 'politics' like a bag of potatoes that are always new.

And if grapevines / conversations are to be believed — I mean, don't believe everything *they* feed you, man — then these people expect both an audience and a living as some kind of *right* — as Artists. Well, think again! There are too many examples of groups at least trying to get

☐ *Continues over page*

Pic: Jean Bernard Sohier

Above: Aswad's Angus Gaye, Tony Robinson & Ian celebrate copping NME Single Of The Week.

Below: Teardrop Explodes' Julian Cope (left) & XTC's Andy Partridge show off suitable poses for the modern guitarist.

Pic: Kevin Cummins

Pic: Kevin Cummins

Pic: Vernon St. Hilaire

Pic: Paul Cox

Above: Pop Group's Mark Stewart & Slits' Tessa in poses for the modern vocalist.

Odd one

Your Reviewer: IAN PENMAN

Singles

☐ *From previous page*

their house in order, to break new ground in both business and musical areas, for self-swathed showers like this to have any excuse to get away with such drivel, to limp about on their whole-baked dogmacrutches, flipflopping their flimsy excuses about 'identity' and so forth.

For all their bat-iness, something like Scritti Politti shows up The Pop Group as being *well* Brian of Nazareth. *"The way out is through the door / How come no one uses it?"* they query. Hmm.

MOST INTERESTINGLY

LUDUS: The Visit (New Hormones 12" EP). Review the first Teardrop Explodes paragraph, delete & rewrite if desired, and then proceed here. 'The Visit' is too packed and involving to qualify as a leading edge on singles-ness; it contains more thoughtis), falls, chances, challenges and victims than most long players you would be presented with these or any other days. The acutely feminine emphasis crossed throughout Linder's intriguing, disconcerting lyrics and wordsound is arranged and organised scrupulously, abstractly, with and in all the instrument noises. A differently productive Ludus altogether from one we saw live not so long ago.

Four pieces, finishing on a flourish with 'I Can't Swim I Have Nightmares', one of the most surprising 'songs' I've heard for a long while. Levels of sung language-use and response are deranged. Logical settings are confused. The restricting 'seriousness' of language is ignored and made fun of, Linder using her voice impatiently, desperately, unsettling pattern, shape and the sound of communication with gleeful deliberation, unformal abandon. 'The Visit' gets a Gertrude Stein gold ribbon for prose murder: sexuality, language and rhythm are standerly, tenderly, shockingly dispersed. To mildly, wildly paraphrase some G.S. . . . You must hear with the most interest, the tunes that are silver and make mischief and make conscious unconscious rhymes. You must!!

PLUCKED UP HIPPIES

FAUST: Extracts 1 & 4 (Recommended Records). Making a decent case for selective reissue, and proof that not all old hippies are entirely fucused up. A short, rhythmically febrile 45rpm side with the flip at 33 — all previously unreleased. Worthwhile played next to something like D.A.F., and then find out (or not) what other Fausts they have revivified in Battersea, home of Recommended's arbitrary collections committee. Maybe if I leave it at that you'll be suitably less put off than usual (when pre-1976 plucky Euro hippie inventors, their praises we do sing) and sound out some acute but approachable 1972 experiments in sound. It does say on the label it was a "party". (Bloody Commies!)

AN ODD RECORD

(PROROKY) THE PROPHETS: Back To The Burner/Back To Siberia (Hypothetical Records). An odd record, telling you about it would spoil things, I mean, aren't you intrigued already? I'll just quote the part of the insert that refers to side two: 'a list of railway stations scattered across the Russian sub continent. These stations are notorious for seeing more passengers arrive than depart." Definitely one for Pere Ubu/The Normal fans.

ANOTHER ONE

WKGB: Non-Stop / Ultramarine (Fetish Records) As you've probably ascertained, this isn't *quite* as odd. An American import — WKGB being two chaps in New York wraparound sunshades who, I sense, rather fancy themselves as something surrogate along Suicide lines; maybe it's a more rewarding hobby than you'd think — the titles betray the relative ambiences, of which I find the late-'77-recorded 'Ultramarine' more persuasive. One for the more stubborn synthesiser furniture fans amongst ye. Nice.

KINDA FAMILIAR

THE JAM: Going Underground (Polydor)
JOE JACKSON BAND: Kinda Kute (A&M)
THE STRANGLERS: Bear Cage (United Artists)
G-r-o-a-n. Cod liver oil please, having long since worn out one's word on the frankly just a teensy bit predictable fabrics, stitches, tears, belches and careers of these three loyal & hardy employment bureau regulars. But . . . week in, week out!!

I feel so ambivalent with The Jam, like if someone were to tell me Leyland Motors had started making records instead of record losses. The Jam: I think of cocoa adverts, Wilkinson Sword ads — a family band, that's my Jam. Intelligible, simple, smooth— sociology freed of statistics, politics with no real parties in the opposition. Which is all well and good when something as forceful and cunning as 'Eton Rifles' slips out the sleeve. But not here, not this week (go on, buy it, prove him wrong), not on our doubtless trendsetting two single package (the Lene Lovich reviewed elsewhere is one too) which combines a studio duo and three live noises: 'Down In The Tube Station At Midnight', 'Away From The Numbers', and 'The Modern World', fans. It's still the same loyal, tough, emphatic, familiar Jam music, the new tracks not particularly instant or irregular even by Jam standards. Yes, Paul Weller is passionate — but it's a passion which won't conceal, doesn't frighten, can't crack.

At a guess, I'm the long straw, the bloodless stone, here, but: a grown person goes around selling words like 'kinda' and 'kute'? This world really is rocky. Preposterous! Joe Jackson is a tool of (a) few trades and master of none. His 'Kinda Kute' does not sound like a single, being a mid-paced to-fro excuse for him to excercise his long, dribbly tongue like one of those toy doggies that exist so dutifully in the world of the car rear window: wag wag gawp. No bark, no bite. 'I'm The Man'? I'm the urban cretin morelike, my babies.

And so to The Stranglers. And away again. (One for all: all for what?)

KILLING JOKE: Wardance / Psyche (Malicious Damage) Killing Joke, like bigger boys The Jam and The Stranglers, are stuck with too many garish guitars and obvious symbols. Overwrought and underthought: a thicket. Their brambles verge too far on the narcissistic moralising of The Stranglers this time — it was bearable on their debut EP: this stampede, however, is all too locked in by its loudness. A shiny, mechanical container. Useful for psychological waste disposal.

A. MORE: Judy / Lucia (Quango)
THE BIRTHDAY PARTY: Riddle House (Missing Link) Suddenly — anyone for rock n droll? These two out-conservative the bigger piggies in the weekly midst by virtue of more underhand stabs at happy rock family hegemony — or maybe what I really mean is the poor are nicer. No, I bandy with sympathies, there are a variety of accents, interruptions, nightshade leaning subjects slinking, sulking, gestating. True, there's the odd unfortunate stray poltergeist guitar throwing fits here and there — but sax and synthi substitutes do sufficient to pick the game up. You have to rifle these planes of politeness for their hidden eccentricities ...

The Birthday Party are Australians now resident in London, they claim, and have an album scheduled on Ralph Records. Anthony's 'Judy / Lucia' duo sound better once removed from the 'Flying Doesn't Help' LP frame, if it is still a regenerating A. More we hear; wait till 'Flagface' comes! Watching UFOs: that's what this was like.

LENE LOVICH: What Will I Do Without You (Stiff) Writhing in the *Sunday Times* this week, cult hero Derek Jewell, quoting Rachel Sweet, Lene Lovich and Caroline Mes *(who??)* as being 'typical' "new wave" 'girl singers' *(what??)* states: 'Their voices are slightly sour ... their largely inept lyrics prickle like hedgehogs; their backing bands are relentless riffing and very dull, like lightweight steamhammers.' *'Prickle like hedgehogs'!* If only it were that good!

SISTER SLEDGE: Easy Street (Atlantic) I loved the last three, but this one is destined to stay just a good friend. An adequate and far to stable / staple proposition.

THE KINKS: You Really Got Me (RK)
THE WHO: I'm The Face (Back Door). Old Age Popsters, who know about these things — probably why I think of such folk as I think of old teachers: the smell of sawdust in grim corridors, smoke choked staff rooms, 'those who can do, those who can't teach,' etc. — tend to legitimise these hep platters by saying one started the Heavy Metal genre, the other was the original Mod 45! With friends like that who needs me?

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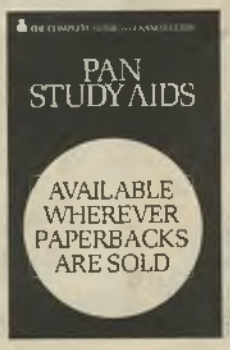

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THE BOYS WITH THE PERPETUAL NERVOUSNESS

Boys simply don't come more next door than the Feelies, four model citizens of Haledon, New Jersey

Richard Grabel (words) and Joe Stevens (pictures) take an outing to the home of militant wimpism

THE FEELIES are a study in eccentricities.

Two boys in a small New Jersey town, developing an understanding based on shared heroes.

Two boys constructing a homage to a music that passed on.

Two boys with a puzzling approach to being in a band.

Two boys: Glen Mercer (nee Sebesma — Dutch, spelling approximate) and Bill Million (nee Clayton), who lead The Feelies. It is their show — they are the writers (with Mercer responsible for lyrics) the producers, the frontmen.

Glen Mercer —

> "The way we dress, it's suburban, small town. It's just the suburban nature of the band"
>
> — Bill Million

FROM the start, Feelies gigs were few and far between. Usually they occurred on national holidays — Presidents' birthdays, Flag Day, Veteran's Day. They never used roadies. At early gigs they would "disguise" themselves in baseball caps as they set up their equipment. Even their equipment was a quirk — the smallest Fender amps available, perched on chairs.

Two eccentric looking boys. Baggy pleated pants, conservative shirts. Intent and serious airs. They could have been out-takes from an ancient *My Three Sons* casting call, the kind of awkward, adolescent science-rejects who spent all their time in the basement tinkering with a physics set. Only these boys tinkered with guitars.

But were they really like that?

"Well, I didn't have many friends in high school," Glen Mercer confirms. "I went to Eastern Christian High School, in North Haledon. It was fairly strict. Most of my friends went to the public school" — 'public' in the US equalling 'state' in the UK.

Bill Million was going to high school in nearby Haledon.

Mercer: "We knew each other. We never played in a band then, but we knew we had similar tastes. The Stooges, The Velvet Underground, The Who."

Million: "There were very few people out here who were into that kind of music. So to find someone was very exciting."

The two boys begin to write songs together. "Eventually," Mercer says, "we had so many songs we thought we should have a band." Enter the brothers Keith and Vinny DeNunzio on bass and drums.

They debut in February 1977, and make a powerful noise. At first, they take the drone guitar attack pioneered by the Velvets and extend its method to an even more frenzied result. When drummer Vinny leaves and is replaced by Anton Fier, they begin to experiment with a more fluid, polyrhythmic approach to the drone beat, often adding a second percussionist for greater rhythmic texture.

The Feelies' first single 'Fa Ce La' was a surprise for those who know the band's live sound, and their album will be even more so. The ringing harmonic chaos that had been their forte has been abandoned to a more subdued, careful style.

The translation of these experiments into vinyl reveals something else. The Feelies trace their lineage from The Velvet Underground. But they are really closer in spirit to Jonathan Richman. Like Richman, they maintain a suburban detachment, a state which may be passed off as innocence. Lou Reed in his good days never shied away from smearing our faces in the urban dirt. It gave him something to say.

IT'S A VERY quiet Sunday afternoon. We pick up drummer Anton Fier at his SoHo loft and drive off to Haledon, New Jersey, home of The Feelies.

Fier has one of the few cheap lofts left in an area that has been converted by hip capitalism from an abandoned manufacturing area into Chic City. It's not far to the tunnel that takes us off Manhattan Island and into another world, a tacky commercial landscape of highways, gas stations and fastfood joints.

Fier is a native of Cleveland who found his way into The Feelies through a newspaper classified ad. In addition to his Feelies duties he holds down the drummer's seat in The Lounge Lizards, an intriguing and funny punk-jazz outfit. Even more than Keith DeNunzio, who shares with Mercer and Million a New Jersey background, Fier is the odd man out in the group.

Haledon turns out to be a quiet, middle-and-working class suburb. Not rich, but the streets are lined with trees and the houses are neatly set out, with front and back yards. The streets are totally deserted.

The front door of the house is open. Bill Million lives here with his wife and three dogs. Glen Mercer lives five minutes away.

Million greets us in the living room, his ever-present coffee cup in hand. He is a confessed coffee addict who brings a portable electric coffee pot to the dressing room every gig the band plays.

The living room is unusually bare and stark looking for a suburban house, the white walls creating an unnatural-seeming brightness. Otherwise all is the very picture of normality.

Mercer and DeNunzio emerge from the kitchen. DeNunzio is friendly, good-natured, but relegated to a minor role in terms of speaking for the band. Million is talkative and personable. But Mercer remains stand-offish, distant, his manner suggesting a crotchety old New England grandpa.

We take seats in the living room. Sipping coffee, looking at The Feelies in their V-neck sweater Sunday best, I feel like a kid on a Sunday outing to visit the family's black-sheep cousins. An awkward, slightly askew moment. Sit still and don't fidget.

WE RUN through the pertinent facts of their backgrounds and the band's formation, outlined above. Their first recording was for Ork Records, an aborted single. Next was the Rough Trade single 'Fa Ce La', really only the general release of a demo tape. Then came the Stiff contract.

Million: "The main reason we signed with Stiff is that we insisted we shouldn't have a producer, and they agreed. I don't know how bands can allow their music to be mixed by someone else. It's something we could never do."

BOYS at play. Mercer and Million mixed 97 'Crazy Rhythms' according to their own, idiosyncratic specifications.

Million: "We didn't want to go after a big modern sound. We took at it as a rather unique sounding record. There's an awful lot of clarity and separation that isn't found on most records. The guitars are split. Very seldom did we use the centre spectrum in the mix."

Mercer: "It lets you know right from the start that it doesn't require passive listening. That's why I think a lot of people are surprised by the sound of our record. It doesn't come out like our live sound and assault you. You have to actively listen."

Million: "It's very difficult to record certain guitar parts in the studio. Our whole idea is to have this droning guitar thing as the foundation. Sometimes live that drone gets out of control, and the melody lines and the drum lines take a back seat.

"In the studio we couldn't get that same guitar sound. We could get it but it wouldn't go over into the control room. So it was either doing what we did, go for that clarity, or do multiple guitar overdubs, which we didn't want to do. It wouldn't fit our style of playing."

BOYS sending baffling smoke signals. The songs on the album make impressions, set an atmosphere, but they never seem to make a statement. Their lyrics teasingly suggest content, but nothing is being said.

Mercer: "That's correct, I think."

Then 'Boy With The Perpetual Nervousness' really does sum you up? *"There's a boy I know but not too well/'Cause he doesn't have a lot to say."*

"Well, it doesn't really sum up the band, but it is a good opening song in that it says it's a person who doesn't have a lot to say, and throughout the album is not real lyric-heavy. I look at myself primarily as a musician and as a lyricist second. We're an instrumental type band, the lyrics are just vehicles for the melodies. I don't think it's important to have a statement in your music."

TWO BOYS approaching a career in music with unflappable casualness. Not only do they rarely play gigs, they also don't really rehearse.

Million: "We very seldom rehearse our songs. We just rehearse them briefly before we play. The idea is to have a catalogue of ideas, and then when the time comes to apply them."

Later, out of earshot, Fier confesses some misgivings about this approach. He's of the old school theory that musicians should play, constantly. "I'm worried about the band," he says. "We're coming to an important juncture, getting up before the world. They have to make some decisions."

MEANWHILE, fishing for facts, I discover that Mercer just married in November a girl whom he'd dated for seven years. Million has been married for "a few years". DeNunzio is getting married in May. Fier is divorced: "I'm the only one who's in this rock and roll life for the women."

So The Feelies are real model citizens. Marry your high school sweetheart and settle down in your parents' hometown.

Million: "I think we just hit on an image as a natural growth out of our backgrounds. The way we dress, it's suburban, small town. We are like that. It's just the suburban nature of the band."

And you're not rushing to get out?

"No, we're rushing to stay."

THE FEELIES are peevish at times, stubborn always, determined to have their way. They seem bent on deliberately confounding expectations, on not giving of themselves what people seem to enjoy most from them. When their gears mesh, they transmit a buzz straight to the heart. But theirs is a presentation more than a performance; they play to each other.

They are the gentlemen farmers of the underground. Kids with a hobby.

It is a mode of operation they will have to break out of if their music is to develop beyond the confines of its present shape: an intricate, insular arabesque, a brilliant tapestry that points only towards its own centre.

Bill Million — Glen Mercer — Keith DeNunzio — Anton Fier

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DOLBY STEREO

Joseph Wambaugh ponders an early retirement.

A FAIR COP

Silver Screen Special

Bestselling author JOSEPH WAMBAUGH, ex-L.A.P.D., now makes movies his own way, too. Filing a report: NEIL NORMAN. Photographic evidence: TOM SHEEHAN.

JOE WAMBAUGH resigned from the Los Angeles Police Department in 1974, six years before his term of office was due to end. As a vice cop turned best-selling novelist — his first book, *The New Centurions*, was filmed with George C. Scott and his second, *The Blue Knight*, turned into a TV movie and spin-off series — he was celebrated among cops and robbers alike. But by the time Wambaugh became involved in litigation over the treatment of his own screenplay of his third novel, *The Choirboys*, by director Robert Aldrich, he had acquiesced to the mounting pressures and left the Force, a decision not lightly taken. He won the case, had his name removed from the credits and was solvent in seven figures as a direct result of the action.

Wambaugh cuts a trim figure, talking easily and rapidly about his new film, *The Onion Field*, and the problems involved in raising funds independently for it. Son of an ex-police chief and steelworker, he served six years in the Marines and spent three years in the steel mills before joining the LAPD in 1960.

His manner and features belie his Irish steelworking ancestry and 43 years, though the sleepless nights caused by *The Onion Field* have undoubtedly contributed to his svelte appearance — not surprisingly as he had $750,000 of his own money tied up in the film. The remaining $1,650,000 was raised through relatives and friends. His latest film, *The Black Marble*, a romantic comedy, opens in America this week.

"We're out of business now that we've finished with both pictures," he told me, although he has bought the rights to *The Rapist* by Daniel Forbes, which he'd like to film in Ireland if he can raise the money.

As an innovator in Hollywood determined to make his films his way, did he see anyone following his lead?

"No. My risk was too great. No one else would take a risk like that. I worked for two years without drawing one cent. Not one. Furthermore, I've put all the money I could beg and borrow of my own into these productions and agreed to take it back only after all my other investors had recouped every cent of their profit before I got one cent of mine. No one else is going to do that. Not ever. I'm not even sure I'd do it again. It's a total and complete risk. I could go totally under. I'd be bankrupt if, God forbid, the pictures didn't work."

The Onion Field is the disturbing story of Jimmy Smith and Gregory Powell, who kidnapped two policemen in 1963, killing one of them in the process. The resulting trial was the longest in Californian legal history and lasted seven years. Like Truman Capote, who encouraged him to write it, Wambaugh is more concerned with the psychological effect of the events on the protagonists, especially the surviving policeman, Karl Hettinger, whose feeling of guilt and disgrace led him to petty thieving.

"I feel that first, last and all *The Onion Field* is a multi-faceted study of guilt. That's why I wrote it. It's not about an interesting killing or a long court case.

"Of course, the most interesting to me was the unconscious guilt carried by Hettinger that made him go out and commit a series of thefts which was obviously nothing more than his guilt crying out for punishment, which he never understood. The second kind of guilt that fascinated me was the guiltlessness of the two minds of the two sociopathic criminals; I became fascinated by the sociopathic mind that denied the existence of guilt.

"Gregory Powell is almost a world-class sociopath because although he feels no guilt whatsoever he's clever enough, devious enough and complex enough to understand that you do feel guilt. He feels he's fortunate not to have been born with this infirmity. Smith is an absolute world-class sociopath; he doesn't even believe that the rest of us experience guilt.

"Finally and less interesting was the guilt as perceived by the Police Department: Hettinger's 'guilt', which he was made to carry, and guilt as pursued by the criminal justice system which gives up its pursuit about midway through their legal exercise until finally the legal process becomes the end in itself. Ascertaining guilt is totally irrelevant finally."

DESPITE THE questionable justice meted out by the police force and the courts, Wambaugh's cops are essentially heroic. Had he experienced much corruption within the system?

"Los Angeles is a rather corruption-free area as far as police and public officials. The Eastern part of the United States, which is older and founded on political machine mentality, is infinitely more corrupt. However you cannot have a corruption-free police department and a corrupt administration in the same city; they have to go hand in hand. If you've got a corrupt police force in New York, I assure you it's because the public officials in New York are corrupt."

There is a brief self-portrait of the author in the novel of *The Onion Field* who, as a young vice cop, is already questioning police behaviour as a result of Hettinger's treatment. It was the firing of Hettinger rather than the killing itself that made an impression on the latent writer. Given this, I asked Wambaugh what changes he would like to see in police procedure to prevent a similar series of events occurring again.

"I'd insist on intense psychotherapy for all policemen on a continuing basis. Groups of policemen should be dealt with in therapeutic sessions to make them understand what's happening to them and make them understand it's alright to talk about it, it's alright to cry. Right now it would be considered a very unmanly thing to in the macho role of policeman."

Wambaugh is a buccaneer, flouting convention to achieve his end and, although he would probably not want to be remembered solely as the man who put humanity into cops, it is clearly one of his most significant achievements. As a film maker he has room to develop — *The Onion Field* lacks narrative tension through his insistence on following the details of the case so precisely, yet still manages to pack a punch thanks largely to superb acting and the bizarre nature of the events and characters involved — but his intuition, integrity and courage leave an indelible mark.

And letting facts speak for themselves does have its advantages. Few scriptwriters could come up with a better insight into the sociopathic mind than Jimmy Smith's own words: "My conscience is clean, if this thing you call a conscience is for real, and not just something rich white people say is for real just to make guys like me feel like they oughtta punish themselves. If the truth be known, I don't think it really even exists. Not for anybody. Guilty is something The Man says in court when your luck runs out."

The Onion Field

Directed by Harold Becker
Starring James Woods, John Savage, Franklyn Seales and Ronny Cox
(GTO)

TO say *The Onion Field* is flat is not merely an agricultural axiom. In adapting his own book for the screen, and acting as (uncredited) executive producer, Joseph Wambaugh has fashioned a curiously lifeless film from potentially explosive material.

That it's based on a true story — two petty thieves kidnap a couple of cops, one is executed, the other brought to the brink of suicide by the subsequent series of trials — makes it all the more regrettable a missed opportunity.

But Wambaugh's caution, his meticulous attention to seemingly trivial detail, his laborious reconstruction of apparently secondary relationships, can be forgiven when remembering the indignities he suffered during the making of *The Choirboys*, Robert Aldrich's crude interpretation of another Wambaugh bestseller.

Unfortunately, good intentions are not enough. Because the problems with *The Onion Field* have been compounded by the direction. It's Harold Becker's second film (his first, *The Ragman's Daughter*, received limited distribution in 1972) and it's little surprise to discover he's a former stills photographer.

So while we have Wambaugh's screenplay placing equal emphasis on almost every scene, Becker's conventional camera placment continuously gives a corresponding impression of stasis. The cutting is extremely staid too, so that even in the crucial kidnapping sequence the main impetus derives from Eumir Deodato's music.

The overall effect is of a cross between stodgy, theatrical staginess and — fruity dialogue aside — a routine TV movie.

At least there are some performances to admire, most of all James Woods' thoroughly unpleasant two-bit hood. Whether done up like a Katzenjammer Kid to pull a liquor store heist or exchanging twee sweet-talk with his dowdy missus, Woods' hollow-cheeked, sunken-eyed psycho-mania screams from the screen. Not far behind is John Savage's nerve-wracked policeman, who becomes increasingly wraith-like and tic-inflicted as the farcial trials persist.

Much more could have been made of these unbelievably macabre examples of U.S. injustice, but Becker's pacing is so leaden as to leave Wambaugh's obvious and righteous anger drastically muted. Irritatingly, and despite the powerful central performances, the film peters out in a barrel-load of bathos.

For the acting, *The Onion Field* is fine. But next time maybe Wambaugh will come up trumps with a genuine *movie*-maker on his side. You remember movies — they're the things that are supposed to move.

Monty Smith

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Richard Pryor Live In Concert

Directed by Jeff Margolis
Starring Richard Pryor
(Osiris)

FROM a British perspective, it used to seem as if Richard Pryor led two separate existences.

In films ranging from *Blue Collar* to *Lady Sings The Blues* he has appeared as a powerful, expressive actor with startling comedic gifts; on records he incarnates himself as a standup (and fight) satirist described as "the black Lenny Bruce" by many well-intentioned people who would be very offended if you suggested that they were even the slightest bit racist (you can probably spot them in Pryor's audiences: they're the white people laughing loudest and most self-consciously at the jokes about white people). The comparison is vaguely analogous to the way the American press described Jimi Hendrix as "the black Elvis" in 1967.

Enough! *Richard Pryor Live In Concert* melds the two functions; it's a visually tatty record of a Pryor performance, bringing his material to life with gesture and inflection in a way that emphasises that his live records are merely soundtracks. (They're also carefully polished and planned well in detail to the point where I was convinced that Pryor's 'Wanted: Live In Concert' album was the soundtrack of the movie until checking the recording locations. Album and film are virtually identical twins down to the last *"muh-fuckuh"* and cough).

His subjects include heart attacks, Chinese restaurants, sex (and sexual) politics, some uncharacteristically sentimental material about children and animals, The Wonders Of Nature, white folks, black folks . . .

Eminently quotable it all is, but portions of Pryorlogue carved off the wall and stuck between brackets by no means convey the essence. It may seem an uneasy cross between a night out at A Club and a night out at The Pictures, but — until Pryor comes over here — it's the nearest we're going to get to an evening with the toughest monologuist in the racket. 'Im 'ard

Charles Shaar Murray

The Magician Of Lublin

Directed by Menahem Golan
Starring Alan Arkin, Louise Fletcher and Valerie Perrine
(Entertainment)

THE many ways in which actors, rock stars etc. contrive to keep reality at a distance are a matter of public record. Yasha, a late-19th century Polish magician, takes the process one step beyond, his entire outlook shaped by his ability to sidestep most of life's problems through sleight of hand.

Magic, like football in 20th century Britain, is his escape from poverty and mediocrity, his Wembley the Warsaw Alhambra.

Alan Arkin rightly accentuates Yasha's painful sincerity as he makes and breaks a succession of earnest promises that subsequently prove irksome to carry out. Of the mistresses, or, studding his itinerant existence, only the clinging Zeftel (Valerie Perrine) receives veiled contempt instead of hollow vows — and that because she irritates him with ludicrous promises of her own.

