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NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

READING • SPIZZ • ROOSTERS
FANZINES • POSITIVE NOISE

Stray Cats far from home. Pic: Peter Anderson.

Stray Cats

How Yankee
Quibbabilly
put the Bop back
in Britain

By Adrian Thrills

1984
PART TWO
THE BRITISH
POLICE
STATE



Pic: Peter Anderson.
Dave Wakeling and Saxon of The Beat seen leaving 10 Downing Street after the celebration party to mark the singles chart entry of their friendly advice to Mrs T. A Tory spokesman said later: "Yes, things are bad, and they're going to get a lot worse." Tory popularity immediately rose by ten points on all opinion polls.

UK SINGLES

This Last Week			Weeks in	Highest
1	(4)	Ashes To Ashes..... David Bowie (RCA)	3	1
2	(—)	Start..... Jam (Polydor)	1	2
3	(1)	Winner Takes It All..... Abba (Epic)	4	1
4	(3)	9 to 5..... Sheena Easton (EMI)	6	3
5	(9)	Tom Hark..... Piranhas (Sire/Hansa)	3	5
6	(2)	Upside Down..... Diana Ross (Motown)	6	1
7	(6)	Oops Upside Your Head... Gap Band (Mercury)	6	5
8	(13)	Feels Like I'm In Love..... Kelly Marie (Calibre)	2	8
9	(5)	Oh Yeah..... Roxy Music (Polydor)	4	9
10	(18)	Sunshine Of Your Smile.. Mike Berry (Polydor)	2	10
11	(7)	Give Me The Night George Benson (Warner Brothers)	5	7
12	(14)	All Over The World Electric Light Orchestra (Jet)	3	12
13	(8)	Funkin' For Jamaica..... Tom Browne (Arista)	5	8
14	(23)	Dreamin'..... Cliff Richard (EMI)	2	14
15	(11)	Mariana..... Gibson Brothers (Island)	6	11
16	(20)	Private Life..... Grace Jones (Island)	4	16
17	(10)	More Than I Can Say..... Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)	8	2
18	(26)	Modern Girl..... Sheena Easton (EMI)	2	18
19	(21)	Can't Stop The Music Village People (Phonogram)	2	19
20	(16)	Lip Up Fatty..... Bad Manners (Magnet)	5	14
21	(—)	Biko..... Peter Gabriel (Charisma)	1	21
22	(25)	Bank Robber..... Clash (CBS)	3	22
23	(—)	You Gotta Be A Hustler Sue Wilkinson (Cheepska)	1	23
24	(—)	I Die You Die.. Gary Numan (Beggars Banquet)	1	24
25	(—)	Best Friend/Stand Down Margaret Beat (Go-Feet)	1	25
26	(—)	There There My Dear Dexy's Midnight Runners (Parlophone)	6	8
27	(—)	Marie Marie..... Shakin Stevens (Epic)	1	27
28	(—)	A Walk In The Park..... Nick Straker Band (CBS)	1	28
29	(—)	Eighth Day..... Hazel O'Connor (A&M)	1	29
30	(—)	It's Still Rock And Roll To Me... Billy Joel (CBS)	2	24

BUBBLING UNDER

Sartorial Eloquence — Elton John (Rocket)
Sleep Walk — Ultravox (Chrysalis)
You've Been Gone — Crown Heights Affair (De-lite)
Backstrokin' — Fatback (Spring)
I Got You — Split Enz (A&M)
Years From Now — Dr Hook (Capitol)

INDIES 33s

- 1 Closer..... Joy Division (Factory)
- 2 Voice Of America..... Cabaret Voltaire (Rough Trade)
- 3 Unknown Pleasures..... Joy Division (Factory)
- 4 Live..... James Chance and the Contortions (Invisible)
- 5 Bouquet Of Steel..... Varicous (Aardvark)
- 6 Dome..... Dome (Dome)
- 7 Colossal Youth..... Young Marble Giants (Rough Trade)
- 8 Los Angeles..... X (Slash)
- 9 The Raincoats..... The Raincoats (Rough Trade)
- 10 Totales Turn..... The Fall (Rough Trade)

INDIES 45s

- 1 Love Will Tear Us Apart (12")..... Joy Division (Factory)
- 2 Final Achievement..... In Camera (4 AD)
- 3 Elastic Man..... Fall (Rough Trade)
- 4 Transmission..... Joy Division (Factory)
- 5 Shack Up..... A Certain Ratio (Factory Benelux)
- 6 Edward Fox..... Smack (Aspirin)
- 7 Not Ready..... Sector 27 (Panic)
- 8 Terror Couple Kill Colonel..... Bauhaus (48E)
- 9 Holidays In Cambodia..... Dead Kennedys (Cherry Red)
- 10 No Message..... Mystere V's (Flick Knife)

Chart by: Paul at Bonaparte, 284 Pentonville Road, London N1.

REGGAE

- 1 Night In September..... Rod Taylor (Nigger Kojak)
- 2 African Girl..... Jubba Tate (Marcus)
- 3 Drunken Master..... Ranking Joe (Belmont)
- 4 Happy Anniversary..... Greg Isaacs (Cash and Carry)
- 5 Crucial..... Bunny Wailer (Solomonic)
- 6 Rat In The Centre..... Archie and Lynn (High Note)
- 7 After You..... Wayne Wade (Joe Gibbs)
- 8 A1 Sound..... Captain Sinbad/Little John (Youth In Progress)
- 9 Torturing..... African Brothers (Black Link Int)
- 10 If This World Were Mine..... Junior Delgado (Prestige)

Chart by: Joe Gibbs, 29 Lewisham Way, London SE14.

DISCO

- 1 Funkin For Jamaica..... Tom Brown (Arista)
- 2 Upside Down..... Diana Ross (Motown)
- 3 Oops Upside Your Head..... Gap Band (Mercury)
- 4 Use It Up And Wear It Out..... Odyssey (RCA)
- 5 A Lovers Holiday..... Change (RCA)
- 6 Give Me The Night..... George Benson (Warner Bros)
- 7 Jump To The Beat..... Stacey Lattisaw (Atlantic)
- 8 Brazilian Love Affair..... George Duke (Epic)
- 9 In The Forest..... Baby O (Calibre)
- 10 Take Your Time..... SOS Band (Tabu)

Chart by: Powerhouse Roadshow 01-388 9852

NME CHARTS

WEEK ENDING
August 30, 1980

US SINGLES

This Last Week			
1	(2)	Sailing..... Christopher Cross	
2	(1)	Take Your Time (Do It Right) Part 1..... The S.O.S. Band	
3	(3)	Emotional Rescue..... Rolling Stones	
4	(4)	Magic..... Olivia Newton-John	
5	(6)	Upside Down..... Diana Ross	
6	(5)	It's Still Rock & Roll To Me..... Billy Joel	
7	(13)	All Out Of Love..... Air Supply	
8	(10)	Fame..... Irene Cara	
9	(9)	More Love..... Kim Carnes	
10	(17)	Give Me The Night..... George Benson	
11	(12)	Let My Love Open The Door..... Pete Townsend	
12	(8)	Tired Of Toein' The Line..... Rocky Burnette	
13	(14)	Boulevard..... Jackson Browne	
14	(16)	Into The Night..... Benny Mardones	
15	(25)	Lookin' For Love..... Johnny Lee	
16	(21)	Late In The Evening..... Paul Simon	
17	(20)	One In A Million You..... Larry Graham	
18	(19)	Old-Fashioned Love..... Commodores	
19	(15)	Take A Little Rhythm..... Ali Thompson	
20	(23)	You're The Only Woman..... Ambrosia	
21	(28)	Drivin' My Life Away..... Eddie Rabbitt	
22	(11)	Shining Star..... Manhattans	
23	(30)	I'm Alright (Theme From 'Caddyshack')... Kenny Loggins	
24	(27)	Hot Rod Hearts..... Robbie Dupree	
25	(52)	Another One Bites The Dust..... Queen	
26	(18)	Misunderstanding..... Genesis	
27	(31)	Don't Ask Me Why..... Billy Joel	
28	(34)	All Over The World..... Electric Light Orchestra	
29	(33)	You'll Accompany Me..... Bob Seger	
30	(23)	Stand By Me..... Mickey Gilley	

US ALBUMS

1	(1)	Emotional Rescue..... Rolling Stones
2	(2)	Hold Out..... Jackson Browne
3	(5)	The Game..... Queen
4	(4)	Urban Cowboy..... Soundtrack
5	(3)	Glass Houses..... Billy Joel
6	(8)	Christopher Cross..... Christopher Cross
7	(7)	Diana..... Diana Ross
8	(10)	Give Me The Night..... George Benson
9	(6)	Against The Wind.... Bob Seger & The Silver Bullet Band
10	(11)	Fame..... Original Soundtrack
11	(18)	Xanadu..... Original Soundtrack
12	(12)	Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere... Rossington Collins Band
13	(15)	Full Moon..... The Charlie Daniels Band
14	(13)	Empty Glass..... Pete Townshend
15	(9)	The Blues Brothers..... Original Soundtrack
16	(14)	Heroes..... Commodores
17	(30)	Back In Black..... AC/DC
18	(21)	T.P..... Teddy Pendergrass
19	(16)	S.O.S..... The S.O.S. Band
20	(20)	Off The Wall..... Michael Jackson
21	(17)	One For The Road..... The Kinks
22	(23)	Duke..... Genesis
23	(24)	Real People..... Chic
24	(19)	The Empire Strikes Back..... Original Soundtrack
25	(—)	Crimes Of Passion..... Pat Benatar
26	(22)	Middle Man..... Boz Scaggs
27	(25)	There and Back..... Jeff Beck
28	(29)	Rhapsody and Blues..... The Crusaders
29	(26)	Just One Night..... Eric Clapton
30	(31)	One In A Million You..... Larry Graham

US Charts: Courtesy 'CASHBOX'



Pic: Barry Plummer.
The last time Michael Jackson appeared on this page he was sporting a policeman's hat. Now, to celebrate his 46th week in the albums chart, we see him playing at pilots. Photographers with pics of Mike in an Indian head-dress or similarly spectacular prop are asked to contact NME in the event of his next single proving successful.

UK ALBUMS

			Weeks in	Highest
1	(2)	Give Me The Night George Benson (Warner Bros)	6	1
2	(1)	Flesh & Blood..... Roxy Music (Polydor)	13	1
3	(3)	Xanadu..... Soundtrack (Jet)	7	1
4	(5)	Back In Black..... AC/DC (Atlantic)	3	3
5	(4)	Deepest Purple..... Deep Purple (Harvest)	6	2
6	(6)	Diana..... Diana Ross (Motown)	10	6
7	(19)	Vienna..... Ultravox (Chrysalis)	6	7
8	(9)	Sky 2..... Sky (Ariola)	19	2
9	(26)	McCartney 2..... Paul McCartney (Parlophone)	14	1
10	(11)	Off The Wall..... Michael Jackson (Epic)	46	3
11	(16)	I Just Can't Stop It..... The Beat (Go Feet)	14	3
12	(13)	Searching For The Young Soul Rebels Dexy's Midnight Runners (Parlophone)	5	9
13	(—)	Living In A Fantasy..... Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)	1	13
14	(7)	Emotional Rescue Rolling Stones (Rolling Stones)	9	1
15	(—)	Elvis Aron Presley..... Elvis Presley (RCA)	1	15
16	(21)	Kaleidoscope Siouxsie & The Banshees (Polydor)	2	16
17	(14)	Manilow Magic..... Barry Manilow (Arista)	5	14
18	(20)	Regatta De Blanc..... Police (A&M)	45	1
19	(17)	King Of The Road..... Boxcar Willie (Warwick)	8	8
20	(30)	Ska 'n' B..... Bad Manners (Magnet)	3	20
21	(25)	War Of The Worlds..... Jeff Wayne (CBS)	29	2
22	(12)	Glory Road..... Gillan (Virgin)	2	12
23	(8)	Uprising..... Bob Marley & The Wailers (Island)	9	4
24	(23)	Bat Out Of Hell..... Meatloaf	2	23
25	(15)	The Game..... Queen (EMI)	7	1
26	(10)	Closer..... Joy Division (Factory)	5	8
27	(27)	Can't Stop The Music.... Soundtrack (Mercury)	2	27
28	(—)	Me Myself I..... Joan Armatrading (A&M)	13	4
29	(18)	Live 1979..... Hawkwind (Bronze)	3	18
30	(28)	Dumb Waiters..... Korgis (Rialto)	2	28

BUBBLING UNDER

McVicar — Roger Daltrey (Polydor)
Hang Together — Odyssey (RCA)
On The Riviera — Gibson Brothers (Island)
Drama — Yes (Atlantic)
Another String Of Hits — Shadows (EMI)
Voice Of America — Cabaret Voltaire (Rough Trade)

5 YEARS AGO

- 1 Sailing..... Rod Stewart (Warner Bros)
- 2 I Can't Give You Anything (But My Love)..... Stylistics (Avco)
- 3 The Last Farewell..... Roger Whittaker (EMI)
- 4 It's Been So Long..... George McCrae (Jayboy)
- 5 That's The Way (I Like It), K.C. & The Sunshine Band (Jayboy)
- 6 Summertime City..... Mike Batt (Epic)
- 7 Blanket On The Ground..... Billy Jo Spears (UA)
- 8 Best Thing That Ever Happened..... Gladys Knight (Buddah)
- 9 Julie-Ann..... Kenny (Rak)
- 10 El Bimbo..... Birnbo Jet (EMI)

Week ending September 2, 1975

15 YEARS AGO

- 1 Satisfaction..... Rolling Stones (Decca)
- 2 I Got You, Babe..... Sonny and Cher (Atlantic)
- 3 Help..... Beatles (Parlophone)
- 4 Make It Easy On Yourself..... Walker Brothers (Philips)
- 5 A Walk In The Black Forest..... Horst Jankowski (Mercury)
- 6 Zorba's Dance..... Marcello Minerbi (Durwin)
- 7 Like A Rolling Stone..... Bob Dylan (CBS)
- 8 All I Really Wanna Do..... Byrds (CBS)
- 9 All I Really Want To Do..... Cher (Liberty)
- 10 What's New Pussycat..... Tom Jones (Decca)

Week ending September 3, 1965

10 YEARS AGO

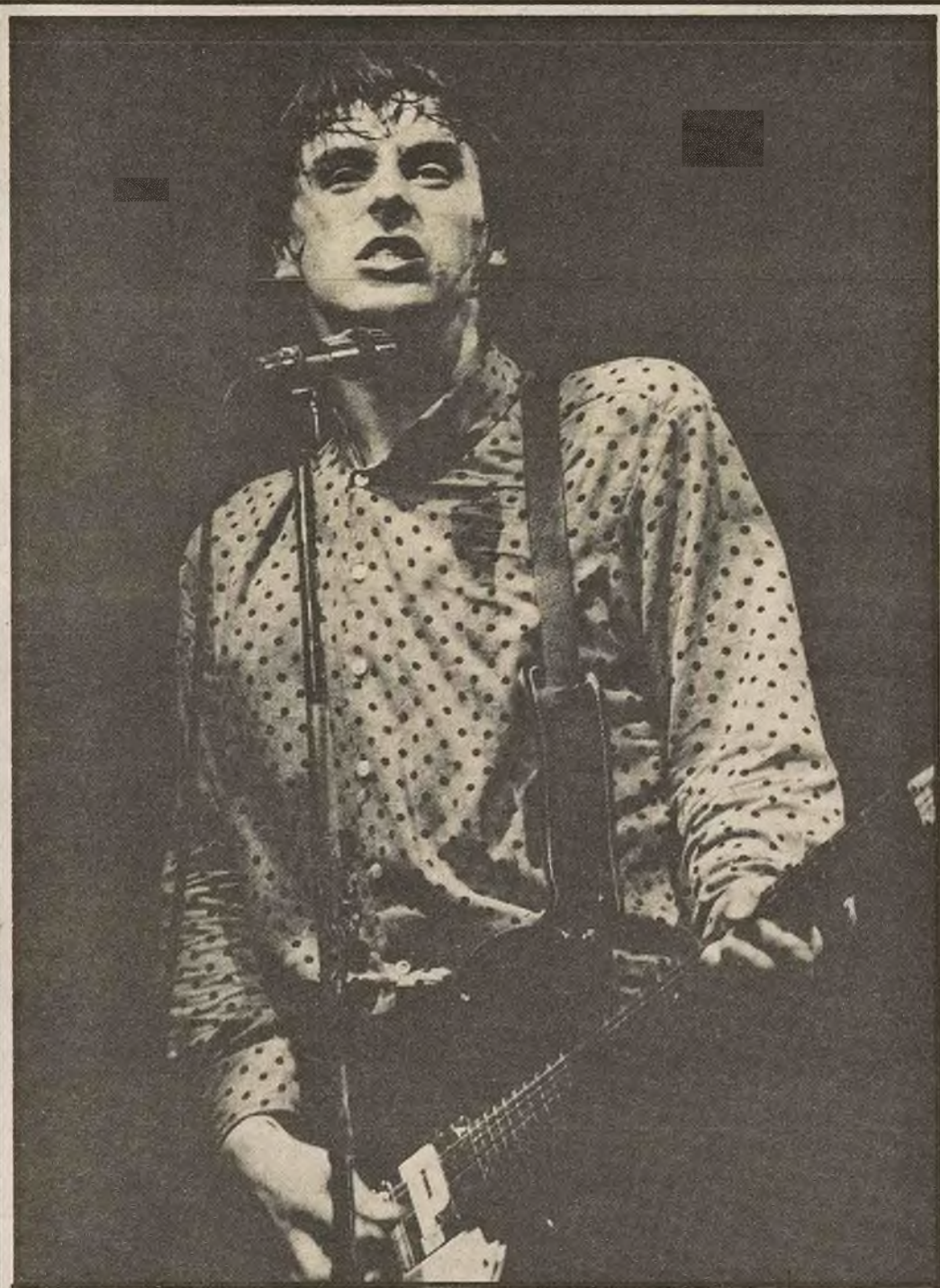
- 1 Tears Of A Clown..... Smokey Robinson (Motown)
- 2 The Wonder Of You..... Elvis Presley (RCA)
- 3 Mama Told Me (Not To Come) ... Three Dog Night (Stateside)
- 4 Give Me Just A Little More Time..... Chairman Of The Board
- 5 Rainbow..... Marmalade (Decca)
- 6 Neanderthal Man..... Hotlegs (Fontana)
- 7 25 or 6 to 4..... Chicago
- 8 Love Is Life..... Hot Chocolate (Rak)
- 9 Make It With You..... Bread (Elektra)
- 10 Natural Sinner..... Fairweather (RCA)

Week ending September 2, 1970

20 YEARS AGO

- 1 Apache..... The Shadows (Columbia)
- 2 Because They're Young..... Duane Eddy (London)
- 3 Please Don't Tease..... Cliff Richard (Columbia)
- 4 Mess Of Blues..... Elvis Presley (RCA)
- 5 When Will I Be Loved..... Everley Brothers (London)
- 6 If She Should Come To You..... Anthony Newley (Decca)
- 7 Everybody's Somebody's Fool..... Connie Francis (MGM)
- 8 Girl Of My Best Friend..... Elvis Presley (MGM)
- 9 Love Is Like A Violin..... Ken Dodd (Decca)
- 10 As Long As He Needs Me..... Shirley Bassey (Columbia)

Week ending September 2, 1960



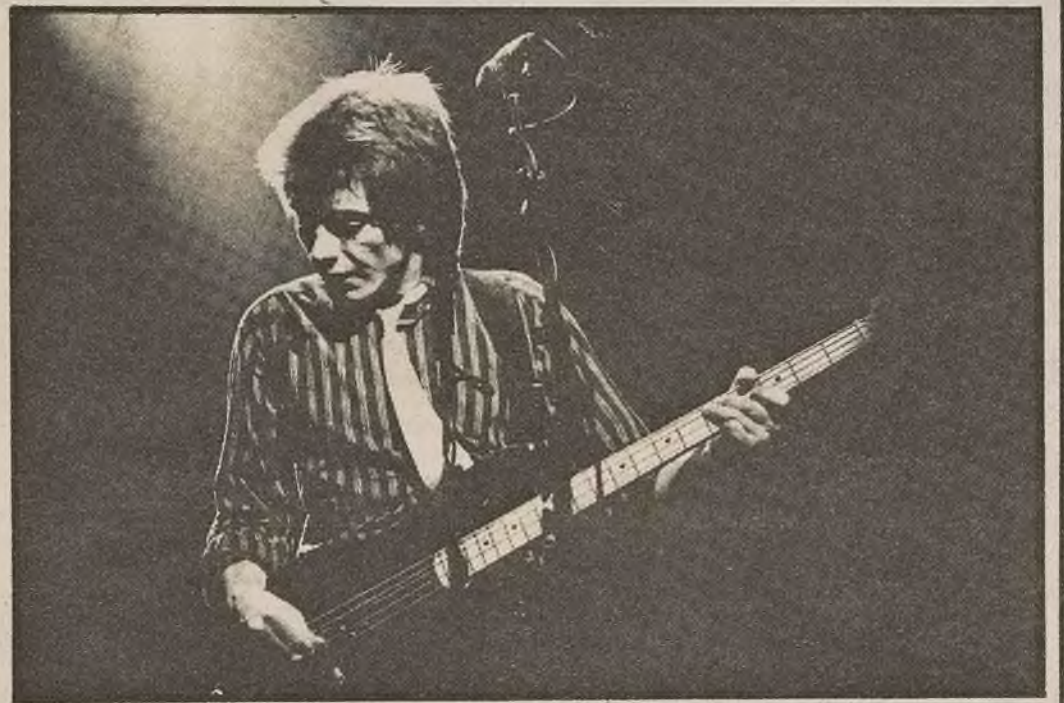
Jam setting off

THE NEW JAM album — 'Sound Affects' — is to be released in mid-October and to coincide with its release the band are to undertake a 21-date tour.