The Magician (Alan Arkin) and his mistress (Maia Danziger) — but who's holding the reins?

Magic moments

The inevitable tangle of illusions winds ever tighter against a backcloth of sombre greens and browns that lightens only during a brief idyll in the rooms of a beautiful, widowed Countess (Louise Fletcher, as emotionally inhibited as in *Cuckoo's Nest*).

The strict Judaism of his wife and the rest of their community is stifling to a man insistent that seeing is believing. More than once, when God is invoked, Yasha retorts derisively "Have you had an interview with him?" only to ensure his own humiliation by the same yardstick when he announces his intention of flying from the upper circle on his debut at the Alhambra.

His career in ruins, an uncharacteristically crass attempt at burglary forces him to 'fly' from a third-floor window, dragging a broken leg home to find that his coltish, besotted assistant Magda (Maia Danziger) has succumbed to despair at one more broken promise.

The dreamlike, tympani-laden build-up to Yasha's discovery of the resulting carnage is edge-of-the-seat stuff and stresses the sluggishness of much that's gone before. Just when you're thinking that, with 20 minutes lopped off, this could be the missing link between *Stardust* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, the magician pulls his last and best trick . . .

And if this was that sort of paper, I'd be telling you that Maia Danziger was one to watch. She is.

Harry George

On The Box

Saturday March 15

GUNFIGHT AT THE OK CORRAL: John Sturges' 1957 blockbuster pits Burt Lancaster's Wyatt Earp and Kirk Douglas' Doc Holliday against those rotten old Clantons in the aptly named town of Tombstone. Co-stars include Jo Van Fleet and Lee Van Cleef (which must be some kind of record) and Sturges went on to make an intriguing sequel, *Hour Of The Gun*, ten years later. **(ITV London and Tyne Tees)**

THE L-SHAPED ROOM: Depressing kitchen sink stuff — unwed mum (Leslie Caron) meets intense young writer (Tom Bell) in seedy boarding house — handled ever so delicately, of course, by Bryan Forbes in 1963. Should put the mockers on your weekend, no problem. **(ITV London)**

WHITE HEAT: Raoul Walsh's classic 1949 melodrama marked Jimmy Cagney's literally explosive return to the screen after a self-imposed eight-year hiatus and the little chap made much of his role as mum-obsessed psycho Cody Jarrett ("Made it, ma! Top of the world!"). Staunch support from Edmond O'Brien and, according to one critic at the time, "the most gruesome aggregation of brutalities ever presented under the guise of entertainment." **(BBC2)**

Sunday March 16

CROMWELL: Extremely tedious history lesson from Ken Hughes in 1970. Richard Harris is the 17th century 'revolutionary', Alec Guinness one of the King Charlies, and Patricks Wymark and Magee are also skulking around. **(BBC 1)**

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'BEFORE THE DAWN' 'ROLLER'

An operative of Killing Joke's Malicious Damage label points out a dim and stubborn regional punk crew who follow the band around. "They're looking for a leader," he observes drily. "Like everybody else."

Killing Joke share one in the studio (L-R): Paul, Jazz, Geordie, Sid. Pic: Mike Laye.

Suddenly everything's gone only rock'n' roll again. Punk, mod, ska, HM — it's the same old escape route in a different make of limo. Down in the bondage division, Killing Joke are striking Spokesmen Of A Generation postures. PAUL RAMBALI asks why.

LET'S PUT it this way: everybody's looking for something to fall back on.

Three years of rock iconoclasm have proved that no sooner is one poster torn down than another appears to take its place. There's plenty of room on the hoarding, and lacking a piper to call the tune, we pay our money and take our pick. Punk, heavy metal, mod, modern, rude . . . They sound as hollow as I feel.

For a time this fragmentation seemed healthy. Now it just seems like it's crumbling.

Each style gives its adherents an elite status, a reason to look down on the rest. So they use that excuse to take it out on each other — instead of on the system that causes their discontent and their revolt and finally closes in like a fog on all the frail, frustrating aspirations of teendom, until one day they find they don't even know their hopes from their fears, and the only thing left to take it out on is the wife.

What a sad and terrible waste of all that healthy, honest, confused and ill-directed rage. Shave your head, wear a bum-flap, buy a suit or stitch logos onto your back if you must compensate for feelings of inadequacy but *don't* squander that rage.

And don't wait for your 'leaders' to define it for you either, because all you do by following them is compensate for *their* feelings of inadequacy, often in cash, which only adds to their complacency and helps turn them into the very thing they — or some of them — set out to turn you against.

But people need something to identify with, and these days they'll take what they can get. Last Tuesday I found myself amongst the bondage division, watching them trickle into a sorely under-advertised Killing Joke performance at the London University. An operative of Killing Joke's Malicious Damage label pointed out a dim and stubborn regional punk crew who follow the band obsessively. "They're looking for a leader," he observed drily. "Like everybody else."

IN THE few months that have elapsed since Killing Joke released their 'Nervous System' EP, a virulent cocktail of after-punk ingredients, they have come close to the point of being handed the standard. So close, so quickly, and so slickly, that suspicions have been aroused. The previous weekend they played to a Lyceum full of people who had come to see Joy Division, after ads had given Killing Joke equal if not greater prominence on the bill. It turns out the promoter had naively entrusted the advertising to Killing Joke, who'll take what they can get too.

They're not so much unscrupulous as plain guileless. But they're learning, and experiences such as their short-lived acrimonious liaison with Island Records will teach them cunning. Meanwhile they kick out hard-nosed, hammerhead modern riff structures and spew out harsh, psychotic lyrics with sufficient conviction to make a dent in the pervading apathy, but not quite enough originality to be wholly persuasive. Nonetheless, a new single out soon on Rough Trade called 'Wardance' makes a predictably abrasive noise.

They are basically brats. They don't want to provide you with another entertainment. "No," says their founding member, "we want to fuck them up in the process."

His nick-name is Jazz, he plays keyboards and sings, and he's given to terse statements. About a year ago he and Paul, the drummer, put an ad in *Melody Maker* that put them onto a guitarist called Geordie, and soon after they found a bass player bearing an uncanny resemblance to Sid Vicious, called Youth. In 1977 Youth was "posing about down the Roxy", Geordie was at school failing his A-levels, Jazz was living in a "hell hole called Cheltenham" and playing with Paul in a band run by someone called Matt Stagger.

"It was a good band," says Jazz, "but it was his show, and towards the end it got sickly commercial and we just didn't fit. It wasn't being very honest, and when it comes down to playing, if you lie, it sounds like it."

Killing Joke's ambitions lay in the sphere of rhythm and noise. Youth cites Chic, as an example of the rhythm. "All that sugar shit on top, you can forget that, but the rhythm's there."

"And the production," says Jazz, "a *fat* sound. We're gonna get that, eventually. But we're gonna have noise on top of it: mangled, distorted, searing *noise*."

Otherwise, their intentions are vague. "Music has to keep progressing and changing," explains Youth, mindful of the early punk tenets. "Any music that remains stagnant ends up like all the other crap that's been before it. You have to keep going forward, and there's not many bands that do that."

Needless to say, despite musical similarities to the likes of Wire, Gang Of Four and PiL, they feel no particular affinity for other bands. "We're all different, y'see? We're not like all the other bands, all *clones* who all like each other." Jazz is not in a generous mood.

". . . Whereas we all hate each other," continues Youth. "We've all got different ideas and out of that we've got a general direction. Somebody will write a song, then it'll be passed to someone else, censored, and passed on again. Sometimes it gets to the point where one of us will walk, and if it gets past that point we usually end up with a good song."

THEY ALL agree they want to provoke, but what they want to provoke is vague.

Youth attempts some sort of definition: "Changing the attitude to looking forward instead of back; doing something different instead of following something else."

But they don't want to dictate, nor foster violence, nor provide merely token aggression. "We play the way we feel all the time. We don't pose."

No, they don't. They're genuine. Genuinely limited. But they are good within their limitations, capable of generating some heat and sounding energetic and purposeful. So purposeful that you're forced to ask what the purpose is. The answer lies in a tangled mess of handed-down ideals and private drives. Jazz says he had the idea for this group ages ago. What was the idea? "To form a group."

Youth grapples a little more patiently with the question. "It's like with the skinheads. They stand there looking around, then they'll decide to start bopping up and down. After about six or seven gigs they'll start to wonder why — and then perhaps they'll start changing, and that'll be worthwhile. But in the meantime you feel like asking them what the fuck are you here for? Why are you doing it? You can see they're not doing it because of the reasons you're doing it."

Confused? So are they. I wonder aloud if they know the significance of the red and the black — the international anarchist colours — used on their logo. Youth does, the others don't. "We're not into politics," someone mutters.

The top-dog at CBS Records walks out halfway through their gig that night. "Good," says the Malicious Damage operative. "That'll keep CBS off their back."

As I leave a member of Killing Joke asks me to write something nice about them for a change. I lie and say I will. These days expediency comes cheaper than integrity.

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Rock & Roll Rants & The Personal Dance

DELTA 5

D5 (L—R): Bethan, Kelvin, Julz, Roz, Al. Pic: Santo Basone.

BY ADRIAN THRILLS

THE IDEA OF a rock rhythm section built around two bassists as opposed to the traditional guitar-bass-drums framework is not a new one. It's been bandied about in musicians' circles for years.

But, for all the talk, precious few bands have had the guts to make the double-bass connection an onstage reality.

The Pop Group tried it once, as did Captain Beefheart's Magic Band before them, although in both cases it was probably more a case of nonconformity for the sake of it and not much else.

Joe Strummer, too, once toyed with the concept of a twin-bass driven reggae band although nothing came of the idea.

Then there was the much-publicised plan for Nick Lowe and Richard Hell to throw together a somewhat unlikely one-off band, twin basses thundering, for the first Mont De Marson punk festival in 1976. Needless to say, this scheme was another which failed to get off the ground.

Then there are Delta 5, three girls and two boys who come from Leeds and have played a lot of gigs with The Mekons and Gang Of Four.

D5 have been playing with two female bassists — Bethan and Roz — for well over a year now, not because it is a smart gimmick or because it looks good or even because they can actually play too well, yet: they simply feel that it perfectly suits the music they play, as Bethan is forever being called upon to explain.

"Whenever we play, we always get a load of people coming up to us and asking why we have two basses as if it was something really weird. Either that, or people from other bands come up and say they'd always wondered how that would sound and they were always going to try it but never actually got round to it.

"We always wanted to play dance music basically. We've always been into the whole happy funky music thing and that's very bass orientated."

MOST of the best new dance music to emerge last year seemed to fulfil two basic requirements: on one hand it was fiercely rhythmic and on the other it was a hybrid of some sort. From The Specials and Selecter to Joy Division and A Certain Ratio, all the best new groups seemed to share this common ground.

Delta 5 were no exception. Their sound is a hybrid every bit as much as the not-so-stupid marriage forged between punk and ska. The difference in D5's case is that the fusion is of the sparse hard rock perfected by Gang Of Four and the rhythm and business of funk and disco.

The resultant cocktail is clean and simple, the rhythms crisp and supple and the interweaving twin basslines never less than danceable.

Bassist number one Bethan was brought up in New Zealand but moved to Leeds to study Design at the Polytechnic five years ago. She met guitarist Julz and set about forming the band towards the end of 1978.

"At the start, the only common ground in the band was disco. It was the music we all enjoyed listening to and you've got to play the sort of things that you like, the sort of thing that you would like to dance to."

So they did, although their first gigs, without the advantages of a fixed line-up, were shambolic affairs. Apart from Julz and Bethan, the only regular member was bassist number two Roz, a Fine Art student from the University whose deep, dub-wise playing counterparted Bethan's jazzier, toppy style.

Roz had been the original bass player in The Mekons but left of her own accord that summer after the 'Never Been In A Riot' single had been recorded.

"I'd just stopped enjoying it in The Mekons," she recalls. "I'd only joined them to help them out in the first place when they'd bluffed their way into supporting The Rezillos in Leeds. They needed a bass player and I had a rough idea even though I'd never really played before, so I just drifted along with them.

"I was never really committed to The Mekons in the way I am to Delta 5. With Delta 5 it is different. I enjoy what I'm doing much more."

With the three girls forming the basis of the band, the other instrumental spots were more often than not handed to whoever happened to be available at the time. Mekons drummer Jon Langford would usually come in on guitar while Gang Of Four bassist Dave Allen stood in on drums for a while. The Mekons' sound mixer Simon Best and Gang Of Four roadie Joi Burnham — Hugo's brother — also stood in from time to time. Incestuous was hardly the word for it.

A semblance of stability only really came with the arrival of the present guitarist Al and drummer Kelvin at the start of last year. Both had previously been in bands in York, Al in R&B combo The Passionkillers and Kelvin in The Jerks.

With their various members having come from such diverse musical backgrounds, D5 resent suggestions that they are no more than the third link in the chain of unlumpable bands to emerge from the Fine Art department of Leeds University. It is true, though, that D5 do owe some of their success to the inroads already made by their mates The Mekons and Gang Of Four.

"Really, it's just a case of people who come from the same place who know each other," says Roz. "It's not as if we all suddenly flocked to Leeds to form bands. Everybody was there before the groups formed."

LYRICALLY, D5 could hardly be further removed from Gang Of Four. Most of their songs lie closer to vintage Buzzcocks territory, dealing deftly and honestly with the politics of personal relationships without getting caught up in mystic romanticism. However, more outward-looking, radical songs seem to be lurking just below the surface.

Julz: "I'd like our lyrics to be a bit more radical and not just about personal things all the time. A bit more relevant to a wider majority of people.

"This might be misconstrued, but we are women and blokes together in a band so we shouldn't shy away from saying something with a bit more substance. We shouldn't shy away from making statements just 'cause we might get landed with a feminist tag."

Bethan: "But it's not as if we have deliberately gone out of our way to avoid making statements. I don't think we're deliberately narrowing down what we want to write about. It's just that some songs haven't occurred yet.

"Personal songs can be just as relevant anyway. Personal relationships are like a microcosm of the whole world and in that way we are commenting on things in general."

It appears that D5 have only recently started to think seriously about their lyrics. Up until relatively recently, the band has been little more than a glorified hobby. Now, with their second single pending, they are faced with a decision whether to make the group a full-time occupation.

Their first single 'Mind Your Own Business'/'Now That You've Gone' came out on Rough Trade towards the end of last year and the new one 'You'/'Anticipation' should follow soon on the same label. But D5 are fast approaching a time when they will have to decide between the Kensington Park Road independent and a deal with a major.

Rough Trade can give them greater artistic freedom, although a major would guarantee the financial security to lift them off the breadline — to date, all gig proceeds have been going straight back into the equipment kitty. Even the level-headed Bethan seems torn between the two.

"If possible, we would like to be able to avoid signing with a big company, but it will all depend on our circumstances. We'd all like to be able to stay with Rough Trade but there are financial pressures to sign with a major. It all comes down to money in the end. Like where does next month's rent come from?"

Julz: "You can't romanticise about something like Rough Trade. Apart from the obvious advantages, there would be a lot of drawbacks with them. The actual name Rough Trade is a real disadvantage in media areas. Radio One shy away from playing a Rough Trade record far more than they do with any other independent label."

Kelvin: "It would be great to get an advance and be able to buy equipment, which we'd only get from a major. But as soon as we do that, we're in debt and we'd also be under pressure to make records, even when we didn't want to.

"Everyone's ideal situation would be to be paid for something that they actually enjoy doing. I mean, it would be great if I could make a living out of playing the drums. I've never been in that situation in my life."

WHETHER Delta 5 ever get to such a situation remains to be seen. If the new single is to be any sort of guide, their chances are promising indeed. On one side, 'You' is a rowdy, straightforward pop number, a great dumb rant of a song, while 'Anticipation' is more thoughtful, a song about how things rarely live up to expectations and one of the most mature, complex song the band have written.

But despite all the soul-searching and the immense promise, D5 have yet to really find their equilibrium. They are still striving for the right balance between partying down and saying something radical and still arguing the pros and cons of the security of a major label and the freedom of independence.

Says Julz, "We don't want to appear really serious. If you get too serious, you might as well just shout things out from the stage rather than make music. It's just a personal thing we're putting across. People should be able to think for themselves."

Of course, you can always just dance.

WIMBORNE FREE!

THE TRUE STORY OF A MODERN ROCK MUSICIAN BORN IN THE WILDS OF DORSET

The Year Of The Fripp minus one: and with the uncanny instinct of the wild, the Fripp returns to the place of its birth and early years . . .

PAUL MORLEY tracks down the Fripp to its natural habitat and charts its evolutionary progress. Fripphotography: SANTO BASONE

The Yew Tree

THE YEW TREE is an attractively quaint tea shop set in a narrow side street that runs off Wimborne's centre road of shops.

Wimborne is a village a handful of miles from Bournemouth. As with all such villages that have strained against the passing of time its details appear tinier than in the outside world.

The Yew Tree itself, part of a neat terrace row, the proud church opposite, the squat toilets next door but one — conveniences which incidentally enable the tea shop to escape censure for lacking such facilities — even the incongruously garish consumer shops on the high street, they all seem tinier.

I had the feeling that I'd been in Wimborne before, but of course I hadn't.

The Yew Tree hardly hums but somehow rolls with sedate conversation. Two Penelope Keiths emptily discuss David Attenborough. An old couple sit doe-eyed in front of empty cups, not saying much at all. The shop's doorbell occasionally jingle-jangles hopefully. If everything is smaller in Wimborne, so too is everything slower.

Robert Fripp slots into the Wimborne perspective perfectly. He is not what he seems. Wimborne must be The Village and Robert Fripp must surely be Number One for he can come and go as he pleases. (But then who is Number One? You are, Number Six.)

A tape recorder low on batteries and so plugged into a convenient wall socket is a strange intrusion into this shimmering shop of tea and sympathy and attracts bemused, even hostile looks. Robert Fripp, guitar player, talker and writer, is being interviewed, and Wimborne's slow march is interrupted. Yet it is from within Wimborne's displaced dimension that Robert Fripp is choreographing a meticulous plan committed to dislocating rock tradition, industry and prejudice. And he's winning.

WE NOW are halfway through Fripp's Drive To '81 and we can surely sense the momentum. This campaign was undertaken on three levels: in the market place, as an incorporation and expression of important ideas and as a self-discipline. As with most things Fripp-conceived, it is not as cranky as might be first assumed.

The Drive To '81 includes extensive — but informal and unusual — touring and a trilogy of LPs. (For now we will ignore the nagging "What after '81?") The first in this trilogy was 'Exposure' and it caused enough aesthetic and commercial ripples to increase Fripp's original confidence. The second part is to be released shortly: "Two albums, each single sided, that have been affixed to each other for the convenience of those who follow Robert Fripp's works. If you buy one, you get one free. The offer holds for each of the albums."

'Exposure' ironically subverted and perverted the conditioning effect of MOR, which is an intensely futile and imperious rock form. It was large scale pop, with autobiographical and unorthodox virtues, and Fripp worked primarily within very formal restrictions. To promote the record Fripp undertook a solo five-month tour of small non-venues — churches, record shops, restaurants, offices, art centres, small cinemas — playing the treated electric guitar he had labelled 'Frippertronics'. (Developed with Brian Eno, and simultaneously with others, the technique uses two tape recorders; one records the signal from Fripp's guitar and loops it to the other recorder, which plays it back delayed as Fripp plays . . . the next phase.)

Pure live recordings of Frippertronics from this tour form the first side of Fripp's new LP, 'God Save The Queen', and the crafty splicing of Frippertronics with disco rhythms and even a David Byrne vocal form the other, 'Under Heavy Manners'. Although retaining and sustaining the integral purpose of 'Exposure', the second part of Fripp's trilogy hops to another extreme.

"Sometimes you need to work outside formal restrictions in order to generate something else," Fripp will explain. "Working within formal restrictions, where you accept the restrictions of a particular form, you accept the remarkable discipline required to express all you know without any room for excess or superfluity, to pin it all down there. For me working inside and outside restrictions go hand in hand and there are no contradictions at all."

Both 'Exposure' and the second LP re-evaluate the specific rock genre. Strip away the original indulgence and pointless polished flamboyance of MOR and replace it with a cleaner more stimulating beauty. Intensify the repetition of disco. Frippertronics itself extends the textural, tonal and sensual properties of treated electric guitar music first unveiled by Fripp (and Eno) on 'No Pussyfooting' and 'Evening Star' to triumphant, intoxicating levels. Neither album is literally new music, but the Fripp approach, and the rigorous theorising and preparation behind each record, lends the music innovative credence.

"There's the novelty if you like. The novel thing about my records is the way they combine a number of different levels simultaneously. It doesn't mean that the form is particularly iconoclastic or earbending. The novel features may well be that in a form which is comparatively well-established the particular ideas which are being expressed may not be usually found within that genre."

Of course, much of Fripp's Drive To '81 is a great tale of subversion, and disruption. As for the third part of the trilogy Fripp hints with a glint in his eye that it will be "modern rock'n'roll". Post-Gang Of Four or pan-Talking Heads?!?

MEANWHILE, in the Yew Tree tea shop Fripp and myself finish our afternoon tea. Delicious scones and luscious cream and not tea but three pots of coffee. We are coming to the close of an afternoon's convoluted discourse. Fripp has said about The Roches, an act he has produced, that they have the capacity for originating insight. I wonder how fresh that insight needs to be.

"Nothing that we discover for ourselves is likely not to have been discovered by others before us, but the fact that we can discover it now for ourselves gives it that particular energy."

Surely now there are more different pressures and predicaments than there have ever been previously?

"Well, the particularities of those differ. I would sense that we have probably the same problems and predicaments that Plato and his contemporaries had in Greece 2,500 years ago. You know, yeah, we're earning a living but how do you remain true to your ideals while you're earning a living, and what do you do with a man being with a woman and all those problems, and having children that get on your nerves? You can even find complaints about overcrowding in Roman cities 2,000 years ago."

But here I am young and suicidal — so what about present-day acceleration, the way that reality is distorted by media projection and the way society pressurises people? Surely this is all new?

"Keep your mind in hell and despair not!" replies Fripp with a strange smile on his face. "How do you do that? Well, if your sense of reality is strong enough you don't get confused, or if you get confused at least you can remember one or two or three glimpses you've had of something which you know is always there, the within-ness . . . so that one can remain innocent at the same time as carrying one's personal history. That dilemma — how do you do it? 'I am resplendent in divergence' is my solution. It's quite practical. Those words are inspired" — Fripp reports this most pragmatically — "there is something entirely apart from me . . ."

You often separate Fripp from whatever; it's a charm of Fripp.

"Yes. Provided it doesn't become a fey mannerism. For me that sense of distance between Fripp and whatever I might be is a real one. It's not imaginary."

How many Fripps are there?

"There are a number . . . Robert Christgau in New York always disliked me intensely, although recognising that my guitar playing had some merit. 'Fripp has always been something of a . . . jerk', he said, which in English terminology is one who polishes the pipe. And I met him and he realised that all the parts of me which he disliked were the parts of me which I disliked but had to put up with. So I said to him 'You mustn't confuse the raincoat with the man beneath it'." Fripp pauses, to smirk and to observe my reaction. The last words I have from Robert Fripp ontape, the last words of the 50 A4 pages that I transcribe, are "Well . . . I like myself a lot more now".

How much does this mean to the rest of us?

The Station

THE TRAIN from Waterloo to Bournemouth is nine minutes late, and Robert Fripp is not a man to ignore this. "How unusual," he murmurs as we meet by the ticket barrier and touch hands. We walk over the crunchy station car park to Fripp's ageing Renault. "I trust your journey was uneventful," he asks, not a man to use two words when six will do. We get into the car, Fripp doing so with exceptional but, as I soon learn, typical precision, and drive off towards Wimborne.

Fripp has a gentle snub nose and hair that rolls up in gossamer flourishes at the nape of his neck. He is suspiciously neat. His manner may be archaic like a bookish, venerable character from the fringes of a Dickens (or Hardy) story, but this doesn't intrude upon his considerable expedience and perception. He is five foot eight and once said: "I am developing a theory, the ultimate anthropomorphism: God is five foot eight." In rock'n'roll terms, he's old. He's only 33.

By association he is a glamorous person. He is remarkably composed, briskly self-assertive and sleekly droll. "I'm not actually cynical," he says. Fripp is at the same time one of the most difficult and one of the easiest people that I have interviewed. Easiest, because he talks indefatigably and undeflatably. Most difficult, because his answers lack formal structure, because any contradictions therein are incandescently elusive and because, by the time he has finished answering a question, he is usually far away from where we originally started.

We drive out of Bournemouth, quickly emerging into flat, yellow, restful countryside. "I love Wimborne," Fripp remarks about the home he attempts to drape with mythical qualities, "and I'm a Wimborne lad. But I never quite fitted in. I never quite seemed in place in Wimborne as a teenager. So I had to go away in order to come back."

Fripp speaks largely as he writes in his sleeve notes. It can be tiring, but also funny, incisive, practical, lively and self-deprecating. Often what he says — and writes both in those sleeve notes and his regular articles on industry/technical theory for *Sounds International* magazine — has more relevance and practical evolutionary potential than his music which, behind all his postulation and inventive conceptualisation, often seems like a lost wayward detail.

"You might say that the pen is mightier than the axe. Mmm. It's a different vocabulary for expressing essentially the same ideas. For me one of the more intriguing aspects of music is that it enables me to discover myself a little more. So as part of my ongoing process of discovering myself through music, in terms of rationalising it, I put it on paper. For those who are interested in rationalising music, they can have access to those ideas. But for those who would rather just listen to the music I am quite happy that they should do so."

But are the same ideas still embraced and appreciated without the explanation and overall context? At one point Fripp will say that "In terms of establishing the ideas one makes the idea and then gets on with integrating it into one's life and that's all you can do". It cannot be denied that Fripp does so much, or that some of his ideas have filtered through positively into the rock mainstream. Frippertronics do sound more 'relevant' than they did on 'No Pussyfooting' seven years ago. "The only form of education," Fripp will say, "is by example".

Fripp sees the music industry as an analogy for a wider society, so when he's talking about his role he is not simply confining himself within "rock and roll". This can get confusing.

Before we get to Wimborne, we're to stop off at an isolated public house for food and drink. All very pleasant. The first part of the interview happens there. Before we arrive at the pub, Fripp tells me that he once auditioned Bryan Ferry to be the lead singer of King Crimson and turned him down.

IT'S HARD to believe that the Fripp who is determined to undermine the richly isolated stupidity of the rock industry and to do away with the 'vampiric' relationship between performer and audience and to introduce new intimacy is the same Fripp (in name and body, if not maturity and haircut) who in the early '70s was a substantial progressive rock star and who, with the band King Crimson, played a massive part in originating the foul, quite ludicrous techno-rock movement that only now lies down to die (with nasty twitches). King Crimson played 20,000 seater venues over Europe and, as Fripp wryly notes, could still do so.

Being a pseudo-intellectual who's fond of a squeak or two I had a couple of Crimson LPs — the weirder, later records 'Starless And Bible Black' and 'Red'. I once even saw Howard Devoto walking through a Manchester shopping centre with a copy of 'Red' under his arm (Devoto was later to ask if Fripp would produce the LP that became 'Secondhand Daylight' — he couldn't). King Crimson never teetered over into the arena of obscenity crowded by ELP, Yes and Genesis but Fripp, though, is almost resentful that history has been re-written (for him, very kindly) and that Crimson are never lumped in that dreadful list.

"If one casts one's mind back — and young people reading your paper will have noticed with interest how history is being rewritten over the past ten years — the first King Crimson was really the band that originated that type of movement."

Fripp calls it the art-rock movement.

"And we did so in much the same way essentially as the Sex Pistols did theirs three years ago, although it wouldn't be fair to say that the Pistols were the only band, just as it wouldn't be fair to say that Crimson were the only band. Nevertheless the point remains. So when I see the names ELP, Yes and Genesis, I remember where the L in ELP came from. I also remember where Genesis got their first mellotron from and who was offered the job with Yes before Steve Howe was."

Things to keep secret about, I would have thought.

"Those are the reasons that I don't object overmuch to rock history having been slightly re-written and the name of King Crimson omitted when the names of those bands are mentioned."

Is your defence of the term 'art-rock' merely an objective sympathy for it or a defence of yourself?

"Well, you can use the term art-rock in different ways. One would be as the name of a particular movement like Dadaism . . . and that's purely historical, having to do with a movement that as far as I'm concerned went wrong."

Was always wrong or went wrong?

"It went wrong. It became increasingly concerned with form rather than content, with style rather than implication of style. You see, the main idea of King Crimson for me was that one could be a rock musician and still retain one's intelligence, in fact use it. Which at the time was not an idea that was very popular in rock and roll and attracted a lot of hostile criticism. Now it would be generally accepted that one can be a functioning, adult, intelligent member of the human race and still be a rock musician. But the groups that have followed that original vein of art-rock are to my mind not very intelligent."

These days, of course, the term art-rock takes on a whole new meaning — a post-punk definition wherein Talking Heads, This Heat, Flying Lizards and Magazine lie — and presumably a broader, slightly more acceptable one based on that original 'intelligent rock musician' idea.

"Yes, the spirit is essentially the same. One can be intelligent and still be a rock musician. But the vocabulary has changed."

So Yes, etc moved away from that simple original framework, in fact eventually utterly contradicted it?

"The spirit evaporated. As a movement, it was vital until December 1972. As a movement, there were varying forms of vitality within all those bands. But after a while it ceased to be a musical movement and it became a means of paying a mortgage, of paying a butler's wage for serving afternoon tea at the end of a large table."

Why December 1972?

"That was when the spirit changed. Quite tangibly. One can act from intelligence or necessity and the industry is generally two years behind an intelligent notion. If you're actually intelligent in industry terms you act six months later because of the structural inhibitions. King Crimson broke up six months after the time it would have been ideal for them to do so."

Retirement

IN JULY 1974 "something clicked with a very loud bang and blew the top of my head off". The experience was "terrible, fucking terrible". Fripp became desperate — the horrendous monster that Crimson had become was a major contributory factor — and couldn't, almost literally, go on the way he was living.

He heard a taped lecture — The Third Inaugural Address to the Sherbourne International Academy for Continuous Education — and herein lay some answers.

"The day before we went into record 'Red' the top of my head blew off and I just had to follow it through. It meant giving up King Crimson. There was a sense of possibility that I glimpsed — and it's so difficult to talk about, especially with the *NME*'s well-rounded scepticism, which I do enjoy — the way they treat the pompous, that's one thing I love about the *NME*; they say things which are simply unsayable.

"But, um, I just had a glimpse of what it was possible for a human being to be, and it was so different to my state of confusion and desperation and all the rest and the nonsense that was going on, but I also saw the price that I'd have to pay, if you like, to be a human being — and it was terrifying. But at the same time I knew I had to have a go.

"So King Crimson wound up and I spent the year getting my affairs together, then went off to Sherbourne for a year and then spent a year recovering. And the next thing I did after that was 'Heroes'. Bowie phoned me up: it was one Saturday night and I was in New York. I got a phone call and it was Eno.

"'Hello, it's Brian! I'm here in Berlin with David! Hang on, I'll hand him over to you!' So I said hello — I'd spent an evening with him at a little party in 1972 — and I said that I'd seen his Rainbow concert and thoroughly enjoyed it and that I'd actually written a letter to him saying how much I'd enjoyed it — which he never received — and how I'd always hoped that we could work together since then.

"And I said 'But I must warn you that I don't know what I'm playing like because I haven't played for three years'. He said 'Well, do you think you could play some hoary rock 'n' roll?' And I said 'Well, I'm not sure, but I expect so, so if you're prepared to take the risk, so am I.' So that was the agreement. I flew out and got moving."

Fripp's extraordinary guitar playing on Bowie's 'Heroes' re-established his reputation. He emerged into the latter part of the decade as a pliable, maverick sort of being.

"At that time I was still officially retired. Retirement is defined as a condition in which one can work more profitably. I was eventually working so hard that by the April of the next year the idea of retirement was silly. I realise that in my case I was working more profitably within the terms of which I framed the original retirement."

Frippertronics

ROBERT FRIPP both rationalises the experience and experiences the idea. There is interaction. Newly refreshed and determined, a mature Fripp plotted the Drive to '81, began it and then utilised the experiences contained within it to maintain momentum. It is with the concept and implication of the Drive To '81 that Fripp has gained the most validity. And, of course, the most respectful attention.

Admirably contradicting the dinosaur days that he spent with Crimson, the small, intelligent and mobile Fripp followed through some of his newly articulated policies of intimacy and reductionism by touring for five months and, where possible, never playing to more than 200 people. In standard concerts, Fripp asserts, the audience had become too passive in their role as 'vampiric' spectators — humouring the concerts and pretensions of the performer.

"Frippertronics reduced the scale of the event, put forward the idea of active listening — and I didn't cop an attitude. In return I didn't wish to be treated as anything but a human being."

But Robert Fripp performing solo Frippertronics could be boring, I thought, and [illegible]

"Well, [illegible] I am boring, yes . . . but that's an opportunity for people. You see, all the idea of boredom that we were talking about before has to do with organising someone's life for them so that the person sits there passively. You just sit there and we will put you through all the excitement, all the shocks, everything you need to give yourself an exciting time! So in an entirely passive state the person goes through all the emotions and goes home feeling very happy. But one realises at the end of this that it hasn't been a qualitative endeavour. That the person in the

FRIPPOVER

"This place, alas now deserted, is where we young bohemians would loose our wild spirits in secret revels, our demonic music carrying our souls deep into the murmuring mystic Dorset night . . .

FRIPPBACK

audience is given nothing.

"So, at this point, one has to find a way of inducing the audience to make the effort. Now one doesn't do that by necessarily being boring but inevitably as part of a performance not everything in it will be to the liking of an audience and during that time people will simply have to make the effort of attention."

It is difficult for some to accept that Fripp is simply not contriving to go over people's heads.

"Well, I'm very straightforward. With the Frippertronics tour of the world I would introduce what I was doing and be very straightforward about it, and, er, present myself as a human being."

Fripp had said that "if the values I believe in are right, the tour will work. If not, it won't." The decision to undertake such a tour was unorthodox, wasn't it?

"Yes, but it was also the most successful publicity promotional tour within the record industry in recent years in America."

As a novelty, or in communicating Fripp ideas?

"On a level — actually right across the board. Any good idea works on any number of levels. This is the thing. Any real event works on a number of different levels simultaneously. That is the crux to everything we've been talking about. That in a sense is an answer to the world compromise and the contradictions and all the rest.

"What one is doing is synthesising a number of different things on a number of supposedly incompatible levels. My hunch is that in fact in a functioning human being all these levels interract simultaneously at once and harmoniously. Then you have what is termed accord. (A chord? — tr. note.) So this promotional campaign gave me the chance to play some of the best music I've ever played, to talk to more people than I've ever met, to examine virtually every Polydor territory in Europe and America so that I now have intimate information and insight on a practical day-to-day shopfloor level of Polydor which even the top people don't have. My guitar playing improved, I have all of 'God Save The Queen' from the tour, a lot of experience, lots of friends, my ideas developed, and I even earnt a living."

All of which is remarkable.

"Bloody right it is. And yet I was told that I was a turkey for doing it."

By who?

"It was implied by everyone who had anything to do with it — oh Fripp, what a turkey."

So you not only satisfied your own requirements, and developed them, but you penetrated the prejudices and routines of the industry.

"This is true. In Polydor in New York now I'm viewed in a somewhat different way to what I was before. I'm viewed with respect. If I say something now the idea tends to be listened to — because it may sound completely silly now, but his last silly idea worked. And I was Polydor's third or fourth best-selling white rock artist last year.

So it was succesful. And it was successful in a number of ways. Not only in a quantitive way but I think also in a qualitative way. It was remarkable. I can't describe some of the things that happened. Quite remarkable. Mmm. Sensational."

Fripp somehow manages to say this without a hint of arrogance.

Repetition

FRIPPERTRONICS is neccessarily repetitive. It can be both beautiful and tedious. It can be either dull or intense, comic and ironic.

"Intriguingly, a lot of men would see it as cerebral whilst a lot of women would say that it's fascinating. The men would say 'That was intelligent, that was an interesting form, that was an intriguing use of harmony, oh what a lovely melody line' and so on, and the women would cut directly to what was going on. That never fails to fascinate me.

"In terms of repetition, if one was going to wax philosophical about it for a moment, one could say that it is in repetition that one finds the possibility of freedom."

A lot of people's first reaction is to laugh when they hear Frippertronics.

"I laughed when I first heard Stravinsky. It was hilarious. Ho! Ho! I was 13. It was 'Firebird.' Our music master played it. We said we want some modern music like Johnny And The Hurricanes, and he said 'Alright, I'll play some modern music', and he put on Stravinsky. And I rolled around. Ho! Ho!

"Like, I bought a very cheap jazz LP for two Django Reinhardt tracks, on electric guitar, and it being a cheap LP they put lots of bodged things on there and one of them was by Charles Mingus, a piece called 'Abstraction'. Because I couldn't be bothered to get up and take the needle off everytime, it hit that track. For about seven years I heard this track, from the age of 14 onwards, and I thought what a load of shit!

"And then after seven years, after I'd listened to my Bartok string quartets, my 'New World Symphony', my 'Sergeant Pepper', my 'Are You Experienced', and my John Mayall And The Bluesbreakers LP with Eric Clapton, and as I was just about to turn professional under the strength of all this music, at 21, I would sometimes put on 'Abstraction' by Charles Mingus and, after seven years of personal suffering, the penny dropped.

"I had a letter from a fan. 'Pussyfooting' was released in '73, the letter came in 76 or 77, and it was 'Dear Mr. Fripp, when I first bought 'No Pussyfooting' I thought it was a load of

"Here stood the stage, then thronged with Wimborne's finest players. I stand upon the very spot where Eno and I devised our respective world domination strategies. E'en now I seem to feel distant vibrations linger still . . .

garbage, now I think it might shatter the universe'."

What kind of feeling do you get when listening to 'No Pussyfooting' and Frippertronics?

"I can't describe how much I love it. Just thinking about it tears begin to form in my eyes."

Do you understand why people don't like it?

Oh yes. Because pleasurable experiences have not been reinforced by that music. Yes, I understand."

Is it meant to be rock and roll or does it become it because of the way it's presented and packaged?

"There are a number of ways of defining rock and roll. One of the definitions of rock music would be that which is handled by the industry of rock. Now I always wish to be handled by the industry of rock because it allows me more mobility than within the organisation which handles either so-called classical music or so-called jazz. If what I was doing was called contemporary serious music it would die.

"I'm not going to force it on anybody, because that will only breed a reaction. As a purely practical way of working one has to avoid violence, and if one is genuinly trying to create a change one has to find a way of granting respect to people whose views are different. Any force breeds a reaction in equal or greater terms. If I came to you and said 'This is a really great album, listen to it', even if you listen to it you will not like it. There is no way you will like a record forced on you. On the other hand, if it is put under your nose or just left casually by your record player with an open *NME* next to it with a review saying what a hot LP it is, then there's no coercion involved and it could be discovered for oneself. So it's a question of presenting it in a way that is accessible, but without force, that requires intelligence and persistence.

"'Exposure' had this poster in America which said 'From the genuis who invented King Crimson, another new musical form'. Oh no! The embarrassment! So I went to see the relevant person and told them to put 'Not the product of genius, merely persistence' on the next one."

I suggest a lot of people wouldn't look towards Robert Fripp music because it is by Robert Fripp.

"Well then, you must tell them what a remarkably humorous and personable little lad I am. This is one thing which I would like to avoid, which is the notion of Robert Fripp as a

dry cerebral beast. Those who don't have intimate contact with me will perhaps harbour this erroneous notion, but they will just have to get to know me better. That's all I can say."

Glamour

MANY WHO move towards Fripp will possibly do so because of the musicians that Fripp knows and has worked with. He is linked with Brian Eno, David Bowie, Blondie, Peter Gabriel, David Byrne . . .

"Glamour seems to be an associative thing. Eno is pretty glamorous because of the glamorous people that he knows, and Bowie. They're all very attractive people, let's say that. But the glamour side of their lives is wholly apart from what they are as people. It's that point where glamour takes on its iconic stature; I sense it's mainly associative and is entirely independent of the people as human beings.

"The confusion arises wherever one confuses what they are as a human being with their iconic status. That's problem time. What Debbie probably does better than anyone I know is tweak the lawful discontinuities of her particular situation, doing this to illustrate certain points. For example I did a *Midnight Special* with them in America, and what Blondie did was to suggest a number of people who should be on their show, of whom I was one and Suicide another. And in the middle of 'Heart Of Glass' over the instrumental break Debbie, very low, started talking about — I think it was — the American military and saying some remarkably heavy things deadpan, off the cuff, just quietly under the music. Quite remarkable. If you listen knowing that the irony is there, Blondie take on a different aspect. If you take them upfront, they might be dumb. But they're so obviously not."

How important is it for there to be substance behind The Star?

"Chris and Debbie are very conscientious about what they do. When you ask me that and say the word 'important' it places me in a position where I am making an ethical judgement over others."

Not that specific, but the concept of populism and responsible communication.

"I would say that it gives one an opportunity. I wouldn't say this is important, I would say it is an opportunity."

Do you enjoy this?

"I've had it for 11 years on a level I'm comfortable with, or slightly beyond being comfortable with. If I was more comfortable, I

"Ahh, I see they've boarded up the bog. If only they knew what treasure is stored within . . .

wouldn't be able to do the work that I am doing now. At the same time I accept that there will come a point where I will be more acceptable than I am now. You see, in America where I have been for nearly three years, I went to the Bottom Line to see Brand X and I walked in the place and within 6 feet inside the door I had a standing ovation — which only Lennon or Stevie Wonder would get close to.

"In terms of any so-called cultist status it gives me more opportunities for disruption than I have here. Some people are able to handle and work with successfully an awful lot of popular acclaim; other people can't handle any at all. I handle the amount that is useful to me for my work, accepting it as a particular role which I've undertaken to accept for three years. If it appears to be useful beyond that, then fine.

"It is an opportunity and I try to accept the responsibility. You say 'important'. As I've got older, I've accepted that there is a far greater variety of possibilities for any one way of doing something, so it is difficult for me to say that this one way is necessarily more important than another."

The Pub

FRIPP EASES his Renault into the car park next to the public house, an isolated building surrounded by meadows. "You come close to death more times driving in the country," he has remarked, referring to the meander and narrowness of the lanes, "than in the city." He is a meticulous driver.

He extricates himself from the car with as much exactness as when he slid in. Inside the empty pub he orders the drinks and lunches with an odd sort of perfectionism. Using an indirect local influence he's discreetly proud of, he requests of the barmaid that the radio be turned off. "We're doing an interview, you see," he says politely but, surely, enigmatically.

Fripp straddles rock and roll wisdom and eccentricity. He is now very much, almost extrovertly so, in control of inner being and surrounding circumstances, a calm, productive contrast to those pre-Sherbourne days.

"I think it's a lot to do with a more realistic perception of what I am and what I'm not. I've got to know Robert Fripp a lot better, the peculiar creature that I live within. And, or, instead of fighting Robert Fripp every turn of the way, if you like, I've got to know better some of the structural contradictions that compromise Robert Fripp. Fripp is now more mobile."

Fripp has written that the future unit of organisation "is the small, mobile and intelligent unit where intelligence is defined as the capacity to perceive rightness, mobility is the capacity to act on that perception and small the necessary condition for that action in a contracting world." Through his writings in *Sound International* he details a comprehensive account of why and where the music industry is falling and how it should restructure itself — with the emphasis on an intermediate level of performer who will create respectable business without colossal investment.

"The majority of my own energies and thoughts in America during the past two years have been spent not on music, which can mostly take care of itself, but on the industry."

His articles announcing the necessity for less excess and stupidity inside the industry are remarkable pieces of writing, deliciously objective reasoning. His music somehow lacks the rigour, resonance, obvious hilarity and straightforward practicality of the writing, so that it fails to match the direct impact of what he proposes — the fault of many a conceptualist. It is through these acutely practical suggestions for the reduction of industry and the place of music and performer within that Fripp is more likely to effect change; the music simply flies away, almost evanescently. (Fitted into the idealistic logic of his re-structuring, Fripp's music is of course perfect, low-budget, intimate and expressive, whereas in the real rock world it is merely erratic). Inside the industry Fripp is now taken seriously, if a little warily.

The Drive To '81, the three-year campaign, is exaggerated respect for some rock'n'roll version of the law of diminishing returns. Within the drive he is playing extreme ideas to rock and roll. "Different people have different jobs and different roles and their responsibility is simply to do the best they can in terms of their particular role. That's all you can ask of anyone. When I left Sherbourne, I said to myself what can I do that is not, if you like, not likely to be covered by other people. I thought of two things. One I have access to media, and two, I can make money.

"Currently I'm putting forward a number of ideas that one could find in cosmological classes at Sherbourne, but putting them forward in a very straightforward way so no one is going to think it's intellectual or that I am involved in supporting a number of provinces outside the mainstream of humane endeavour, if you like, or that certainly would have difficulty surviving in normal circumstances.

"And I decided to do it for three years. And after the three years I don't know what I will do."

Fripp has said that "the second three-year campaign begins on September 11th 1981 (when the first finishes). This is the decline to 1984". Of course, in 1981 Fripp may be in a better position than any of us can imagine.

■ *Continues page 63*

"But you young people of today wouldn't understand the pure and questing spirit of that age . . . Now about this new LP of mine . . .

(Mod: "'Ere Mick, oi reckon this chap's been on the scrumpy" . . .)

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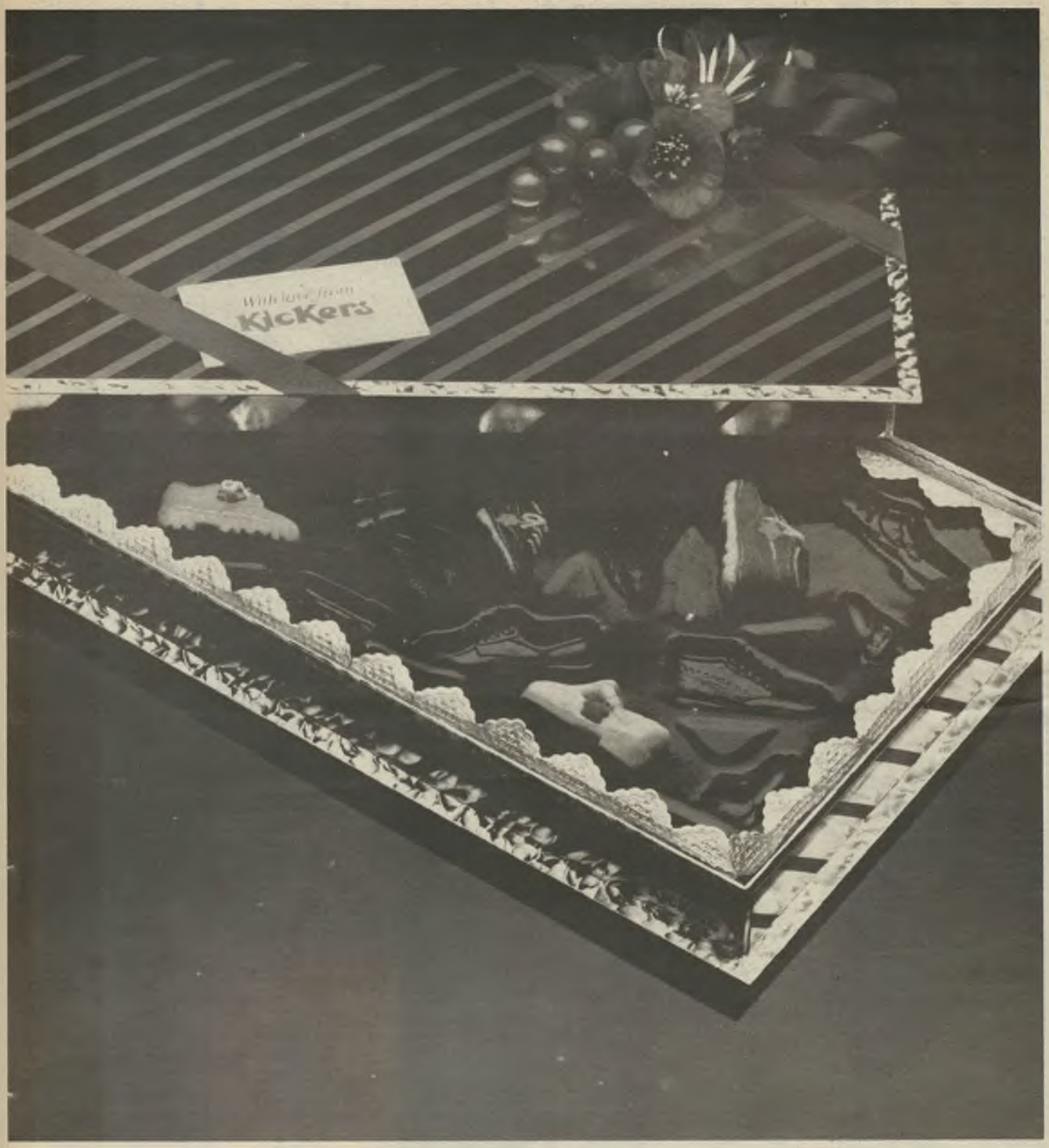

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ALBUMS

THE BROTHERS JOHNSON
Light Up The Night (A&M)
THE sublime art of making platinum out of platitudes — the way the Brothers Johnson practise it, this isn't so much how many people you actually please as how few you actively offend.

Their chart-busting 'Light Up The Night' album is guaranteed, however, to sedate almost anybody. Anybody, that is, who's actually capable of noticing its existence. Statistics show that only three per-cent of the population are even remotely irritated by muzak, leaving a potentially enormous market for the Johnsons' brand of soporific disco-jazz fusion mush.

Whatever possibilities a combination of the two idioms has to offer have been refined to the point of irrelevance by the Brothers, who now simply equate musical excitement with a welter of funky thumbs. Their pop sensibility has been similarly dulled, and nothing as strong as 'I'll Be Good To You' or 'Strawberry Letter 23' enlivens this foray into the world of jacuzzi music.

Granted this is really a soundtrack for a lifestyle that has nothing to do with me — a lifestyle of hot tubs, air-conditioning, jogging and condominiums — and granted it appeals in Britain to the growing breed of soul fans who eschew so-called heavy funk for the more breezy, upbeat, sophisticated soft soul and feather-weight 'jazz' first propagated by the CTI label, but that doesn't mean it *has* to be overwhelmingly insipid. Surely there's no need to further define human understanding of mediocrity.

Nonetheless this record does exist. It's not just something you hear in High Street boutiques. And it comes complete with gushing thanks to all manner of friends, relatives and business acquaintances who "made it all possible", along with a vaseline-lensed photo of the Brothers in unnaturally pallid hue and a warning about the dangers of Angel Dust.

Nice to see they care about people. Perhaps it means one day they'll stop making records like this.

Paul Rambali

THE SEARCHERS
The Searchers *(Sire)*
RECKONING — rightly — that you don't do these things by halves, Sire have followed up their resuscitation of Liverpool's second-finest by relaunching The Searchers' comeback album in time for their return to the London circuit. Out goes the Dylan song, but the new, murky sleeve contains ample compensation in three extra Rockfield-reared classics.

This lot have always picked a good lyric and John Hiatt's 'Back To The War' is that miraculous beast, a cliche-free pacifist tract. In any case, the piercing, synth-like guitar intro and clear, powerful vocals would revitalise 'We Shall Overcome'. 'Love's Melody', the old Ducks Deluxe chestnut, is an immeasurably superior forerunner of The Motors' White Plains phase ('Forget About You' etc.) and sounds like the album's nth hit single. And so to 'Silver'.

This is where all you Byrds imitators trade in your electric 12-strings. Cascading guitars combine with more bass action than usual in a performance The Searchers are unlikely to better.

History says The Searchers stumbled on a unique sound but had scant clue what to do with it. This record rewrites history.

Harry George

Fripp anguishes over the Angustronics album. Pic: Anton Corbijn.

OK, so we've driven to '81. Now tell us why we bothered, Bob

ROBERT FRIPP
God Save The Queen/
Under Heavy Manners
(E.G.)

ROBERT FRIPP is an intelligent, amusing and interesting man, an accomplished guitarist and a brilliant self-publicist. In 1970 he was leading King Crimson, a British art-rock band; in 1980 he is waging a small-scale war against the rock industry and what he correctly diagnoses as "the trend to idiocy."

Like all 'thinking' rock musicians, Fripp is fond of conceptualising his work, of intimating that it has a wider significance than mere 'rock and roll'. This capacity of his, one which he shares with Brian Eno, may result in 'controversial' interview copy, but rarely if ever in 'controversial' music.

The differential between rock theory and rock practice is nothing new; in fact it's an occupational hazard of the creative act. Rock conceptualists have been attempting to confront the problem ever since rock achieved a smattering of self-awareness in the late '70s, but their success in resolving it has been, to say the least, minimal. Bowie, Eno, Talking Heads and Kraftwerk — all of whom have been thought to be 'leaders' of rock theory at some stage or another — have each in their turn signally failed to make music that is as interesting, or even perhaps as valid, as the often elaborate conceptual edifices they've constructed around it.