Dates are Sheffield Top Rank (October 26), Newcastle City Hall (27 and 28), Edinburgh Playhouse (29), Glasgow Apollo (30), Manchester Apollo (31 and November 1), Deeside Leisure Centre (2), Leeds Queen's Hall (3), Brighton Conference Centre (6), Bracknell Sports Centre (7 and 8), Poole Arts Centre (9), Cardiff Sophia Gardens (10), Birmingham Bingley Hall (11), Leicester De Montfort Hall (12 and 13), London Rainbow (15 and 16) and Hammersmith Odeon (18 and 19).

Tickets are now on sale — except at Sheffield where they'll be available on August 30 — prices being set at £4, £3.50 and £3 at all seated venues and £3.75 at non-seated gigs. Special coaches will be running from Skelthorne Street Bus Station, Liverpool to connect with the Deeside gig, while coaches to the Brighton concert will run from Southampton and Portsmouth. For details about the latter ring: Southampton 32240.

Pictures: Anton Corbijn.



Echo, Kennedys, U2 tour too

ECHO AND THE Bunnymen and Teardrop Explodes, front-runners in Liverpool's latest bid for world domination, have both lined up UK tours.

The Bunnymen, who play a date at London's Lyceum Ballroom on Sunday, September 7, with The Sound in support, have now been added to the bill at the Leeds Futurama 2 Festival on September 13, where they replace Simple Minds.

The tour proper begins at Brighton Jenkinson's in September 28, after which the band appear at Bournemouth Stateside (29), Bristol Locarno (30), Birmingham Cedar Ballroom (October 3), Manchester University (4), Leeds Fan Club (5), Derby Ajanta Cinema (6), University of East Anglia (8), Sheffield Limit Club (9), Stirling University (11), Edinburgh Valentino's (12), Lanchester Polytechnic (14) and Liverpool University (15). A single is to be released by Korova to tie-in with the tour.

but as yet the band haven't come up with a title for the A-side, though the reverse has been christened 'Do It Clean'.

Teardrop Explodes head out on their tour in mid-October just as the Bunnies are returning to base. But the band are still seeking two young trumper-players plus some girl singers to augment the group before they set out on their gigs. Job applicants are asked to phone Bill Drummond at Zoo Records (051 2273343). Teardrop recently signed to Phonogram Records, after three singles for Zoo, and 'When I Dream', their first single for their new label, is planned for September 5 release, the B-side being 'Kilimanjaro'.

U2, WHOSE Steve Lillywhite-produced album is out on Island in early October, start a lengthy UK tour next month. Dates are: Coventry General Woolfe (September 6), London Marquee (7 and 8), Bristol Berkeley (9), Hull Wellington (11), Scarborough Taboo Club (12), Leeds Queens

Hall (13), London Marquee (15), Penzance Delmelza's (17), Totnes Civic Hall (18), Stroud Marshall Rooms (19), Woolaston Nags Head (21), London Marquee (22), Sheffield Limit Club (25), Birmingham Cedar Ballroom (26), Coventry Polytechnic (27), London Marquee (29), Brighton Polytechnic (30), Leeds Fan Club (October 2), Retford Porterhouse (3), London School of Economics (4), Herne Hill Half Moon (5), Nottingham Boat Club (7), Manchester Polytechnic (9), and Kingston Polytechnic (11).

THE DEAD KENNEDYS, the West Coast misfits whose lead singer Jello Biafra ran for mayor of San Francisco last year, begin their debut UK tour next month.

Their schedule has hit problems already — a Lyceum gig has had to be cancelled because Mecca's area manager decided that their name was synonymous with trouble. But the gig has been replaced with another London date at the Music Machine, the full itinerary being:

Middlesbrough Rock Garden (September 25), Dundee Caird Hall (26), Edinburgh Nite Club (27), Liverpool Brady's (29), Nottingham Boat Club (30), Northampton Paddock (October 1), Sheffield Lead Mill (3), Manchester Polytechnic (4), Blackburn St Georges Hall (5), London Music Machine (8), Coventry Lanchester Poly (10) and Cromer West Runton Pavilion (11).

Post-XTCism

BARRY ANDREWS, one-time XTC keyboardist and short-term Iggy Pop accomplice, is to play the Leeds Futurama 2 Festival as a member of League Of Gentlemen, a band that also includes Robert Fripp.

Andrews has just completed a solo single, 'Rossmore Road

(NW1)', described as "Kenny Ball meets Lee Perry", which Virgin are releasing on September 12. Those contributing include Fripp, former Motor Richard Wernham, and Pat Paladin of Snatch. The Swindonian is already back in the studios working on other recordings.

RECORD BIZ IN GOOD PUBLICITY SHOCK

PIRATE POP RING SMASHED

JUST ONE WEEK after those highly embarrassing *World In Action* revelations about chart-rigging, Britain's beleaguered record business has covered its blushes with news of a triumphant counterstrike.

For according to the British Phonographic Industry, its controversial anti-piracy unit has fatally damaged what it describes as "one of the biggest counterfeiting syndicates operating in the UK".

The fanfare follows the appearance in the London High Court last Wednesday of 19 defendants nabbed earlier this month by nine teams of BPI solicitors and investigators acting with the authority of a special court order. All 19 duly promised not to make or sell further illegal product. A similar order was served against a twentieth defendant who failed to make an appearance.

From the information issued so far, the investigation — codenamed Operation Radar — followed typical BPI anti-piracy lines: an informant employed within the counterfeiters' camp, and the amassing of concrete evidence in the form of "secretly purchased" cassettes (800 in this case, all of which were analysed by the unit's forensic science lab and shown to be illegal).

A total of 6,000 tapes were confiscated during the August 6 raids in and around London, most of them being K-Tel facsimiles. Also seized were batches of inlay sleeves, plus "professional winding equipment". Among the counterfeited artists were Gladys Knight, Abba, Hot Chocolate, David Cassidy, Elton John and The Beatles.

BPI freelance spokesman Richard Robson told *NME* this week that the five-month investigation had cost some forty to fifty thousand pounds. He thought it unlikely that any of the defendants — most of them small shopkeepers — would elect to go for the costly full trial. The

Mole exposes multi-million tapes fiddle

Mole - crazed press gives BPI front-page coverage. Our headline and this extract courtesy Daily Mirror.

indications were, he said, that they would settle out of court.

More than one of the defendants contacted by *NME* this week declared himself nonplussed by the cut-and-dried tone of the publicity so far.

Colin Richardson of Middlesex, for instance, was particularly outraged by the *Guardian* story which listed the names and addresses of each defendant and suggested, he said, "that we are a multi-million pound syndicate ripping off the industry to the tune of £20 million. No one's told me I'm guilty."

In fact, as earlier predicted by Robson of the BPI, Richardson is unlikely to contest his case because, he says, the High Court is an extremely expensive forum.

"Unlike the lower courts, a solicitor is not allowed to make an appearance for you. Only a barrister will do. And barristers are very costly."

Richardson says his main line of business is the production of cover versions of classic '60s rock and C&W hits.

The case against him, he says, arises out of a request from what turned out to be a BPI agent for some 500 pre-recorded cassettes. The "agent" had been interested in Richardson after seeing his classified small ad offering "covers" for sale.

Richardson describes as "sensationalism" press report referring to the operation of a "syndicate". Of the 19 other people served with a court order, only three are known to him.

On a more flippant note, if these counterfeiters are supposed to be making "multi-millions" of pounds out of deleted Gladys Knight cassettes, how much do K-Tel turn over??

ANDREW TYLER

THE SKOLARS

ADVERTISEMENT

WHO'S THE BLOKE AT THE BAR WITH TWO HEADS AND GREEN SKIN!



IT'S ALRIGHT, HE'S ONLY COME TO REPAIR THE SPACE INVADERS GAME!



The last Small Wonder

WALTHAMSTOW-based independent label Small Wonder, who have been winding down operations over the past few months, release their final single at the start of next month.

Entitled 'Precinct', it is the third release from Redditch band The Cravats, and it will be followed in early October by the band's debut album 'Stormtroopers In Toyland', probably the last LP to bear the Small Wonder logo.

The album was originally due out this month but has been delayed, the band claim, because of a fall-out shelter and tank that are being built for incorporation into the LP artwork.

The label — who released the debut singles by the likes of The Angelic Upstarts, Patrik Fitzgerald, Crass, The Poison Girls and The Cockney Rejects — are also deleting some of their earlier 45s.



OUT SHORTLY is the debut single by the highly promising Manchester-based quintet The Diagram Brothers (above). The group, who tout themselves as Britain's answer to Devo, have formed their own label, Diagram, for the three-track 45. The tracks earmarked for inclusion, all originals, are 'We Are All Animals', 'There Is No Shower' and 'I Would Like To Live In Prison'. Pic: David Corio.

GARAGELAND

WAKEFIELD group The Distributors, who, like The Diagram Brothers, played at the recent ICA rock week in London, release their second single 'Lean On Me'/'Never Never' on September 5. The 45 is the band's first for York-based independent Red Rhino and is available from the group themselves at 26 St Catherine Street, Agbrigg, Wakefield, West Yorks.

The week's most unusual release, however, has to be the new single by the semi-legendary Scottish band The Prats, who first announced their existence on Bob Last's first *earcom* last year. Unable to find a British label to release their work, the band have found an outlet via the German independent Dada Records. The single 'Jesus Had A PA' will thus be available from Dada at Berghalde 20, D-6900 Heidelberg 1, West Germany.

Heading the list of a dozen more independent 45s just about to be unleashed is Classix Nouveaux's 'The Robot Dance' on the band's own ESP label. As for the rest...

- **Helpless Huw:** 'Still You' (US Records, 23 Pilkington Avenue, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands). Huw's re-released debut single, one of the few independents with the distinction of making the Top 30 in Kenny Everett's worst record chart.
- **Louder Animal Group:** 'Six Magnificent Cathedrals' (Ears-Pop, 113 Bonchurch Road, Brighton BN2).
- **The Funboy Five:** 'Compulsive Eater' (Cool-Cat-Daddy-O Records, 28 Mercury Walk, Hemel Hempstead, Herts).
- **Drug Squad:** 'Keep Britain Psychedelic' (Bathroom Floor Records, 76 Sullivan Court, Fulham SW6).

- **The One Takes:** EP (No Choice Records, Bob Lucas, 90 Overstone Road, Hammersmith, London W6).
- **Suburban Jets:** EP (9 Webb Road, Porchester, Hants).
- **The Digital Dinosaurs/Instant Automatons/Door And The Window/Midnight Circus:** EP (Spott Records, 24 Kempley Avenue, Copewood, Coventry).
- **Steve Jackson:** 'Fiction' (Almost Records, 57 Lestrangle Street, Cleethorpes, South Humberside).
- **UK Decay:** 'Unwind'/'For My Country' (Fresh, 359 Edgeware Road, London W2).
- **Essential Bop:** 'Eloquent Sounds' EP (Monopause, Flat 7, 2 Apsley Vale, Kingsdown Parade, Bristol).
- **Linda And The Dark:** 'Horror Movies' (Crash, 444 Finchley Road, London NW2).

THE CARDIFF compilation album 'Is The War Over?', containing otherwise unavailable tracks by Young Marble Giants among others, is being re-released. The first 250 copies of the new issue also contain a freebie EP containing tracks by The Decadent Few, Czechs, Ghoulies and The Boy Wonders. The whole package is available for three quid (plus 50p P&P) from Z-Block Records, Flat One, 1 Walker Road, Splott, Cardiff.

■ **The Impossible Dreamers** debut album should also be in most independent shops this weekend. Entitled 'Ready In The Rhythm Section' it is available for £3 from Merciful Release Records, 78 Sussex Square, London W2.

■ The fourth LP on United Dairies label (7 Burlington House, Kings Road, Richmond, Surrey) is The Lemon Kittens' 'We Buy A Hammer For Daddy', containing the sort of avant-garde rock that has earned the band the title 'the psychotic Nina and Frederick'.

■ Also now properly available from Vinyl Solution (39 Hereford Road, London W2) is the live album by the currently-reforming Nips featuring the dulcet vocal chords of Shane O'Hooligan. Titled 'Only The End Of The Beginning', it can be yours for £3.50.

ADRIAN THRILLS

Mark Smith on tapezine

FUCK OFF RECORDS, one of the longest-running independent tape producers, are set to release their first tapezine. Featuring verbal articles by Mark Smith of The Fall and former PiL drummer Martin Atkins, the tapezine aims to 'fill the gap caused by the absence of a free radio network in this country.'

It is available for £1.50 from Rough Trade or Street Level Studios, 8A Bristol Gardens, London W9. Elsewhere in the tape world...

■ **A Major European Group:** 'Dead Goldfish Don't Give You Any Smalltalk', a cassette album available for 70p and an SAE from 44 School Lane, Norton, Sheffield.

■ **Adultery:** 'Bland Out In Britain', a cassette album, from 2 Druid Street, Glassford, Strathclyde, Scotland. Just send an SAE and blank tape.

■ **D.H.C.I./The Performing Ferrets:** Two C30 cassette albums from Dead Hippy Tapes, 19

Westmorland Road, Maidstone, Kent, at a quid each plus 20p p&p.

■ **The Armpit Juices:** 'The Hosiery Method'. Along with various other tapes by The Electric Bereaved, Desk, and a compilation of bands on the BID label, the C60 is available for a blank tape/SAE from 31 Ton Row, Ton Pentre, Rhonda, Glamorgan, Wales.

Misty En Route

MISTY IN ROOTS, Southall's most sus-aware band of militant rockers, have their first UK album release 'Live At The Counter Eurovision '79' out on the People's Unite label on August 29. Previously available on import only, the album was recorded at the Circus Royal Theatre in Brussels, during 1979, and contains some of the band's most well-known material including 'See Them Ah Come', 'Wicked Man' and 'Judas Iscariot'.

The band are now setting out on the first leg of their late summer tour and dates currently set include Hammersmith Clarendon Hotel (August 29), Maidenhead Leisure Centre (31), Huddersfield Cleopatra International (September 5), Sheffield Leadmill Arts Workshop (6) and Edinburgh Ital Club (7).

● Black Slate, the London-based reggae band, are setting up a nationwide club and college tour to tie-in with the release of 'Amigo', their debut album for the Ensign label. The album will include six tracks from the band's limited edition TCD label album, plus four new cuts 'Losing Game', 'Sticks Man '80', 'Thin Line Between Love And Hate' and 'Legalise Marijuana'. A single, also called 'Amigo', gets a release both as a 7" and a 12" on September 5.

Extra Rev

THE REVILLOS have replaced departing bassist William Mysterious with the equally anonymous Vincent Spik, described as being 'known to the criminal fraternity in Hereford in his previous capacity as an employee of the local magistrates court'.

This week the band also finalised the release of a single, 'Hungry For Love', and an album, 'Rev Up', which Dindisc have lined up for early September.

Mac intact

IN THE WAKE of rumours about the impending break-up of Fleetwood Mac, the band have issued a statement denying it, though they add: 'There will probably be some solo albums in the near future. The group will be going back into the studio to begin recording their next album early in 1981.'

Meanwhile stories persist that all is not well with Pink Floyd, following growing friction between Dave Gilmour and the other members.

Gibb pic gags Babs!

CASH QUIBBLING over a picture of Barry Gibb has forced a delayed release for the new Barbra Streisand album, titled 'Guilty'.

Fly in the ointment is Bee Gee Barry Gibb, who singlehandedly penned the entire batch of songs and, with the help of 'Saturday Night Fever' chums Albhy Galuten and Karl Richardson, also co-produced.

The argument is not about royalties but about a demand by Gibb that he be paid for allowing his photograph to be used on album cover. The Streisand camp has so far resisted, but it is thought likely they will capitulate rather than risk sinking the project.

The shot in question depicts Barry and Barbra hugging in a windswept, all-white setting. Each is reported looking fit, tanned and curly-haired. Gibb is reported to show off much of his chest and a selection of gold jewelry.

Release was originally set for late September. This has now been set back until the two camps make up.

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□ **BILLY CONNOLLY** who performs two special midnight shows at the Edinburgh Playhouse on Saturday August 23 and Saturday August 30, commences his 'On Your Bike Tour' on September 13 at Stroud Leisure Centre, other dates being Slough Fulcrum Theatre (14 and 15), Oxford New Theatre (16 and 17), Fort Regent Gloucester Hall (19), Guernsey Beau Sejour Theatre (20), Crawley Leisure Centre (21), Stoke Victoria Hall (22), Bradford St George's Hall (24), Liverpool Royal Court (25), Middlesbrough Town Hall (26), Coventry Theatre (28), Blackburn King George's Hall (29), Clacton Princes Theatre (October 1), Southend Cliff Pavilion (2 and 3), Swindon The Oasis (4), Bletchley Leisure Centre (5), Chatham Central Hall (7), Hastings White Rock Pavilion (8), Brighton Dome (9), Bournemouth Winter Gardens (10 and 11), Paignton Festival Theatre (12), St Austell Riviera (13) Reading Hexagon (14), Croydon Fairfield Halls (15), Hull New Theatre (16), Buxton Opera House (17), Newcastle Eldon Leisure Centre (18), Scarborough Floral Hall (19), Nottingham Theatre Royal (20 and 21), Stockport Davenport Theatre (22), Southport Theatre (23), Halifax Civic Theatre (24), Blackpool Opera House (25), York Theatre Royal (26) Dublin Liberty Hall (November 11 and 12), and Belfast Festival (13 and 14).

□ **THE BROTHERS JOHNSON** have confirmed dates for a British tour next month. They open at Brighton Dome on September 22, and then play dates at Birmingham Odeon (23), Manchester Apollo (24) and London Dominion (25, 26 and 27).

□ **TOYAH** plays one London date prior to beginning rehearsals for a new play, *Sugar and Spice*, to be staged at the Royal Court Theatre. The gig takes place at the ICA on September 3 and is one of those likely to be filmed for Michael White's *Urg! A Music War*. Blood Donor and Invisible Sex play support.

□ **TIGERS OF PAN TANG** set out to blast the country into submission on September 12, when they open their UK tour at Newcastle Mayfair. Then, while the north-east is still reeling, the heavy-metallists move on to play Northampton Paddock (13), Hull Wellington Club (15), Grimsby Central Hall (18), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (19), Retford Porterhouse (20), Leeds Forde Green Hotel (21), Derby Assembly Rooms (22), Cardiff Top Rank (23), Colwyn Bay Dixieland Show Bar (24), Bournemouth Town Hall (26),

● **Police** have a new single out on September 19, titled 'Don't Stand So Close To Me' / 'Friends'. The band's recently completed album 'Zenytta Mondatta' should be in the shops seven days later.

● **Duncan MacKay**, who has played keyboards with 10cc for the past two years, this week announced that he was quitting the band in order to concentrate on projects of his own. MacKay recently signed a solo recording deal with the Edge label and has been working on an album titled 'Visa', which should be around by early autumn. Prior to joining 10cc, he worked with Cockney Rebel and also played on some Kate Bush recordings.

● **Stevie Wonder** has a single 'Masterblaster (Jammin')' / 'Masterblaster (Dub)' released on September 1. His new album 'Hotter Than July' is being readied for late September. It is now confirmed that Wonder's eight-piece band Wonderlove will be appearing on the Wembley bill, while his four backing vocalists Shirley Brewer, Alexandra Brown Evans, Marva Holcom and Melody McCulley will also be on the gig.

● **Supertramp's** next is a live double that goes under the monicker of 'Paris'. Also scheduled is a single 'Take The Long Way Home' / 'From Now On'.

● **Simple Minds**, who are to support Peter Gabriel during his European tour, have a new album released by Zoom on September 12.



ESSENTIAL LOGIC have lined up a few London gigs: **The Rainbow** (September 1), **Islington No. 1** (2), **Music Machine** (8), **Richmond Brolleys** (25), **Stockwell Old Queen's Head** (26) and **London Action Space Theatre** (October 3). Pic: Anton Corbijn.

Blackburn King George's Hall (28), Hardstoft Shoulder Of Mutton (29) and Manchester Polytechnic (30). Further dates are still being set. In the meantime, there's a new debut album, 'Wild Cat', on MCA.

□ **THE RIVITS**, the band put together by **Jess Roden** and keyboardist **Peter Wood**, make their British debut at London's Venue on September 9, following a first-ever live gig at a Dutch pop festival.

The venue date marks Roden's first appearance in Britain since 1977, though Wood recently played here as keyboardist on the Floyd's Earls Court concerts. Both are currently New York based. The Rivits will be augmented by Steve York (bass) and Willie Wilson (drums), the latter having previously played with Wood as a member of The Sutherquins.

□ **TV PERSONALITIES** have announced the following gigs: London Rainbow (September 1), Hammersmith Clarendon (5), Islington No. 1 Club (9), Croydon

Crawdaddy (12), Stockwell Old Queen's Head (19), and London Rock Garden (22). The Rainbow gig is a charity date with The Professionals, Inner City Units, Essential Logic and others.

□ **THE FALL** play a one-off at Nelson Railway Working Men's Club on Friday, August 29.

□ **GERRY RAFFEERTY's** shows at Edinburgh's Playhouse Theatre have all proved sell-outs and an extra performance, at 11.15pm on Monday, September 1, has now been set. Tickets are £5, £4 and £3.

□ **BRIAN BRAIN** have added further dates and now play Manchester Rafter's (August 28), Birmingham Bourne Brook Hotel (12), Hull Wellington Club (23) and London Rock Garden (October 7).

□ **GILLAN** have added a second date at London's Hammersmith Odeon on October 15. Tickets are priced £3.75, £3.25 and £2.75.

□ **Q-TIPS**, forced to cancel three nights at the London Marquee last week when saxman Stewart Blandamer came down with tonsillitis, have re-scheduled the dates for September 1, 19 and 20.