In short, they've all fallen foul of their own percipience. At the same time they've failed to appreciate or accept that rock is a fundamentally limited and limiting medium, and that no amount of ideological or intellectual slipping and sliding will change the fact. Rock is pop is youth culture is entertainment is politics is fun is many things, but it's not — and can never be — a forum for 'serious' musical adventurism. Perhaps in many ways that's just as well.

'GOD SAVE The Queen / Under Heavy Manners' is the second part of Fripp's projected 'Drive To '81' album trilogy. Unlike last year's unconventionally autobiographical 'Exposure', it's relatively straightforward.

Fripps views it as two separate albums, each taking up one side (although his suggestion that he's offering either album 'free' with the other seems rather rich; the package costs a 'mere' £6.35).

Side A consists of three unadorned Frippertronic tape loops of improvised and treated electric guiter. 'Red Two Scorer' is melancholy and meditative, 'God Save The Queen' (so-called because it's based on the opening notes of the anthem of the same name) serene and sedate, and '1983' gouging, scouring and ominous.

You either like Frippertronics or not. I do, especially its assured repetition and strong, linear development. I also think it's a far more emotional and emotive platform than it might seem. Each of these three pieces has a distinctive mood, timbre and tempo.

Yes, of course it's really just old-fashioned picture music, but Fripp's metallic impressionism at least illustrates an interesting paradox; his submission to a highly disciplined technique ultimately results in an extraordinary freedom. Many folk (as in ethnic) and Afro-American 'jazz' musicians know this intuitively, whereas most rock musicians don't — to them improvisation is to move outside or away from a musical structure, not within or towards one. A minor point, but a pertinent one.

Side One begins with 'Under Heavy Manners', a seesawing Frippertronic loop overlaid with perfunctory bass (Buster Jones, ex-Sharks?) and drums (Alan Duskin) and featuring a predictably wayward vocal from everybody's favourite paranoiac, Talking Heads' David Byrne.

Fripp apparently finds his lyrics to the song hilarious. I find them mildly entertaining, nothing more. Invocations to 'Urizal' (presumably Urizen, who was one of English visionary William Blake's four human 'zoes', or aspects of humanity personified, and represented intellect) compete with constantly repeated anagrams of the song's title (cf the title track of 'Exposure') and a list of paired -isms (eg "solipsism euphemism," "cleverism criticism", "centrism socialism").

The final rush of these -isms will have you scuttling for the Greater Oxford — needlessly, as it transpires, since most of them are just rarefied terms concerned with matters spiritual and philosophical ("pheumatologism", for instance, is the expounding of the theory of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Quite).

But what, pray, does it all mean, Robert? Are you perhaps describing your own vision of Albion or Apocalypse after the manner of Blake himself? I wonder — but not for long, as I'd much rather listen to Byrne's splendid mangling of your meaning.

'The Zero Of The Signified' follows, another loop, its mechanical repetition indistinguishable from the manual repetition of Fripp's solo guitar part (games, brain games).

Bass and drums are gradually withdrawn, leaving the piece to fade away and radiate, which it does very effectively, a careful cyclic surging of gentle electronic sound.

I'm disappointed though. So this is Discotronics? I expected much more of this unlikely merging of disco and Frippertronics. I would certainly have preferred several shorter loops supported by different rhythm section signatures.

As for Fripp's accompanying liner notes, the man seems to be drowning in his own jargon; his rock sociology is as always perceptive, but his expression of same is hopelessly obscurantist. Anyone for "The phenomenon of peaking commits the peakified to ignominy at the moment of greatest achievement in an intriguing manner by which that which attains maximum commercial success is simultaneously abandoned in front of a future of less than maximum commercial success"? I pass.

SO THAT'S it. Robert Fripp is obviously pleased with the album (and himself), even letting Byrne claim on his behalf at the end of 'Under Heavy Manners' that *"I am resplendent in divergence"*. Hmmmm, I'm really not so sure, Robert. I think you're coasting, that you've somehow succeeded in convincing yourself that your every musical act carries as much weight as your accompanying comments upon it. Not so.

Much though I admire and respect Robert Fripp, especially for his pragmatic approach to trying to establish a new relationship with his/any rock audience, I suspect that his 'Drive' (and his planned 'Decline To '84') simply won't have the sizeable impact he intends it to carry until he sets about producing genuinely radical music — which, of course, is utterly impossible within rock frameworks.

Catch 29, at least. I resign.

Angus MacKinnon

GENE PARSONS
Melodies *(Sierra/Briar Import)*
GENE Parsons, always the most laconic of the Country Time Byrds, the grampus to Crosby's elephant seal, doesn't venture into the recording studio too often. Parsons never seemed to like being a fully fledged and paid-up member of the L.A. folk-rock era anyway, his own tastes naturally tending towards the bluegrass styles that had momentarily fascinated the late Gram Parsons (no relation) and Roger McGuinn.

'Melodies' finds him in typically pensive mood, too hard-nosed to be labelled 'laid back' and too single-minded in his objectives to cultivate any sweeping kindling of interest. The material slips easily through ethnic translations of Kentucky flavoured acoustic picking, 'Mama Papa' and 'Way Out There', where he is ably assisted by Greg Harris and Roger Bush, and some effective covers of latterday troubadour romances like Phil Ochs' 'My Kingdon For A Car' or Mickey Newbury's 'Why You Been Gone So Long'.

The band leader lets his charges — Albert Lee, Herb Pedersen, Bob Warford — play fast and loose on understated rhythmic patterns, contributes some excellent licks of his own on all manner of instrumentation and also writes the odd, slightly precious lyric. Even so, the nods to former partners Gram and Clarence White accentuate their virtues as working forces rather than confer any false status of godhead (a mistake the Eagles made on their otherwise authentic 'My Man'). There's a distinctly new rendition of 'Hot Burrito No 1' and 'Melodies From A Bird In Flight' is an exact tribute that doesn't intend to send you off a'weeping and a'wailing and thus bears repeated listening.

A pleasant enough success for Parsons, no faint praise intended. 'Melodies' doesn't disappoint its title and has no pretensions to blight its choosen course. As with all Sierra/Briar offerings it's well packaged and pressed in a spirit of tasteful anonymity. Homely stuff, but distinctive. A bit like Gene's lovingly trained moustache.

Max Ball

Getting the knack of Cheap Trickery (l-r): Bruce Gary, Doug Fieger, Prescott Niles, Berton Averre.

When the little girls do understand, you boys have had it

THE KNACK
. . . But The Little Girls Understand *(Capitol)*

THE KNACK's success in the wonderful United States of America is, I am told, being touted as some kind of evidence that the New Wave — whatever that is these days — is making genuine inroads into the American musical psyche. The Knack are part of the New Wave because their hair is shorter than that of Molly Hatchett, they dress like a 1964 Merseybeat band and their stylistic devices still have names like The Beatles, The Kinks, Phil Spector and The Who sprayed across the backs.

Their musical hardware consists mainly of riffs borrowed (while the owners weren't looking) from records like 'I Can't Explain' and 'You Really Got Me', all bumping along behind Beatley melodies kitted out with coyly malicious misogynist lyrics. Said lyrics seem to be designed to appeal to recklessly masochistic teenage girls and to boys who fantasise about same.

The first Knack hit — 'My Sharona' — was an entertaining little single: the jerky riff made for good dancing if you heard it by accident and the rhymes were amusingly strained. However, on this — their second album — the tracks which sound like 'My Sharona' sound distressingly formulaic and the ones which don't sound even worse. In other words, 'My Sharona' contained the only good licks they know.

Even under the heavy manners imposed by producer Mike Chapman, a fellow whose idea of a good record is remarkably close to the public's idea of a good record, The Knack come across strictly flyweight. Even when they steal the title of an American Yardbirds album and set it to a Beatles-play-Little Richard structure lifted from 'Long Tall Sally', they rock hard enough to make The Bay City Rollers sound remarkably like The Clash by comparison. Their Spector cop 'The Feeling I Get' rings as true as cardboard.

Thus far, we have a group who recycle the past neither lovingly and skilfully (like Dave Edmunds) nor roughly and radically (like The Cramps), but weakly and cynically (like Showaddywaddy). However, the content of the work is nowhere near as appealing and inspiring as its form.

One has only to hear Doug Fieger, The Knack's singer and lyricist, complacently informing the listener that 'Baby' (presumably his girlfriend) 'Talks Dirty' and then go on to rhyme 'dirty' with 'hurt me' before panting in mock-lascivious abandon along with the riff, or begging 'Mr Handleman' to take his (Fieger's) wife home and pay for the privilege (murmuring, *"Well, she looks all right in the dark"* over the fade-out), to realise that here is a man with an extraordinary sensibility. Here is also a man with an attitude to women that is a remarkable cross between Howard Hughes' attitude towards money and Hitler's attitude towards the Jews.

Fieger only shows the final card in his clammy little hand on the album's closing track 'How Can Love Hurt So Much' when his sly bullying is suddenly transformed into full-blown martyred balladeering. Like all true bullies, Fieger is quite prepared to beg when coercion fails to produce results.

It remains only to be said that the album does contain one excellent song. It's called 'The Hard Way' and it was composed by someone called Ray Davies, whose work sounds considerably more interesting than Fieger's. Maybe Davies should form his own Knack-style group and really clean up.

The Knack bear roughly the same relation to rock and roll as radiation poisoning does to nuclear power. When the little girls do understand what Fieger thinks of them, The Knack are going to be in a considerable amount of trouble. It couldn't happen to a nicer band.

Charles Shaar Murray

MARTI WEBB
Tell Me On A Sunday *(Polydor)*

MUSIC by Andrew Lloyd Webber and words by Don Black; here's the soundtrack album of the TV show, screened *twice* in the last month alone, of the huge promotional exercise aimed to establish this creaking vehicle for Ms Webb (star of *Evita*) as a thoroughly modern musical for our times. It's already spawned a major hit in the form of 'Take That Look Off Your Face', opening chapter of the story and, maybe apart from the title song, easily the strongest track on offer. And even *that* sounds uncomfortably like Mary Poppins sings The Ronettes, so be warned.

Basically, 'Tell Me On A Sunday' is the bleakly romantic tale of an English girl in New York (with one interlude in LA), narrating the catalogue of her succession of unsuccessful love affairs — she's on her third by the end of side one. The story's interspersed, for much-needed light relief, by horribly twee letters home to mum — cloying examples of that Julie Andrewsish artificial ultra-Englishness which always infects product intended for American consumption. For all its contrived pretences at modernism, it has nothing whatsoever to say about its subject — unless it's a smug hint that for women emotional independence is impossible, an old-fashioned cautionary tale on the follies of living as a moral outlaw. Lyrically the album's riddled with cliche; as an overall concept, it's a curiously futile one.

The Lloyd Webber score — performed by assorted worthies including Rod Argent, Jon Hiseman and the London Symphony Orchestra — amounts to more MOR

pop-opera, memorable in parts but mostly lacking the grandeur and impact of previous efforts. Marti Webb's essentially actressy approach to the material soon gets irritating on record as well. And as for the televised one-woman show itself, what a drab and unimaginative affair that turned out to be. Whatever happened to the video age?

Paul Du Noyer

THE CROOKS
Just Released *(Blueprint)*
IN ONE corner we have The Crooks (presumably so-named on account of their light-fingered leanings in the song-writing stakes); a mod group. In the other there's Simon Boswell, who produces them as elegantly clean, clear, cautious, wafer-thin pop, in much the same way as he'd like to have produced his own — now defunct — pop group, Advertising.

The results are disastrous. There'd be little competition to find a dodgier debut this year. The Crooks evidently take to Boswell's sophistication — echo, synths, crisp modern wrapping — as they figure it's their only hope in hell of getting any recognition for a slab of blatant Jam / Small Faces steals that have neither the passion of the former nor the slickness of the latter and are at least a year late into the record racks to boot.

And Boswell, in turn, seems to be looking for sufficiently malleable material to experiment with, totally oblivious that his studio high-wire act couldn't be less compatible with the (hideously hackneyed) true-grit mod bravado of their lyrics.

Too much, too late, Crooks. Go directly to jail; do not pass 'Go'; do not collect £200.

Mark Ellen

A double date train tour to Rainbow City

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Club Ska '67 *(Island)*
More Intensified! *(Island)*
APRES 'Intensified!' . . . le deluge!

It was obvious from the outset that the sucess last year of Island Records' 'Intensified!' collection of original ska would prompt the label to dig deep into their vaults of Jamaican music for more. And here it is: 'Club Ska' is a straightforward re-issue of a 1967 sampler album while 'More Intensified!' is exactly that, being volume two of the current series of ska compilations.

'More Intensified!' is the superior album. There are 16 tracks as opposed to 'Club Ska's' 13 and the selection — compiled with the advantage of 15 years' hindsight, by Stephen Barrow — gives a more coherent guided tour of the genre that was to inspire the 2-Tone generation.

Having said that, 'Intensified' volume two is not quite in the same class as its predecessor. The running order is more erratic and the real highlights fewer and further between. But highlights they still are, from four uptempo Skatalites instrumentals to the more languid swing of Eric Morris's 'What A Man Doeth'.

Whatever else, the 'Intensified!' series pays tribute to the sheer volume of work produced between 1962 and 1967 by the round of musicians who went to form The Skatalites and their various subsidiary bands — the likes of Don Drummond (trombone), Roland Alphonso and Tommy McCook (tenor sax), who lay down some of the most remarkable blazing horn lines ever committed to a recording studio.

Lyrically, the material spans most of the usual concerns of ska from parable psalms extolling the virtue of honesty (Stranger Cole's 'Run Joe') to inspired nonsense (Sir Lord Comic's wacky takeover 'The Great Wuga-Wuga') to overtly political songs like Lord Brynner And The Shleks' 'Congo War'. But even the latter, in typical fashion, degenerates into more wonderful nonsense, poking fun at the unpronounceability of all the names involved in the 1965 civil war in what was then the Congo.

Desmond Dekker, ace face

But the best track on 'More Intensified!' doesn't even qualify as ska in the first place. It is the closer on side two, The Ethiopians' 'Train To Skaville', which has both feet planted firmly in the slower rock steady genre with exquisite harmonies replacing the omnipresent horns of the earlier stuff. A pointer for the third rock-steady orientated volume along the lines of Virgin's 'Hottest Hits' LP of last year — now that would be some record.

'Club Ska '67' is a more patchy affair, although it does have the rare distinction of mentioning the word "guns" more times than 'Give 'Em Enough Rope', with favourites like The Skatalites 'Guns Of Navarone', Baba Brooks' 'Gun Fever' and The Soul Brothers' 'Lawless Street' all on the bill.

There are a few other gems too, like Delroy Wilson's emotive ballad 'Dancing Mood', The Gaylads' boppy 'Stop Making Love' and Desmond Dekker's prophetic — in the light of recent events — 'Shanty Town': *"Rude bwoys a go wail/'Cos dem outa jail/Rude bwoys cannot fail/Dem a loot, dem a shoot, dem a wail"*.

There is also a classic Toots And The Maytals track 'Broadway Jungle' with the Kingston madmen thinly disguised as The Flames.

But the sleeve notes, reproduced in their original form as from the pen of now Clash producer Guy Stevens, say it all: "Tune in, turn on and happen with us on every one of these tracks."

Forget the hip and the hype and let the beat come all over you tonight.

Adrian Thrills

JACK DeJOHNETTE
Special Edition
CHARLIE HADEN / JAN GARBAREK / EGBERTO GISMONTI
Magico
TERJE RYPDAL
Descendre
NANA VASCONCELOS
Saudades
MIROSLAV VITOUS
First Meeting *(All ECM)*
NO ONE seems too enamoured of Manfred Eicher's releases these days. Pity. What tends to be forgotten amidst the art gallery sleeves and blow-dried studio sound is that few labels have pursued such idiosyncratic taste with such apparent disregard for public and critical acclaim.

Terje Rypdal is a prime example of an ECM first waver lost in indulgent space. 'Descendre' is disaster, two rambling sides of Terjidly melodramatic electroscapes. The guitarist replays all his old keening seagull licks, Palle Mikkelborg's trumpet doodles along the scale and spectral synths glower in the background. Whatever happened to the embittered menace of 'Odyssey' or the purity of 'After The Rain'?

'First Meeting' is little better: Miroslav Vitous, as bassist / leader, fails to impose any character. John Surman on reeds can't make much of the material and Kenny Kirkland is one of those dreamily precious pianists Eicher delights in. Side one is all cosy cotton wool, but the flip is better — 'Recycle' develops a bitchy dialogue twixt bass and bass clarinet and 'Concerto In Three Parts' is a gnarled bass solo.

Approach 'Saudades' with caution, though, and you might be surprised. Solo albums from percussionists are improbable beasts but Nana Vasconcelos' effort is curiously likeable. The oblique additives — abstracted, intrusive strings, a sudden disturbing wail of voices, Egberto Gismonti's cascading eight-string-sketch a rich cross-cultural terrain. Chalk up a hit.

Egberto Gismonti turns up again on 'Magico' but this one's another formula-bound meeting of 'masters.' Saxophonist Jan Garbarek's brutally insensitive insistence again proves unsuitable for the spartan patterns used here and the featherweight themes are bereft of melodic interest. Predictably Charlie Haden comes off best, working out some telling interplay with the guitar on 'Bailarena' and contributing the best number, the tense 'Silence.'

So — finally — to the good news. Eicher's patronage has at last been extended to include American heavyweights and 'Special Edition' is the new music in excelsis. Jack DeJohnette's team — David Murray on tenor and bass clarinet, the great Arthur Blythe on alto, Peter Warren's bass and cello — stride through the set like imperious giants. The sheer ingenuity of the drummer's compositions wring immense, piledriving solos from the horns: taste the brilliant switchback of 'One For Eric' or the contrasting violence and pastels of 'Journey To The Twin Planet'. The over-exposed Murray comes good on 'Eric,' a glorious tribute to Dolphy, snorts and squeals married to a tumbling swing. Blythe sunders the pastiche of 'Zoot Suite' in a shattering alto-tenor tear-up.

To ice it off you get two Coltrane tunes: the neglected 'Central Park West' holds gorgeous, drifting harmonies and 'India' rolls on DeJohnette's crashing breakers. The catch? Great as it is, this is the most untypical of ECM records.

Richard Cook

Dreamboat springs leak

KEVIN AYERS
That's What You Get Babe *(EMI)*

THIS WEEK's perfect *Old Grey Whistle* second slot guest, the ghost of Kevin Ayers. He appears with corroded chums and/or all those sock and soul session music cess pool players with Kings Road beards and ghastly carefully grubby USA beer T-shirts, who always look up at one another when things start to get down.

Somebody or something keeps a cultural leper like Ayers alive — why? What use can he be? Surely he doesn't (even) make money any more?

I can appreciate that our country has campus universities and that in them are student recreation committees who have to book acts to keep the students from writing too many papers on protozoa — they have to get real 'out of it' and have something other than themselves to amuse them when nights draw in — and I can see that Kevin Ayers is just the kind of simpleton minstrel they will all find suitably suitable. He is carefully — what a cheeky chap!! — sexist, coolly camp, probably drinks glasses of white wine on stage and cracks jokes about his life on the Continent as a paid cuff. Yes, of course, that's it: Kevin Ayers the cuff.

He's always referred to as an "English eccentric" — so there's no critical legitimation of his role or his subjectivity. He is legitimately *Kevin Ayers*: you know, tch!, Canterbury, Soft Machine, whacky chaps, keep on chugging along, singing a song, releasing an album, getting a loan just fine.

What a nice existence!

In fact, there's nothing 'eccentric' to a conservative rock and droll Scrabble player like Ayers (at least Syd had the validity to split, practically and psychologically) who just sticks chained up in his mirrored dungeon, crapping out the same old — best cliche in the book: 'the same old' — starchy, stringy, sensible, soporific, soapy, scrag end lyrical and musical constructions.

The appalling gloss and glib sophisticated nothingness of its cover imagery announces 'That's What You Get Babe' as comprised exactly how, of, who with, for and . . .

Kevin Ayers: etcetera.

Ian Penman

"Ian Penman, I spoot on your muzzer . . ." The light shines out of Kevin's behind. Pic: Mick Rock.

WAZMO NARIZ
Things Aren't Right
(Illegal)

WAZMO NARIZ surfaced on Stiff several months back with an offbeat pop single about telephone calls. He's now resurfaced on Faulty Product's Illegal label with an album of hard, frantic pop whose main flaw is precisely its desire to remain emphatically offbeat.

Hardest to swallow are Wazmo's vocals which whoop, hiccup and sometimes growl in a stylised gabble reminiscent of Bryan Ferry trying to impersonate Lene Lovich whilst a ferret explores his trousers.

It's impossible to discuss Wazmo's talents as a lyricist when his singing mangles the words into mere noise, though brief intelligible snatches don't impress, and mysterious titles like 'Stubbies', 'Germ Proof Cleaners' and 'Al's Radiator' suggest an air of ponderous peculiarity.

The music, meanwhile, can be heard falling (or sagging) somewhere between Elvis Costello, Talking Heads and XTC. Fine models, but they only serve to underline Wazmo's failure to emulate their strength and understanding of pop. Instead we get a jaunty, arid elasticity, an attempt at avant-garde bubblegum that bounces, burps and borders on the gloriously inane but is too self-regarding to ever go far enough.

'Things Aren't Right' is too contrived, too incessantly *pop*. It gives me a headache.

Graham Lock

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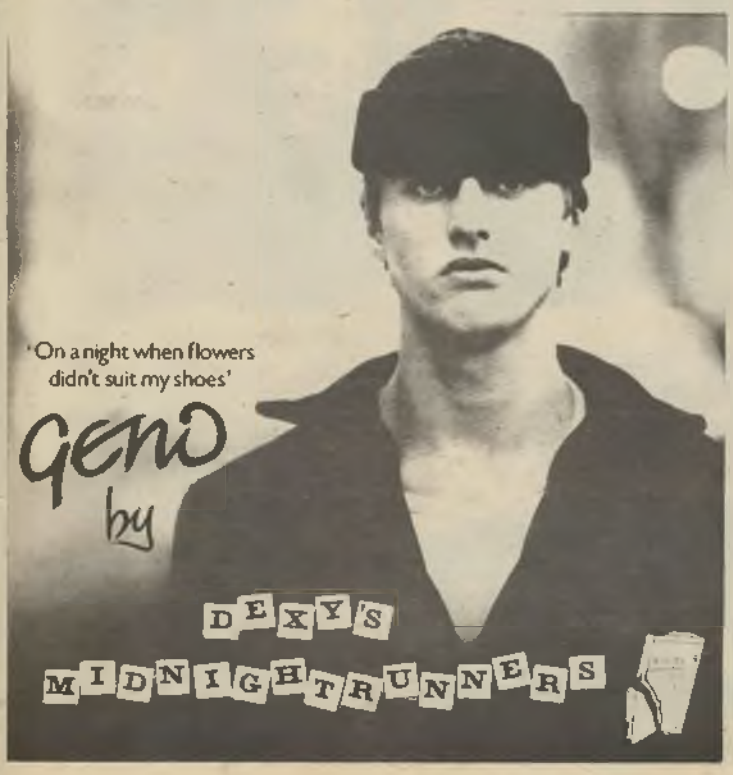

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RANDOM HOLD
The View From Here
(Polydor)

RANDOM HOLD, you might say, are red-blooded artisans where Magazines are anaemic artists. Practitioners of a sturdily dramatic music that pulses in fine robust fashion even while the lyrics make an ineffectual nod towards the same bleak todays and oblique tomorrows that trouble Devoto's devotions.

The vocals — wrenching white soulful — impress too, but the strengths of this album are primarily instrumental. Through the ornate crescendos of 'Silver Spoons, Golden Tongues' and moody atmospherics of 'With People (Out Of Love)' to the title track's swiftly shifting rhythmic floor, the music retains its ominous edge.

The staunch basis for this authority comes from Peter Phipps (ex-Glitter Band — sussed you Pete!), flaying the drums like a manic carpet-beater, and ex-Matching Mole and 801-er Bill MacCormick, whose bass growls and prowls with customary aplomb. Complementing them are David Rhodes, whose dark chunky guitar occasionally flares with aggression, and David Ferguson, on keyboards that flit and swoop, coax and grumble. And knitting all together with consummate skill is the subtle hand of producer Peter Hammill.

Random Hold do falter at times. 'What Happened' builds well only to sag at the weak chorus, a fault that also afflicts the generally inane 'Etcetera'ville'.

The odd lapse aside, 'The View From Here' attacks with force and vitality. No new visions, but it runs full-pelt through that grey area where rock traditionally gets bogged down in orchestration or ersatz jazziness, and emerges with most flags flying

Graham Lock

"Lynn Hanna, I spit on your mother . . ." (cont page 63) Pic: Philippe Carly.

Unbecominghagen

NINA HAGEN BAND
Unbehagen *(CBS)*

THE TITLE 'Unbehagen' is a pun on Nina's name. Translated as "ill at ease" it's an apt description of the disparity between Nina Hagen's image and her achievements on this album.

Side one starts with an imaginative, amusing pastiche in which Nina's warm, melodious yodels extol the virtues of black culture then suddenly switch to snarling vitriol: *"But what business have I got in Africa as a woman/When the black man castrates the black woman?"*

Unfortunately, 'African Reggae' appears to have been a happy accident. The rest of the music is so invariably dull that anything interesting stands out, plainly labelled "special effect". And the limitations of the band are clearly revealed in the limp live track and the short, dated instrumental at the end of the album.

Why Nina Hagen should choose to encumber herself with a leaden, long-dead, essentially male 'rock' music is beyond comprehension. And her unfortunate infatuation with the genre doesn't stop with its sound. Although translations often erase subtleties, there's enough on the English lyric sheet to indicate her intent: she's simply taken the ludicrous untruths of hackneyed rock lyrics and reversed the roles. She seduces unsullied 15-year-olds, revenges herself on old loves, and presents an all-powerful persona with the relentless, dominating inanity of the classic, empty-headed HM hero.

'Nightmare' has the standard chuntering rhythm and yowling riffs, yet is initially an accurate dissection of an obsessively destructive affair: *"I drive the sweat from your smooth brow/deep down into your brain"*. And the phrase *"When I blast witchlike over the wall"* suggests it may have deeper implications on the subject of East/West relations. But the song degenerates into bloated, gloating triumph that makes it unsuccessful in either sense.

Then there are the signs of a fixation with self that doesn't effectively illuminate anyone else's dilemmas — unless you share the habits of Nina's hapless ex-husband, the subject of 'Hermann Was His Name' (*"real life he can't just live like that/he needs the needles and the pills/to fill his veins with vital thrills"*), or lead the lamentably boring life of a blossoming star chronicled in the listless 'Down At The Carnival'.