□ **JUDY COLLINS** is to appear at a concert to be given at London's Festival Hall on Monday, September 29. She then plays a British tour, including the following confirmed dates: Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (30), Southport Floral Hall (October 4), Edinburgh Usher Hall (5), Croydon Fairfield Hall (7), Reading Hexagon (9) and Belfast Ulster Hall (10).

□ **RICHARD and LINDA THOMPSON** are set to appear at the Fairport Convention reunion gig at Pewitt Farm, Cropedy, near Banbury, on August 30. **Ralph McTell** and **Steve Ashley** have also confirmed the date, while **Richard Digance**, **Dave Cousins** and **Diz Disley** are expected to make an appearance.

□ **NINE BELOW ZERO**, whose 'Live At The Marquee' album is out on A&M this week, play the following dates: Middlesex and Herts Country Club (August 27), Birmingham Cedars (28), Kinglevington Country Club (29), West Runton Pavilion (30), London Dingwalls (31) and London Rock Garden (September 5).

□ A 'BATTLE Of The Bands' contest is being organised by promoter Steve Lishman, in order to find new recording talent. The contest, which features heats in a dozen cities and a final at the London Rainbow Theatre on February 3, offers £3,000 in cash plus a recording contract — with guaranteed album release — to the winners. All bands selected for the competition are to be paid for their performances and the finalists will also receive recording contracts and contribute tracks to a studio recorded compilation album.

Bands wishing to be considered should send a demo cassette tape, featuring two original songs and one cover version, together with a brief biography, a photo and details of previous live gigs to: Battle Of The Bands Ltd., London House, Fulham Road, London SW10 9EL. Only amateur or semi-professional bands with no existing recording or publishing contracts will be considered. Closing date is September 30.

RECORD NEWS



MARTHA AND THE MUFFINS' 'Suburban Dream' single is to get an August 29 release by Dindisc. A month later comes an album, 'Trance And Dance' produced by ex-Gong bassist Mike Howlett. The first 20,000 copies will contain a free live EP recorded at gigs earlier this year. Pic: Anton Corbijn.

Titled, 'Empires And Dance', the first 10,000 copies will be available at £3.99 or less, the price then reverting to £5.00.

● **Comsat Angels**, the highly rated

Sheffield band, have an album 'Waiting For A Miracle' out on Polydor Records on September 5. An autumn UK tour is to be announced shortly.

● **Local Heroes SW9's** 'Drip Dry Zone' album is released on Oval Records during September. Charlie Gillett's label is also planning to issue 'Even When I'm Not', an album by ex-Squeeze bassist Harry Kakoulli, during the next few weeks.

● **Saxon's** latest single 'Suzie Hold On' sees the light of day early in September. The B-side is a live version of 'Judgement Day', the studio version of which will be included on the band's third album for Carrere, threatened for late October.

● **The Spectres**, who are currently dickering with EMI about a contract release for Glen Matlock and Danny Kustow, hope to go into the studios during September to lay down tracks for a single, with Clive Langer or Alex Chilton producing. Following recording, the band return to more UK gigs, including appearances on the re-scheduled Ramones tour.

● **Decca** have once more plundered their **Rolling Stones** vaults to provide a special series of double A-side singles, which come packed in special bags. There will be 12 singles in the series, every one of which has seen action as a single in the past — the one exception being 'Gimme Shelter', which comes backed by 'Sympathy For The Devil'. The discs will be available singly, while a special collector's box, which will include a colour poster and silver and blue enamel badge, will be on sale through special mail order.



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Tickets on sale at Dome box office
from Saturday 23rd August. Tel No. 0273 682127

Tuesday 23rd September 1980
Birmingham Odeon, New Street, Birmingham
Ticket Prices: £4.50, £4.00, £3.50. Show Time: 7.30 pm.
Tickets on sale at Odeon box office
from Monday 25th August. Tel No. 021 643 6101

Wednesday 24th September 1980
Manchester Apollo, Ardwick Green, Manchester
Ticket Prices: £4.50, £4.00, £3.50. Show Time: 7.30 pm.
Tickets on sale at Apollo box office
from Saturday 23rd August. Tel No. 061 273 1112

Dominion Theatre,
Tottenham Court Road, London W.1
Thursday 25th, Friday 26th & Saturday 27th September 1980
Ticket Prices: £4.75, £4.25, £3.75. Show Time: 8.00 pm each night.
Tickets on sale at Dominion box office
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Apollo Theatre, Glasgow
Sat. 20th Sept. 7.30 p.m.
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Capitol Theatre, Aberdeen
Sun. 21st Sept. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets: £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 0224 23141

Odeon Theatre, Edinburgh
Mon. 22nd Sept. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets: £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 031 667 3805

City Hall, Sheffield
Tues. 23rd Sept. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets: £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 0742 735295/6

Assembly Rooms, Derby
Wed. 24th Sept. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets: £3.50, £3.00
Available from B/O Tel: 0332 31111

Guild Hall, Portsmouth
Fri. 26th Sept. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00
Available from B/O Tel: 0705 24355

Rainbow Theatre, London
Sat. 27th Sept. 8.00 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 01 263 3148
Premier L.T.B. and Virgin Ticket Unit

Odeon Theatre, Hammersmith
Sun. 28th Sept. 8.00 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 01 748 4081
Premier, L.T.B. and Virgin Ticket Unit.

Gaumont Theatre, Southampton
Tues. 30th Sept. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 0703 29772

Colston Hall, Bristol
Wed. 1st Oct. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 0272 291768

Odeon Theatre, Birmingham
Fri/Sat. 3rd/4th Oct. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 021 643 6101/2

St. Georges Hall, Bradford
Sun. 5th Oct. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00
Available from B/O Tel: 0274 32513

Apollo Theatre, Manchester
Mon. 6th Oct. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00, £2.50
Available from B/O Tel: 061 273 1112/3

De Montfort Hall, Leicester
Tues. 7th Oct. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets £3.50, £3.00
Available from B/O Tel: 0533 544444

Victoria Hall, Hanley
Thurs. 9th Oct. 7.30 p.m.
Tickets £3.00
Available from Mike Lloyd Music Shops
Tunstall, Hanley, Newcastle under Lyme
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Empire Theatre, Liverpool
Fri. 10th Oct. 7.30 p.m.
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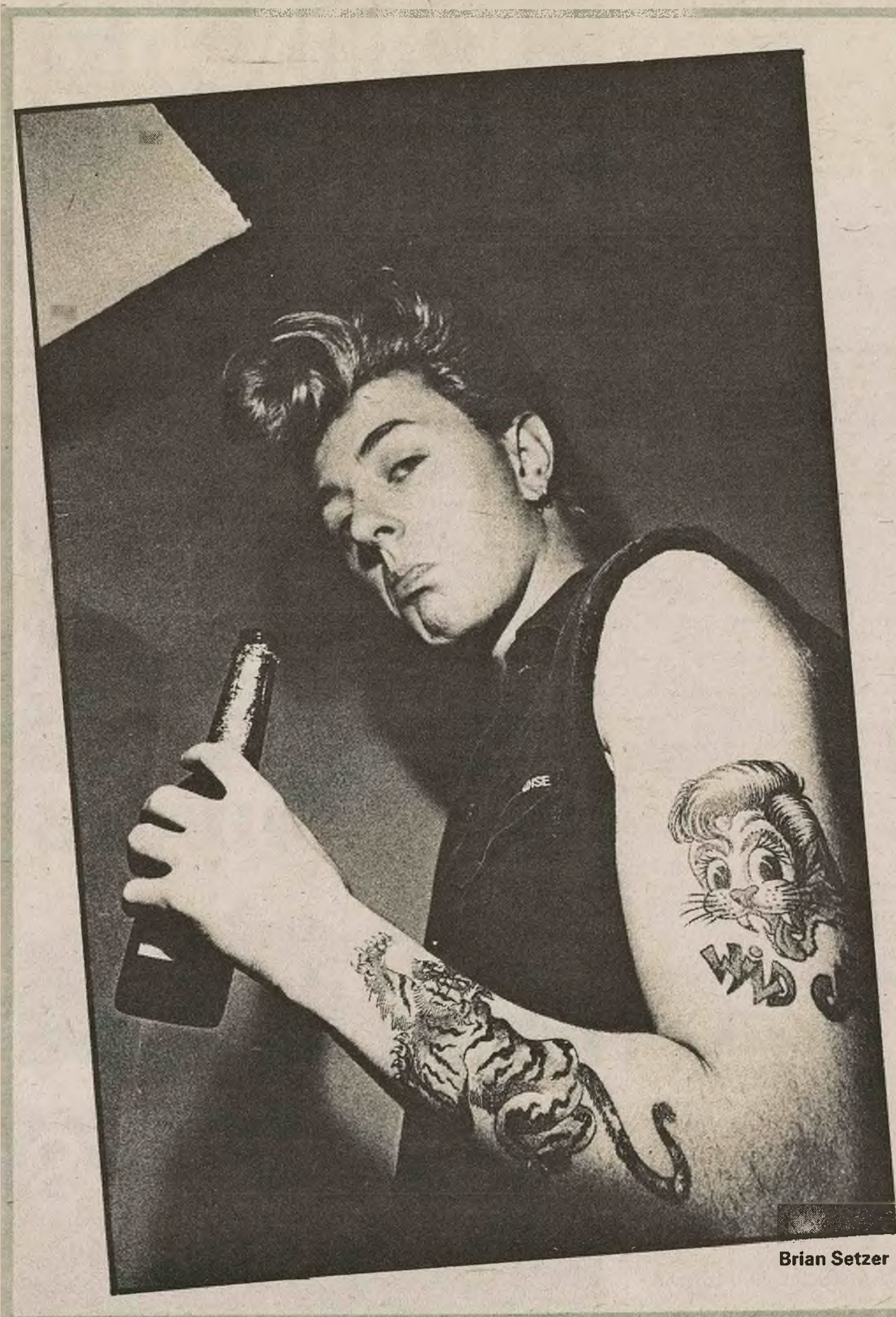
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HOUSING SHOCK REPORT

Long Island rockabilly rebs sleeping on Soho office floor . . . no place to hang a double-bass . . .



out of place hair on his elaborate blond quiff and takes up the story. "We supposedly had all these gigs set up but none of them materialised. We weren't actually too bothered about it at first until we found out that it was really hard to get gigs over here. I mean, compared to New York, it's almost impossible. Over here they want tapes and all that shit."

"I don't really want to start blaming anyone, but it was a big mess up and we were stuck right in the middle of it!"

THEIR FORTUNES took a turn for the better, however, after a chance meeting with the original Police and Electric Chairs guitarist Henri Padovani. He introduced the band to Claudine Riley, a publicist working for press agent Keith Altham (Who, Rolling Stones etc), and the group were allowed to sleep on the sofa and floors of their London office until more permanent accommodation was found.

Claudine herself then went about the task of persuading club promoters to book a band who, though a cult name back in New York, were total unknowns to the UK rock audience.

For their part, the band were keen to play any dates they could get, from rootsy pub venues like the Thomas A Beckett in the Old Kent Road and The Kensington in Shepherd's Bush, to more traditional music biz watering holes such as Dingwalls and The Venue.

With digs and gigs no longer a problem, the sheer vitality of their stage performances did the rest, welding the spirit of the original rockabilly of the '50s with a musical toughness and visual punch that is strictly 1980.

And once the word was out, their reputation started to blossom to the extent that they are now being courted in earnest by half a dozen major labels as well as attracting such luminaries as Jerry Dammers, Pretenders, Clashers, Banshees and even old hands like Jagger, Richards and Ronnie Lane to their gigs.

It's not quite the hoary old rags to riches tale — there's a long way to go yet — but their near overnight success in the London clubs does reek of the sort of storybook rock 'n' roller coaster ride to fame that just isn't supposed to happen these days.

But, bunking the train to stardom aside, The Stray Cats had no grand plans when they took the shot in the dark of moving to England.

"We just kinda got sick of Long Island 'cause we'd been living there all our lives," drawls Jim. "We didn't really think about it much. We just packed up and left one day. We didn't come over here 'cause the audiences were indifferent at home or anything like that. We just got tired and had the independent urge to split."

Despite their initial difficulties, the move has left few regrets.

"The only thing I'd go back for right now is grease!" says Brian. "The hair grease over here just isn't the same. But apart from that I

Tomcats began in earnest, dropping most of their Cochran and Vincent covers in favour of original stuff. They also changed their name to The Stray Cats and moved in on the trendier Manhattan club scene.

Now for the caper. Despite being stylistically at odds with the dominant NY trends as they saw them — middle of the road punk and camp '60s pastiche — The Stray Cats had little trouble in securing regular gigs on the Max's/Hurrah's circuit, and began establishing a strong reputation as a live band in much the same way as they are now doing over here.

"At first it was pretty hard for us," recalls Jim. "At first everyone thought we were *queers* or something 'cause of the way we dressed. But when they actually heard us play, they all knew we were playing rock 'n' roll and slowly but surely we built up a pretty large following of kids aged from about 17 to 21. By the time we left, we were getting about 300 people along to most of the gigs."

"We don't want to limit ourselves to a straight rockabilly audience. We don't want to have just teds and rockabillys coming along to see us, 'cause we're not a straight rockabilly band. The songs are more modern, the lyrics are more contemporary, and it's all much louder and electric than the earlier stuff."

"But it's still got the *spirit* and the basic look, which we kind of exaggerate a bit," he adds indicating the pin-drop of a quiff as greasy as the kebab he's just demolished.

"I mean, no-one actually wore hair like *this* in the '50s! We just take it one step on. We sort of mix up the clothes a bit. This might be a rockabilly haircut, but we don't just wear rock 'n' roll stuff."

Brian goes further and cites The Specials, Beat and Selecter as bands working in a similar way to The Stray Cats, taking an established musical form and using it to create something more contemporary, without destroying the all-important spirit of the original.

"I saw The Specials once and they were great. They've got their roots but they haven't got stuck in one place. They're really taking things on and developing them."

The petty revivalism charge is also shown the red card before being properly raised.

"If people were to accuse us of being part of a revival I wouldn't see it, 'cause we don't play pure rockabilly. If you're talking about someone like Showaddywaddy, then it *is* just revival shit, 'cause they don't play with any feeling."

"But if you really feel something then it isn't a revival. Look at some jazz musicians who have been playing swing for the past 40 years. That's not a revival. It's just something that they really feel."

The band view their most obvious British contemporaries — Whirlwind — with a curious mixture of admiration and suspicion,

Not quite the hoary old rags to riches tale, but . . .

If The Stray Cats get any more successful they'll have beds of their own to sleep in.

A HUMID late August afternoon in the centre of Soho. Three young Americans bemoan the lack of hot sauce on their takeaway lunch from the kebab store across the road and gather in an apprehensive semi-circle for an interview.

The trio are 19-year-old Brian Setzer and his two 18-year-old partners, Slim Jim and Lee Rocker. Collectively they are The Stray Cats, pioneers of post-modern rockabilly and arguably the hottest band currently doing the rounds on an otherwise uninspiring London gig circuit.

We are sitting in the first-floor office of a London music business publicist.

Nothing unusual about that, of course, *except* that these hardly-salubrious confines are also the only place the three native New Yorkers have been able to look on as home for the past six weeks.

For, at the start of July, The Stray Cats, bored with the suburban backcloth of their smalltown origins on New York's Long Island, felt the uncontrollable urge to get moving. The initial feeling was that anywhere would do until a little thought and consultation with their English manager Tony Bidgood resulted in the Cats homing in on the UK to start searching for the young rockabilly rebels in London.

Gigs and contacts were hastily arranged back on the other side of the Atlantic, a flight booked and instruments packed, including Lee's sizeable double bass, which required a seat and air ticket to itself on the TWA Jumbo into Heathrow. But that was where their problems started. The arrangements that had been made for gigs and accommodation fell unceremoniously through, leaving the band — in their own words — "in Shit City".

Brian chews on a chunk of kebab, adjusts an

want to stay here. We want to be able to do a proper tour of England and Europe.

"We're starting to get a steady following now. I'm starting to notice the same faces at the gigs and we're really happy with the way the crowds are reacting and the way the songs are going down."

THE ROOTS of The Stray Cats lie not only in the music of Cochran, Presley, Vincent and Burnette but also in the now defunct New York cult band The Bloodless Pharaohs, in which Brian played guitar from mid-1977 right up until the end of last year.

Though they made it onto record — cutting two tracks for the NY compilation LP '2 By 5', produced by Blondie's Jimmy Destri — the Pharaohs never realised the potential of their initial vision as a band carrying on from where the first Roxy Music album left off.

By the time the split came last year, a disillusioned Brian had already started gigging on a part-time basis with his old schoolmates Lee and Jim, sometimes playing as many as three sets a night around the bars of Long Island as The Tomcats.

With the final demise of the Pharaohs, The

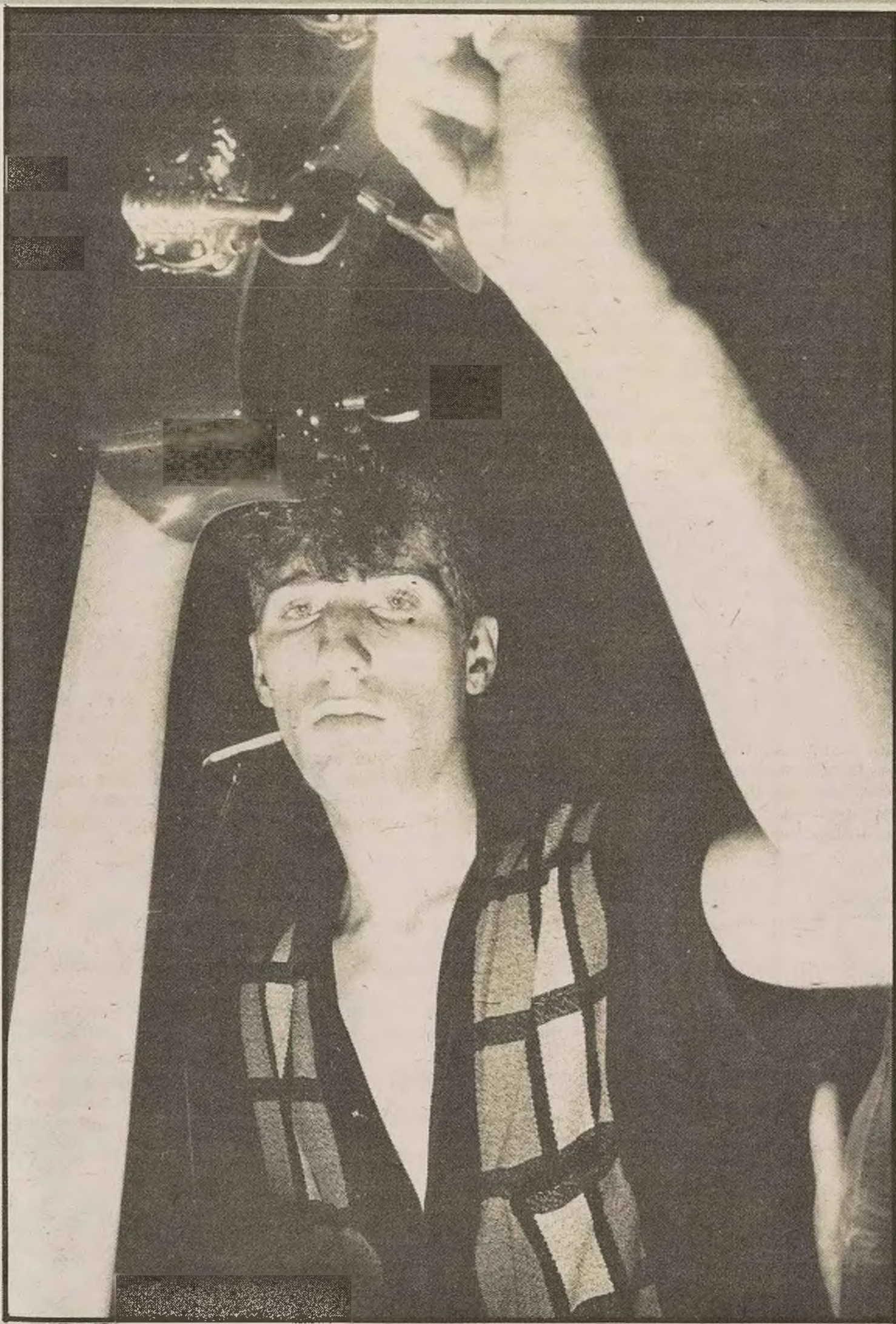
Brian rating them unequivocally as a band with a real *feel* for the music, but both Jim and Lee have their doubts.

"I don't think they really have anything to do with rockabilly," muses Jim. "They seem to do things straight out of the book, but the whole thing about rockabilly is that it's supposed to have spirit and they didn't have that when I saw them."

"They were very lackadaisical, very rehearsed and the whole thing about rockabilly is supposed to be just going out and doing it."

"I'd like bands like them more if they didn't set themselves up as rockabilly bands," adds Lee. "I mean, they don't *look* rockabilly. They use an electric bass and a giant drumset. If I just saw them as a *band*, I think I would like them more."

THE STRAY Cats' genuine affection for the style and flash of '50s rockola and the emphasis they place on trying to re-capture the wild and raw spirit of the original rock 'n' rollers has hardly clouded the sharpness of their lyrics. As Jim — a forthright and articulate drummer — points out, there's



Lee Rocker

more to sing about these days than just highschool dances.

The band's live set still includes a few well-chosen covers from the obligatory Eddie Cochran number — usually 'Something Else' or 'Jeannie, Jeannie, Jeannie' — to a relative obscurity like Warren Smith's 'Ubangi Stomp', and The Supremes' 'You Can't Hurry Love' — both radical transformations of the originals, the former a pounding ska-based thrash and the latter a rambling countrified rocker.

But it's the original stuff that stands out, particularly the sketch on youth-cult violence 'Rumble In Brighton' and the nearest thing to a directly political song, 'Storm The Embassy'.

Both Brian and Jim, who co-write most of the songs, refute suggestions — hinted at in last week's *Live!* review of the band — that 'Rumble In Brighton' is merely a glorification of mindless gang thuggery.

Brian: "It's not a glorification of the violence 'cause I think that the whole fighting thing is totally ridiculous; people just beating someone up for the way that they dress . . ."

Jim: "I really hope that it doesn't glorify anything. It's supposed to be more like an article, someone standing back and writing about the fighting, 'cause there's nothing like that in America. The last line of the song also says that no-one is the winner 'cause no-one does come out on top in the end 'cause the whole thing is so ridiculous."

Brian: "There are no gangfights like that in America. There are certain areas, like part of Brooklyn, that you don't go to 'cause of the muggings, but there are no big fights just 'cause someone dresses differently or wears their hair in a certain way."

"When we first came here we were overly afraid 'cause of what we'd heard, but there hasn't been any trouble at our gigs and we've had skins, mods and teds all along, anyone that likes rockabilly. That's the one thing they've all had in common. We want to play for everybody, not just the rockabilly kids."

"We even went to see the Cockney Rejects at the Electric Ballroom and we were scared shitless 'cause it was a really wild night with a riot and everything. We'd walked in not knowing what to expect but none of the skinheads in there even looked at us differently . . . probably thought we must have already been nuts going in there on our own anyway!"

The other stand-out original 'Storm The Embassy' is not, as reported in another paper, an odious ode to the SAS, but a song about the plight of the US hostages in Iran. The patriotic tone seems almost reactionary on the surface, although Brian sees it as more of a general comment on the apathy in the face of the crisis.

"What really inspired that was coming over

here and finding that no-one was really bothered about it. What am I actually saying in the song? Get those people back basically!"

"It's just a song written out of anger on the spur of the moment. It's not really that realistic. I don't know if we should actually storm the embassy but that's just how you feel when you hear about it every night on the news in America and you get so pissed off. It's just aggravating, although I don't hold it against anyone personally."

'Storm The Embassy' is one of a batch of songs that Brian and Jim have written and integrated into the set in the six weeks since their arrival in Britain. (Another is the as-yet-unrehearsed 'Teenage Army', about the ominous call for the re-introduction of draft registration in the States.)

Although he claims not to be a prolific writer, Brian's productivity has certainly increased since the band's arrival in Britain, something the composer puts down to the change of scene.

"I've been inspired over here, basically," he says. "If I was still sitting at home in my apartment in New York, I might get bored and not write anything for a month."

"But if I've got a lot of things happening to me, like now, I just get a lot of ideas. It's not as if I write a song every week, just that if I get inspired, I'll write a lot."

"Most of it is a pretty spontaneous thing."

AND THOSE last words echo quite simply just what the appeal of The Stray Cats is — their freshness and immediacy: that fleeting zap and sparkle that is probably destined never to be caught in the studio with the intensity that exists on stage with Setzer going through his Cochran routines while extracting a wall of feedback from his 1956 Gretsch, Lee Rocker wrestling with the violin bass and Slim Jim unleashing a barrage of shrieks as he brings the drumsticks down on his solitary snaredrum with the crash of a sledgehammer on corrugated tin.

Back in the Soho office-cum-hotel, a more restrained Jim quietly concludes the interview with the sort of anecdote he probably *knew* would close this piece.

"I saw this great lady on the train today who came up and asked me why I had a sword in my ear," he recounts, indicating the dagger earring that dangles from his left lobe.

"She told me that it was dangerous and how her husband once stabbed someone with a kitchen knife and ended up in a special hospital."

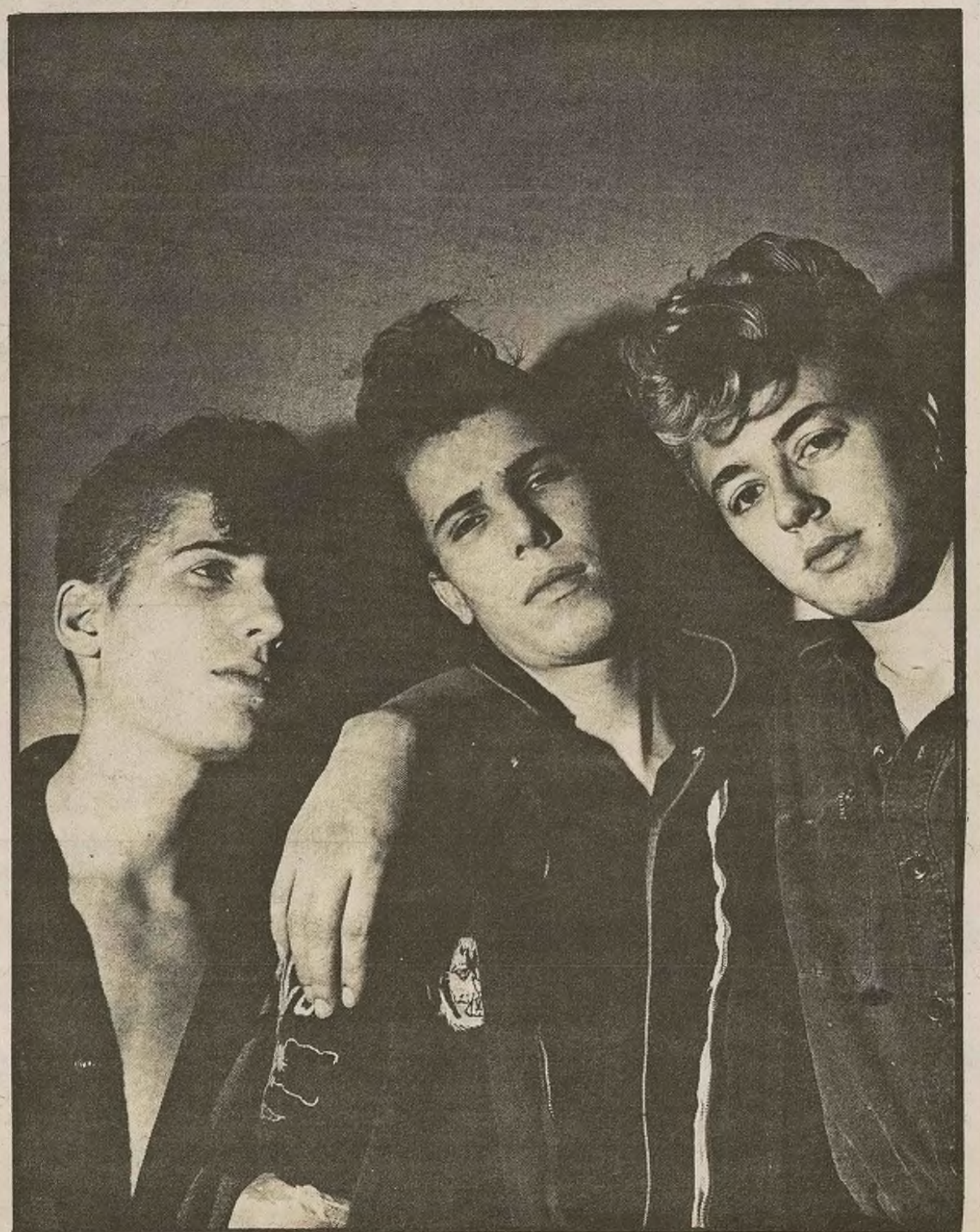
"Then she says 'What's your christian name, child?' So I said James and she says 'You take care of yourself James and I hope you get what you want out of life!'"

So far, the lad's right on course.

A rock 'n' roll myth by Adrian Thrills Mean 'n' moody pix by Peter Anderson



Slim Jim



WHO THE HELL IS KAREL FIALKA?

Words:
PAUL
DU NOYER

SUPPOSE a boy named Karel would have to be good at explaining himself. Fortunately, Karel Fialka is just that.

As a fairly promising exponent of modern electronic pop, one of his aims is to inject the genre with an element of adult sophistication. Thoughtful and articulate in a cultured sort of way, Fialka presents an impression of one who's prepared his personal manifesto with care. He says he'd even like to develop a viable form of contemporary cabaret in which to showcase his music.

So who the hell is Karel Fialka?

For a start he's the name on a new album released on the Pye-sponsored Blueprint label, called 'Still Life', a record that marks his bid to invent a music that's geared to mind and body equally — 'Mind And Body' being that album's original working title.

Unkindly, Fialka might be described as the archetypal English dilettante (even if he is Czechoslovakian / Scottish and born in Bengal, raised in Africa). His previous involvements include poet, painter, smart-set disco DJ, "various things to do with fashion", and actor.

The only precedent for this current expedition into music was a partnership a few years back with Paul Roberts, who became Sniff 'n' The Tears. However, the past 18 months have seen three likeable 45s by Fialka — 'Armband' which was out initially on his own Red Shift label, 'The Eyes Have It' which was extensively airplayed and modestly successful, and now a clipped and tricky dub kitty called 'File In Forget'; like the other two, it can also be found on the 'Still Life' set.

Karel Fialka's songs, for the uninitiated, are often quite ingenious, and always very stylish.

Vogue-ish electropop on the surface, full of hooks and synthesised riffery, they've got a brightness and attack about them — not to mention some consistently acute lyrics. But already he's been accused of hollowness, of being all about calculated cleverness



rather than gritty commitment. Is Fialka perhaps just a suave outsider, idly chancing his hand at a new game?

"Well I'm not into a rock 'n' roll stance," he admits, in well-spoken tones. "I think my music is more rock 'n' roll than most people's is, and it

has a certain vibrance to it; but basically I've been standing back from the more self-destructive excesses of rock. I wanted my record to be European rather than American."

How d'you explain the difference?

"European rock 'n' roll demands less schmaltz, less ersatz emotion. I don't have to lay myself on the line for everybody. It's the old thing: those with eyes will see, those with ears will hear."

"What I'm working on now, my actual concept for rock now is — I have to use the word — 'cabaret', though it tends to stick in the throat."

Ah, cabaret... For all the revered history of that form, hasn't it been pretty well discredited by now? Could he really see any *useful* potential role for cabaret in grim old 1980?

"Yeah! It doesn't have to be Batley or Las Vegas, smarmy smiles and rhinestones. It's presenting a specific interpretation of numbers. I'm thinking in terms of people like Brecht and Weil, cabaret that makes a point. You have to make it pertinent to what is going on in the world."

But why cabaret?

"I can't help but feel that rock, in its various forms, has been around for such a long time that it has to start moving in new directions; otherwise it's just being stunted... I went to see a band a few weeks ago and they were 'good', but they were *dead*. There's not enough in rock any more for any band just to stand up there and play, or go through its various motions of headbanging, its phallic guitar poses."

It remains to be seen if Fialka can put these ideas into practice. Although no more than a very basic synth player (his accomplices on record are Robin Langridge on synths and Martin Deegan on drums) he still nurtures hopes of live performances in the future. I'll be waiting, for one. So will Batley and Las Vegas.

Pix:
SANTO
BASONE

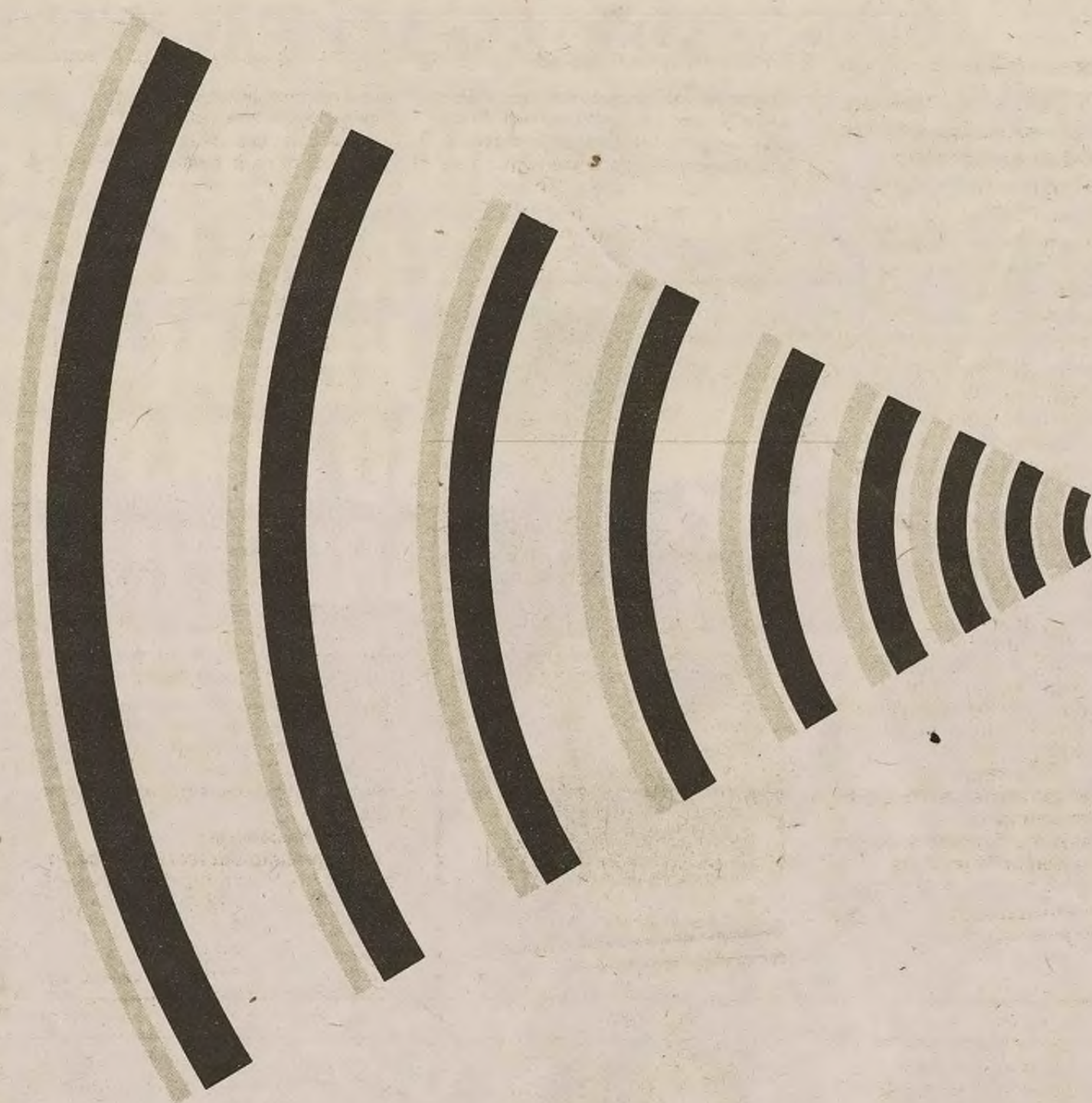
IS CABARET THE FUTURE OF ROCK AND ROLL?

THE
MICHAEL
SCHENKER
GROUP



THE SINGLE
**"ARMED
AND READY"**
CHS2455
Chrysalis

LIMITED EDITION IN CLEAR
VINYL WITH FREE
EMBROIDERED
PATCH



THE SOUNDS OF VOICES

The new single from
DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES
YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELIN'
is a contemporary rendition of
this classic song. Released from their
forthcoming album **'VOICES'**
YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELIN'
is bound to continue the success of
PORTABLE RADIO, **WAIT FOR ME**, and
their most recent hit **RUNNING FROM**
PARADISE, all three from their previous
album **X-STATIC** (PL 13494 Cassette
PK 13494).

'VOICES' Album Cassette

YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVIN' FEELIN'
Single

ON TOUR

September
11th — Bristol Hippodrome
12th — Southampton Gaumont
14th — Coventry Theatre
15th — Manchester Apollo
16th — Southport Theatre
17th — Edinburgh Playhouse
19th — Oxford New Theatre
20th — Brighton Dome
21st — Croydon Fairfield Hall
22nd — Hammersmith Odeon
24th — Birmingham Odeon



RCA

Thrills



Pic: Derek Ridgers

Brighton Easter Bank Holiday 1980.

SKIN and the HEAD Brutality Verite?

DEREK RIDGERS is a 29-year-old photographer who has always been interested in the deliberate manifestations of individuality through dress and self-presentation. It's an interest which has drawn his work again and again towards youth and its many subcultures.

In '78 he mounted an exhibition of 'punk portraits' at London's ICA; now for the first three weeks in September (Sept 1-20), he is showing a series of photos of skinheads at London's Chenil Galleries, 2 Gledbe Place, SW3, just off the Kings Road. The galleries are open 11am-6pm, excluding Sundays.

Although Ridgers acknowledges the skinhead doctrine as one of "violence and to a greater or lesser extent overt nationalism", he also notes that these are kids who by

their mid to late teens are already locked into a life of violence and conflict with authority, whatever they may do or think.

That's one reason why he considers the printed interviews with his subjects which accompany the visuals as important as the photographs themselves. These are talks on a broad range of subjects — not just race, nation, and violence, but also drugs, home, family, aims, and a sense of belonging.

"Maybe you'd think these discussions haven't got much to do with taking pictures," says Rodgers. But it's not the sort of contention the optical proof supports.

CYNTHIA ROSE

Perrett a wanted man — at last

ON TOUR in the States recently, Peter Perrett of The Only Ones became a fugitive from the San Francisco police who were hunting him for alleged Attempted Murder and Assault With A Deadly Weapon — in this case, a car.

"I was parking the car while the others went for a coffee," he told *Thrills*, "when this six foot three Chinese parking-lot attendant came up and grabbed me and started shouting that I couldn't park there."

The car moved, somehow, and the attendant was knocked to the ground, apparently sustaining a bruised leg. Smarting from this injury, he proceeded to press charges.

Meanwhile The Only Ones had left San Francisco for New York, where the course of justice was again thwarted by their departure for London. Since then, extradition proceedings have been stalled due to the accused's liver complaint.

"I've been told that if I go back to America, I'll be arrested," says Perrett. On the other hand, the prosecution's case may just prove too weak to even sit up in court.

The hapless singer describes the whole episode as "unreal".

PAUL RAMBALI

Thrills



Pic: North Wales News Service.

Seventeen outside the DHSS after charges against them were dropped; a victory in a no-win situation, or was it just a grey area proposition???

LIFE ON THE DOLE Looks up momentarily...

AS REPORTED a fortnight ago in *Thrills*, Rhyl-based band Seventeen have been subjected to a lengthy investigation by the Department of Health and Social Security over the question of their drawing unemployment benefit whilst gigging for charity and for free.

Last week, after five months of 'investigation', band members Eddie MacDonald, Nigel Buckle, and Mike Peters were summoned to their local office and told that there were now no charges to be brought against them. Peters remarked to *Thrills* that it did seem strange the DHSS should drop the matter "as soon as the press and our MP start asking

questions."

Lead guitarist MacDonald added: "I hope the coverage given by the press helps other bands not to get into the same situation and also shows them that if they think they are being unfairly treated by bureaucrats they can fight back." Seventeen are offering free entry to all kids who bring their dole cards to their next gig, on Sunday 31 August at The Kensington in Russell Gardens, W14, as a commemorative gesture. And as a peaceful gesture, anyone from the Rhyl Unemployment office can claim a free ticket to another gig, at the Rock Garden in London on 16 September.

SEAMY UNDERBELLY



MONDO VIDEO: Desert Island Discs with chips

VIDEO GAMES are everywhere. There is hardly a bar in the country free from the mind-bending scream of death rays as would-be Captain Kirks save the Universe from destruction at 25p a game. There is also a big market for the silicon chips that drive video games and General Instrument Microelectronics specialize in the chips that produce the sound effects. Their AY-3-8910 chip, for instance, can imitate anything from a particle beam weapon to the death throes of a Zanti Misfit.

Now the designers at GIM have produced a chip that will play twenty seven of your least favourite tunes in what they describe as piano and organ modes. Just wire it up, switch on and listen to such sing-a-long favourites as 'Yankee Doodle',

'Hallelujah Chorus', 'Star Wars', 'A Solo Mio', and 'God Save The Queen' (traditional version). The AY-3-1350 will happily warble Beethoven's Fifth until either its battery or your patience runs out. And amongst the applications suggested by GIM are musical toys, car horns and musical doorbells. Unsuspecting visitors would be welcomed by either 'The Wedding March' or 'Colonel Bogey' — according to your premonitions as to the caller's identity.

Doctors are already worried that over-exposure to these chips may lead to an increase in mental illness and the Ministry of Defence is rumoured to be interested in the devices.

READY KILLOWATT

THERE AIN'T NO CURE FOR THE SUMMERTIME NEWS

PICKING UP THE PIECES

and walking . . .
(and talking . . .)



Building a better world — or sitting. Au Pairs pic: Mike Laye.

IF YOU feel like an 'alienated activist', you might want to stop short of that small ad in *Private Eye* or *Time Out*, in favour of *Beyond The Fragments*, a new organisation planning a special conference this weekend.

Following in the steps of the book of the same name, the *Beyond The Fragments* conference shares its aims: to unite activists who hail from 'many traditions' — tenants' groups, trade unionism, anti-racist organisations, alternative bookshops and newspapers, socialist theatre and music co-ops.

It will be held this Saturday, August 30th, at Leeds University and its wide-ranging programme (stalls, exhibitions, workshops, debates, music, theatre, film, song, children's activities such as badge-making and games) will be enhanced by an evening concert featuring the Au Pairs and Birmingham Two-Tone band Fast Relief. Minimum registration fee is £2, with extra charges for food and the concerts. Donations are also welcomed. Applications are available from Jo Fitzpatrick, 14 Midland Road, Leeds 6. There are also plenty of creche arrangements for those with small children.

TOP MARX

Thrills!



editor of the London *Spiritualist* magazine. "Clearly a cut-out photograph has been superimposed."

Thrills' own enquiries, however, indicate that Earray's diagnosis might well fall far short of the truth.