We're left with 'Bow-Wow' — a bit of exhibitionism over a quick punk thrash that's mildly distasteful rather than wildly shocking — and two slight skits called 'If I Was A Boy' and 'Fall In Love' which I imagine are better suited to quasi-cabaret on-stage antics. And Lene Lovich's 'Lucky Number' surfaces as something called 'We're Still Alive' in which the original's insubstantial effervescence is lost in a morass of morbid philosophising and a lumpish arrangement.

On the sort of material that frequently confuses crassness and crudity for liberation, the awesome range of Nina's voice is extraordinary — but pointless. And she herself becomes a stereotyped predatory female, a rampaging femme-fatale who's stuck in the mud of myth.

'Unbehagen' isn't radical, it's reactionary.

Lynn Hanna

THE BROUGHTONS
Parlez-Vous English? *(EMI)*

"Oi loike it, oi loike it, yeah yeah yeah!" choruses the breathless Brummie girl from 'Little One', side one track one. Now, while I wouldn't go quite *that* far, it has to be said that this album, Edgar Broughton's first in several years, certainly isn't as utterly horrible as one might pessimistically have expected.

For once, and long ago, The Edgar Broughton Band were *enfants terribles* of 'underground' music at its all-out bludgeoning unloveliest — hippy-political, raging and ferocious, the definitive 'people's band' (philosophically protopunk). Weary years of slogans, benefits and arrests later, they called it a day, only to re-form in late '78 — originals Edgar, brother/drummer Steve and bassman Arthur Grant, plus a few others.

And yet 'Parlez-Vous English' isn't really too bad. Humour it does possess (as in 'Little One', affectionate satire *a la* Jasper Carrot) and even pastorally romantic patriotism ('April In England'). Apart from the unsuccessful would-be punkiness of 'Down In The Jungle', Broughton's social conscience expresses itself in compassion more than through the grim aggression of old.

Musically, too, there's more mellowing and less bellowing; still straitjacketed by clumsy early '70s conceptions of the way that rock should be rolled, they nevertheless squeeze in some inventive touches, just enough to suggest that they've kept outright stagnation at bay. And it *is* waggishly packaged (by Hipgnosis; joke semiology already). 'Parlez-Vous English' is hardly recommended listening for a brave new decade, but nor is it the last gasp of a has-been. Broughton's a still-is.

Paul Du Noyer

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Bruces go Mental

MENTAL AS ANYTHING
Mental As Anything
(Virgin)

'THE NIPS Are Getting Bigger' must be the most beguiling song about the demon drink since John Entwistle's 'Whiskey Man'. Its blend of humour and desperation was enough to clinch them a worldwide deal without the sweat of having to become Big In Australia first.

The resulting album shows equally that the single was no fluke and that the band are spreading themselves far too thin by stretching to 14 tracks. Four Mentals write and, while each of them comes up with the goods at least once, 'Nips' writer Martin Plaza is noticeably the strongest. His sun-blissed vibrato and Peter O'Doherty's superb, measured bass playing give MAE a quality of persuasive stealth that immediately sets them apart.

Plaza's 'Spanish Gardener' links these characteristics to long, lean guitar lines and proves typically idiosyncratic in subject matter. A council worker becomes obsessed with a smart suburban female and feels that his problems would be over if only he could switch nationalities — Plaza's real name is Murphy — and tend her daffs.

There are few worthwhile songs about showbiz and the presence of three on the album is a definite weakness. Reg Mombassa's 'Business And Pleasure' adapts the old 'Can I Get A Witness' shuffle with some flair and Plaza's two are very listenable, but it's all so much navel-contemplation, however skilful. Generally, however, the lyrics successfully walk the fine line between triviality and wackiness-for-its-own-sake, with 10cc's long-lost ability to evoke a fantasy and inject it with real conviction resurfacing stronger than ever on Mombassa's 'Egypt'.

Greedy Smith vamps away amiably on his Farfisa, chips in with two OK ditties and contributes good squawking harp on 'Talk To Baby Jesus' (Mombassa). The closer, 'Wolf At Your Door', is Peter O'Doherty's finest hour, showing commendable sympathy for a much-maligned beast *'They'll bite your young head off / Sad, but that's how they get off'*.

Mental As Anything lack only discrimination. I'm impressed.

Harry George

Mental's Greedy Smith

METABOLIST
Hansten Klork *(Dromm)*

ON the strength of last year's EP (tinkly-bonk music of sullen pointlessness) and 'Hansten Klork', Metabolist are the musical equivalent of small boys with new chemistry sets, diligently making nasty smells: they appear to take a positive delight in making the least captivating music possible.

'Hansten Klork' is characterised by ponderous repetition of lumpy, sludgy riffs, accompanied by sundry bangs, crashes and the like. Most tracks would be far too long at a fraction of the length: they start, go nowhere, and stop. Stasis.

The title track, for instance, sounds like a work-out in a junkyard. It thumps and rattles along clumsily, stops, and picks up again. Some words are sung in a silly voice. It sounds neither enjoyable nor interesting, just smugly self-satisfied with its impenetrability and general unpleasantness.

Metabolist would like to be Magma, or maybe This Heat — but where those bands build bridges, Metabolist build walls. And if they continue to make music which touches no emotional or intellectual nerve, no-one will be the slightest bit bothered when they brick themselves in completely.

Andy Gill

Japs get Cuddled

CUDDLY TOYS
Guillotine Theatre
(Teichiku import)

AH, Cuddly Toys, dont'cha just love 'em! No? I thought not. Formerly known as Raped and now posing on the periphery of Britain's glam-rock revival, they've been uniformly cold-shouldered on home ground. But the Japanese, it seems, are taking to them like wasps to a picnic. Hence this album, available here only on import.

'Guillotine Theatre', lovingly assembled and accepted in Japan, is the controversial brainchild of Sean Purcell, the group's lead singer and fledgling icon. He apparently views himself as some kind of strip cartoon Phantom of the Paradise, and to illustrate this he graces the album sleeve clad in white tights and tutu, frozen in a beatific dying-swan posture. If that creases you, then fine,

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you'll probably take to 'Guillotine Theatre' as well.

What we have here is a compilation of songs both dreadful and inspired. On first hearing, it sounds not unlike a piecemeal regurgitation of 'Ziggy Stardust', accentuated greatly by the uncanny likeness of Purcell's and Bowie's singing. Added to which there's some audacious ragbagging of the Man's musical trademark; lyrics dripping with macabre imagery, half-glimpsed shreds of despair and decrepitude, and strangely anachronistic fragments of musical debris keep cropping up.

But 'Guillotine Theatre' has a lot more going for it than just hand-me-down pastiche. Indeed it oozes an atmosphere of spookiness and hollow decadence rarely equalled on vinyl. And Purcell's weird word-images, though loosely sifted from the Ziggy Thesaurus, stand out as disarming, funny and sharp-hewn in their own right, even to the point of lampooning the original. Vulgar snippets like *"In the bathroom I could find no razor/but instead a schoolgirl's blazer/brushed my face with Mary Quant/got it on with T. Rex on the radio"* ('Join The Girls') are fairly typical.

As rock'n'roll goes, chunks of 'Guillotine Theatre' are quite appalling. At times Cuddly Toys play with enough finesse to dismantle a shed, but no matter, things like that really add to its overall charm. At their best, notably on 'Join The Girls', 'Madman', and the brilliant 'Astral Joe', the Toys unload savage noisy scoops of delirium that will pull the carpet from under your listening pleasure.

Rick Joseph

Left: Roger Powell and the bass's neck

IMPORTS
by Fred Dellar

THOUGH raised on jazz in my nappy-rash era, I've never really come to terms with the free-form variety. I know that such experimentation must continue if the music is to progress and I respect too many of the musicians involved to suggest that they're merely pulling the wool over the public's eyes, as some mouldy-fygges would have us believe.

So I continue to listen, sometimes digging the occasional spin off the tangent and generally giving a nod of approval without experiencing much cuickening of the pulse. Which was pretty much the case when I aired **'Alpha Omega' (Clear Light Of Jupiter)** by an Aussie five-piece given to frontal free-forming over a backdrop of rock rhythms. I suppose Alpha's John Bellamy may well be the McLaughlin of Melbourne, while tenor and soprano sax-man Dave Brown is obviously no sloppy-chops. In fact, the musicianship of the band is not to be disputed. Nevertheless, I kept finding myself trying to work out things on a mental slide-rule — which is not the way that things should be, my belief being that the state of the art should equate with the state of the heart. Still, that's my problem, not Alpha's or yours.

In the meantime, if I ever need to prove that technique and a flair for electronic wizardry doesn't necessarily add up to the whole can of beans, then I'll dig out **John Lee Hooker's 'That's Where It's At'**, which has just been reissued by **Stax-Fantasy**. Virtually a one-chord wonder, with an erratic sense of time and a vocal style best termed mean-deluxe, Hooker has always worked best alone which, happily, he does on this particular item.

"Hold your hand right down and work your thumb kinda beat-like," Hooker instructs on 'Teachin' The Blues', laying out his style for all to comprehend. "Ain't no lotta chords to remember, just a big beat — an' I sound like a whole band," he adds, coming up with the whole truth and nothin' but the truth, so help me, Muddy Waters.

Back in the land of the micro-chip, it comes as no surprise to discover that **'Air Pocket' (Bearsville)**, from Rundgren keyboardist **Roger Powell**, is the type that has a black hole in it. Accordingly the instrumentation on what is virtually a one-man space project includes an EMS sequencer, an Imsai 8080 computer, a RMI keyboard computer, a talk box, synthesised percussion and bass lines — just about everything, in fact, that helps pass the time of day for your average over-the-top keyboard whizz kid, the only really down-to-earth item on the whole list being a nine foot chunk of sewer-pipe.

There are instrumentals called 'Lunar Plexus' and 'Sands Of Arrakis', and songs that mention being balanced on a highwire across a valley of stars, while the Runt himself appears to bless the whole project on a cut that's called 'Morning Chorus'. I've played the whole thing a couple of times and still haven't discovered any trace of human life. But then, Powell's music is published by a company that's known as Cybersound. Figure it out for yourself.

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Stoller, Presley and Leiber scan manuscript of 'Jailhouse Rock'

Legendary rock'n'roll writer/producer Mike Stoller was in London last week to work on a Roundhouse stage play based around his and Jerry Leiber's classic songs. PAUL RAMBALI went to yakety yak.

BEFORE the rock, there was rhythm'n'blues. I knew I'd been short-changed when I heard Joe Turner's sublime 1954 recording of 'Shake, Rattle And Roll' and found that, contrary to Bill Haley's popular bowdlerisation, the song begins with the protagonists in bed.

Then a friend gave me a copy of Willie Mae Thornton's low-down and dirty 1953 version of 'Hound Dog', and I realised Elvis hadn't quite told it like he walked it at the time either. *"You ain't nothin' but a hound dog,"* moaned Miss Willie Mae, *"snoopin' round my door/You can wag your tail but I ain't gonna feed you no more"*.

That salty blues metaphor missing from the version Presley recorded three years later was written by two young white songwriters called Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, who came from points East to Los Angeles in the late '40s and went on to define more than anyone else apart from Chuck Berry and perhaps Otis Blackwell the mythology of rock'n'roll. With songs like 'Jailhouse Rock', 'Kansas City', 'Riot In Cell Block No. 9' and the trashy-comic cuts of The Coasters, and then with The Drifters and Ben E King, and finally with the Red Bird girlie-group label, they helped write the book of teen.

Even now, Berry is used to sell cigarettes and The Coasters are used to sell jeans, which indicates the lasting fascination with the Myth. And it's yet another outbreak of that myth which brings Mike Stoller, a dapper man in his mid-forties, to England.

He's here to work on the music for a stage production due to begin in April at London's Roundhouse. It's created by playwright and occasional wit Ned Sherrin, who had the idea of taking Leiber/Stoller songs and using them to tell a tale called sarcastically, if not affectionately, *Only In America*.

"The stage will be populated with characters from the songs," explains Stoller. "It follows a story-line from beginning to end without one word of dialogue, other than lyrics, and it's sung throughout. "What the story concerns he won't reveal, other than that it takes place within a 24-hour period in 1959 in a "decaying urban centre just outside of New York City."

It's in some ways ironic that their songs should end up in a show, since when they were written, Broadway was very much the antithesis of rock'n'roll. Yet The Coasters records particularly were often cleverly dramatised little fantasy episodes from real life. "We didn't think we were writing songs as such when we did records like 'Charlie Brown' and 'Yakety Yak'. We treated the song as a script for the record."

When they started writing — Leiber with his notebook full of blues couplets, Stoller with his background in boogie piano, modern jazz, and modern composition — they felt that all the important songs had already been written anyway. Cole Porter, Gershwin and Rogers and Hart had it covered. So they wrote what they liked, knocked themselves out.

Stoller now. Pic: Pennie Smith

"When it started in the States, rock'n'roll was an out-growth of black popular music, which was the blues and rhythm'n'blues. It also had other soubriquets that were not especially nice such as race music or sepia music to indicate it was music done by blacks and for blacks — which happened to be the kind of music Jerry and I were very enamoured of. We tried to write in that style because it was, to us, writing *up*. Whereas some people thought it was writing down — a second-class music that was not as good as the so-called popular music of the day.

"But as we wrote, elements of ourselves crept into the songs, taking them beyond mere emulation of the classic blues form. Then the young white audience suddenly, became almost entirely disenchanted with their pop music. By '53 or '54 there were more and more young people looking for something that represented or gave vent to their feelings — or at least was more interesting than Patti Page."

Then in 1956 the Tupelo Flash personified that urge when he sang his version of Leiber and Stoller's 'Hound Dog' to over half the total US television audience on NBC's *Steve Allen Show*. The rest, as they keep saying, is history. But unlike its central player, it's not yet dead and buried.

The decade that gave you the H-bomb, the bikini, the *NME*, the rock and, of course, the Myth seems to be a perennial obsession. Annotated cultural trivia keeps on coming. For instance, there's a new book that traces the long and prolific career of Leiber and Stoller in words and a profusion of pictures just out in the States. It's called *Baby, That Was Rock'n'roll*. To be a focus of such nostalgia must be strange.

"Looking back, it's a surprise that some of the things we did have lasted more than a few weeks. One of the things we used to feel about the work we were doing was that it was like a newspaper, say, or a magazine. Put one out, hope that it lasted it a few months, then it was dead. Put another out.

"In America now there are all kinds of radio stations geared to playing oldies non-stop. I can see that it represents a time when people felt safer, more secure and happier, although there's an enormous young following of people who weren't even around then, who were born in 1960, and are now into '50s music. But then in the '40s there were people getting excited about the Charleston and music from the '20s . . ."

And so it goes.

★★★★★

** Main pic taken from 'Baby That Was Rock & Roll', published in USA by Harvest, price £8.95.*

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Tickets £2.50 in advance, £3 on the door. Advance tickets Saffron Records, Trinity Street, St. Austell, Saffron Records, 2 Victoria Square, Truro, and from Virgin Records, Plymouth.

NEW CORNISH RIVIERA LIDO
CARLYON BAY, 2 MILES EAST OF ST. AUSTELL OFF THE A390
TELEPHONE: PAR (072-681) 4261

Bedlam Club

A DEVIL OF A DISCO

In the 2000 capacity Big Hall
Saturday March 22nd

THE SKATALITES

The original Guns of Navarone

Tickets £2. Advance tickets Saffron Records, Trinity Street, St. Austell, Saffron Records, 2 Victoria Square, Truro, and from Virgin Records, Plymouth.

NEW CORNISH RIVIERA LIDO
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TELEPHONE: PAR (072-681) 4261

EDDIE & THE HOT RODS

NINE BELOW ZERO
THE V.I.P.'S

LYCEUM
SUNDAY 16th MARCH at 7.30
TICKETS £3 (INC VAT) ADVANCE LYCEUM BOX OFFICE TEL 836 3715.
LONDON THEATRE BOOKINGS, SHAFTESBURY AVE., TEL. 439 3371, PRINCE BOX OFFICE, TEL. 240 2245.
DO ROCK ON RECORDS, 3 NORTON TOWN RD., HAYES, TEL. 485 5088

MUSIC MACHINE

CAMDEN HIGH ST. Opp. MORNINGTON CRESCENT TUBE
TEL 01-387 0428-9

Wednesday, 12th March £1.20
Heavy Metal Night *featuring*
PREYING MANTIS + White Spirit
+ D. J. Neil Kay

Friday, 14th March £2.20
PURPLE HEARTS + The Nips + Exit 22

Saturday, 15th March £2.20
MUD + 'A' Block

Monday, 17th March £1.20
THE CHAPS + Robert and the Remoulds
+ Arrogant

Tuesday, 18th March £1.20
NETWORK + Jim Wilkie + Mafia

Wednesday, 19th March £1.20
CUDDLY TOYS + Special Guests

Thursday, 20th March £2.00
ATHLETICO SPIZZ 80 + Headline
+ The World Debut of Wavis O'Shave
+ The Noise Toys

Thursday 27th and Friday, 28th March

SIOUXSIE and the BANSHEES

+ Subway Sect
+ The Scars

Advance Tickets now on sale £3.00

LICENSED BARS - LIVE MUSIC - DANCING
8pm-2am MONDAY TO SATURDAY
OVER 18s ONLY

THE SOULBOYS

TOGETHER AT THE NASHVILLE
MARCH 17 and MARCH 31
THE NUMBERS

BAD MANNERS

THE BODYSNATCHERS
SWINGING CATS

7.30, THURS. MARCH 27, ELECTRIC BALLROOM
184 CAMDEN HIGH STREET, NW1

Echo & The Bunny Men
A Certain Ratio
Psychedelic Furs
Manicured Noise
The Teardrop Explodes

LYCEUM
STRAND W.C.2
SUNDAY 23rd MARCH at 6.30pm
TICKETS £3.00 (INC VAT) ADVANCE LYCEUM BOX OFFICE, TEL. 836 3715.
LONDON THEATRE BOOKINGS, SHAFTESBURY AVE., TEL. 439 3371, PRINCE BOX OFFICE, TEL. 240 2245.
DO ROCK ON RECORDS, 3 NORTON TOWN RD., HAYES, TEL. 485 5088

THE BRIDGE HOUSE

23 BARKING ROAD, CANNING TOWN, E16

Thursday 13th March 60p
SPLODGENESSABOUNDS
+ The Touch

Friday 14th March £1.50
Charity Gig for Dave Prichard featuring
CHAS 'N' DAVE

Saturday 15th March 70p
TOUR DE FORCE
+ A.P.B.'s

Sunday 16th March 70p
Q-TIPS
+ The Guynors

Monday 17th March 60p
WASTED YOUTH
+ One On One

Tuesday 18th March 60p
THE WALL
+ Industrial Music

Wednesday 19th March 60p
PAUL SHUTTLEWORTH'S LATEST CRAZE
+ Pencils

Thursday 20th March 60p
JIMMY NORTON EXPLOSION
+ Haircuts

CAROLINE Roadshow

STATUS QUO — WHITESNAKE
We present John Coghlan's

DIESEL BAND

featuring John Coghlan, drummer of Status Quo, Neil Murray & Mick Moody of Whitesnake.
Andy Brown, Bob Young, & Jackie Lynton
Plus Caroline Roadshow

Tuesday 25th March
Ilford Palais, High Road, Ilford, Essex

Wednesday 26th March
St Ive's Centre, Westwood Rd, St Ive's
Cambridgeshire

Thursday 27th March
Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
Doors Open: 8 pm, Bar, Adm £2

Doors open 8pm. **D.J's Robb Eden, Robbie Day & Brian Martin.**
We are Britain's most outrageous, Heavy Metal Roadshow. Adm £2
To book the Caroline Roadshow Phone 0621-783-279

THE PORTERHOUSE

20 Carolgate, Retford, Notts.

Friday 14th March £2
The Six Drum Beat Package
THE GANGSTERS + THE QUADS + THE THRILLERS

Saturday 15th March £2
METRO

THE CRYSTAL PALACE

Anerley Hill, Upper Norwood, S.E.19
(Crystal Palace Roundabout)

Saturday 22nd March

THE BLUES BAND

Doors open 8.00 pm.ss — Fully licensed bar

01- BAND

Catch us at:
Rock Garden, 17th March
Windsor Castle 18th March
Upstairs at Ronnie Scotts 19th March

Special appearance at:
THE TARGET at Reading 29th March
Adm £1

NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE

RORY GALLAGHER ... God's gift to the Emerald Isle, before He got around to creating the Rats and their contemporaries. Now he (with a small 'h') sets about consolidating his divine right when he plays a one-off at London Lyceum on St. Patrick's Day (next Monday), as the climax of the London Festival of Irish Arts.

Thursday

Barnsley Little Tavern: **The Future**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Chevy**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Skydiver**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Titan**
Birmingham Odeon: **Nazareth/Saxon**
Blackpool Jenks Bar: **Seventeen**
Bodmin Jail Club: **Metro Glider**
Bournemouth The Pinecliff: **Scissor Fits**
Brighton Alhambra: **The Techniques**
Bristol Granary: **Money**
Burntwood Troubadour: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Caerphilly Double Diamond: **The Drifters (for three days)**
Cambridge University Centre: **The Foundations**
Canterbury Alberry's Wine Bar: **The City Blues Band**
Cardiff Philharmonic: **Zipper**
Carshalton Roundshaw Youth Club: **Bloodshot**
Christchurch Jumpers Tavern: **The Scavengers**
Coventry City Centre Club: **Fiddler's Dram**
Coventry Warwick University: **Dexy's Midnight Runners**
Derby Blue Note: **The Little Roosters**
Edinburgh Astoria: **The Cramps**
Exeter Routes: **The Inmates**
Gloucester Roundabout: **The Lambrettas**
Gravesend Red Lion: **Mey West**
Guilford Wooden Bridge: **The Small Wonders**
Hanley The Place: **Fantasy (for three days)**
High Wycombe Nags Head: **Squire**
Hornchurch The Bull: **CO2**
Hull Wellington Club: **Dangerous Girls**
Leeds Fan Club: **The Psychedelic Furs**
Leeds Gladrags Club: **Agony Column**
Leeds Fest Hotel: **Spyder Blues Band**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Dodgy Tactics**
Leicester De Montfort Hall: **Judas Priest / Iron Maiden**
Lincoln Cornhill Vaults: **The Point**
Lincoln Drill Hall: **Praying Mantis**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Pink Military**
London Camden Music Machine: **Athletico Spizz 80/The Noise Toys/Wavis O'Shave/Headline**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Splodgenessabounds**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Bauhaus/Modern English**
London Finchley Torrington: **Don Weller Group**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Tennis Shoes**
London Fulham The Cock: **Trimmer & Jenkins**
London Fulham Wolfson Hall: **Footsbarn with The Golden Fleece/The Ivory Brothers**
London Hammersmith Clarendon Hotel: **The Raincoats/Delta 5**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Peter Gabriel**
London Highbury North Polytechnic: **The Flatbackers/Next Step**
London Holborn Blitz: **Vice-Versa**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Limousine**
London Kennington The Cricketers: **Southside**
London Kensington De Villiers Bar: **Gold Dust Twins**
London Kensington The Nashville: **The Bogey Boys**
London Marquee Club: **T.V. Smith**
London Mile End Queen Mary College: **The Idiot Dancers**
London New Barnet Duke of Lancaster: **The Oral Exciters**
London New Cross Royal Albert: **Mutiny**
London Oxford St. 100 Club: **Black Slate**
London Putney White Lion: **Shakey Vicks Blues Band**
London Shepherds Bush Trafalgar: **Misspent Youth**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Ron Rubin Quartet**
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: **Johnny & The Jailbirds/Bop Street**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **The OK Band**
London Thornton Heath Prince George: **The Bench**
London Victoria The Venue: **Linda Lewis/Sox**
London Waterloo National Theatre Foyer: **Peter Ind Duo**
London Waterloo Royal Victoria: **Freddy's Festwemmers**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Expressos/Thieves Like Us**
London Woolwich Tramshed: **Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames**
London WC1 New Merlin's Cave: **Big Chief**
London WC1 School of Oriental & African Studies: **Cimarons/ HB Band**
Maidstone Royal Albion: **Spitzbrook**
Manchester Andi Club: **Gritschool/Armageddon**
Manchester Ashton Tameside Theatre: **Gerard Kenny**
Manchester Ashton Memory Inn: **Local Heroes**
Manchester Band on the Wall: **Chris Williams Quartet**
Manchester De Ville's: **The Passage/The Deer & The Window/Spurtz**
Manchester Osborne Club: **The Chasters / The Distractions**
Manchester Polytechnic: **Steve Forbert**
Merthyr Tydfil Tiffany's: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Clive Langer & The Boxes**
Newcastle The Cooperage: **The 45's**
Northampton Southfields Farm: **Mystery Guests/Small Print**
Norwich Manor House: **Zorro**
Norwich Tudor Hall: **Mick Jackson**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Drug Squad**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gaffe**
Portsmouth Cumberland Tavern: **Lip Moves**
Port Talbot Troubadour: **The Original Mirrors**
Reading Hexagon Theatre: **George Melly & The Footwarmers**
Sheffield Limit Club: **Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark**
Sheffield University: **Fred Wedlock**
Southampton Eastleigh Crown Inn: **The Piranhas**
Southampton Joiners Arms: **The Bitter Lemmings**