From Chicago, where David Bowie is appearing in the *Elephant Man*, the chameleon rock bomber told *Thrills* (if a little enigmatically): "... Goggles."

ANDREW TYLER.

GIVE US BACK OUR MEN???

B-52s resort to threats!

THOSE pacifistic B-52's ("Can we stress once again that 'B-52' is southern slang for bouffants and beehive hairdos and has nothing to do with bombers") have finally succumbed to the lure of that potential PR gambit in the sky.

During their recent Australian tour, they issued a press release in the form of an official memo — to the Australian Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

The memo read like a warning and threatened an "impending invasion by a squadron of B-52's posing a threat to the nation's sanity."

The Hon DJ Killen, Australian Defence Minister, took the stunt in stride. He instructed minions to reply with an equally official document, stating that he had personally taken it upon himself to warn the PM. Killen said that he had no doubt the exercise would prove "friendly and lowflying" and concluded with a flourish that would make music in any press agent's ears: "B-52's are known for their powerful punch . . . No one could sensibly ignore their presence."

Reviewers remained relatively unmoved but the sortie turned out a success with nearly every date SRO. Both the *Down Under* underground press and our own *Music Week* delighted in reporting that, between dates in Sydney, the group spent



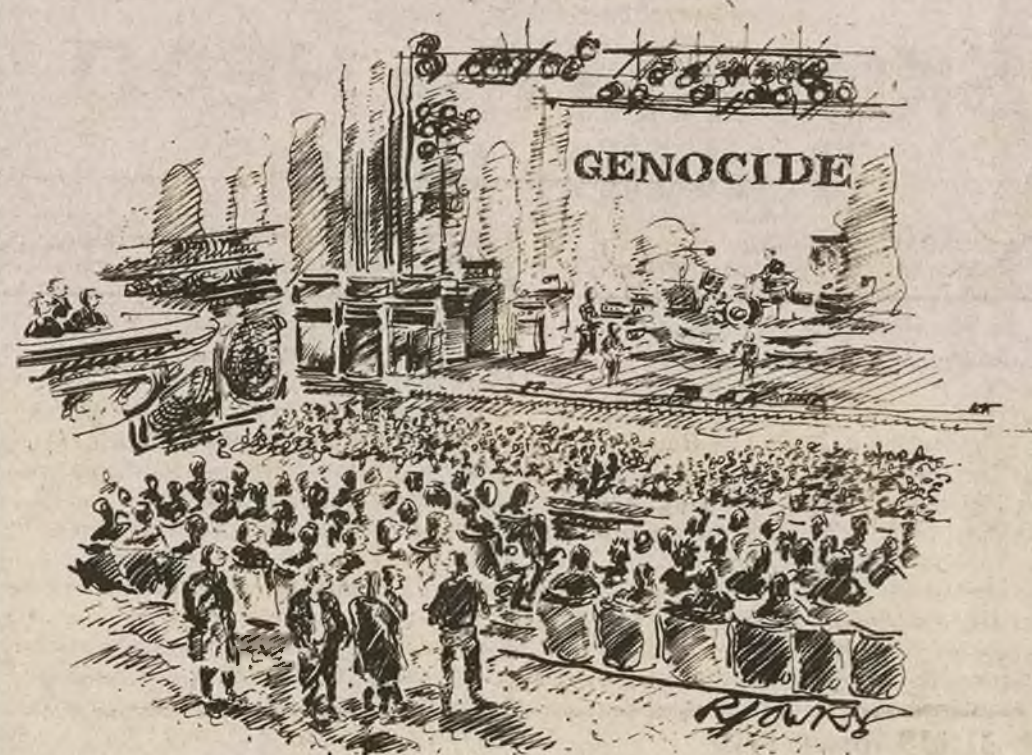
Cindy and Ricky: the Australian Aqua-Velva.

"many hundreds of dollars on authentic aboriginal artefacts".

The concept of the B-movie B52's sussing out 'authentic, original' anything may boggle the mind. But this is certainly better news for Australian friends than Mick Fleetwood's recent purchase of a \$1.3 million stud farm outside Sydney.

BEVERLY HILLS

Lowry



"Of course it's a reflection of contemporary reality! A bunch of boring ex-public schoolboys encouraging a huge number of people not to think for themselves by peddling meaningless twaddle as genuine observation and shared information."

TWO MEN AND THEIR HUNCHES . . . Make readers lose their lunches

THE MAN to the right with what looks like David Bowie all over his tie and a hankie in his mouth is Tyneside spiritualist Norman Stacey. Mr. Stacey was pictured like this in last week's *Sunday People* under a fearlessly probing six column headline reading: Medium's Ghost Denounced As A Fake.

Mr. Stacey denies the fakery claim. He says he is a simple, honest medium who for 30 years has been in touch with the spirit world via a shot-down Lancaster bomber pilot called Bob Walker.

Walker, he says, has been appearing in voice only to a circle of friends and fellow believers at their regular seances. It was when the ex-pilot announced his intention to make an actual appearance that a group member, John Barron, was able to take the startling snap.

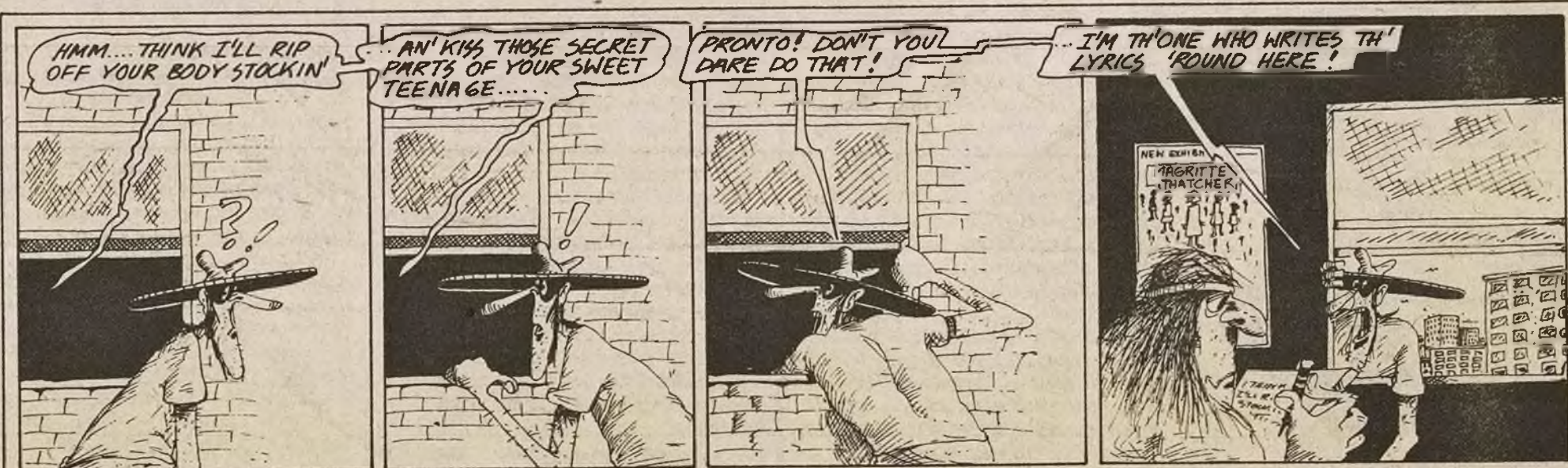
Barron (aged 70) told the *SP* that Stacey secreted himself behind some curtains and at a suitable moment these were drawn back.

"He was seen to be slumped in his seat with ectoplasm coming out of his mouth. Then we heard the voice of Bob Walker and saw him standing in front of the medium."

There is no way, he says, that Norman Stacey could have faked this picture. The *Sunday People*, however, were able to produce an 'expert' to claim otherwise.

"Pathetic", cried Walter Earrey,

The Lone Groover



Benyon

THRILLS!

VACATION READING

1. Hope Staples Eternal
by Adrian Thrills

THERE IS still a tendency to look at 'zines as a commodity stranded in the wasteland of the punk days, charming for what they were then, but now outmoded. Yet that sort of patronising condescension could hardly be further from the mark. Right now we are going through the great fanzine revival.

At last count, there were well over 500 fanzines in regular circulation. The most stunning thing, sheer volume aside, is the fact that the quality, after a few years in the dumper, is generally pretty good.

The variety is also remarkable, ranging through predictable hard-core punkzines and anarchy rags (eg Tony D's *Kill Your Pet Puppy*), series of excellent local provincial mags and guides (*NMX* in Sheffield, *City Fun* in Manchester and *Mersey Sound* in Liverpool), to picture and photozines (*The Poser*, and *Dance Crazy*) and even poetry fanzines (*All The Poets* and *Impossible Dream*).

Opportunities now open to the prospective fanzine editor are wider and more appealing than the expensive commercial printing methods and shoddy distribution — mostly by self — operating in '76-'77.

The two real vortex points of the current boom are Rough Trade and Better Badges. Though both complexes are only a couple of hundred yards apart in London's Notting Hill, they cater for magazines from all over the country.

Rough Trade (202 Kensington Park Road, London W11) receive, on average, 12 new fanzine titles per week, most of which they immediately take on for distribution

IT'S HOT! Too hot for rebellion, eyeliner, bank robberies, magnolia perfume or rubberwear. Here on page 13 we've cast off that rancid leather jacket, slipped into something cooler, and settled down with a small mountain of fanzines.



Pic: Joyce Agee.

purposes. Fanzine co-ordinator Sue Donne sends out copies to a chain of record and book shops nationwide.

Better Badges (286 Portobello Rd., London W10) also distribute. In addition, however, they now operate a print-now pay-later reproduction service by which the kids editing the mags can get their sheets on the street without having the money upfront initially.

Says Sue Donne: "In the last year the whole fanzine thing has really taken off again. A lot of the people who were writing to Rough Trade for

mail order records at first are now doing fanzines. And a lot of them are also getting into the do-it-yourself tape thing, which seems to be the next stage along the line.

"I try to send out as many copies of each fanzine as possible, but a lot of record shops are still a bit funny about them. They'll be fine about taking half-a-dozen new independent singles, but won't have anything to do with the new fanzines."

People who come to Rough Trade with difficulties in getting fanzines

produced are often sent along to Better Badges, who usually have about half-a-dozen fanzines in the process of being printed at any one time.

Better Badges mainsprings Mike and Joly pay the printing costs, keep a proportion of the magazines produced for their own distribution network, and sell the remainder back to the editors at cost price.

Explains Mike: "The kids don't need to have the money there and then when we print them. And they don't get a big print bill as they

would if they were going to a commercial printer. We send the mags on to places that stock our badges and a lot of them go over to the States.

"We are still getting used to it, so inevitably there are going to be some delays and problems. Our main area of business is still badges."

So is the boom likely to hold up? "Hopefully it will. But that depends to a large extent on whether standards keep up and the people find new, interesting things to write about."

Martin Russian, editor of Sheffield's *NMX* says: "For a while there was a lack of things to write about once the established music press caught on to the punk thing. Now there's a new underground, or whatever you call it, there's a lot of new things to get excited about."

Advice he gives to prospective fanzine publishers includes "For people starting one without much cash the best place to go is Better Badges. Otherwise local underground political presses or community workshops operate a cheap service. And the local socialist bookshop will give you numbers of cheap presses."

"Student unions also give good reproduction, but the trouble is at very busy times the outside stuff must wait until all the students union work is done. But they are cheap and you do get very good reproduction."

"Cheap advertising helps. Each page of advertising pays for one page of editorial."

He thinks a fanzine cooperative would be useful, but attempts so far to establish one have come to nothing, because participants at an exploratory meeting in Dunstable couldn't agree on anything.

2. UK Roundup
by Charles Shaar Murray

IF IT wasn't for fanzines, there would be no way for *NME* to discover that Sheila And The Poo Flaps had magically metamorphosed into Olga And The Communists (that's from *The Wool City Rocker* 7, 30p from 5 Beech Terrace, Undercliffe, Bradford BD3 0PY) or that Mark Smith of The Fall has been berating my good friend and colleague Nick Kent for not writing about Iggy Pop in the early '70s (courtesy of *Printed Noises* 4, 20p from 2 Kensington Rd, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 1QJ). Tastefully passing over the fact that it was well-nigh impossible to stop Kent writing about Comrade Pop during the period under discussion, one certainly cannot fault the current bunch of 'zines on grounds of avoiding heated debate.

Least readable is *The Poser* (unpriced, 4 Palmerston Crescent, London N13) simply because it consists entirely of photographs. Subtitled *The Photazine*, issue 6 depicts Hazel O'Connor, Holly & The Italians, The Books, The Cramps and Siouxsie in intriguing poses. Second least readable is *Strangled* (3FF, no discernible address) — but only because it's in French, a language which your correspondent

commands but feebly. It is notable for a vast array of photos, drawings and scribbles concerning Los Stranglers, and not a lot else.

Hot On The Visuals? (unpriced, Flat 3, 48 Sutherland Avenue, London, W9) is subtitled *A Pamphlet For Young Moderns*. Its only begueter is one Chris Burkham, who presents the reader with his autobiography before pronouncing on *Swindle*, Toyah, The Clash, and the *Elvis* '56 photobook. There are also some random thoughts on glamrock and the author's impression of Khartoum, with the end result that *Hot On The Visuals?* is an almost prototypical egozine.

Much hotter on the visuals — hand-printed cover and all — is *Stabmental* (35p from Rough Trade), an exceptionally well-designed 'zine in a limited edition of 300 (making 299 after discounting this copy). It includes a transcript of a Residents radio show and sundry stuff on Cabaret Voltaire and the epically unmusical Half Japanese (nobody I meet is prepared to believe that Half Japanese are even more unmusical than Metabolist, but they are, they are) as well as a cassette checklist that may prove invaluable in months to come. As the chaps behind *Stabmental* are now leaving school, they're threatening not to produce ish 4 (though, tantalisingly enough, they include a contents list for this phantom

edition that they may not produce: Throbbing Gristle, The Diagram Brothers and Prior To Intercourse).

Glasgow's *Fumes* (40p double issue including a 20-page booklet of poems and graphics by Jas Sherry, 22 Nithersdale St, Glasgow G41) take Orwell's "Unity Is All" as their watchword, and aid and sponsor other fanzines as well as circulating cassette compilations of local and other bands. This issue is a special on electronic bands — it even takes in Tangerine Dream, f'Chrissake — but I've been through it six times and I still can't find the Human League interview promised on the contents page. Still, *Fumes* comes highly recommended. Get in touch.

Southampton's *Frayed Edges* (20p to 81 Bedford Place, Southampton) comes with a giveaway antinuke poster (already on the *NME* office wall) and carries a solid, straight-talking interview with solid-straight-talking Tom Robinson, as well as an illuminating Crass review, some horrendous layouts and a lot more 'political w/big P' material than any of the other fanzines. If only someone could render the usual sense of its grinding spirits fractionally more acute...

Another Glasgow 'zine *Sunset Gun* (unpriced, 123 Moss-side Rd, Shawlands,

Glasgow G41) includes an extremely elderly Clash interview as well as sundry snippets of dialogue with Garry Glitter, The Flowers and The Fall (most popular group with fanzine writers, it appears), and a breast-beating looking back at Jobriath (Jobriath???) Nostalgia is one thing, but *this* is ridiculous). Rowdy and anarchic, *Sunset Gun* is only at its second issue and can only improve when Klark Kent and Max Profits (huh?) develop a slightly more acute visual sense.

No Cure (15p, 8 Candleford Close, Bracknell, Berks/6 Denmark Rd, Newbury, Berks) opens up with a Patrick Fitzgerald poem, then interviews Stiff Little Fingers and LKJ as well as The Lemon Kittens, while *Listening In* (30p, 20 Cromford Rd, Wandsworth SW18) seduces Jam completists with a couple of pages of verbiage from Bruce Foxton. This brings us back, cyclically speaking, to *Wool City Rocker* and *Printed Noises*. The former caters quite happily to those who enjoy HM and Real Punk — the next unholy alliance — and the latter weighs in with lengthy screeds on The Fall, Gang Of Four, Ludus and the Scrifs.

And that doesn't even take *Quiet Life* and *Phantom Bop* into account. If fanzines are dead, no-one seems to have told the people who put out the 'zines. The 'zine scene is healthy, Jack.

3. US Roundup
by Cynthia Rose

IF YOU want to send your shekels winging their way across the grosserwasser, the hippest recruit to your home could be *Psychotronics* — a truly bent version of *TV Times* (or, more accurately, America's *TV Guide*) — now on issue five. This masterpiece of electroart (ie it's xeroxed) is meant to serve as a programming guide for underground sickos in the NY area. Which means that you'll have to enjoy its portrait of television's weird'n'wonderful potential at a distance, but what you lose in ambience, you can gain in wisdom from the past. (Did you really already know William Shatner starred in *Kingdom of the Spiders*?). Available at 35 cents an ish from 341 East 9th St (apt 12), New York, New York, USA.

From the land of the *National Enquirer* and Elvis' clone son come also tidings that the June issue of *Short News* (an NY freesheet distributed at concerts) has gone 'multi-page'. *Not-So-Short-News* (whose dynamic duo of editors, Jim Shorts and Nancy Breslow, recently visited *NME* offices) sports a '50s collage cover every bit as sizzling as the frankfurter fest in a classic beach-and-bongos movie. Inside, it carries ads now (one real, one

fake) as well as a newsletter from Pittsburg and lots of hot behaviour hints. One of its other virtues is a commitment to publishing other 'zines; this issue it's Pittsburg's *Shake 'n Pop* and LA's *No* (Verdict: "A pervert's WET"). Subscribe to *Short News/Not-So-Short-News* by contacting Nancy Breslow at PO Box 1028, Gracie Station, New York City 10028 USA. Austin, Texas — remember the rise of

redneck rock? — has emerged from that Berkeley of the South mystique and even at two bucks *Sluggo!* is a good guide to yet another important and improving New Wave-ish scene. Pretty classy: spiral bound with colour cover. And pretty useful: lists of local record shops and indies, lists of fellow fanzine producers, and LOTS OF LAUGHS. Contact: PO Box 755, Austin, Texas, 78767.

Another popular front is the Athens/Atlanta/U. of Georgia scene, with bands like the Method Actors and Pylon already hot on the heels of their buddies the B-52's. So far the only fanzine to reach *Thrills* from this area is the slick *Useless Knowledge* (ish three) from Debbie Heidel, PO Box 53334, Atlanta Georgia, 30305; cost \$1. Rather B'52-vian in orientation ("Do you dream in colour?") but that's no bad thing in a 'zine context. And the table of contents alone (Jamie Hoover by Betsy Bilger, Car Wreck by R Watt King, Electric Chairs by Stan Satin and how to cut cheese by R Watt King) establishes *UK's* utter invaluableity. (Method Actors are interviewed in the current ish).

The aptly-named *Away From The Numbers* hails from San Diego — a territory with more waterfront to cover and more 'zines on the case. Their issue one relies heavily on a UK bias for sales (not another exclusive Paul Weller interview) but the tour of LA thrift shops, and its West Coast charts, are amusing. And who could resist the lure of issue two's promised feature on The Snails' Tupperware party? A copy costs only fifty cents, but you'll have to ring up editor Peter Verbrugge on 560-0590 in San Diego, California if you want the address. Maybe he'll invite you to the next stapling party...





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THE CREATURE WITH THE ATOMIZED BRAIN



Or: I Talked With A Zombie

Are you ready for the Thirteenth Floor Elevators revival? Roky Erickson, cult and occult figure from the swirling mists of psychedelia, takes time out from doing the Devil's work to enlighten NME's resident psychiatric team, Prof Nick Kent (vibes) and Dr Pennie Smith (auras)

AT 4.20 ON A TUESDAY afternoon, in a room steeped in humidity, I am waiting for my turn to interview Roky Erickson.

No one seems to know what exactly is going on. The location appears to have mysteriously changed from CBS Records' headquarters in Soho Square — where I am — to the Portobello Hotel, where Erickson is. Queries as to the whys and wherefores of the move are met with a vagueness that becomes increasingly irksome.

Finally, a call from the Portobello fills me in as to the strategy afoot. A timid-voiced PR addresses the matter at hand:

"Ah... we decided that doing interviews here would be more conducive. You see, Roky is a... um... very sensitive person and uh... very shy. It would be wise, Nick, if you were... um, patient and a bit tactful when talking to him. The flight over has probably... disorientated him somewhat."

As I put the phone down, mimicking this display of PR diplomacy, a CBS employee seated nearby simply mutters: "Why didn't he just tell you the bloke's a complete nutter and leave it at that?"

The Roky Erickson interview. Extract 1.

NK: Though you were raised in Texas, apparently you're currently living in San Francisco, isn't that so?

RE: (long pause). Uh... it's a secret. Ah don't give out mah address to anyone.

NK: Why is that?

RE: (Even longer pause). Beg pardon? Could you repeat that question again?

NK: Why do you keep your current base of operations a secret?

RE: Well... it's a... (a pause of approximately 65 seconds' duration) it's a secret.

NK: (Changing subject). Your songs, the lyrics, are constantly referring to 'demons', demonic forces. How do these creatures manifest themselves to you?

RE: (After an absurdly long pause). In secret. (Nods his head as if proclaiming some remarkable truth).

NK: Oh! Uh... I see.

ROKY ERICKSON is the archetype of that animal known within the terminology of rock as 'a cult artist'. That is, he is famous for not being famous, possessing a pedigree of no mild consequence and commanding a small but obsessive clique of followers.

Born in 1947 and destined to become the eldest of five brothers, his upbringing within the lower-middle-class confines of Austin, Texas was shaped principally through the presence of a domineering mother, a former opera singer who held fervently to the most rigid mores of fundamentalist Bible Belt tradition. During his formative years, Erickson the eldest was force fed a diet of hellfire-and-brimstone religious dogma. His own fixation for trashy '50s horror comics and the vintage black and white ghoulish B-movies that appeared on late-night TV made for an unsettling combination.

The Roky Erickson interview. Extract 2.

NK: What was the first music you recall hearing?

RE: Uh... ah... ah don't (complete blank-out for some 45 seconds. Erickson eventually snaps out of his phase-out, scratches his nose and belches).

NK: Well, when did you first play the guitar?

RE: Ah... uh... ah didn't play the guitar first. Ah played the piano first. Picked up t' guitar when ah was ten years old... But ah played piano first.

NK: What sort of music did you play on the piano then? Were you classically-trained or did you try and play like, say, Little Richard?

RE: (Obligatory long pause). Nooo, ah didn't play like Little Richard. T'way ah played piano was, uh, ah'd put a razor-blade between the keys so when anybody... y'know (lethargically demonstrates a hand running over the 78 keys), their fingers'd be cut off. (He smiles at this, then his eyes return to their freeze-out zombie droop. He lights another cigarette).

INSPIRED BY THE British Invasion bands — Kinks, Yardbirds, The Who, Rolling Stones — at 15 years of age, Erickson formed his first group, The Spades.

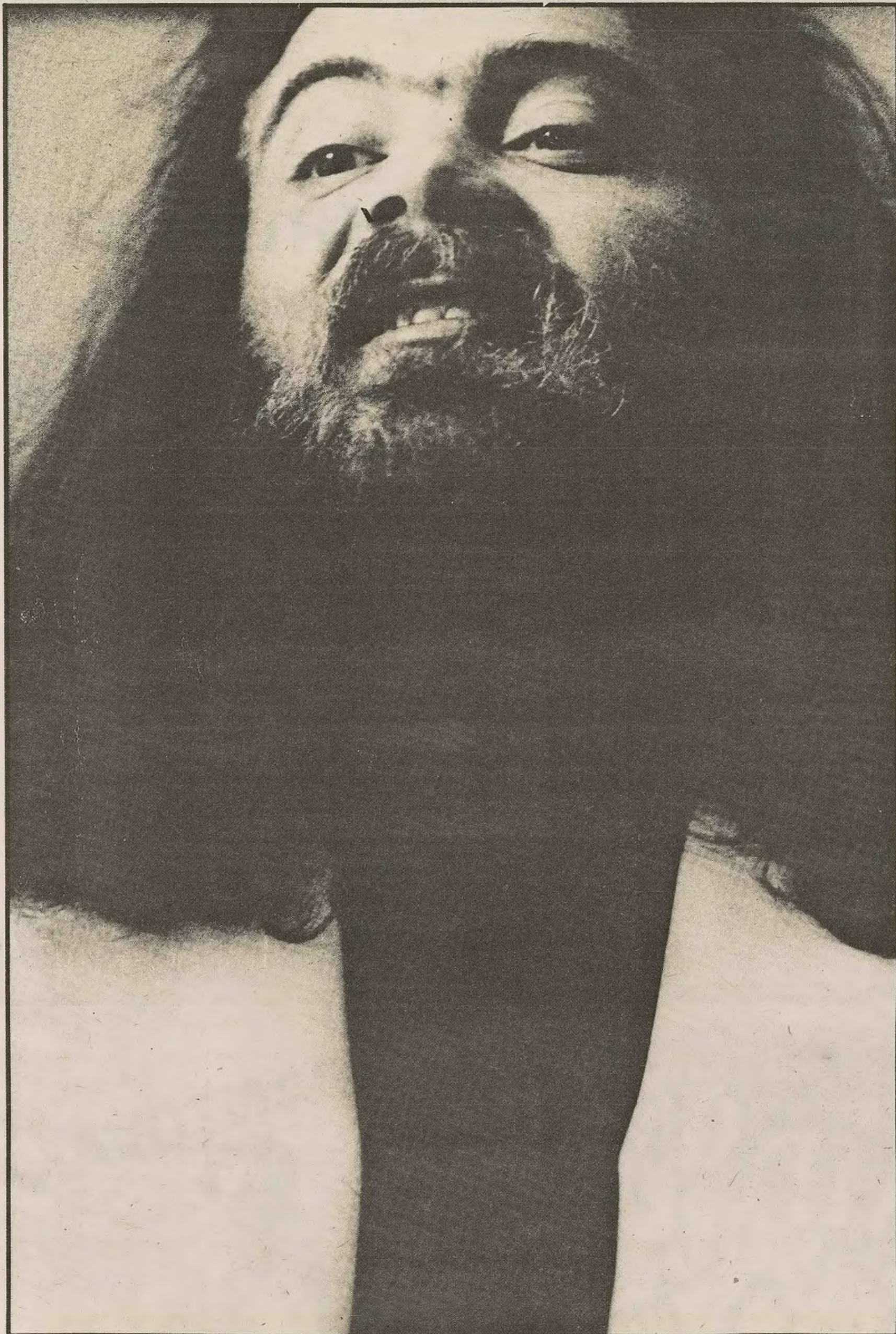
As lead singer and guitarist, Erickson also began song-writing, with the result that a local Austin label — International Artists — signed the group and released a single 'You're Gonna Miss Me' composed by a juvenile Roky. A fervent garage-band stab at the kind of white R&B that The Rolling Stones and Them were moulding, it became a local hit before metamorphosing into a national Top 40 smash when The Spades were renamed The Thirteenth Floor Elevators.

The name change came about when Erickson and his collaborators were approached by one Tommy Hall, a self-appointed svengali-type several years their senior and a teacher of sociology in the Austin area. Whilst the early acid experiments instigated by Ken Kesey on the West Coast were immortalised by Tom Wolfe's new journalism, similar less lavishly publicised forays into the world of hallucinogenics were being undertaken by a clique of young Austin students who'd discovered mescaline and other organic intoxicants growing in the fields around their home state. Hall was amongst the first to discover the potency of 'psychedelic' drugs, and zeroed in on Erickson & Co, electing to become the group's ersatz guru, lyricist and jug-player.

The Thirteenth Floor Elevators' short, erratic history is arguably the perfect episode of psychedelia run rampant, the pimply garage-band transformed overnight into self-proclaimed prophets, seers and sages of the new age of enlightened awareness, with all parties ultimately getting totally 'lunched out' and finally collapsing into a heap of acid casualty debris. Of the original members, one has been murdered, another has found Scientology, another is a junkie...

Basically the group, despite the obsessive ravings of zealots, weren't that startling. They made sniggering references to the virtues of taking psychedelics in their puerile lyrics, whilst their music was a curious grab-bag of folk-rock, jug-band and rhythm'n'blues that occasionally sparked to an inspired consequence but usually just sounded dull and self-indulgent.

Already well-doused on all manner of hallucinogenics, Erickson, Hall and the Elevators moved to San Francisco, setting up headquarters in Haight-Ashbury in a bid for national acceptance. This however was thwarted by the incestuous nature of the local scene, and a year spent attempting to break through ended with the group returning to Austin, demoralised and with Erickson in particular none



too stable from extensive gorging of methedrine along with the usual mind-bending cocktails.

Considered by the authorities as a subversive influence on the state's youth due to the band's overt promoting of hallucinogenics, Erickson was busted for some comparatively miniscule quantity of hashish and, faced with the choice of jail or mental hospital, chose the latter without fully comprehending the consequences. Once incarcerated, he escaped and was eventually caught again — holding some opiate — with the result that he was sentenced to stay in Shoal Creek Mental Institution for an indefinite period.

Erickson remained there, subjected to Thorazine and electro-shock therapy, for three years, until certain acquaintances enlisted the aid of a lawyer to extradite him.

The Roky Erickson interview, Extract 3.

NK: The period you spent in the, uh, hospital — did you feel that you had been used as a scapegoat?

RE: No!

NK: What do you feel about the three years you spent there? How did it affect you?

RE: (long pause). Beg pardon! Could you repeat the question again!

NK: The mental hospital — your stay in the hospital ...

RE: Uh ... we-e-ell, that was propaganda.

NK: What was?

RE: (pause). The hospital, yup.

NK: Are you saying that you didn't get locked away in a mental hospital, a sanatorium, for three years?

RE: Uh (long pause) ... no, ah have to say ah didn't. Oh, will you excuse me for a second!

ONCE RELEASED, Erickson wandered back into flirtations with heroin and methedrine. Back in Austin, he met up with Doug Sahm, whose Sir Douglas Quintet had been Austin's other mid-'60s rock band of any consequence, albeit purveying a Tex-Mex sound totally at odds with the Elevators' rambling psychedelia. With a budget of exactly one hundred dollars, Sahm took Erickson into the studio.

The result was four tracks including a single 'Red Temple Prayer' — also known as 'Two Headed Dog' — which was released on the little-known Mars label. Credited to Erickson and 'Blieb Alien', the cut was a quite extraordinary piece of music, commencing with what sounded like 20 out-of-tune Gibsons imitating the sound of Hitchcock's *The Birds* descending in full flight on a lone Volkswagen, before Erickson appeared to manically bemoan the fact that he'd "been working in the Kremlin with a two-headed dog".

The culminative effect was totally disarming, not dissimilar to Captain Beefheart in terms of undermining conventions, although the basic chord structure was stock three-chord hard-rock. The components, though — Erickson's crazed vocals, the disorientating clash of rock guitar and electric autoharp, the fractured splurge of images that somehow conspired to mould together a vision of psychotic dread — created a record of quite unique consequence.

Just as the Erickson single appeared, The Thirteenth Floor Elevators suddenly became a hip name to drop. First Television's Tom Verlaine and Richard Hell raved about the first T.F.E. album and performed 'Fire Engine', an Elevators original, in homage to this seminal influence. Patti Smith, who knows a good bandwagon when she sees one,

immediately cited the group as "inspirational", whilst Pere Ubu did likewise. All of a sudden old, long deleted Elevators albums (there are four in all) were changing hands for twenty quid or more.

Andrew Lauder reissued the Elevators' 1966 debut set on Radar followed by 'Easter Everywhere' — their most 'psychedelic' album — while Virgin picked up on 'Two Headed Dog' and let it out in the UK.

Erickson meanwhile was recording demos of new songs — he boasted of there being some 300 to choose from — with titles like 'Creature With The Atom Brain', 'I Walked With A Zombie', 'Mine Mine Mind', 'Bloody Hammer/Dr Chane', 'Night Of The Vampire', 'Don't Shake Me Lucifer', 'I Think Of Demons' and 'Bo Diddley Was A Headhunter'. Tapes circulated around proved conclusively that the perverse brilliance of 'Two Headed Dog' was not a one-off coincidence — particularly the ghoulish razor-cut of 'Bloody Hammer'.

On one level Erickson was a rock'n'roll George Romero, yet there was evidently something more. Like Syd Barrett, Erickson's sanity was not nailed amidst the conventional bearings of the 'rational human being'. Whilst the likes of David Byrne and Richard Hell attempted to articulate the psychotic mentality through the craft of study and assimilation, Erickson simply was a psycho.

IT HAS BEEN virtually all of four years now since the advent of 'Two Headed Dog', and 'Five Symbols', Erickson's first album, has finally been released on a major label, CBS.

The record's release however is something of pyrrhic victory. While one can only admire London-based A&R man Howard Thompson's tenacity in signing an American-based act — never mind the bizarre nature of the artist's music — and bypassing CBS's American parent company Columbia, 'Five Symbols' is in many vital respects a pale, soft focus representation of Erickson's music.

Where previous recordings still sound fearsome, other-worldly — hard-rock etched with a psychotic edge — 'Symbols' removes that edge, rendering the music as nothing more than average heavy-metal amp-ups. The production makes Erickson sound like a quirky freak spewing out Hammer horror mind-scrambles. Where Erickson's music was disturbing and dangerous, 'Five Symbols' conspires to make Erickson 'safe'.

When the matter is broached, Thompson plays the diplomat.

"Well, first of all, I personally do like the sound on the album. However, I think that had it been any more 'aggressive', then it would have been virtually impossible to have gotten a deal at all."

Thompson was granted a three and a half thousand pound promo budget for the Erickson project. The money proved insufficient to bring Erickson's band over here to play gigs — easily the most viable form of promotion as Erickson is generally considered a most remarkable live performer "when the mood is right". Instead, he was flown in for a series of interviews with the music press that spanned the whole of last week. Even though he was accompanied by his newly-wedded bride, Holly (a former waitress who he met at a club he was playing six months ago) plus managers Bruce King and Craig Luckin, Erickson appeared to be a virtual zombie.

Our first encounter on Tuesday of last week was a fiasco. Erickson appeared totally incommunicado, barely able to articulate more than two syllables every five minutes. Looking like a heavily sedated Rasputin, his eyes were glazed and heavy-lidded, while his brain was simply not receptive to the questions.

Over an hour-long attempt at communication, Erickson only 'awoke' once — his eyes suddenly came alive, certain words caught his thus far dormant brain-waves and he muttered: "Hey, yeah, positive love! That's right! Hey, this is a good interview. Let me get another coffee, OK!"

As he waddled off, his wife turned to me. "I'd advise you to ask all your questions again. He's woken up."

Are his communication lapses something of a put-on, I enquired?

"Oh, no, not at all. He's like that all the time." She shrugged and smiled demurely.

"THE DEVIL ... no, ah'm not afraid of the Devil. Why should I be? It's mah religion."

This is the second Roky Erickson encounter. Apparently he tends to liven up once it gets dark. It's 10pm. Same location, two days on. Of course, he fails to recognise me.

"See, the Devil will punish you if you are bad."

Each word is masticated over in an irksome Texan drawl that heightens the somnabulistic effect even further. "He stands at the gates of Hell and if you're bay-ad he'll send you down there. Ah know all this, see. Ah know 'cos the Devil is like mah friend. Ah am his, uh, chosen one. Out of all the people in the world he came to-me and said 'Roky, you are mah ... human' ... ah don't know just the right word for it. Maybe you do?"

Mouthpiece?

"Uh ... no. There's this word, though. Like ah'm his chosen one. He chose me to do his biddin', see."

Hold on a mo. The Devil, right, stands for evil.

"Well, ah wouldn't say that! He punishes you if you are bad. He'll send you straight to Hell."

What's Hell like, Roky?

"Whew boy, it's a ... terrible place to be. Believe you me, it's lahk all fiery and full o'sinners. And you're in there forever."

"No-oo, ah'm not frightened of goin' to Hell. The Devil, see ... he's mah friend. Just as long as ah'm good, ah'll be alright. See, them at the hospital, they tried to keep me in there but they didn't realise mah power. How could they?"

"Poor fools! Them doctors and nurses, whew, they're all crazy! They couldn't hold me in! They couldn't mess with the Devil's chosen one! How could they?"

Umm, Roky, a lot of people would say that the Devil is an evil force, right, and he rules the world.

"Nah, he don' wanna rule the world (pause) but then again maybe he does! (pause) I'll have to figure that one out!"

"See, the Devil has chosen me on his, uh ... own — but I've got to have mahself a good time at the same time. Now how do you figure that?"

ROKY ERICKSON scratches his beard, squints and ponders on this pressing dilemma awhile. You can see the eyes fog over again, the mist descending around the brain.

In three minutes he'll be back in the land of the living dead ("Ah kinda liked that film. Ah love to see them zombies dance") and me, I'll be hoping the psychedelic revival doesn't happen.

"Hey yeah, positive love! That's right! Hey, this is a good interview. Let me get another coffee, OK!" As he waddled off, his wife turned to me. "I'd advise you to ask all your questions again. He's woken up."

Ross Middleton. Pic Robert Sharp.

POSITIVE NOISE

Moving closer to
the correct use
of sound

Paul Morley gets decisive about
a hoot new Scottish band

GEORGINA SPURGE
STORY OF THE EYE
With Essays By: Susan Sontag and Richard P. Sullivan

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WHEN: Without journalistically bracketing it as the new dark side of the moon or whatever, Scotland is fermenting so many exciting new groups — adding further weight to my reckoning that to live in London is to be cut off from all that is really happening in contemporary pop music.

None of these groups sounds like each other — pluralism out of insularity — and the unavoidable 'hype' ... starts here. One group out of many (for now). Positive Noise: moving closer to the correct use of sound.

I've always wanted to see an elephant's graveyard.

HERE: At Dingwalls, Glasgow's Positive Noise are playing their first London date, showcased along with two sad Scottish cabaret groups — paraded under the ludicrous banner 'Jock-rock'. An audience gathers for a Monday good-night out, regardless of who's playing: business people, faded rock names, tourists, leeches. Live music is not an attraction, but an incident, even an irritant.

P. Noise are on stage at midnight: 15 people are scattered around the front of the stage, the rest — over a 100 — don't budge from their tables. Something old fashioned and cosy like The Jags might have woke them — but Positive Noise want to

communicate, tell truths, to use a kind of force. The pests!

THEN: Positive Noise formed this time last year. I interview Ross Middleton, singer/guitarist/writer, a couple of weeks before their Dingwalls appearance. He is the group's talker. He broke off studying French literature and Structuralism at a Parisien University, inspired to play guitar by Tom Verlaine, compelled to form a group by 'Real Life' and Joy Division. Middleton, Les Gaff (drums) and Middleton's brother Fraser (bass) practised, often by covering J.D. songs, and quickly progressed. They played their first gig in October, were noticed and encouraged by Simple Minds — whose sensitised soul music was another dominant influence.

By January they'd included a third Middleton (pin-up Graham) on synthesizer, and rather than record a single prepared a Glasgow compilation. Along with The Alleged (now defunct) and Restricted Code (now signed to Pop: Aural) they contributed two pieces — 'Refugees' and 'The Long March' — to 'Second City Statik' on their own Statik label. It featured in the independent charts, sold out, and Rough Trade are re-pressing it.

Positive Noise's two songs were romantically in the spirit of Joy Division, but they weren't contrived; there was no laziness. They were learning from the way J.D. constructed sound, responding to their finer feelings.

"Joy Division as an influence. ... I place their importance not so much in their music, or Ian Curtis' vocals — although they're obviously woven into the fabric of our music — but their attitude. You have to learn from something and we'd

rather learn from Joy Division and Magazine than anyone else.

"If there is such a thing as an essentialist R'n'R myth they've tapped it, transcended it, and if we ever do that, we've really achieved something."

Having added Graham Middleton, P.Noise moved away from the expansive J.D.mood, towards Magazine incontinence. But if their sound resembled J.D. and Magazine, content — though concerned with similar pressures and desires — was inevitably different. Middleton has it in him to reconcile, revile, attack, define with as much articulacy as those who showed him the way. He looks deep inside. He gets serious.

But then his favourite comedians are Kenneth Williams and Frankie Howerd.

Performance is one hour of self-exorcism and self-willed honesty — I hope.

AND BACK HERE AGAIN: At Dingwalls, to a dreadful deadening response, Positive Noise show how far they've developed in just one year. From their original influences, Positive Noise have now careered into a place of their own where the possibilities are immense.

Their set at Dingwalls was the hardest I've seen by a new group this year — and I'm told that for them it was a bad show.

They tear into play, immediately broadcasting a sound that's a collusion of self-control and untrollable urges. They've taken from J.D. and Magazine (and Television and Simple Minds) and blended it, even blasted it together within their own perspective. They are steeping it out.

"We're not so much working under these people any more, we're working with them."

'Give Me Passion' is one bitter way to start a performance, total alarm and conviction, vital white soul music. Middleton's voice is a revelation. No longer obviously deep and stiff, he fuses melody using expression and emotion, singing in a way that's somewhere between 'Spiral Scratch' / 'Because You're Frightened' Devoto and his own ideal.

He's possessed, tormenting... but few people at Dingwalls as much as flinch. Astonishing.

They play soul music — not in the '60s R&B tradition, but where obsession, confusion, sensationalism fight to reach the soul. The songs conspire to instil more than just a

There is only one thing worse than being pretentious and that's not being pretentious.

THERE IS an openness about a whole host of new bands and a determination to break on through, not just the apathy but the simplicity and self-satisfaction, the pale fear of genuine emotional reaction. Bands are committing themselves to something more personal and resounding than just playing 'tight music'.

Without losing the value and perspective of *entertainment* they are setting their sights higher than what has gone before.

"I think it is going towards a more realistic version of

A dreaded label to let whom it may concern know that there is something happening. That there is something literally moving within rock, interesting, speculative, realistic changes in the underground, even if it only affects the smallest chink in the surface.

Positive Noise at Dingwalls was a quiet, disquieting clash between dead rock and live rock. They made no impact whatsoever. What can you say?! They will! Rock is part of real life, not a self-centred, self-contained tangent, not the listless parasite it seems to wish to be. Positive Noise can see rock getting wider, not narrower, because they look beyond purely rock influences.

It seems natural that they should be so direct, but it actually takes great courage and persistence.

P.Noise will sign to a major label soon. Then the adventure takes off.

I want to inspire creative madness in others.



Ross onstage. Pic Harry Papadopoulos.

feeling of acceptance.

Middleton — balding of course, wearing grey clothes of course — stares hard above the indifference.

"I hear you like nostalgia down here," he jibes, introducing 'Hypnosis'.

"It's a song that equates nostalgia with the death-wish."

Dingwalls people don't hear him: if he'd launched into 'Stay With Me' or 'Jumping Jack Flash' they might have perked up.

psychedelia — that label has been really mis-applied.

These new bands, they're a lot tougher. It's like the 1940 upsurge of romanticism with Dylan Thomas, and then in the '50s you got Amis and Larkin. And they felt the same emotion, and they were still wounded by love, and all those other things, but they were more in control and they were more realistic. If we've got to conspire to think of a name for this new breed of bands it's got to be The Movement."

ROSS MIDDLETON is 23, writes for *Sounds* under the name of Maxwell Park — pellets of sanity along with McCullough and Middles — and has no guilt feelings clogging his will. He does not apologise for arrogance, passion, awe, naivety. I interviewed him for two hours. At the end of it I ask Middleton — who sings in a pop group some would call cold, bleak, indulgent, who sings songs about the danger of ignorance and the horror of awareness, a man who inside five minutes recited the entire history of British comedy with Danny Baker — if he is, despite it all, essentially, happy.