Friday

Aberdare Paymaite Club: **Flying Saucers**
Ashtead Youth Centre: **The Head**
Bath Moles: **The Amateurs**
Bath University: **The Inmates**
Bedford Horse & Groom: **Disco Students**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Grace**
Birmingham Digbeth Civic Hall: **The Androids**
Birmingham Elizabethan Days: **The Traitors**
Birmingham Golden Eagle: **The Mods**
Birmingham Town Hall: **Stiff Little Fingers / Another Pretty Face**
Birmingham University: **Steve Forbert**
Bradford Palm Cove Club: **Vex**
Brighton Sussex Sports Centre: **The Relatives / The Agents**
Bristol University: **The Photos**
Burton 76 Club: **The Fabulous Poodles**
Colchester Essex University: **Eddie & The Hot Rods**
Coventry Ryton Bridge: **Streetlite**
Croydon Fairfield Hall: **Buddy Rich Band / Ronnie Scott Quartet**
Dudley J.B.'s Club: **The Insiders**
Glenrothes Rothes Arms: **The Freeze**
Gravesend Red Lion: **Terry Lee**
Gt Yarmouth Caister Holiday Centre: **C&W Weekender with Jimmy Lawton / Billy Armstrong / Cottan Mill Boys / Pete Sayers etc (for three days)**
Gt Yarmouth Hippodrome: **Fiddler's Dram**
Jersey St Helier Behan's: **Slade**
Launceston White Horse: **Metro Glider**
Leeds Wigs Wine Bar: **Dodgy Tactics**
Leek Municipal Gardens: **Spad Humbers**
Leicester De Montfort Hall: **Nazareth / Saxon**
Liverpool C.F. Mott College: **Dick Smith Band**
Liverpool Eric's: **The Psychedelic Furs**
Liverpool University: **The Strays**
Llanelli Glen Ballroom: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions / Clive Langer & The Boxes**
London Acton Kings Head: **Paz**
London Battersea Arts Centre: **Walter Ahart**
London Birkbeck College: **Bloodshot**
London Camden Brecknock: **The Boyce Band**
London Camden Dingwalls: **The Smirks / The Flatbackers**
London Camden Electric Ballroom: **Teyah / Section 25**
London Camden Southampton Arms: **Jellyroll Blues Band**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Chase & Dave**
London City University: **Prince Far I / Creation Rebel**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **9 Below Zero**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Straight 8**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Tenpole Tudor / Scissor Fits**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Judas Priest / Iron Maiden**
London Harrow Rd. Centuro Iberico: **Disco Students / Poison Girls**
London Herne Hill Half Moon: **The Step**
London Holborn Conway Hall: **The Epileptic / Slnyk / The Erotics / The Steps**
London Holborn Princess Louise: **The Scoop**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **the Soft Boys**
London Kennington The Cricketers: **Menyana**
London Kensington Elizabeth College: **Sore Throat**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Pink Military**
London Ladbroke Grove The Elgin: **Nick Turner's Inner City Unit / Vincent Units**
London Marquee Club: **Matchbox / Gino & The Sharks**
London New Cross Royal Albert: **The Johnnys**
London Oxford St. 100 Club: **George Melly & The Footwarmers**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Greig & Nigel's Folk and Blues Night**
London Putney White Lion: **Sammy Mitchell Blues Band**
London Regents Park Bedford College: **The Little Roosters / The Mice**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Al Grey / Jimmy Forrest**
London Tottenham Court Road YMCA: **Orchestra Manoeuvres In The Dark**
London Victoria The Venue: **Wilko Johnson**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Vibrators / Mobster**
London W.14 The Kensington: **Kim Beacon & The Debonaires**
London WC1 New Merlin's Cave: **The OK Band**
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **Central Line**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **Gritschool**
New Brighton Grand Hotel: **Asylum / The Room**
Newcastle Kings Head: **Monocomics**
Newcastle Polytechnic: **Dexy's Midnight Runners**
Newcastle University: **Magnum**
Newport The Village: **Chicken Shack**
Norwich Corn Exchange: **Footsbarn with The Golden Fleece / The Ivory Brothers**
Oxford Buckland College: **H.B. Band**
Oxford Polytechnic: **Shakin' Stevens / Never Never Band**
Penzance Demelza's: **The D.S. / Sabotage**
Peterborough Cresset Centre: **The Piranhas**
Pontardawe Dynevor Arms: **Regal Slip**
Poole Brewers Arms: **The Contacts**
Poole Wessex Hall: **Showaddywaddy**
Prestatyn High School: **Seventeen**
Retford Porterhouse: **The Quads / Gangsters / The Thrillers**
Sheffield Broadfield Hotel: **The Speedy Bears**
Sheffield University: **Linda Lewis**
Shepton Mallet Secondary School: **The Rejects**
Southend Top Alex: **Steve Hooker Band**
Stockport College: **The Images / Direct Hits**
Stoke North Staffs Polytechnic: **Any Trouble / The Chasters**
Sunderland Mecca: **Eric Bell Band**
Wallasey Dale Inn: **Allen Heat**
Wolverhampton Lafayette: **Praying Mantis**
York Civic Hall: **The Step**
York De Grey Rooms: **The Raincoats / Delta 5 / Fetish**

Saturday

Aldeburgh Maltings Concert Hall: **Fiddler's Dram**
Barnsley Civic Theatre: **Buddy Rich Band**
Basildon Double Six: **Clamen Pull**
Bath Moles: **The Rejects**
Birmingham Bogarts: **Cerebus**
Birmingham Digbeth Civic Hall: **Quartz**
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: **The Close Rivals**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Handsome Beasts**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Mean Street Dealers**
Blackpool Norbreck Castle: **Dedringer**
Bradford Palm Cove: **Mirror Boys/The Groupies**
Brighton The Centre: **Peter Gabriel**
Corby Raven Hotel: **Gritschool/Easypreys**
Coventry Lanchester Polytechnic: **Scissor Fits**
Doncaster Skellow Grange: **Strange Days**
Eastbourne Congress Theatre: **David Soul**
Fishguard Frenchman's Motel: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Clive Langer & The Boxes**
Glasgow Strathclyde University: **Gerard Kenny**
Glasgow Technical College: **The Cramps**
Gravesend Red Lion: **The Boyce Band**
Harrogate Adelphi Hotel: **The Oscillators/825 Lines/Process/The Clients/P.T.O.'s/Vinyl Diners/The City Limits/The Mirror Boys**
Hastings Pier Pavilion: **Headline**
High Wycombe Nags Head: **The Smirks / The Idiot Dancers**
Hitchin North Herts College: **Praying Mantis**
Horsham Capitol Theatre: **Matchbox**
Hull Cat & Fiddle: **The Veins**
Ingatestone Community Centre: **Bastille**
Knaresborough Mitre Hotel: **Tom Egans Ready**
Leatherhead Leisure Centre: **George Melly & The Footwarmers**
Leicester Polytechnic: **UK Subs**
Leicester University: **Dexy's Midnight Runners**
Lincoln Cornhill Vaults: **The Accelerators**
Linlithgow Academy: **The Freeze**
Liverpool University: **Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark**
London Battersea Arts Centre: **The Patterns/Those Helicopters**
London Camden Centre: **Jabula/Spertacus**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Terminal Snack Blues Band/Jim Willie & The Mafia**
London Camden Music Machine: **Shakin' Stevens/Never Never Band**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Tour De Force**
London Clapham 101 Club: **The Flatbackers**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Reflets/Tranzista**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Jackie Lynton's HD Band**
London Fulham Greyhound: **The Little Roosters**
London Hackney Adam & Eve: **The Rhythm Hawks**
London Hammersmith Lyric Theatre (lunchtime, free): **Bob Kerr's Jazz Friends**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Judas Priest/Iron Maiden**
London Herne Hill Half Moon: **Electrotunes**
London Highgate Jacksons Rock Club: **Seven Year Itch/Spoof Order**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **9 Below Zero**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Richard Strange**
London Manor Park Ruskin Arms: **Ophidian**
London Marquee Club: **The Q-Tips/The Expressos**
London New Barnet Duke of Lancaster: **Spider**
London Paddington The Chippenham: **The Orange Cardigan/Mick Chilling**
London Plumstead Green Man: **Splodgenessabounds**
London Putney Half Moon: **Ronnie Lane Band**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Earl Okin**
London Regents Park Cecil Sharp House: **Roger Watson**
London Royal Lancaster Hotel: **Sweet Substitute**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Al Grey/ Jimmy Forrest**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Big Chief**
London University College: **Mobster**
London Victoria The Venue: **Supercharge/Straight 8**
London Waterloo National Theatre Foyer: **Brian Leake Trio**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Vibrators**
London Wimbledon Nelson's Club: **Chas & Dave**
London W.1 Portman Hotel: **Harry Gold's Pieces of Eight**
Luton College: **UB40**
Manchester University: **Linda Lewis**
Marlyate St. John's Hall: **Force**
Melton Mowbray Painted Lady: **Limmie & The Family Cookin'**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **The Psychedelic Furs**
Middlesbrough Teesside Polytechnic: **The Crooks**
Modern Baptist Free Church: **Rev Counts & The Speedoze**
Newcastle Northumberland College: **The Junco Partners**
Norwich East Anglia University: **Eddie & The Hot Rods**
Nottingham Casanova: **Nemen The Demon**
Nottingham Outlaws Bar: **Radium**
Nottingham University: **The Inmates**
Oldham Lancashire Hotel: **Loud'n'Lazy**
Oldham Tower Club: **Money**
Oxford Oranges and Lemons: **Disc Students**
Paisley Bungalow Bar: **Colossus**
Penryn Buffalo Club: **Metro Glider**
Poole Wessex Hall: **Showaddywaddy**
Retford Porterhouse: **Holly & The Italians/B Movie**
Sheffield City Hall: **Nazareth/Saxon**
Sheffield University: **Steve Forbert**
Southampton Jumpers Tavern: **Plasmigan**
Southampton The Griffin: **Ebony Rockers / The Skavengers**
St Austell New Cornish Riviera: **Stiff Little Fingers/Another Pretty Face**
Stockton The Teessider: **Carl Green & The Scene**
Swindon Moonraker: **The Switch**
Walkden Bulls Head: **Local Heroes**
West Runton Pavilin: **Motorhead**
Wrexham Crown Hotel (lunchtime): **The Pesta**
Wolverhampton Polytechnic: **The Blues Band**
Wolverhampton RAF Cosford: **Flesh Cats**

Sunday

Aberystwyth Great Hall: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions / Clive Langer & The Boxes**
Bedford Kempston Rovers F.C.: **Flying Saucers**
Bedford Night Spot: **Linda Lewis**
Belfast Whitla Hall: **Planxty**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **The Out**
Birmingham Shirley Red Lion: **The Crack**
Birmingham (Yardley) The Swan: **Video**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Exit (lunchtime); Sounds / The Androids Of Mu / The Mob (evenings)**
Bradford College Vaults Bar: **Japanese Soldiers**
Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): **Bill Scott & Ian Ellis**
Bury The Derby Hall: **The McCalmans**
Carlisle Border Terrier: **The 45's / Money**
Congleton Station Inn: **Spad Hunters**
Croydon Fairfield Hall: **Showaddywaddy**
Croydon The Star: **Tennis Shoes**
Dumfries Stagecoach: **The Cramps**
Gravesend Red Lion: **Radical Sheiks**
Huddersfield Coach House: **The Crooks**
Ipswich The Royal William: **Zorro**
Jackdale Grey Topper: **Gangsters**
Leeds Fan Club: **The Step**
Leeds Haddon Hall: **The City Limits**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Windows**
Leeds Staging Post: **Side Effect**
Leicester Gt. Wigston Club: **Strange Days**

CONTINUES OVER...

SAD CAFE are a massive attraction in the North, witness their ability to sell out three nights on the trot at Manchester Apollo next month. And they're now beginning to make their mark in a big way further South, thanks to their recent chart successes. They open a major UK tour in Leeds on Wednesday.

GIG GUIDE

Monday

Leicester (Shearsby) Bath Hotel: **The Speedy Bears**
London Battersea Nags Head: **Jugular Vein**
London Bethnal Green The Green Gate: **Quebec**
London Brixton George Canning: **Southside**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames**
London Charing Cross Duke of Buckingham: **The Invisibles (for four days)**
London Charing Cross Rd. Astoria Theatre: **Shakin' Stevens / Never Never Band**
London Clapham Two Brewers: **Sad Among Strangers**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Mean Street / Between Pictures**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Fiddler's Dram**
London Finchley Torrington: **The Dance Band**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Billy Karloff Band**
London Fulham Greyhound: **The Smirks / The Flatbackers**
London Fulham The Cock: **Aura**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Nazareth / Saxon**
London Herne Hill Half Moon: **Johnny Mars' 7th Sun**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Mobster**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Whirlwind / The Point**
London Marquee Club: **The Passions / Ralph & The Ponytails**
London Oxford St. 100 Club **Red Beans & Rice**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Johnny Parker**
London Strand Lyceum Ballroom: **Eddie & The Hot Rods / 9 Below Zero / The V.I.P.'s**
London Victoria The Venue: **The Teardjerkers / The Moondogs**
London Woolwich Tramshed: **Boys Of The Lough**
London W.1 Portman Hotel (lunchtime): **Bob Kerr's Jazz Friends**
Luton The Unicorn: **Decoy**
Maidstone Royal Albion (lunchtime): **Fast Eddy**
Manchester Cyprus Tavern: **Crispy Ambulance / Flame**
Manchester Portman Bar: **The Chasters**
Mold Theatre Clwyd: **Dutch Swing College Band**
Newbridge Memorial Hall: **Eric Bell Band**
Newquay Central Hotel: **The Winners**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Medium Medium**
Portsmouth Guildhall: **David Soul**
Poole Brewers Arms: **The Switch**
Reading Cherry's Bar **General Accident**
Redcar Coatham Bowl: **Magnum**
Southampton Gaumont Theatre: **Judas Priest / Iron Maiden**
Southend Shrimpers: **The Blues Band**
Walsall Dirty Duck (lunchtime): **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Wolverhampton Lafayette: **Squire**
Birmingham Golden Eagle: **Ice**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Gentleman Jim**
Birmingham Night Out: **The Drifters (week from Monday)**
Birmingham Romeo & Juliet: **Handsome Beasts/Chevvy**
Birmingham Town Hall: **Gerard Kenny**
Boston Folk Club: **Martin Carthy**
Bradford College Vaults Bar: **Oral Sex**
Cambridge Oddball Rooms: **The Veins**
Cheddesden Golden Fleece: **Spad Hunters**
Colwyn Bay Pier: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Clive Langer & The Boxes**
Colwyn Bay Dixieland Showbar: **Seventeen**
Croydon Fairfield Hall: **Showaddywaddy**
Edinburgh Triffanys: **The Psychedelic Furs**
Gosport John Peel: **The Switch**
Ilford Cauliflower Hotel: **Original East Side Stompers**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Pete Galpin's Blues Express**
Liverpool Everyman Bistro: **Dick Smith Band**
London Camden Brecknock: **Ptarmigan**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Twig & The Kicks/The 3 Royals/Tex & The Extraordinaires**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Wasted Youth**
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse: **London Jazz Composers Orchestra**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Brainiac Five/The 01 Band**
London Fulham Golden Lion. **Bob Kerr's Whoopee Band**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Reel To Reel / The Same**
London Hammersmith Palais: **The Selecter/The Bodysnatchers/The Swinging Cats**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **The Flatbackers**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Lee Kosmin**
London Kensington The Nashville: **The Soul Boys/The Numbers**
London Marquee Club: **Portraits**
London North Polytechnic: **Eddie & The Hot Rods**
London N.4 The Stapleton: **The OK Band**
London Oxford St. 100 Club. **The Blues Band**
London Putney Half Moon: **Noel Murphy**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Penny Royal**
London Ronnie Scott's Club: **Buddy Rich Band (for a week)**
London Strand Lyceum Ballroom: **Rory Gallagher**
London Victoria The Venue: **The Atrix**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Cockney Rejects/Kidz Next Door**
Norwich East Anglia University. **The Photos/Mark Andrews & The Gents**
Nottingham Aspley Community Centre: **The Ripple Tanks/Gypsum**
Nottingham Commodore: **Dutch Swing College Band**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Party**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gwalhir**

STEVE FORBERT, who created quite an impact during his brief 1979 tour, returns to the UK this week to headline a short series of dates — opening at Manchester (Thursday), Brimingham (Friday) and Sheffield (Saturday). A major London appearance follows next week.

Nuneaton 77 Club: **The Crooks**
Portsmouth Gaiety Rooms: **Patrik Fitzgerald/The Touch**
Preston Guildhall: **David Soul**
Reading Cherry's Bar: **The Civvies**
Sheffield Top Rank: **Stiff Little Fingers / Another Pretty Face**
Swansea University: **Dexy's Midnight Runners**
Watford Bailey's: **Bill Fredericks (for a week)**

Tuesday

Aberdeen Capitol Theatre: **Judas Priest/Iron Maiden**
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: **Brujo**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **The Ramparts**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Speed Limit**
Birmingham Town Hall: **Matchbox**
Birmingham University: **The Cramps**
Birmingham The Zoo. **Dexy's Midnight Runners**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Hibiscus**
Bournemouth The Woodman. **The Skavengers**
Bradford College Vaults Bar: **Total Confusion**
Brighton The Centre: **Showaddywaddy**
Croydon Crawdaddy: **The Smirks/The Boyce Band**
Edinburgh Netherbon: **Digitz/Fascination**
Glasgow Countdown Club: **Facial Hair**
Gravesend Red Lion: **The Rackets**
Grimsby Community Hall: **Slaughter & The Dogs**
Leamington Mississippi Suite: **The Veins**
Liverpool The Masonic: **Allen Heat**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Gangsters/The Quads/The Thrillers**
London Clapham 101 Club: **The Lambrettas**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **the X-Effects/Twice Shy**
London Deptford Albany Empire: **Mellow Rose/Ranking Bogart/The Albions**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Sad Among Strangers**
London Fulham Greyhound: **Clemen Pull**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Bad Manners**
London Kensington The Nashville: **The Lone Groover/The Mica/Major B Laser**
London Marquee Club: **The Vibrators**
London N.4 The Stapleton: **Brett Marvin & The Thunderbolts**
London Oxford St. 100 Club: **Cymbelines/Emotional Joes**
London Putney White Lion: **9 Below Zero**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **No Limit**
London Victoria The Venue: **The Inmates**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Lonesome No More/The A.P.B.'s**
Maidstone Mid-Kent College: **Girl/Praying Mantis**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **Stiff Little Fingers/Another Pretty Face**
Manchester Micklehurst Cricket Club: **The Chasters**
Market Bosworth Avenue Arts Club: **Spad Hunters**
Norwich Cromwells: **The Crooks/Jane Bond & The Agents**
Paisley The Bungalow: **The Psychedelic Furs**
Portsmouth Polytechnic **The Photos**
Sheffield Blitz (at the George IV): **Combat Angels**
Sheffield Fiesta Club. **David Soul**
Sheffield Limit Club: **Magnum**
Sheffield University: **The Cramps/The Original Mirrors**
Southampton Concorde Club: **Dutch Swing College Band**
Southport Floral Hall: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Clive Langer & The Boxes**

Wednesday

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Aylesbury Friars: **The Selecter / The Body Snatchers / The Swinging Cats**
Birmingham Barrel Organ **Brujo**
Birmingham Bogarts: **Eric Bell Band**
Birmingham College of Food: **The Insiders**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **M.S. Nightwork**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Rainmaker**
Birmingham (Yardley) Bulls Head: **Roses**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Snigger**
Bradford College Vaults Bar: **New Age**
Cardiff Top Rank: **Stiff Little Fingers / Another Pretty Face**
Cheltenham Plough Inn: **Roadsters**
Coventry Zodiac: **The Accelerators / The Stains**
Edingburgh Odeon: **Judas Priest / Iron Maiden**
Evesham Fox & Hounds: **The Veins**
Grangemouth International Hotel: **First Priority**
Leeds Polytechnic. **Squire**
Leeds University: **Sad Cafe**
London Camden Dingwalls: **The Heptones**
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse: **Otis Rush / Jebula**
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London Fulham Golden Lion: **The Set**
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London Fulham The Cock: **Geoff Castle & Strange Fruit**
London Hammersmith The Swan: **The Cards**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **The Directions**
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London Kennington The Cricketers: **Kim Beacon & The Detonators**
London Marquee Club: **The Photos**
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: **The 01 Band**
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London W.10 Acklam Hall: **Berlin/U2**
London W.14 The Kensington: **Johnny Mars' 7th Sun**
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Middlesbrough Teesside Polytechnic: **Contraband**
Newcastle Mayfair Ballroom: **Slaughter**
Plymouth Monroe's: **Flying Saucers**
Sheffield Brincliffe Oaks Hotel: **Alexis Korner / Colin Hodgekinson**
Sheffield Broadfield Hotel: **Heaving An Allen / Naked Pygmy Voles**
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MORE LIVE!
on page 65

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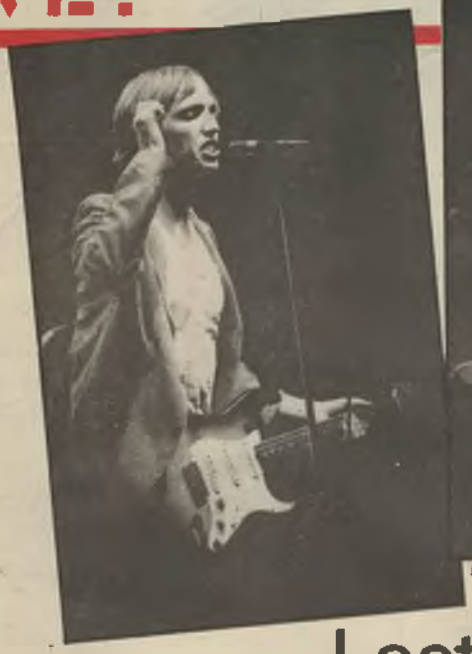

Flying T playing the Flying V

Pix Anton Corbijn

Last of the great rock'n'roll romantics

Tom Petty And Heartbreakers The Fabulous Poodles

Hammersmith Odeon

TOM Petty's rock'n'roll is streamlined and clean, and it's pure and professional, and it's powerful and smooth, refined and exact, and on paper it starts to look like everything dislikeable in the modern American mainstream of music — which is as boring as it's orthodox and as disposable as it's self-satisfied.

Tom Petty is anything but boring and disposable; he transcends all limitations of type and category to deliver work that's superb on any terms.

Just when I was getting to think of competence and class as virtually dirty words, synonymous with stagnation and complacency, that's when The Heartbreakers hit Hammersmith and I got reminded of how things don't have to be that way always.

"I tell ya, this ain't no ego trip. We just feel like playin'," laughed the man with the perfect haircut, leading his band into one of the innumerable encores which made up the last half-hour of a long, long set. It all started with an opening trilogy of 'Shadow Of A Doubt (A Complex Kid)', 'Anything That's Rock'n'Roll' and 'Fooled Again (I Don't Like It)', all examples of the effortless excellence they were to revel in throughout, followed up with 'Here Comes My Girl' and 'Even The Losers'.

Petty and his men — Mike Campbell on guitar, Benmont Tench on keyboards, Ron Blair on bass and Stan Lynch on drums — play with a melodic sensitivity that in no way detracts from the punchy directness of the material, but combines with it to make a gorgeously exciting sound, almost casual but always right. I could do without the mouldy old repertoire of guitar hero poses, and if The Heartbreakers didn't smile so much they would *look* awfully dull — but other than that the show really couldn't be much better.

I suppose what makes them special above all is the distinctive mix of elegance with energy, demonstrated to glorious effect in the exceptionally fine 'Refugee' (now a single, I believe) and the hard driving, lovingly constructed songs after it: 'Listen To Her Heart', 'American Girl', 'Breakdown' and 'Too Much Ain't Enough'. Petty's lyrics, though often a shade derivative, are never less than intelligent; mostly they mark him out as the last of the great rock'n'roll romantics.

Blues and country roots are in evidence everywhere — the former, notably, in the slow and satisfying 'Cry To Me', the latter in a pleasantly light 'Stories We Could Tell' that featured Fabulous Poodle Bob Valentino on the fiddle, and Petty himself on acoustic. The extensive encore section afforded more opportunities for fooling around, like the old Lulu — sorry, *Isleys* — belter 'Shout' as well as 'Somethin' Else', the Eddie Cochran — sorry, Sid Vicious — standard.

And a very good time was had by all, not least, it always seemed, by Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers themselves. 'Century City' eventually closed proceedings, and so began the reluctant shuffle exit-wards.

At that moment, surely very few present could have been thinking back to this evening's commencement — a well-received but decidedly inferior performance from support act the 'Fab Poos', firmly blasted back into irrelevance by all that was to follow.

I wish somebody could explain the joke for me. Just what is so funny, lovable, enjoyable or otherwise in the slightest worthwhile about four grown men dressing stupid and playing bad rock'n'roll pastiches, all in the service of trite, sub-adolescent humour? The Fabulous Poodles invariably end up looking more cliched than the cliches they purport to parody.

Despite the potential offered by Valentino's useful violin contributions, and indeed the musical resources of the group as a whole, they prefer to play safe with cosy and coy explorations of well-worn themes (teen dreams, Hollywood dreams) and clumsy send-ups of their betters, worst being the silly-old-bluesman intro to the pathetic 'Tit Photographer's Blues'.

Had I a goat, then this would assuredly get it.

Paul Du Noyer

The Pretenders UB40

Hammersmith Palais

A BIG 'hi' and welcome to another round of 'Build 'Em Up And Knock 'Em Down', the fun-filled game you can all join in.

As you'll remember, the rules are quite straightforward: just pick yourself a promising act, lavish extravagant praise upon them, all the time *demanding* that they be given the instant recognition they so richly blah blah blah . . . and then, just when that very success is almost theirs, see if you can whip the critical carpet clean from under them and (roll of drums with organ solo) 'Start The Backlash'! Yuk yuk yuk.

So without further ado, let's have a big big hand for this week's lucky contenders . . . The Pretenders.

Isn't there a sort of law in business that says everyone rises to the level of his incompetence, meaning you keep getting promoted until you land the job that's one notch above your abilities? Because on tonight's showing I really think that this is the situation The Pretenders are in. A fine little club band, maybe: purveyors of the occasional immaculate 45, certainly; but as a top-drawer album-and-live attraction, I fear the recent spate of surly reviews pretty well got it right: the band just don't cut it. They're out of their depth.

Having no particular axe to grind *vis a vis* Ms Hynde or any of her fellows, I gloat not. I went prepared to be as convinced as any of the ticket-clutching kids had already made up their minds that they were going to be, and I wandered out too indifferent to even feel disappointed. Simply, it has to be recorded that this was a soggy and sorry performance, lamentably unequal to the 'event' status it held for so many of those present.

How many went expecting *Top Of The Pops* come to life? I can only hope they got it, because The Pretenders didn't succeed on any other level.

From my side of the packed dancefloor, the sound was muddy and damp — the singer's muttered introductions (or whatever they were) were altogether inaudible, to the plain distress of several around me. More

Continues over

Little Miss Chrissie. Pix Anton Corbijn.

From previous page

seriously, the band's playing was lumpy and casual, not so much nonchalant as haphazard. Single-to-be, 'Talk Of The Town' was all but impossible to gain much impression of, while the usually impressive 'Cuban Slide' which followed it turned out leaden and clumsy. Throughout the set Hynde's dry, hard-edged vocals fought a losing dispute with the insensitive clomping of its clock-watcher back-up.

But there's a sudden pulse of excitement as — unexpectedly early in the set — they curve into 'Brass In Pocket' then, quickly, 'Stop Your Sobbing' and a very brisk, business-like Kid'. At least, I thought, they're not holding back with the hits just to give the proceedings an artificial lift at the end — and I was wrong, because they finished with a single encore of 'Mystery Achievement' and, yes, 'Stop Your Sobbing' again.

Like the album (full of the singles you've already got), like their whole career to date, The Pretenders' show is a case of forcing a little to go a long long way. Too little, too long.

Less contrived and more concerned with actually getting something across were the support, UB40.

Yet another of the multi-racial Midlands reggae rejuvenators, UB40 were appealingly loose and lively from the beginning. But they soon seemed to reach a sort of plateau of enjoyability after which, although admittedly no expert in affairs of the reggae, I couldn't help finding them pleasant rather than excellent — even if 'Food For Thought', B-side to the current record, was very good indeed.

And there was dancing in the crowd such as the dear, genteel old Palais can rarely ever have seen

Paul Du Noyer

Cramps set into the audience. *Pic Alain de la Mata*

Burns strangles his guitar. *Pic. Kevin Cummins.*

The Cramps

King's College

ALREADY candidates for Group Of The Decade and Last Year's Thing, The Cramps hit London on Friday night for a warm-up gig prior to their British and European jaunt.

The Cramps epitomise the instant group, parading a build-in legend alongside the kind of collective ego that rarely manifests itself outside of America. Like The New York Dolls before them, they are out of sync with fashion or movement, creating a rock and roll movie whose sound and vision are not only unique but immediately identifiable.

Voodoo rockabilly swamp-rock: the metaphors will soon be flying like bats from a belfry.

'Human Fly' and Domino' opened the set and before they were halfway through their third number 'Caveman', the crowd had turned into a pulsating Blob, weaving, jumping and spilling onto the stage despite the effort of the hapless student bouncers (sic).

Nick Knox fuelled the throbbing, Zombie heartbeat of the music, while Poison Ivy Rorschach, looking like a Mickey Spillane whore in gold lurex pants and plasma-freezing stare, maintained a pitiless rhythm throughout. Brian Gregory, chainsmoking geek guitarist, played with evil glee sending a tortured guitar scream into the audience like Quasimodo pouring lead off the roof of Notre Dame. And Lux Interior, chaos exploding all around him as various kids from Rent-A-Creep attempted to get in the act, never once let go of that Wolfman/Presley stance, even though he finished the gig in nothing but a pair of red underpants.

You'll either love them or loathe them — but every one of you who finds no pleasure in this trashy, contrived New York garbage band means one less I have to share them with.

Neil Norman

Stiff Little Jungle Toys

Stiff Little Fingers

Liverpool

WHEN Johnny comes home from a Stiff Little Fingers gig, you can bet he's going to be fatigued — he'll have spent the best part of an hour pounding the boards with his AirWair and living out someone else's problems like a spiky dummy in a photo-strip war picture story. This is the modern world — where glamour! and atrocity! merge with the monotony of televised human misery! to become . . . a camera-less film set.

You can be patronising, wear Swell Maps togs and marvel at the commitment-in-captivity you're witnessing. Or you can pogo and bellow and shake your fist and get all your neuroses out of your system, but it'll amount to the same thing — you're slumming, getting vicarious kicks and contrary to the Decadence Is Glamorous Ethnic, it's a *pathetic* way to live.

Stiff Little Fingers are presenting the White Riot show The Clash suggested but would never produce. Their credentials for it are damningly impeccable, singing about their lives in Ulster; but while it's reality for them, their rage, combined with ther ghost-written lyrical scenarios (a queesy prospect and one that puts credibility at severe risk) is nothing more than a conveniently authentic emotional backlot for an audience of method-acting righteous rhetoric rockers to ham it up on.

Eddie and the Happy Days Hollis Rods briefly cornered the same market, and the writers of SLF material have a steady eye on psyche-tempting slogan titles — 'Wasted Life', 'Alternative Ulster', 'Gotta Getaway' and 'At The Edge' — there's a

ORIGINAL

Tour March 7th EXETER Routes Club 8th BRISTOL Polytechnic 12th MAIDSTONE Mid Kent College 13th PORT TALBOT Troubador 14th NEWTON ABBOTT Seal Hayne College 15th KENT University 18th SHEFFIELD University

hideous blatancy about barbed wire, snipers and sectarian brutality (think about it) but there's a coy Madison Avenue touch to the way it's presented.

Onstage in the Paul Simmons Spring 1977 Collection, Fingers explode their dated blow-torch rock, and run through as many of the Tussauds rock poses as humanly possible in three minutes or less. 'Gotta Getaway' began round one and was greeted with ferocious enthusiasm — from here on in the audience became epileptic beans on toast; all you could see were bobbing heads.

Musically, Stiff Little Fingers are blusterous and nondescript suffering from the Mother Ireland infatuation with twin guiter aural smog and cudgelling the already-pulped equine physique of the Primal Roar Of Discontent: you can't hear the words. They're no different historically from the obsolescent obesity of all neophyte musicians — they can work within strictly predetermined limits and guarantee themselves the fame they want. Fingers' concession to originality is their background, which they've packaged (or had packaged for them) as a means of gaining publicity and interest, and thus created the ultimate punk windowbox — a toy jungle for their fans.

To update some of their sound, they've turned their token reggae burden, Marley's 'Johnny Was', into a 'disco' number, by eliminating the GI rimshots and substituting t'shush, t'shush, t'shush hi-hat patterns Musical good shepherdry — embrace all the 'black' sheep musical forms and hug them to your bosom — maybe they'll give medals out on Judgement Day.

The para-military atmosphere about the concert itself and the tommy-gun drummer-boy snaredrum pulverisation also accounts for SLF's rise to fame — songs like 'Tin Soldiers' and 'Suspect Device' mix an air of Butlin's-bellicosity with Me Me Me narcissism — you're simultaneously able to assert your own diehard dogmatic domesticity while remaining part of some imaginary army.

To have to use rock music as a means of highlighting and publicising oppression and enforged bigotry where it would otherwise be ignored is an indictment of a society that is so blase and 'tolerant' (spell that jellyfish-like indifference) it has allowed mythology to blanket fact.

Stiff Little Fingers have blindly tried to exploit this state of affairs, but without extracting themselves from it. They've stupidly made their 'their/our' countrymen's plight into vaudeville and been crippled by showbiz for good.

There's still 'rock-'n' roll'. There's still ignorance. There's still Northern Ireland. Stow Stiff Little Fingers, because this will *never* constitute a trinity of any sort.

Kevin Fitzgerald

Rock credibility pension fund.

Pic Tom Sheehan.

The Searchers

Nashville

"IF you don't know any of the songs then they're either off the new album or else you're not old enough."

Over 43 years on the cabaret circuit has left its mark on pop poioneers and Merseybeat survivors The Searchers, most notably in the amiable night-club patter of frontman Frank Allen. While from all accounts they're entirely chuffed and gratified by the new-found 'credibility' which surrounds them these days, the group harbour no illusions about themselves as anything more than entertainers, an unpretentious goodtime 'good turn' that likes to give the public whet it wants — including, if need be, a shamelessly enormous dose of nostalgia.

And I'm not complaining.

The modern day Searchers may be far from the frontiers of contemporary musical advancement, but their set is still embarrassingly enjoyable all the same. Realistic enough to guess the audience's interest lies almost exclusively in hearing immaculate restorations of 'Needles And Pins' and so on, they're nevertheless confident enough to push the more recent product — embodied in the current Sire release — with unapologetic determination, as well they might, because the new stuff's really no disgrace at all.

Somehow, The Searchers are coping with both the present and the past (and even the future?) and managing a kind of good-humoured dignity while they're about it.

Still blissfully intact are those jingle-jangle guitars which so entranced young Jim McGuinn (twin 6-strings, not 12) and the carefully floated vocal harmonies. New boy Frank Allen seems to be fitting in nicely — a mere 15 years after he replaced original bassist Tony 'Black Jake' Jackson — whilst the revered seat of Chris Curtis is kept warm by current drummer Billy Adamson.

The guitarists don't look appreciably older: on rhythm it's John McNally (likes, if I remember, chips, tea, smart suits, shirts, dislikes planes and "conceited people") and playing impeccably melodic lead is Mike Pender (likes time-milkshakes, blondes and Everton; dislikes shaving and "stuck-up people"). And, truthfully, the group can still skip through that cobwebbed repertoire and not sound in the least mechanical about it — 'Take Me For What I'm Worth', 'Love Potion Number Nine', 'Farmer John', 'Saturday Night Out', 'Ain't Gonna Kiss Ya', as well as the more obvious choices like 'Sugar And Spice', 'Goodbye My Love', 'Sweets For My Sweet' and 'Don't Throw Your Love way' — all those wonderful old things, not merely preserved but positively and joyfully alive.

Of the present output, three numbers stood out: 'Hearts In Her Eyes' by The Records' Will Birch, 'No Dancing Is Allowed' and 'It's Too Late'

Just don't write this band off, that's all, or else you're missing out. (But they would be much better off without those horrible blo-wave jobs.)

Paul Du Noyer

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Knacker Doug Fieger. Pic Santo Basone.

And they brought their own audience too

The Knack Dominion Theatre

CROSSING the foyer, about ten minutes before the band came on, I chanced upon a fellow Briton. We shook hands warmly and talked fondly about the old country, laughing aloud on the irony of holding such a gig at *this* theatre.

Meanwhile back inside the velveteen, armchaired warehouse a thousand million hungry yankees stewed in a delirium of showy homesickness. Total strangers became one under their flag, comforting as they congratulted, theatrically whooping to friends on the

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Taken from the forthcoming album 'Going deaf for a living'

other side of the hall, engaging in snatches from what I expect are songs learnt at summer camp and having an altogether delicious time.

This wasn't to be a Knack London debut at all. More than anything the concert smacked of an entertaining - the - overseas - troops excercise, show them the folks back home still care, dishing out stockings and gum to the locals. Trouble is, boys, we got just about all the stockings and gum we need right now. . .

Just as 'Pretzel Logic' began to make its third appearance of the evening over the PA — by now even the squealing had turned to sighs of 'Aw c'mon you guys!!' — the lights began to dim and the curtain dragged up and the meal arrived. The immediate reaction is of being impressed, I scribbled. Four black and white made-to-measures against a pastel pink backcloth, hitting their (one) beat and smiling; singer Doug Fieger — the one who looks like a Barron Knight — winking and frisky, pretending that it's only his microphone duties that keep him from some fancy dancing, although we really know that he can't string two steps together without belying his hippy background. He disguises the shoddiness and crassness that are a Knack lyrical trademark by sliding the stanzas from the corner of his mouth with his eyes rolling as if we're prizing some hot secret from him.

About halfway through this opener, 'Baby Talks Dirty', I sit back into the seat that I never realized I sat forward in, and figure that after all this time I still fall for the old flash opening routine. And, jiminy cricket, is this show calculated!

It takes a long frozen bout of study to cut through the visuals, the onstage furrowed brow 'exertion', and the perfectly balanced sound and to listen out for . . . what? The Knack appear to have five notes that they occasionally toss into the air and play 'em as they land. Hammering and belting, they appear to take their aural approach from Led Zeppelin's 'Physical Graffiti' particularly 'Custard Pie' and the backline push of 'Trampled Underfoot'.

It's the bare but outsize bones of heavy metal beneath the stretched skin of US phoney-baloney new wave. I've heard their songs described as economic — ho ho — they're not, just clumsy. One filler variation, the rushed, frantic, flatulent 'End Of The Game' (a UK Subs with slide guitar) is neatly tucked and chucked away while everyone's getting their second breath. Whatwasthat?

But The Knack are Big Business back home and it's obviously in *everyone's* interest not to bruise their peach-like egos. I mean how would it be to go booking them into The Nashville? Naw, hire that poor man's Palladium and pack it with kith and kin. (Comparison: Status Quo playing British camps in Germany).

The Knack remain oblivious to all this. They really think they've arrived! Fieger gently chides us for not panic-buying the first album, screams "Buy Our LP!" at us another time, and repeatedly calls "Hello London!" but still doesn't find it odd that the mere mention of America and San Jose, California causes the place to dissolve into bouts of prolonged cheering.

The Knack think the whole world's a West Coast and consequently slack enough to swallow the same garbage. (Song titles: 'Good Girls Don't', 'That's What Little Girls Do', 'Frustrated', 'Baby Talks Dirty'). The Knack even think everybody will automatically give a thumbs-up when the singer mimes a pair of oversized tits to accompany his winkle and wee-wee lyrics.

Come the tenth tune I arose, registered by traditional spoiled vote and got out into Tottenham Court Road not a little furious at the worshipped Knackers and their seedy style.

One small satisfaction: The Knack's coals are still nowhere near the Newcastle they so smugly think they're conquering.

Danny Baker

Spyro Gyra

Hammersmith Odeon

SPYRO Gyra live are a different band to Spyro Gyra on record — a fierier, funkier, more frolicsome act. For much of the evening, their hard work and careful injections of drama happily hold the attention. But, as the encores wear on, their stylistic rut, their cosy adherence to safe musical parameters becomes depressingly obvious. By the end, blandness of material has easily outpointed fervour of performance.

It begins differently, with the second number a brilliant display of hard-core, stone-to-the-bone funk. Sadly, Spyro Gyra fail to fuel this fire and later funk toughness is leavened by its bright, boppy context, though uptempo pieces like 'Percolator' and 'Heliopolis' rarely become as tame as their vinyl counterparts

But it's the ballads — 'Shaker Song' and 'Morning Dance', led by Jay Beckenstein's high, sinuous sax — for which the band are best known. A smooth, soft-shoe shuffle towards instant appeal and chart success Live, these two are sharper; but other efforts in the genre, bereft of attractive melody, drift too close to the inconsequential; are empty and forgettable, all challenge avoided.

It's a pity Spyro Gyra confine themselves to an AOR version of jazz-funk. They're all fine musicians but only give occasional glimpses of their prowess in full flight. Beckenstein peaks excitingly on 'Island Lady', his sax cavorting and honking with true Rollinsesque splendour.

But otherwise, it's all tight, sweet and workmanlike. No risks, no vision.

Chet Catallo plays clipped, funky guitar; Tom Schuman fluid, punchy keyboards; while Eli Konikoff on drums and bassist Jim Kurzdorfer hold it together with sensitive yet emphatic polyrhythmic textures. Good stuff; they touch the polarities, but don't transcend them.

Percussionist Gerardo Velez is the visual star. Elegantly clad in trousers and vest, he hurls himself about the stage, wincing and grunting as if every downbeat was an orgasmic experience. Twice he dances round the aisles; between times assaulting his array of percussive metal.

But even he's upstaged by a half-naked, middle-aged man who clambers from the audience to sweat and sway precariously onstage for the encores. Less a morning dance than a loony late-night lurch.

These characters are entertainment by default, an illuminating aside on the characterlessness of the music. Live, Spyro Gyra aren't slick or techno-flash or egotistical. That they avoid these traps yet still fail to startle suggests their skill and commitment are somewhat misdirected. A case of play safe, stay sorry?

Graham Lock

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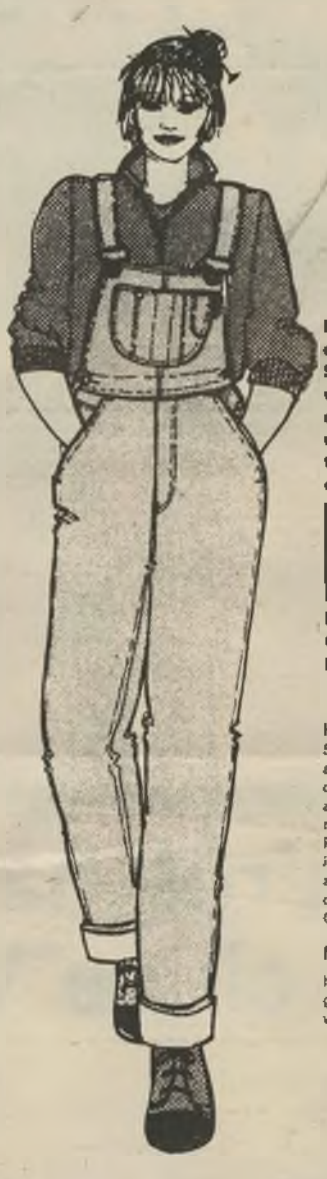

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Fabulous Thunderbirds

Hope and Anchor

9.30 this soggy Monday night: one Thunderbird's in traction, the rest in Islington.

A demon touch of 'bad craziness' ensured that after Sunday night's gig, guitarist Jimmy Vaughan got so haplessly pissed that he fell over and broke a leg. A phone call at five secures the Rumour's Martin Belmont to dep, and by eight there's a crowd bulging out of the front of the Hope, snaking round the side and halfway up the street that suggests a band with a reputation that you'd be hard pushed to squeeze into a venue ten times the size.

Blues tends to slice through the social strata, the Thunderbirds' blues more than most. Crammed down in this two-door lock-up are all manner of honchos: pin-striped brokers from the muesli belt, bespectacled blues archivists, bikers, glossy magazines readers, spike-tops, girls going wild, longhairs, Rick Nielsen in disguise (baseball cap, chequered tie) and the rest looking like refugees from a mouth-harp convention.

The crowd says as much about the Thunderbirds as the music itself — both so diverse as to be almost unique.

They straddle both camps; enough road-tested experience to attract the mythologists, but still young, vigorous and inventive enough to draw the new blues generation. The T-Birds shoulder the entire awsome weight of the US Blues tradition, from their Texan homeland, through to the Delta and up around Chicago and back, picking up strains of Cajun along the way. They deliver with the maximum of economy and the minimum of ceremony, just a low barrelling undercurrent that sounds as full, rounded and colourful as it seems effortlessly stream-lined.

And they look the part: to all intents, they *are* the part.

Kim Wilson comes across like some half-cast Turkish bath attendant, chunky ruby rings on his fingers, flash stone studs in one ear, an excuse for a moustache dozing on his upper lip, a grubby turban lodged atop his sweltering features, and a mouth-harp and mike in hand. Keith Ferguson manages to look both the mildest and the meanest Southern grease monkey you ever clapped eyes on; a psychedelic shirt, a week in his mouth, a gold tooth glinting behind a curl of a smile, darting low sidelong looks beneath red-rimmed lids, his hands and chest scored with tatoos, his battered bass scrawled with faded drawings. The distant Mike Buck drums up a thick, stoking groundswell without flexing a muscle, only an occasional nod to Ferguson suggesting that he knows what song, town or country he's in.

In contrast (not surprisingly, for someone who's only rehearsed two numbers) Martin Belmont's wrapt in acute concentration, playing sparse rhythms, furious undercut leads, adding just the right amount of texture and never once threatening to outweigh the T-Birds unmistakable edge.

I adore this band from the moment they kick off to the moment they leave, swaying, sweating, smiling quietly, ales in hand, with Joe Ely and his squeezebox player Ponty Bone in tow after duly ripping up 'Kansas City'.

Without Vaughan they go easy on the album material (well worth a visit, incidentally) and weigh heavy on the covers, the best tonight being J. B. Lenoir's 'Talk To Yer Daughter', Muddy's 'Mannish Boy' — which gives full rein to Kim Wilson's stunning vocal range — and Sonny Boy Williamson's 'Cross Your Heart' in which the PA packs up, the band tones right down and Wilson plays an octave harp solo (unamplified) that slips down as sweet as three fingers of Jack Daniels. If it isn't ecstacy, the difference isn't worth the time of day.

Blues booms may come and go, but these guys should carry on forever. Attention: United States, Mexico and Canada — the Thunderbirds shall inherit the earth. It is written.

Mark Ellen

Belmont, Ely and Wilson. Pic Steve Wallgren.

Fabulous Funder

Dollar Brand

Camden Town Hall

A LITTLE South African night music; Dollar Brand — or Abdullah Ibrahim as he now prefers — and two 50 minute sets of solo piano, a Freedom Concert (benefit for the African National Congress) at Camden.

Like Cecil Taylor, for example, Ibrahim's view of piano is orchestral; but while Taylor goes for a relentless assault on the senses, Abdullah's approach is more voluptuously melodic. The first set ran through a patchword of poignantly romantic themes as brilliantly diverse as tribal warpaint; swirling ostinato lines puddled into dark vamping figures of crushing power. Influences like Ellington are now nothing more than dimly-glimpsed spectres at a very rich feast. The sources of Abdullah's playing now stretch back to the very roots — blues, gospel, impenetrable African backwaters — which I presume is just the way he wants it.

The second half relied more heavily on the percussive left hand and what was gained in momentum was lost in subtlety. Immaculate attired in crisp brown suit before a resplendent green and red backdrop, Ibrahim seemed to be playing largely for himself, curiously distant in view of the circumstances of the gig. The touches of church hall solemnity became a little ponderous at times, and when he sang a tune with township dust I felt like an intruder.

Still, a packed house lapped it all up (although wild applause at the mention of the Zimbabwe elections rang with patronising self-congratulation); and despite appalling toothache so did I.

Richard Cook

IF rock'n'roll had any backbone it would close ~~Virgin Records~~ N.M.E. down.

Danny Baker, NME 7.12.79

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New Musical Express 1st March, 1980

Dear Ed,
Sorry, couldn't resist this!
Virgin

"It's nice to find a paper that sticks to its principles..."

PETTY PLUS

◊ From page 8

same night as Springsteen. It was good for his credibility and it increased his potential drawing power on the East Coast.

"While we were in limbo with the lawsuits I'd read all these articles in the *Los Angeles Times* about radiation creeping in. I'm not a very political guy but I'm getting a bit worried. At least let the Russians bomb us, it would be so embarrassing to blow ourselves up.

"Mike (Campbell) and I discussed playing one of those benefits because we thought we'd draw a completely different crowd to the people Jackson Browne and Graham Nash get, the Woodstock types. When Bruce phoned me to play with him — and he doesn't usually have other groups on his bill — we decided to do it. We don't preach or send out leaflets. I haven't heard the album anyway, it doesn't look very interesting. I saw the show and that was enough.

"I've changed my mind about a lot of things. I used to say 'Fuck the whales', but now I think we ought to save them too. Why not?"

It's possible to view this softening process with some cynicism, as part of the homogenised image that tends to accompany stardom, but Petty had no guarantee that 'Damn The Torpedoes' would catch fire.

"If those people had kept on suing me I was going to be on a soup line. I've never got onto that channel about what is life? This time I had a few sleepless nights. The only thing I owned were my songs. I wanted to write anthems for underdogs, songs like 'Even The Losers' and 'Refugee'... the theme of the album wasn't self-conscious but when I put it together afterwards I could see it was about standing up for your rights, the ones that everyone has which can't be fucked with or taken away. Rather than get really graphic, 'They took me down to the court today and grilled me for eight hours', I wanted to keep the common denominator of them as love songs with other connotations.

"They aren't necessarily boy-girl songs, but also I don't think the kids want to hear a record about the evils of the music business; that would be as boring as hell. The songs I always dug were the old R&B ones, I liked the innuendoes. The old people thought they was just kissing but you knew they were fucking each other's brains out. When Johnnie Taylor did 'Who's Making Love To Your Old Lady While She's Been Out Making Love' that spoiled it for me 'cos that was a hit and afterwards all the black cats were just gonna say it.

"I am romantic, an old sap. All my values came out of the TV tube from the age of five. My whole love of the guitar came from seeing cowboys like Gene Autry when they all had guns and guitars. It looked like the hippest thing. If you didn't have TV and movies where would your idea of romance come from? Books probably, but I'm not a great reader."

If Petty is adamant in his opinion that rock and roll is the great healer, the embalming fluid that negates the value of education, politics and the liberal arts then he is only offering his own view.

"Linda Ronstadt called me up to support Jerry Brown but I couldn't do all that stuff, I'd feel silly. I think if you can take people away from their problems for two hours that's as likely to enlighten them as any political thing. I don't trust *any* politician. Period."

MEANWHILE he's adept at accepting the bows and the plaudits while keeping one step ahead of the pundits and their slings and arrows. He takes his job seriously but is unconvincingly modest. He calls his songs 'disposable' yet he risked bankruptcy for them. He says that songwriting is just fun — "I refuse to think of it as work" — but his game plan looks like very hard work indeed.

As for his philosophy, his attitude to the demands of the current life-style, that springs from an expression of naivety based on solid self-assurance.

"I've proved everything to myself. One of my favourite Dylan lines is *'I've got nothing to live up to'*, and that's what I feel. I don't have to prove it to anyone else."

Being in the public eye, being successful, being good looking, embracing rock and roll as a life force — all these are traits which idealists will use to undermine him.

It won't make any difference.

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers don't have any time to be complacent and if he refuses to accept the role of spokesman on non-related (as he thinks) topics does that make him a reactionary or a bad person?

To some people it does. But then some people think Bob Dylan would make a good President, that John Lydon should be Prime Minister, that Beethoven should have been a town councillor.

No, the rock and roll that Tom Petty stands for *is* hopelessly naive, terminally young, won't change a thing. That's its charm. And when he encored at Hammersmith with the familiar Bobby Fuller number 'I Fought The Law (And The Law Won)' you had to admire his cool cheek.

Tom Petty fought the law and the law lost. That was really something.

MARK ANDREWS
and the Sentis

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A&M

Dear Virgin Records,

How very, very witty of you to pick up on our advertisement dept's stupid blunder in accepting those tawdry T-shirt classifieds which you so gleefully reproduce in your own ad on the left.

Many of our readers have also pointed out that we were carrying the squalid little things, and to them our thanks. The ads have been stopped as of this issue.

Unfortunately, the NME editorial and ad depts operate as two separate entities, and we cannot always be as vigilant as we would wish where adverts are concerned.

But editorially, at least, this paper would no more depart from its principles than Virgin Records would, say, hesitate to make monetary gain from exploiting dead people in the basest way possible.

Yours sincerely,

NME

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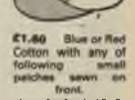

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FRIPPEXTRA

■ *From page 37*

Humour

WE ARE sitting in the nice, quiet pub eating our scrumptious cheese and bread and swallowing our tangy lager, and I am wondering where the humour is in Fripp's work, in the new LP to be specific. (I actually see great humour, but I know that lots of you out there do wonder a lot about Fripp and humour.)

"I remember when King Crimson played in Minneapolis back in 1974 and I went up to the microphone and with my tongue planted very firmly in my cheek said "This is not music to be enjoyed, this is serious music". The next day the concert was reviewed and it said 'Fripp was honest enough to say that King Crimson was not music to be enjoyed!'

"Well, when doing Frippertronics in 1979 I got up and said substantially the same thing. 'This is music without humour, this is serious music' and I looked at all the faces and they were all there still! And then I smiled, and you could feel the relief — oh, boy, maybe we can enjoy this after all!

"I would say that my right foot is deadly serious and my left foot is rolling around with laughter. I need both feet to walk."

Fripp glances down at a lyric sheet on his knee — the words for 'Under Heavy Manners' which Byrne sings. "Alright we're looking for humour . . . well, what about the first lines, *'Trumpets, I can hear trumpets'* — what an absurd thing that is! And then it goes on a bit, *'bells, I can hear bells'*, and when writing the original lyrics I had just emerged from a Cyprus monastery, and I wrote about the trumpets and then the bells, and then *'Olives' I can eat olives'* and that line didn't have a place here, I was just about to eat olives. So I think my flow of inspiration was distracted by my immediate surroundings."

'Under Heavy Manners' is essentially a list of all the-isms imaginable, and somewhere in there is the (divergent) solution to all our (impossibly divergent) problems. But not laid out in a form that is particularly penetrable.