"Oh yeah!" he grins.

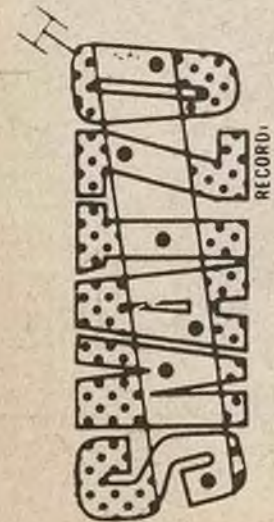
"Anxious but happy."

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Come As You Are

Prick Up Your Ears: The Biography Of Joe Orton
by John Lahr (Penguins £1.50)

IN 1967, Joe Orton, playwright of provocation and outrage and author of *Loot*, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, and more, was battered to death by Kenneth Halliwell, his friend, lover, tutor and collaborator of fifteen years, who himself then committed suicide.

John Lahr portrays Halliwell as white with bitterness — justifiable but inadmissible — as timorous, wretched, imprisoned, as the unsuccessful purveyor of a turgid, hermetically sealed, affectedly archaic, madman writing, whose only 'true' form of self-expression (bar the murder) was achieved by pasting himself (and Orton) into an oppressive collage cave in the Islington bedsittingroom where they lived out their (for the most part) penurious, invisible, dismembered lives.

And Lahr portrays Orton as emerging miraculously out of this menage as gay — in its sense flamboyant — furious, libidinous, nonchalant, breathtakingly resilient and world-beating.

Orton took a major interest in ordinary speech with a fascinated suspicion of platitudinous idiom. He liked tinkering with dodgy commonplace expressions and constructions ("and let me tell you, I can only say how") which he would take to bits, incongruously reassemble and incorporate, willy nilly, into his plays, making the innocently delivered lines party to his quest for the sentence that can kill.

Lahr 'frankly' places the sensational end of the story — the murder and the suicide — at the beginning, and the biography then goes about its business of investigating how on earth it came about. For even if Halliwell was the epitome of squashy doom, it's not an inexorably sinister story and its terrible conclusion was freak and screwy rather than tragic and inevitable; you feel more sick than sad.

Lahr writes with interpretative relish, without assuming omniscience, the result of inspired research and plausible intuition. I tired somewhat of Orton's (cosmic) anger and Orton's (cosmic) laughter — as invoked by Lahr — but enjoyed such 'psychological' aphorisms as "Passion, the thrilling, punishing battle between license and control" and "Despite its ferocious facade revenge is an act of nostalgia" and "Like his characters, Orton's life was filled with many tentative gestures of ghostlike mastery".

This ingeniously commercial book of serious biography and criticism with its pranking borrowed title, its tasty chapter headings — 'Jokers Are Wild', 'Monstrous Fur', 'Scandalous Survival', 'The Freaks' Roll Call' — and its wordy verve — 'Freudian hyperbole and priapic pandemonium' is surely Orton's appropriate epitaph.

Susan Holland

Orton (above) in 1965, and right, as a teenager at RADA.



Up Against It
by Joe Orton (Eyre & Methuen £2.25)

JOE ORTON was at the height of his short-lived success in early '67 when he was approached by Walter Shenson, producer of *Hard Day's Night* and *Help*, to script a follow-up.

The result, *Up Against It*, was as far from the whacky mop-top world of the first two fab four flicks as *In His Own Write* from *All You Need Is Love*; a ribald, sexual, social and political satire on '60s England.

The Beatles — or at least Epstein and McCartney, who were evidently bossing the show judging from the extracts from Orton's diaries that accompany the script — couldn't handle it. Even had Orton lived to argue out his case it's doubtful that *Up Against It* would ever have been made; too shocking and subversive for Epstein and McCartney and too cynical for Harrison and Lennon, who by now were already on their way into their acid 'n' guru phase.

Set in a Britain of indeterminate future with a woman Prime Minister (!) and a civil war ranging between the sexes, the film obliges our heroes to variously disguise themselves in drag, cavort in sexual romps and generally undermine the authorities at every opportunity. No wonder that Malcolm McLaren — prosecuted for his Orton t-shirt — is still regretting he didn't know of the script's existence for Pistols purposes. It sure would have made a better movie than *Swindle*. And to think we ended up with *Magical Mystery Tour* instead.

Neil Spencer

Readers' Digest

by Ian Penman

THERE ARE no novels about masturbation this week, so I figured I'd kick off with a word from my unspoken sponsor, Friedrich Nietzsche: "How much of a piece of music has been understood when that in it which is calculable has been reckoned up?" (*The Will to Power*).

If you wanted to reinscribe this in rock music clichespeak, I guess you'd howl, 'Ain't gonna keep my feet on solid ground no more! But since this is A Book Page, 25 Years of Rock (W. H. Smith, £6.25) must take precedent. If you wanted me to reinscribe that in my terms, I guess you'd read 252 Pages of Hack (John Tobler and Pete Frame, fee unknown), since this is a book which does not even mention The Fall, and critiques thusly, for instance, of punk: "turned out to be a lot of fuss about nothing". That is the reckoning of a miserable idiot; no matter how it turned out, punk was patently about a large number of things. Besides, what else can be proffered an encyclopedia which is the offspring of a marriage between Radio One and W. H. Smith bar a good puking?

The Guinness Book of Hits of the Seventies (Guinness £4.95) is a book of lists which could be compiled (actually and aesthetically) by a computer. So why the publishers need the involvement of Tim Rice, Jo Rice, Mike Read and Paul Gambaccini, I haven't a clue.

The Bad Track (Collins Crime Club, £5.25) by Martin Booth is a hard-edged (sic) detective narrative strung out (sic) around the shaky persona of aforementioned

rock star 'Bohny Oppen' — which isn't an anagram of 'Bob Dylan', but judging from the following passage: "His second album, with its protesting stance and suppressed but tangible social arrogance, caught the imaginations of millions across the western world. Songs with lines like 'Three Mile Island, let it hang: show me the grass once more' and 'legalizing institutions that the politicians fear' carried Oppen high into the charts, as well as the minds of the intellectuals listener"... yes, well.

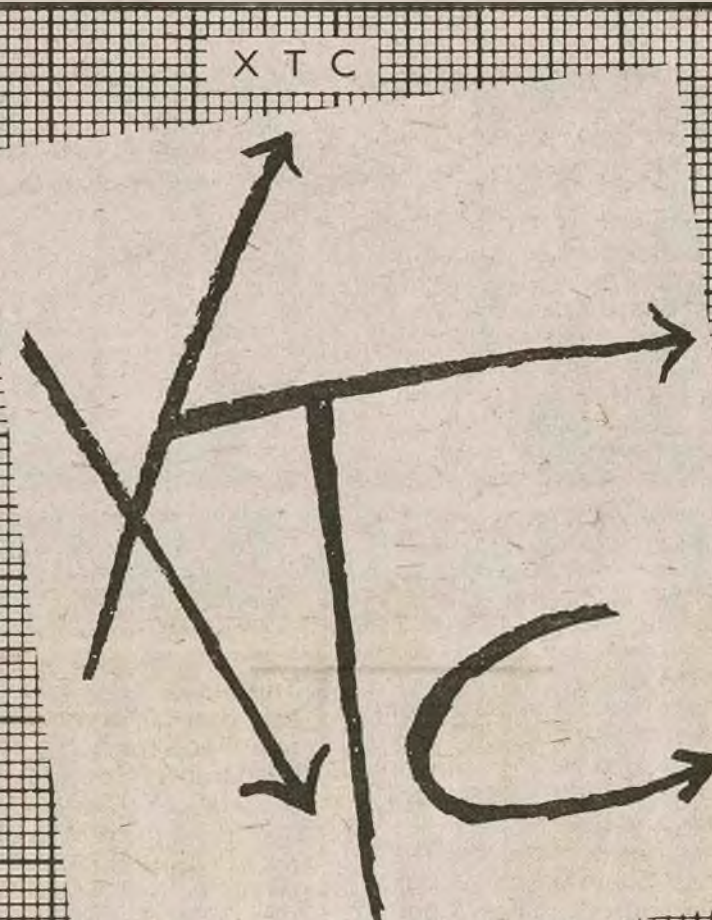
John Irving, a current darling of the semi-detached intellectualist world, has three novels re-vamped by Corgi following the scandalous success of *The World According to Garp*: **The 158-Pound Marriage** (95p), **Setting Free the Bears** (£1.25) and **The Water-Method Man** (£1.25). These show Irving to be an archetypal American breed of novelist — the This Book Will Change Your Life: unctuous page-to-page quicksell of simplistic philosophical cure all.

Jupiter's Travels (Penguin, £1.50) by Ted Simon — "Four years around the world on a Triumph" — stays the David Attenborough side of *Zen & The Art of Etc*, but is still permeated with post-comedown-Kerouac wisdom: "Does it rain because you carry your umbrella, or because you don't? It's a personal matter depending on how you remember it... Thinking's like a black tunnel. Once you're in it you have to think your way through to the other end. At least I think so." Bah, humbug!

the new single

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Right — Ruffy folk (L-R):
Ruffy, Owen, Segs, Fox.
Pic: Anton Corbijn.

SINGLES

■ **Single Of The Week**
THE RUTS: West One (Shine On Me) (Virgin). In the face of admittedly weak competition The Ruts have made the record I like the best in this past seven days — and for more than the sentimental reason that 'West One' will be the group's last under that name, and Malcolm Owen's last under any name. There's fierce vitality at work here, with anger and intelligence never far behind. Whatever reputation followed The Ruts around, they were always much more than the crude punk headbangers of common prejudice, as this song will testify as often as you care to listen to it.

XTC: Generals And Majors (Virgin). This is good too, a sarcastically bright number about how "Generals and majors never seem happy unless they got a war", dedicated to uniformed lunatics everywhere. If the song itself lacks the obvious appeal of some other XTC work, then closer attention points to a band that's slowly



PUT IT OUT OF IT OUT OF IT OUT OF IT

gaining in stature and value. Proof that 'clever' doesn't have to be a term of abuse.

BUZZCOCKS: Are Everything/Why She's A Girl From The Chainstore (UA). Otherwise known as 'Part One' from their planned series of instalment singles; I really hope there's more interesting stuff in the pipeline than this. Far from being two of the most loveable things Buzzcocks have ever put on a 45, 'Are Everything' and 'Why She's A Girl From The Chainstore' sound like works of dull determination rather than of fresh inspiration. The first one, a Pete Shelley song, plods heavily along with no obvious direction in mind. And Steve Diggle's 'Chainstore' is as close to mere headbanging as I'd ever care to hear this group get. To be sure, neither number is without a certain acquired charm — this is Buzzcocks, after all — but is that all there is?

THE ASSOCIATES: The Affectionate Punch (Fiction). A distinct air of Next Big Thing-ism seems to cling to Scotland's Associates right now, and they're not unworthy contenders. 'The Affectionate Punch', debut album title track now singled out for extra attention, is a song full of stylish power, as emotive as it's precise and controlled. You'll like it from the start, and very likely love it thereafter.

THE SWINGING CATS: Mantovani (2-Tone). However refreshingly zany, irrepressibly wacky etc etc these Swinging Cats might prove in live performance, precious little of that charm translates itself on to this disc. 'Mantovani' comes across as no more than an inconsequential uptempo instrumental joke, a brief album filler at best. Is the 2-Tone quality control department on summer holiday, or what?

CLASSIX NOUVEAUX: The Robots Dance (ESP). Personally, I've got an in-built resistance to songs about robots, and the whole tacky clone-ranger future blank 'I'm-not-a-free-man-I'm-a-number

charade. I'm just programmed that way, I guess. Never mind: Classix Nouveaux are by no means a bad band and, save for its lyrics and general air of contrivance, this debut single is attractive and cleverly assembled. I do worry about their haircuts, though.

SPLODGENESSABOUNDS: Two Little Boys (Deram). So old Max, right, Max Splodge, right, he goes and remakes the old Rolf Harris hit, right, and does it punk style! Haw, haw! What a wag! And so on. You'll all have your own feelings about this kind of thing, naturally; please feel free to act as your own feelings lead you. Me, I'll never voluntarily listen to the thing again.

BLAST FURNACE: Can't Stop The Boy (Nighthawk). Er ... er ... er ... I like it! I really do! Backed by neo-R&B classicette 'South Of The River' and an, um, enthusiastic rendering of Robert Johnson's 'Me And The Devil', this is basically a two-year-old number reissued to oblige a fresh demand and welcome it is too. Matching musical punch with lyrical diversion, the record also boasts some excellent personnel — the late Zenon De Fleur, Johnny Guitar, Skid Marx — as well as having (slower, Charlie, I don't type that fast)...

ELVIS PRESLEY: It's Only Love (RCA). A track extracted from the current Presley 800-album boxed set thingy, and why they picked on this one must remain a mystery. Despite the young, mean and moody Elvis who's pictured

on the sleeve, this lame big-production ballad dates from one of the lean (that's musically, not figuratively, speaking) periods of the man's later career, when he couldn't decide whether to be a parody of himself or of Tom Jones. Hard-core collectors might be more tempted by the B-side, never released before (and it's not hard to see why), a soppy dirge in an Hawaiian shirt that's called 'Beyond The Reef' and is so bad it should have been named 'beyond belief'.

THE KORGIS: If It's Alright With You Baby (Rialto). The Korgis' bespectacled wimp of a singer must be the oldest lovesick adolescent in the business. Nevertheless, this song has all the aching, string-laden appeal of its lush predecessors and I must admit that it brings out the lovesick little wimp in this listener quite efficiently. God, how embarrassing.

DARTS: Peaches (Magnet). Further evidence to suggest that Darts are not the band they once were comes with this particularly anonymous offering, a re-working of some old lkettes thing that sounds like a mish-mash of everything they've done already. Following as it does that horrible Four Seasons cover 'Let's Hang On', the new one marks some sort of improvement, but the general impression is of a party that's dragged too far into the early hours. Somebody show it the way to go home ...

TERI DeSARIO & K.C.: Dancin' In The Streets (Casablanca). Why do people insist on doing this sort of thing to fine old songs? Answers on a ten pound note ...

ART OBJECTS: Hard Objects (Fried Egg). This, on the other hand, is excellent. Bristol-based Art Objects seem heavily into Raincoats and not smiling and all that, but they've one of the tiny handful of worthwhile singles I've heard this week. Hard, and full of bitter intelligence.

THE JANET AND JOHNS: Let Bygones Be Bygone / I Was A Young Man (Vindaloo). This is what we want. The Janet And Johns (alias Charles and Hywell, a former librarian and a former undertaker, apparently) have come up with a compelling double-sider, two songs so different the disc ought to be treated for schizophrenia. 'I Was A Young Man' is a peculiar thing: a modern traditional folk song, hand-on-ear and synthesised drone, like Martin Carthy meets Dalek 1. 'Let Bygones Be Bygone', meanwhile, is stark, rhythmic and committed, very like Gang Of Four sans guitar, a convincing demolition-job on the corrosive effects of nostalgia. "No change without a push!" they declare, and I daresay they're right.

THE SINCEROS: Disappearing (Epic). Sincero pop is modern, rather than moderne, and tends to be too clever by half — whatever that means. 'Disappearing' is a slowish, almost smoochy piece of well-written and subtle mood

music that will infiltrate your head by stealth, and eventually leave as quietly as it came in.

THE NICE MEN: Nuclear Summer (Mrs Green). Stars of a recent *Gasbag*, The Nice Men cometh from Ormskirk, Lancashire, and have made a record which is pretty spirited and interesting considering how dull Ormskirk is. A bit clumsy, but very likeable.

DENNY LAINE: Go Now/Say You Don't Mind (Scratch). They're good enough songs, I suppose, but I would have thought Denny Laine had got enough mileage out of his two moments of pre-Wings glory by now. Too many years of playing Igor to Macca's Dr Frankenstein must make the odd solo attempt too much to resist.

ALARM CLOX: Protector (Alarm Clox). AEL (that's Anarchist Easy Listening) arrives in the form of this mild-mannered, melodic and certified non-sexist song by politically conscious West Country band Alarm Clox. It's so conventionally attractive and well-behaved that it comes as a shock to see the circle around that first 'A' in the band's name. An unlikely liaison of dissidence and prettiness.

DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES: You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin' (RCA). Great pointless cover versions of our time, number 4003 in an endless series. As an economical alternative to spending money on this smoothly produced middle-aged MOR schlock, why not just take a

cardboard box, write 'Do not disturb' on the side, and wear it over your head?

THE MECHANICS: Talking To The Wall (Big Fish). Perhaps the finest group to come out of Golant, Cornwall, in modern times, the three-piece Mechanics follow up that worthy debut 'I Don't Wanna See Your Picture' with another robust example of their sturdy, new wavish hard rock. This foot-in-both-camps approach of theirs might work to their commercial detriment, and I don't see this song setting the woods on fire, but there's an encouraging blend of ideas and competence here if you look for it.

MADDY PRIOR BAND: Wake Up England (EMI). Better still, have a lie in: they're playing this tripe on the breakfast show.

WASTED YOUTH: I'll Remember You (Bridge House). Creditable attempt by cold, black-garbed mysterious East End posers, though not a patch on the Frank Field original (sorry, some mistake here). Produced by the patron saint of this kind of thing, Peter Perrett, 'I'll Remember You' works hard to wrap itself in atmosphere and mystique but ultimately fails to conceal its hollow interior. Interesting cover, though, borrowed from French photographer Brassai.

MARTIN AND THE MARTIANS: Martians (Risky Disc). What this wistful piece of sci-fi silliness is all about I haven't the faintest idea. But its strange blend of po-faced drone and chipmunk chirp is undeniably appealing.

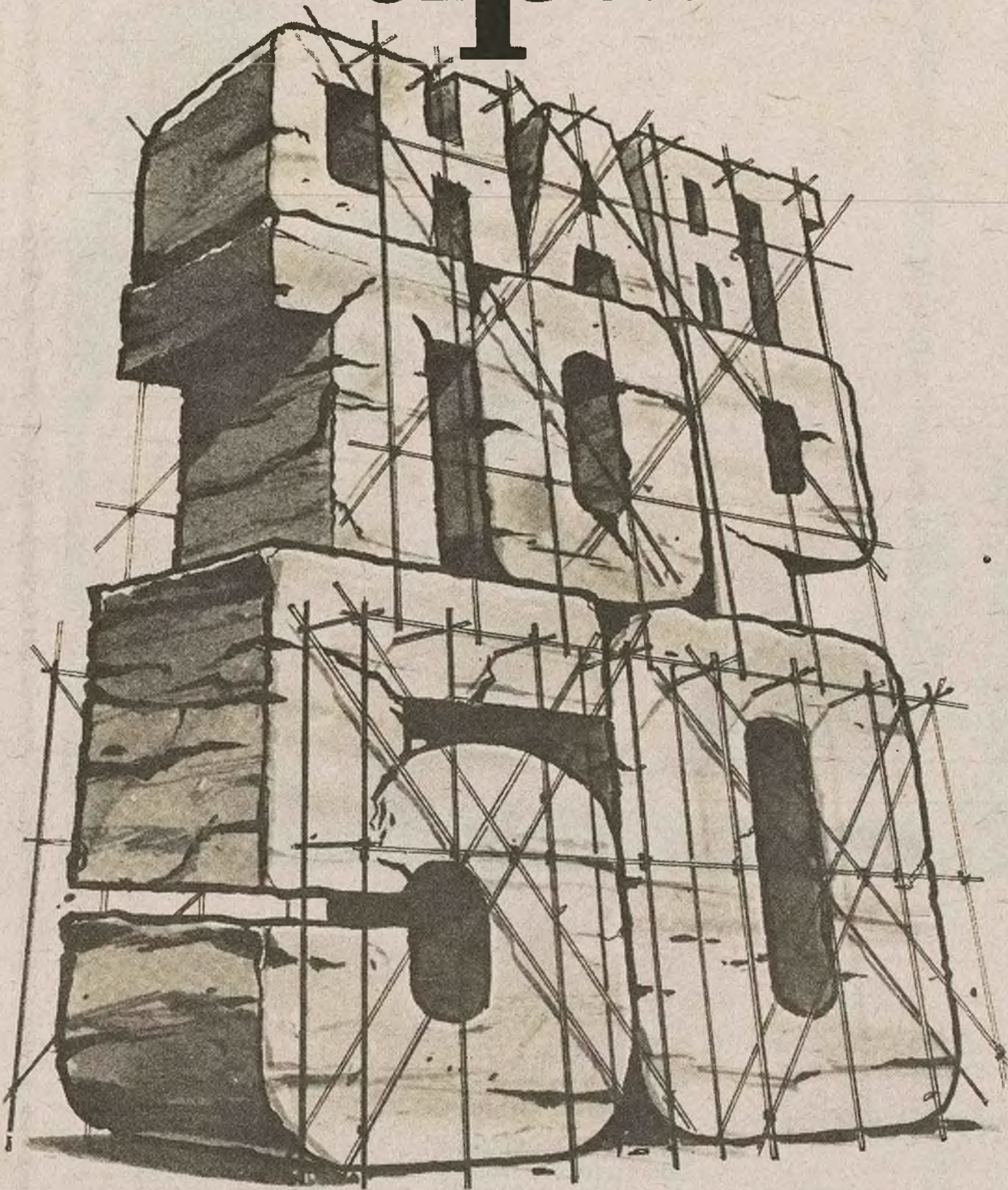
THE VIPs: The Quarter Moon (Gem). This fresh-faced foursome are so irredeemably breezy and lightweight they make 1910 Fruitgum Company sound like Throbbing Gristle. They can't keep a straight face even when they're trying to. The VIPs are not the future of anything — they may not even be the future of The VIPs — but I have a soft spot for them (right between the ears, sure) and this is as agreeable a pop song as any they've yet come up with. Lacks gorm, but has spirit.