"One accepts that there will be a proportion of people who will not like this work. This doesn't distress me. Once upon a time it would distress me."

But not now. Somewhere there emerges a contradiction. Fripp gurgles, meanwhile, at his own lyrics. "I find these hilarious." He stares at one particular 'verse' — *'jurism tourism/neoligism imperialism/cleverism criticism/cataphaticism apophitacasm/dogmatism apologeticism.*

"They're also quite remarkable. 'Under Heavy Manners' is current street jargon for police brutality and repression, synonymous with 1984, that you had Bowie's 'Diamond Dogs', Orwell's *1984* and now . . . Fripp's 'Under Heavy Manners'.

"Here you are. That's your problem. It's a divergent problem. What is a divergent solution? There you have it, and the song is remarkable advice. Keep thy mind in hell and despair not. Which is the state of normal everyday life. This is the solution to the world's problems. It's rock'n'roll metaphysics, it's hilariously funny, you can dance to it . . ."

It has lots of practical uses?

"Oh yes, lots," says Fripp, convinced, "It's very healthy too. Very good for raising the blood. You'll notice as well something I find incredibly funny. David mispronounces 'apophataciem' he says 'apaphataciem' — that's just personal, but I find that incredibly funny! But it's left in quite deliberately.

"Apophataciem and cataphataciem are the two ways available to theologians of approaching God. If you phrase a question in a certain way you predicate the answer. Or to put it another way, unless you find another language out of it, you're stuck. So if you pose the problem — what is God? since this is obviously theological, you have two alternatives. One you can say everything that God is, or you can say everything that God is not.

"So apophataciem and cataphataciem are respectively the two approaches. Cataphataciem says God is not this beer, God is not this table, God is not this glass and so on, and apophataciem says God is everything. But there would have to a way out of that so you can go beyond theology to a better sense of what is. So one would have to find ways of asking another question. And this is what philosophy is about in a sense. Not finding answers to any of the questions but asking better questions."

Philosopher

I HAVE great respect for Robert Fripp, enjoy his music and can never underestimate his catalystic effect. But in terms of the confrontation, the conflict and change he aims for, via his music and writing, something is missing. Maybe 'success!' (Which is where the paradoxes begin.) He is still winning because very few others are playing the same game.

Many times he mentioned that he is not special. The point of Frippertronics was to affirm that Robert Fripp, guitar player, is a human being, no better than you or I. Yet the way he presents his ideas through the music does elevate him — makes him 'different.' Not because of his intelligence or commitment, but through the way he translates and idealises that. The strategy is good; the practice not so good. The philosphy, music, theory, wil are not properly balanced; things are not clear. Fripp is putting up new, less destructive but just as potentially interruptive barriers. I have labelled this The New Distance; the new distance is defined as that which is the same as the old, but a little more friendly, not as drug or money orientated, but just as likely to alienate.

Maybe Fripp would be better suited as philosopher.

"That is a heavy word. You see if I say that I am philosophical, that's one thing. I could be any country lad who goes in for a pint and leans into his beer and weases profound. If on the other hand you say that I am a philosopher, it means that I'm serious, humourless, dry, a little like not to be enjoyed. And it would also tend to imply that I am in some way special, which would cut me off from the mainstream of humanity. So really by and large although it would appeal to my conceit, I would rather not be called a philosopher."

Presumably Robert Fripp is innocent. "Innocence is the capacity to abandon personal history. Art is the capacity to re-experience one's innocence." Presumably Robert Fripp is not to be defined.

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ACROSS
2 'Do The Dog' toaster meets Chaka's band!
4 & 26 across Jimi Hendrix first hit single
8 The Knack's US knumber one (2,7)
10 Johnson Bros foot-tapper
13 Follow-up to 'Walking On The Moon' (2,6)
14 Shake up cole, OK! (4,4)
15 See 28
16 Tangerine Dreamer who erased forgel (6,6)
18 See 20
19 Korky, Felix or Stevens?
21 HM slice of song thrush!
23 The Misses Golden of Shirts or Haslam of Renaissance
25 Jazzman/critic: 'Owning Up' is his autobiography (6,5)
27 See 8
28 US soul singer whose first UK Motown hit was 'Take Me In Your Arms And Love Me' back in '67 (6,6)
29 & 15 Clash supporter?

DOWN
2 Oh dork, it's the one-armed medic! (2,4)
3 Amphetamined independent?
4 Noisy side of M.A.S.H.?
5 Ian Page's play for glory (2,5)
6 Geldof rode around a few times and changed bands! (2,8)
7 XTC personage seasonally up pear tree! (4,9)
9 Horse and cart reconstituted for a place in the pit!
12 Ska group who had original hit with 'Long Shot Kick The Bucket'
17 Partnered Justin Hayward on their (wet) 1978 single 'Forever Autumn' (4,5)
18 Code plan changed for 13 across trio
20 & 18 'At Home He's A Tourist' was their outstanding 45 of '79 (4,2,4)
22 & 24 US MOR singer who sounds like she's prepared!
24 See above
26 Dr/----/Oates

ANSWERS
ACROSS: 6 'Too Much Too Young'; 7 'Ranking Full Stop'; 9 (Brian) Epstein; 11 Max Boyce; 13 'Ticket To Ride'; 15 Troggs; 16 Pye; 17 Bread; 19 'Eleanor Rigby'; 22 Lol (Creme); 23 'The Bitch Is (Back)'; 24 'Rio'; 27 Shea; 28 Gary Moore; 29 'Airport'.
DOWN: John Foxx; 2 Julie Covington; 3 Stiff; 4 Dolly Parton; 5 (Diana) Ross; 6 'Three Minute Hero'; 8 'The Prince'; 10 'Never A Dull Moment'; 12 Everly Brothers; 14 Tom Petty; 18 & 20 Roy Orbison: 'Bright (Eyes)'; 24 'Radio (Radio)'; 25 '(The Bitch Is) Back'; 26 (Bright) Eyes'.

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GASBAG

Real words from the real world

DEAR Julie, in your most recent venture into literature you tell us of the wonders of Radio 4. It must be real fun to be able to listen to *The Archers, Woman's Hour*, documentaries and plays which they "have a habit of slotting in" all day — but some of us have more important things to do like going to work (yes yer actual hard graft) to earn a living and I'm finding it tougher by the week to be able to do so.

Occasionally you charm us with your snide, gawky, street view (sic) witticisms. These 'pieces' that you carve are very rare and you seem to do sod all else but you appear to be able to live. Then at the end you become nasty with the classic line "That's the real world, rock fans". What the hell do *you* know of the real world, Julie!
Dave, Sunderland.
The 'real' world . . . an interesting concept. — M.S.

Dear Julie, congratulations on a fine article expounding the virtues of BBC Radio 4 and the BBC World Service, which I agree with entirely.

As you enjoy these, may I suggest that you also tune into Ireland's RTE Radio 1, which may please you. But be warned, it does have adverts, and they tend to break into Gaelic without warning.
From Keynsham (Land Rover country), nr Bristol.
Don't tell me — your aerial's on your pink half of the drainpipe. — M.S.

OK, OK — so I've heard the new Alex Chilton album, gone out and bought the new Sister Sledge album *and* started listening to Radio 4. What more do I have to do to become the hippest lap dog in the world?
Cris and Twist, Plymouth, Devon.
Bone up on Thomas Tallis, it would seem. — M.S.
Your previous answer made little sense and you know very well that this one won't either till next week. — FEATURES ED PLUGGING FLYING LIZARDS PIECE

So *Tiswas* is fantastic, eh! I always thought 'Tiswas' stood for "This Is Shit, Watch Another Station".
Terry, Downside.

The Social Security (S.S.) might not read *NME* but they certainly read *Snouds*. As an unexpected postscript to my interview with that rag (26.1.80), in which I poked fun at my medical adversaries and their failure to turn me into a Scots Zombie five years ago, it seems the S.S. had advised my non-existing social worker into advising my (ain't-got-one-got-kicked-off-their-lists) 'doctor' into *strongly* advising me to a return bout with . . . you guessed it — the same old headshrinker who tried to stitch me up all those moons ago.

Please note: I have remained unemployed for seven years in a deliberate attempt to annoy your establishment. All together now: *aaah*. As a reward for being a threat to the poxy system I find myself faced with three 'alternatives': 1) being booted off S.S. 2) taken to court by S.S. 3) turned into a chemico-electrical zombie.

I told the S.S. two years ago that they could do what the fuck they liked. Please let it be known that if you beat the system you lose; if you don't beat the system you lose. There's nothing like a good dilemma.

. Hope you remember me.
Wavis O'Shave, South Shields, N.E. (cold) England
P.S. It's not fair — I only wanted to marry Anna Ford. Sad . . .
A dilemma? You're on the horns of one, mate. Tell you what — we'll try and get this one freelance rates. — M.S.

Dear A. Salon-Drabster, your letter (*Gasbag* 1.3.80) reveals you as an imposter. No true member of Les Salon Drabsters would know or even care about Dadaist poets, redolent as they are of art and culture. If by the slightest chance you are a Salon Drabster (retired or not) may I remind you of your solemn oath to write to no one but the Old Codgers, and even then only on the subject of Gert Muller?

Suffice to say, A Salon-Drabster, we are investigating your identity and will expose you soon as the creepy malcontent you are.
Sir Abu Barker
Tephaywa-Belaywa, Seaview, Nunhead, London SE15.
Never mind poor old Wavis — sign this one up, Neil. — M.S.

Dear Mike Barson (keyboard player with Madness), so sometimes you look at us and think "Who are those prats who follow us all over the country" (and abroad). Well I'll tell you:

1. We've been without any new clothes or things due to spending *all* our money on Madness gigs (solidly for the past four months, regularly for nearly a year).
2. We've nearly been murdered by various arseholes all over the country who dislike Londoners.
3. We've never asked to stay at your hotels (even if it does mean sleeping in outside toilets or wandering around in strange and usually violent towns 'til the first train home leaves first thing then going straight to work).
4. Nearly losing our jobs due to missing late trains or waiting for non-existent trains.
5. We have never asked you for anything except occasionally if there's any chance of getting in on the guest list because we haven't been able to get tickets, although usually we've bought tickets beforehand.

We just wanna have a good time without causing anyone any inconvenience. Please think carefully before you assume that all your fans are the same, otherwise there's gonna be an empty space at the front left of the stage at future Madness gigs.
Some Madness Fans.
Let's just hope you've put Barson off his breakfast. — M.S.

In Gavin Martin's article on Madness he mentioned something about Vincent Price appearing in Hammer films. In fact Vincent Price never appeared in a Hammer film.
John Connolly, New Barnet, Herts.
I did. — MICHAEL RIPPER (never before mentioned in *NME*)

Vis you we'd just like to say a big thank-you to Madness for the best gig in Washington DC (Bayou, 22.2.80). And the nuttiest take-over of a record-store ever witnessed. Come back soon!!!
From your unofficial Washington correspondents (not so bored with the USA), Judi & Molly (2 temporary ex-patriates), Washington DC, USA.
So, enough of this Madness bickering — they're well liked in the States. — M.S.

Having just taken possession of my first Hackney Carriage I would be grateful if you could arrange for my appearance in next week's Gig Guide.
Robert De Niro, Salisbury, Wilts.

I recently invited Sting of The Police to breakfast and guess what? He never turned up. Thanks to Feargal Sharkey of The Undertones for giving us a great night out at their recent concert at the Savoy here in Limerick. He told me that Paul Morley was a definite head-case. I am inclined to agree with him. That's all for now.
Brendan, Limerick, Ireland.

Can I be the first to congratulate Paul Morley on his Robert Fripp article? — Also can I appeal to readers not to knock the young lad in future *Gasbags*, as he is a really friendly, honest, genuine human being, who isn't too hip to talk to ordinary punters. Besides, he bought me a pint! Cheers.
From someone who met Paul Morley at the Simple Minds YMCA gig at which Richard Jobson was also present and who totally ignored me when I approached him, Ely, Cambs.
There you have it, readers — the two sides to Mr Morley. Head case or punter's pal — what do you think? Write to Malcolm Allison, Maine Road, Manchester. — DAVID VINE

I would like to congratulate Rainbow on their excellent 'show' at Wembley (29.2.80). They proved beyond doubt that they are the group for the '80s.

Actually, Rainbow started off rather poorly. For 25 minutes (or maybe even longer) they sunk to the lowest level — they played 'songs'. Luckily, after five or six of these trivial 'songs', they got down to the real business. 'Catch A Rainbow' was the real turning point; halfway through the number Ritchie Blackmore broke down all the barriers between artist and audience. He was so captivating, the audience was forced to sit down again. Then came 'Lost In Hollywood'. After an extremely thought-provoking three-minute keyboard solo, the group knocked off the formalities of a couple of verses. Blackmore then stood solo on stage for ten minutes making weird noises go round and round the speakers. Next up, another keyboard solo (including 'Star Wars' and 'Green Onions') — ten or 15 minutes of super fun. The 'show' neared its climax as Cozy Powell whipped up a ten-minute drum solo.

Despite having played for an hour and ten minutes, and despite obvious exhaustion, Rainbow managed to deliver the final crowning triumph — Judy Garland singing 'Over The Rainbow' over the PA.

All this for just £5.
Colin Tobin, Uxbridge, Middlesex
P.S. I hope Rainbow had a good time sticking the chairs back together again.
You HM fans, you're so sarcastic. — M.S.

Just a word to the granny who reviewed BA Robertson's single (23.2.80): Can't you see that Bolan was the creator of the whole '70s sound — from the triumph of T.Rex to ghastly Gary Glitter, and all the way from the arrogance of punk to the dreadful techno-rock of Gary Numan?

Once you've got that you just might understand what music is all about.
Martin B, Northampton.
Well, you're not a prat at all, either. — M.S.

My gran who lives in Wales has just moved into a new flat and the address is 2, Tone Close — but she refuses to have her head shaved and is having trouble running on the spot. Can you suggest anything that might help?
Mr NOJ, West Kensington.
She could always move. But if anyone else mentions their gran we'll do something drastic, like print even more guff on Joe Ely. — M.S.

Please print my letter as my gran thinks I'm a promising young writer.
Gisele, London SW17.
Right, that's done it. — M.S.

If Joe Ely is country then I'm a donkey's anus. Just watched his band on TV and that tasty hybrid of R&B and country most closely resembles the sound coming off the old Sun records. I seem to remember we used to call it rock'n'roll.
John Charman, Briston, Norfolk.
Sun records? Never heard of them. — M.S.

Dear Monty Smith, with regard to your comments and hugeley amusing references to 'Dirty gits', Scottish football and the European Championship in Rome this summer, might I be allowed to invite you to take a very long walk off a short pier and generally to take a flying
(Letter becomes extremely offensive at this point. — Sensitive Ed)
Roy Auld, Redland, Bristol
That's what amuses me about you Scottish folk — you all love the Auld Sod so much you move down here. — M.S.

Glad somebody explained about Ian Penman's style of writing (*Gasbag* 16.2.80). I always thought it was a typographical error.
D. Montford, Leicester.
Clevor dique. — LON PINMOON

Congratulations on the ultimate anagram in the very silly QMITD competition. I'm sure I wasn't the only person to notice that last week's ish was a complete anagram of the New Testament (complete with editorial notes, index and chapter titles).
Stewart Lee Hevel (Decipher me if you can), Leeds.
You certainly weren't the only one. But we gave fabulous big prizes to the others because they kept quiet about it. — M.S.

I am perhaps only an idiot. But please, would you tell me: are Charles Shaar Murray and Blast Furnace the same person?
Marie-Axelle Loustalot-Foust, Paris, France.
We're not sure. But we think the editor should be told. — M.S.

Illustrator: Mr Lowry
Ill temper: Mr Smith

T-ZERS

DOLPHINS, dolphins and more bleedin' dead dolphins. Quick as a flash *T-Zers* pawns its calf-leather Log Rollers, it chamois shirt and leopardskin strides, its chic camel-hair zip-up and rawhide Texan titfer, and dons wun hunnerd percent acrylic threads, bemused air and furrowed brow to muse upon the late heinous threats to World Ecological Consciousness by the irksome islanders of Iki. *Fact:* Dolphin distress signals relayed by sub-aqua sonar devices have been proved to keep their fellow mammals away, thus saving them the bother of getting offed by all manner of blunt instruments.

But soft! A lightbulb flickers dimly atop *T-Zers'* worried dome. Could such a system already have been brought to bear in the wacky ole world of rock 'n' roll? Could it in fact have been incessant exposure to their own anguished rantings on US radio that has driven horrendous bubblegum vendors **The Knack** to forsake home waters and beach themselves in Blighty? And worse! Could a surfeit of their glutenous noise on our own wavelengths be the sole means of getting rid of them? Then so be it. *Anything* to spare us a repeat performance of the foolish foursome on *TisWas*, or save another handful of unsuspecting Brits from blundering into one of their London gigs only to be suffocated by hordes of slavering Yankee teensters. A Knackered **Tom Robinson** was seen hoofing it after just four numbers at the Dominion . . .

And yet more evidence of dolphin sonar repelling systems: one-time ITV comic **Reggie Bosankey** has ducked out of appearing on the **Kenny Everett** *Video Show*. Those of you with dodgy heart conditions should sink four fingers of firewater before we divulge the shocking truth that rotund Reg was scheduled to corral his latest cut entitled 'Dance With Me' while **Hot Gossip** were to adopt various erotic poses in the vicinity of his lissome frame. Apparently Equity, in an attempt to spare our screens such a hideous spectable, said that the noisome newsman couldn't perform until he joined the actors' union . . .

And what does **Rick Nielsen** care about the worldwide dolphin crisis? Not a lot it seems, the **Cheap Trick** frontsperson and failed baseball giant being too busy hanging out at **Fab Thunderbirds** gigs (in his subtle peaked cap, chequered tie and suave cardy disguise) and 'laying down' a new LP at London's AIR studios with creaky **George Martin** at the controls. The album will be a double picture disc *objet d'art*, a rogue *T-Zer* predicts . . .

We hear the sound of distant gums. **Jerry Dammers**, after being on the end of plenty of stick for playing a ten bucks a ticket gig for New York impresario **Ron Delsener** (see *Thrills* two weeks back), announced at the said gig that **The Specials** were receiving $1,000 for the show — "the other $9,000 is buying Ron Delsener a new swimming pool", which *T-Zers* believes is unlikely to double as a dolphinarium. Dammers went on to dedicate 'Gangsters' to the aforementioned Delsener. Among those at the gig, and closeted in cosy opera-styled box, were **Mick Jagger** and soul sister **Jerry Hall**, **David Bowie** and a Japanese female escort and **Debs Harry** and playmate **Chris Stein**. Can't imagine what they all talked about apart from the global fish shortage and their respective ages . . .

Group of the decade, last year's thing, voodoo rockabilly swamp-rock exponents par excellence etc The Cramps got a right royal UK welcome when they did a European tour warm-up one-off at London's King's College last Friday (see **Live!** *page 54). And, no, they're not the world's largest group, that is the audience on stage with them. Drummer Nick Knox looks on apprehensively as singer Lux Interior gets some unbidded help from a few fabulous Kevins. Lux was scared out of his pants (left). At least, we hope he was — if it was part of the act poor P. J. Proby would have more cause to be a bitter and twisted old man. Big pic: Mike Laye. Pants pic: Alain de la Mata.*

They all get a little soft in the head Stateside, when not concerned with the imminent plight of the porpoise. Hunky beachboy **David Soul** has two court cases pending in Hollywood where cameramen claim the beefcake beat 'em up. Apparently one of them had commented on the increasing rate of violence on Soul's TV sit-com . . .

The Zoo Palast was the unlikely venue for the premiere of The Clash movie Rude Boy at the Berlin Film Festival recently and seen answering questions from bemused German intellectuals are (left to right) director Jack Hazan, producer David Mingay and Johnny Green, personal road manager to Joe and the lads. "Would've been a better picture if there'd been more close-ups of my quiff," said Mr Green. Pic: Erica Rabau.

Meanwhile **The Clash** are also mashing up the Yew Ess of Ay with their current red-hot platter 'London Calling' edging its way on to the Top Forty, all concerts selling out, and guest support star **Lee Dorsey** exceeding all expectations. The brillantine moguls are said to be working on a joint version of 'Chain Gang' with the ex-pugilist soul star who is also about to go into the studio with New Orleans' finest **Allen Toussaint** to record a new album . . .

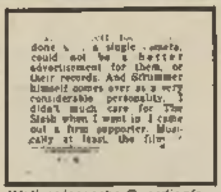
Just his soul respondin': The old grandfather of Motown, **Smokey Robinson**, was so impressed after hearing **The Beat's** sparkling version of his very own 'Tears Of A Clown' that he immediately despatched a telegram of congrats to **Ranking Roger & Co** . . .

Another Yank who could well be hot-footing it to his local post office is premier **Osmonds** fan **Andy Williams**, for the beaty Brums have concocted a ska version of the cookie cruncher's 'Can't Get Used To Losing You' for their soon-come **Bod Sargeant**-produced LP . . .

But what, you may ask, has any of this to do with dolphins? Even puritan beaconettes like **Mary Whitehouse** are less concerned with the planet's piscatorial problems than the dodgy demeanour of Thames TV's *White Light* stalwart **Gary Crowley**. The precise nature of Blighthouse's call to the programme is still unknown but it's believed the foghorn cockney twang of Crowley's natural intonation is felt to be a "bad example" to all those youngsters who — as *T-Zers* is informed — never speak in anything but the **Queen's** purest tongue, whatever that is . . .

But the real million dollar question this week has to be: Are **Wings** in a flap over **Denny**? Wacky **Macca** was apparently less than pleased with the way that **Laine** quit Japan to plug a new single by **Jo Jo Laine** (a relation) at the Midem music business convention in France, leaving bossman Paulie wearing the ball 'n' chain. Rumours of a Laine / Wings split have been fiercely denied. (Choruses of 'Go Now' etc, fade . . .)

And yet more remours. **Fact:** the chic wept copiously this week to hear that Studio 54 has lost its liquor licence on account of the unholy quantities of drugs consumed therein. Fact: **Rockpile** will play on **Carlene Carter's** upcoming LP. Fact: **Lech Kowalski's** *Dead On Arrival* (a classic hunk of celluloid featuring **Sex Pistols** and **Clash**) is to have preview screenings for inflight passengers aboard commercial jets. *T-Zers* ponders the reaction to the **Chris Salewicz's** interview with the late lamented **Nancy** (who strips mid-way) and **Sidney** (out of his tree and inaudible). Lies, all lies: four members of **Madness** did not check out in a car crash last week . . .



. . . [illegible] done . . . a single [illegible] could not be a better advertisement for them, or their records. And Strummer himself comes over as a very considerable personality. I didn't much care for The Slash when I went in. I came out a firm supporter. Musically at least, the film [illegible]

Well, at least the Guardian's actual review of the film didn't piss all over Joe and the boys.

More facts: It took Bible-bashing **Bob Dylan** a mere three days to cut his second **Jerry Wexler / Barry Beckett** album in Muscle Shoals, **Eno** and **Fripp** are working on a joint venture and **Graham Parker & The Rumour** are to record their very next disc at Compass Point Studios in the sun-drenched Bahamas with **Jimmy Iovine** producing.

Rather than being a benefit for Earth's ailing amphibians, **The Searchers'** gig at London's Nashville turned into low-level lig of the month. Seen in various stares of disarray were gnarled **Strangler Hugh Cornwell**, **Bette Bright**, **John Wicks** and **Will Birch of The Records** (who report that one **Jude Cole** is their new guitarist (male) and a new album will reach you in April) and **Banshee Siouxsie Sioux** (who denies allegations that she intends to cover The Searchers' immortal 'Needles And Panzer').

As promised in last week's *Thrill*, **Andy Wilson**, author of the New Wave Directory *Too Much* has contacted *T-Zers* to say that the book is available at Rough Trade or by sending a 50p postal order to the address quoted in the piece . . .

Island's Ska compilations continue their penchant for *NME* scribes. The first includes **Eric Morris'** 'Penny Reel' and the second features none other than 'Dick Tracy'. *Whoever* next . . .

Post-modernist Marxists **Gang Of Four** have signed to Warner Bros for U.S. release of their product, er, sorry, extremely valid vinyl statements . . .

Meanwhile, pre-modernist surfers **The Beach Boys** dare to mix music and politics, daft things, by playing a benefit gig for presidential candidate (and ex-CIA supremo) **George Bush**. Like **Brian 'Sandpit' Wilson** once wrote: "They say that I got brains, but they ain't doin' me no good" . . .

And last and by no means least is the thrilling news that one-time rock goddess **Patti Smith** has married the ex-**Stooge**, **Fred "Sonic" Smith**, on March 1st in Detroit's stately Mariners Church at a *tres* private affair attended by their parents, **Mr.** and **Mrs. Smith** of New Jersey and **Mr.** and **Mrs. Smith** of Michigan.
After the ceremony, Pat rang up her fave NY paper *(NY Post)* and gabbed about her and Fred and their fab groove for the '80s. Mrs. Smith (still overjoyed with her new name) says that Art will make a comeback in the decade, and she's ready, building up a positive strength for an underground power-base there in Detroit. She hasn't trimmed her tresses in two whole years and they now dangle at what used to be dubbed 'beatnik length'. She also prays for the people of Afghanistan.

But nary a word about dolphins!! . . .

SINCERE apologies for the abrupt increase in the price of your *NME* but it just crept up on us, honest. What with the inevitable increase in production costs, half the staff losing their bets on Spurs and the editor's annual six-week trip to the Bahamas coming up, our hands were forced. Still, it's only a shilling increase and you can't even get a box of Swan Vestes for that. And even at 25p *NME's* still cheaper than half a pint of lager in most places. Just be thankful you don't live in France — it's gone up one whole franc there. Hang on a mo' — there's no change in price for Germany. What's going on here? We know they were runners-up in the war and in '66 but . . . *(Change the subject, for God's sake. — Ed.)* Er, when was the last time three girl singers were numbers one, two and three in the charts?

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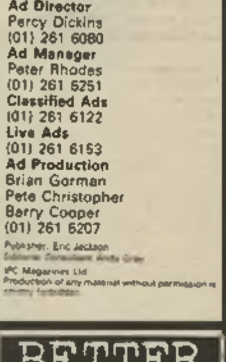

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EDDIE+ THE HOT RODS

THREE TRACK SINGLE

'AT NIGHT'

c/w
YOU BETTER RUN
LOOKING AROUND

TOUR

MARCH
5 NEWCASTLE, Polytechnic
6 LIVERPOOL, Eric's
7 MANCHESTER, University
8 SUNDERLAND, Polytechnic
9 ST.ANDREWS, University
10 EDINBURGH, Tiffany's
11 DURHAM, University
12 HULL, University
14 ESSEX, University
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16 LONDON, Lyceum
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