Reviewed

by PAUL DU NOYER



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SPIZZ CLIMBS THE STARSHIP ENTERPRISE!

Chris Bohn charts courses both known and unknown with Athletico Spizz 80

LIFE AT home with Spizz immediately after he signed a major record deal wasn't easy for his flat mates, who heard nothing from behind his closed doors but cassettes of former live glories or a tape of Athletico Spizz 80's then unreleased 'Do A Runner' album for weeks on end.

Well, if nobody else recognised his peculiar genius at least Spizz did - and who's to question a man of his tastes? His unnatural thirst for his own material was not so much a deadly attack of immodesty, a final renewal of faith in himself after being constantly rejected by companies for the past four years.

Which isn't to say that he's always deserved the praise Athletico Spizz 80 are currently receiving. Indeed, as Spizz himself is fond of admitting, he'd personally never have gone to see the Spizz Oil duo in which he was responsible for vocals, whoops, shrieks with Pete Petrol on guitar (and in miner's hat) more than once. As to his earlier, less articulate period, his greatest assets were heaps of nerve and cheek, his sole intent being to remain on stage as long as possible without getting hurt.

His first public performance, at Birmingham's Barbarella's 77 Punk festival, consisted of a garbled version of 'Moonage Daydream', which he repeated later in London, accompanying himself on a guitar borrowed from the Slits. But the horrendous noise got too much for them and they pulled the plugs on him.

Siouxsie and The Banshees' agent Dave Woods was one of the few people actually amused by the latter performance, so much so that he decided to manage the duo. Thus they got themselves regular support gigs with the then unsigned Banshees. Their playing, needless to say, polarised audiences into love and hate camps; unfortunately, A&R men out to catch the Banshees and who glimpsed the band from afar mostly fell into the second camp. The ever-willing Rough Trade, however, liked them enough to release five singles by Spizz's various combinations.

The best were the two Spizzenergi records 'Soldier Soldier' and 'Where's Captain Kirk' - both solid dancehall favourites, thanks to instantly recognisable runaway train intros and great chanting choruses.

The second should have been a massive hit, coinciding as it did with the brief mania surrounding the release of *Star Trek - The Movie*. But its independent status and the inaccurate reflection of sales garnered from the BBC BRMB's chart return shop system denied it its rightful position, thus hardening Spizz's resolve to get a major deal. Being basically a pop group, he argues, there's no real point in reaching the peak of the alternative charts when there's a higher one in the background to conquer.

Unfortunately, it took more than their quality or high sales of those two Spizzenergi songs to erase the bad taste of Spizz Oil left in most record company mouths. It'd be nice, but a bit naive, to think that the less commercial,



Pic David Corio

but no less engaging, Athletico single 'No Room' - about drastic housing shortages and escalating youth unemployment - changed A&M's mind.

As it is, who knows? Spizz conjectures, 'We're still a bit earthy for them - certainly not an A&M style band, so maybe they signed us for what we'd do later.'

The deal came about after the band had privately recorded an album's worth of material to hawk around. If no majors were forthcoming, they'd have offered it to Rough Trade, with whom they'd always worked on a one-off basis. Unfortunately, the A&M signing came so suddenly that they didn't have time enough to warn properly their benefactors, making their departure appear indecently fast in some quarters.

Any acrimony, Spizz? "Definitely not on a personal level," he answers. "We're a fairly racy band, as it were, and Rough Trade are a bit more casual about things, you know, and don't seem to want urgently to get records into the charts. We kind of wanted something faster. But as people, they're all great."

"And the whole point about us..." he stops to ponder a moment. "Well, about me, anyway, is that I don't see the point of me behaving like me if nobody finds out how I've been behaving. I don't want to get to the point where we've got a gold album and now want a platinum, but I do want a hit record."

WHEN I meet Spizz for the second time in as many months (the first on a *Melody Maker* assignment doomed by IPC's industrial problems), he's cooking himself a frugal lunch of sausages and baked beans, recounting the following anecdote.

Having just been signed by A&M, Athletico Spizz played a triumphant celebratory gig in Brixton, after which he spent the night watching Woody Allen videos, courtesy of Richard Jobson, before setting off at 6am to hitch a ride back to wealthy Birmingham suburb Solihull to visit his brother. Dropped off at Spaghetti Junction, he was just as

ABOARD PRIVATE



“OK Spizz, now that you’re on a major label, go down to earth and beam those kids’ money up to me.”

quickly picked up by police for walking along the motorway, and just when his early departure looked like being in vain, he spied a friend passing, whom he was reluctantly allowed to accompany into the town centre.

The point of the story being that, now signed, surely he can afford by-passing such trouble by rail?

“When the ticket costs about £15?” quizzes Spizz. “We only get £20 a week spending money — and the £200 lump spending sum we got from signing was swallowed immediately by bills. We’ve been on our own a long time, you know?”

So let’s avoid accusations of selling out.

The story continues at a rich heir’s party — Solihull being that kind of area — but we’ll leave it there and return to pre-Spizz days parties of the art college fraternities and earlier, to which Spizz once belonged. Way back then his constant urge to amuse and entertain manifested itself in mimicry of Johnny Rotten accompanied by rusty banjo, or even Leonard Rossiter.

Why this need to make a fool of yourself? “There was a certain amount of insecurity at school,” he chirpily recalls. “I was just going for my piece of the action — this is where my talent was.”

Couldn’t you play football, or what? “On the contrary. . . I was in the football team, ran cross-country and played badminton at college.”

Before punk gave him the impetus to leave the crowd and join the growing dole queue of performers, he spent his days as an art student painting from pictures of Garbo, Roosevelt and Karloff, placing them in unlikely landscapes. But come ’77 he moved onto what he describes as messy paintings.

“I still see a parallel to my music in my paintings,” he points out. “Especially to Spizz Oil. I see sharp contrast in what we used to do — no intermittent grey matter, it was all black and white.”

Early Spizz’s audacity led to some worthy, if slightly contemptuous and, by their nature, short-lived experiments. Like the very early, unrecorded classic ‘Left Or Right’, which was basically him yelling the title, uttering streams of gibberish in between and interjecting the occasional yelp of “1984.”

“Even so, people started going, ‘Yeah, Yeah’, to what I was saying,” remarks a bemused Spizz. “I realized that with the quality of most live PAs and mixes, and most people being aled up, I could sing anything and people would either get into it or get out of the room. But after a while I thought that approach was artsy fartsy, so I started writing songs. I still don’t think words are that important live, it’s more the feeling.”

Which fits in with his approach to songwriting.

He chooses words as often for the sheer enjoyment of singing them as for their meaning. Fortunately those he likes using fit in with his longstanding and pertinent obsessions with energy, new city environs and space. Check the earliest ‘Cold City’ and ‘6000 Crazies’ singles and those old numbers that have survived through to Athletico’s album, like ‘Energy Crisis’.

Spizz is funny, but that doesn’t preclude taking himself or what’s going on around him seriously. Songs like ‘European Heroes’ and ‘New Species’ are sombre looks at life, though thankfully not poker-faced.

“I didn’t realize until after I’d written it that it sounded anti-left wing,” points out an alarmed Spizz, talking about ‘European Heroes’ — a rundown of guerilla activities throughout the continent. “But it’s not really that at all. It’s anti-sectarian, anti-Russian imperialism. It’s not a great lyrical song, just

straightforward and blunt, with a bit of sarcasm.

“And I cover myself,” he adds, “by saying it’s like attacking from your own ranks — a bit of self-criticism.”

Why, where do you stand?

“Well, I was a member of the Solihull Labour Party in 1974, but left because it was too right wing — is that good enough?” he offers, hopefully.

“Solihull Labour Party! Can you imagine a Solihull Labour Party? (Try substituting Hampstead) There were about 12 active members when I joined.”

He launches into a brief rundown of Labour history, stating how politicians destroy their health working their whole lives for the Party, before moving onto the contemporary problems of the declining NHS and increasing unemployment.

“And now we’ve solved the world’s problems. . .” jokes Spizz. “It’s quite funny how bands get involved in politics, because if what I’ve just said goes into print I suddenly become a quasi-politician — it’s really weird.”

SPIZZ’S CURRENT good fortune is owed very much to the band effort of Athletico Spizz 80. When the Oil duo wore out its welcome, Petrol stayed around for the early incarnation of Energi — he’s on ‘Soldier Soldier’ — but it’s really the almost settled line-up on the ‘Where’s Captain Kirk?’ single that really established itself as a positively vibrant, long term force.

By this time Spizz had been joined by lanky cropped blond bassist Jim Solar and gawkily innocent keyboardman Mark Coalfield, both from the notorious Birmingham combo Ha Ha Germs, whose disruptive reputation far exceeded their actual output. It’s difficult to imagine thoughtful Coalfield taking part in that band’s few bizarre operations, but Solar’s aura of quiet menace somehow fits as he recounts flour throwing incidents and general mayhem at their support spots to other Birmingham favourites like Fashion. When

Solar left, he played awhile in The Techniques, a pickup band featuring another short term Spizzer, Pete Hyde.

Coalfield’s more musicianly abilities brought a new sense of order to Spizz’s chaos without masking its delirious appeal. It took a precarious period of adjustment though to reach the present dramatic balance between good-natured clowning spontaneity and a necessarily anchoring structure. Luckily Coalfield’s own sensibility is well tuned to the Spizz ethos. Check his fragile ‘Person Impersonator’ on the ‘Do A Runner’ album, a song about the second coming with a great pay-off line: “He tells me his name is Harry — but I don’t believe it.”

“Mark is a highly sensitive human being,” comments Spizz honestly, but with tongue in cheek. “Well, I don’t know whether he’d like me to tell you this, but he had quite a dangerous religious experience once. He’s highly introspective about things in general, but that’s not to say he’s not extrovert at all — he says the wackiest things sometimes.”

Silent drummer C.P. Snare stemmed the rapid turnover of Spizz percussionists, while guitarist Dave Scott sharpens the band’s attack with some expertly turned melodramatic pacing. Possessor of the sort of eyes that Anthony Perkins would kill his mother for, Scott was once busted for obscenity as an art student at his London degree showing.

“I was charged under the 1834 Vagrancy Act,” he recalls with relish, “which apparently came about because war veterans used to display their wounds in public, upsetting the ladies. It’s now the law under which they prosecute flashers and dirty old men in raincoats.”

“I was fined £50 and branded a rogue and a scoundrel,” he remarks straight-faced.

“The pictures weren’t very pleasant though,” he admits casually. “I was just expressing myself.”

Disillusioned after the bust, he gravitated away from the insular world of painting to the more public sphere of performance art. He

was part of the legendary Bank Of Dresden, whose other members included ex-PiL drummer Richard Dudanski and Jane Mo-dette, eventually leaving to join Spizz after a brief erratic solo guitar film flirtation at Leeds Sci-fi festival, where Spizzenergi were also playing.

SPIZZ’S SPIRITS are running high at the moment. Still young enough looking to get away half-fare on the tube, he’s gleefully bouncing on the end of his bed, pointing out various Spizz artefacts and collected paraphernalia. Here’s one of The Clash posters he helped flypost around Britain during his early dosser days. There’s the sleeve artwork from ‘No Room’, done by an old art student friend Sioban Coppinger, who posed a naked Spizz in a futuristic blank, bald mask with a full-sized female figure seated on the opposite side of a table. A bizarre tableau.

Any fears for the future, Spizz?

“Not really. If you fuck up on a big deal — big deal! Look what happened to The Slits and The Pop Group, they’re doing alright. You can get in and out of any deal you want.”

So what’s instore for us?

“Zombies could be the next big thing. It’s based on what I know from punk — you know how punks were considered outrageous, noisy and snotty. Well, Zombies are kids who don’t eat, go around blank and take pills all day.”

Have you seen the movie?

“No. But have you seen *The Tin Drum* (the Gunter Grass film adaptation about an adult in a three-year-old child’s body, whose piercing screams crack glass)?” he enthuses.

“Loads of good bits in that. Ari Up went the night our roadie Ginger was there and she was screaming everytime the boy did,” he says admiringly.

“I’ll have to get one of those tin drums,” he asserts. “I can do the screams, but I can’t break glass yet.”

Eat your heart out Captain Kirk — Spizz has found a new hero!



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"Who are you calling 'Dead at the controls'?"

IF THERE'S one thing The Little Roosters' singer, guitarist and all-purpose mouthpiece Garrie Lammin isn't short of, it's bottle.

But then, being from Romford, being obsessed with The Small Faces and how Ronnie Wood fashions his plumage — these things carry certain responsibilities.

Brash, resilient, and looking so much like one of The Perishers you almost feel like asking for proof of identity, Lammin gives the impression of having learned the hustle at an early age.

So when he decided that Joe Strummer was the only person capable of giving The Little Roosters a fair crack on record, all he had to do was convince the Clash City Rocker to accept the inevitable. Which is why Strummer now finds himself at the recording desk in Rockstar Studios producing the Roosters' first album.

"The Roosters' problem," gabbles Lammin as the tapes are being re-wound for a fresh mix, "was that we didn't have too much studio experience, so we couldn't work out why a song that really works on stage doesn't necessarily come off in the studio. The only band in ages to get that sorted out properly have been The Clash.

"See, everybody at various record

companies kept on telling us that they liked our material — reckoned it was well strong — but didn't like either the sound or feel we got on tape."

On the surface, that doesn't appear to leave much else. Phil Chilton, who is engineering the Strummer production, gives a knowing smile, "What usually happens," he says, "is that a road band works extremely hard perfecting a good live sound at gigs, only to have it totally messed up because their record producer has absolutely no idea of what the band he's working with is supposed to sound like."

No such problems here. For Strummer, being a former 101'er also carries with it certain responsibilities.

Lammin doesn't take all the kudos for convincing Strummer that together they could make sweet music. Steve Burgess — Lammin's affable cousin and the Roosters' bassist — clinched the collaboration. It was Burgess who in his alternative vocation as promoter (Panic Promotions), successfully staged The Clash's memorable Notre Dame Hall word-of-mouth shows last year.

"I reckoned," says Strummer, lighting another link in an endless chain of cigarettes, "that if Steve had anything to do with the Roosters, then it must be OK."

A demo of the raucous 'Ain't Proud' was all the persuading Joe required. Initially, he only agreed to produce the Rooster third single.

"Bang four titles down quickly," says Strummer, "and pick out the best two. But somehow we just got carried away with things!"

Fourteen titles — Dylan's 'Wheels

On Fire' being the solitary non-original — were "banged down" and mixed in well under the week.

THE LACK of secrecy surrounding The Little Rooster sessions has caused a lot of loose talk about acrimonious differences of opinion within The Clash. Rumour even extends to Strummer having thrown in the towel and all four members being both skint and shagged out.

Confronted with all this, Strummer seems genuinely surprised. He doesn't deny that things have become strained, but insists that events have become distorted in the constant retelling.

It would seem that when The Clash clash, such incidents aren't smoothed over with a lot of patronising PR jargon and consequently, bad news travels fast.

"When you're on tour," Strummer explains during a break, "there's no privacy, so if there's something to be argued over it's done right there and then backstage or on the bus and quite often when someone is waiting for a chat or autographs. Even if it's all down to a case of fisticuffs, it'll happen on the spot instead of allowing any resentment to build up."

"It's all quite normal... most groups behave like that don't they?" You asking or telling?

Such has been this year's work-load that, by the time The Clash returned from the States and hit Europe, tempers were frayed, motives questioned and what under normal circumstances would be considered occupational hazards suddenly became crises.

One night in Hamburg, The Clash came close to blowing it.

"You can wind someone up so far before they break," Strummer confesses. "Well... they wound me up and I broke."

Early that day, The Clash were attacked by a large mob of beer-throwing punks displeased with the contents of 'London Calling', and once their show started they were confronted with a vast demonstration of prejudice, intolerance and mindless violence.

"The gigs turned into a stand-up boxing contest. Punk rock has only just hit Europe in a big way, but it's totally worthless. It's nothing but a complete 1976 Revival... just another fashion. It's become everything it wasn't supposed to be."

"And what we were confronted with were junior punks in their brand new expensive designer uniforms with concrete heads and no ears."

Events quickly degenerated with The Clash refusing to vacate the stage — "We weren't about to split because some German bastards at the front of the stage are telling us not to play 'White Riot'" — and, like Strummer said, he lost his cool. He delivered a powerful forehead smash with his guitar to his tormentor's head and was only freed by the police without being charged when a breathalyser test proved negative.

"It was only afterwards that I realised I'd almost gone completely over the top." A subdued Strummer toys with a cigarette whilst he carefully considers his next statement.

"I nearly murdered somebody and it made me realise that there must be another way of facing violence... you can't face violence with violence. It just doesn't work."



Steve Burgess and Garrie Lammin queue at the studio canteen.

The man speaks from the heart. "I was emotionally shattered... completely disheartened to see what's happened to the seeds of what we've planted. If those pricks and kids like them are the fruits of our labours then they're much worse than those people they were meant to replace."

"If, I'm going to be pushed into a situation whereby there's even the remotest possibility that I might kill or maim a member of the audience, what on earth is the point of what we're doing? Anyway," his voice falters, "I... I don't believe we've done any good at all. What we've done amounts to..."

He blows a big fat raspberry.

This is just the ammunition Strummer's detractors will seize upon, but then he was well aware of that before making the statement.

Anyway, tea break's over. Back on your heads!

"YEAH, that's it!" Strummer hollers, beer bottle poised inches from his lips. "That really does sound like spears rattling against shields!"

Strummer is supervising the mixing of 'Uhuru' (Freedom). A percussive tribal chant, it's the most adventurous and uncharacteristic of The Roosters' originals, inspired by a TV screening of Zulu.

A twist of a knob here, a touch of reverb there and the multi-dubbed voices of the four Roosters take on the illusion of thousands of African tribesmen in full-cry thundering across the veldt.

■ Continues page 53



All pix:
David
Corio



"1-2-3-4!"

We're a

Garrie band!"

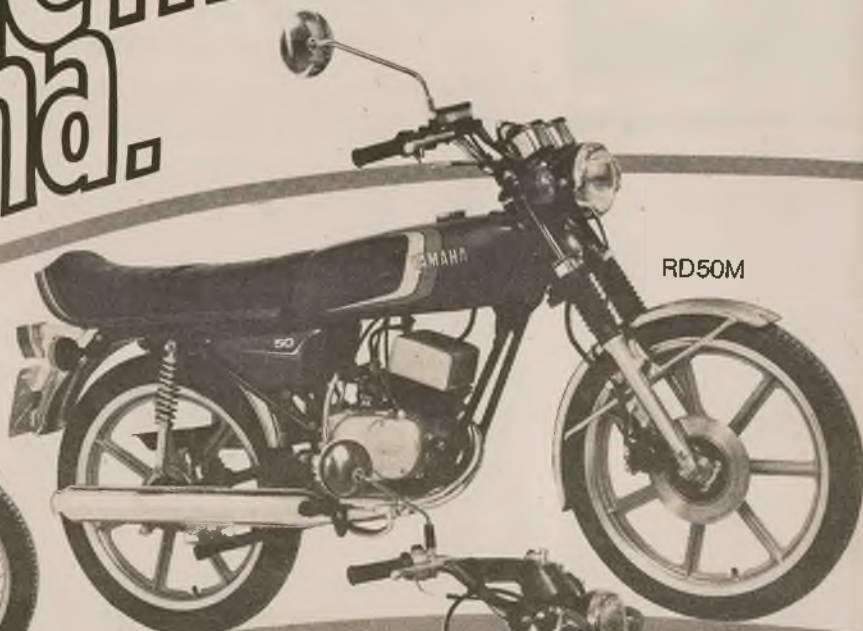




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OUR FRIGHTENING FUTURE—PART TWO OF YOUR THREE-PART PULL-OUT SUMMER FUN SPECIAL

The NME Consumers' Guide To

1984

By IAN MacDONALD

**We are now entering the world of the Totalitarian Revolution. . .
but does Britain have to be part of that world? Year by year, law by law,
this green and pleasant land is inching remorselessly towards a police state.**

BRITONS, RIGHT and left, have always been very pleased with themselves for being independent and not having to kowtow to foreigners.

But if the food and raw material we import from abroad were ever to stop coming, the industrial productivity we depend on would collapse in front of our eyes.

Moreover such a collapse, once the dust had settled, would reveal a little-known and long-hidden truth: that for nigh on a century, and by the sole means of systematically swindling poor nations out of their meagre resources, this green and pleasant land has been able to support a population more than twice its natural capacity.

Britain imports half the food it eats. Robert Allen of *The Ecologist* has estimated that, in the event of a major world food shortage, the carrying capacity of these islands would fall back to what it was in the year 1900 — that is, twenty million. Since on present trends there will be sixty million of us by the end of the century, such a shortage, if permanent, would leave the UK with a surplus population of forty million people.

A permanent shortage is certain to come about sooner or later for the reasons discussed in Part One of this article, but it would not require a global crop failure or two billion extra stomachs to fill to cause our vital supply of imported food to dry up.

At present, in order to pay for the food that keeps its hidden surplus of humans alive, Britain must export manufactured goods. But eighty per cent of the raw materials processed through our industries come, like the food purchased with the end-products they turn into, from overseas. A sudden international crisis that cut us off from our key raw materials would bring about a fall in food imports just as effectively as a direct shortage.

Britain, as a maritime trading nation, is particularly vulnerable to fluctuating circumstances in the outside world. The famous OPEC oil price rise of 1974 set off a global recession, but whereas other countries

absorbed the shock without serious injury, in Britain it doubled the inflation rate to a record 27%, sent unemployment from 577,000 to 1,132,000 in only 18 months, and caused the value of the pound and levels of investment in industry to plunge like a stalled aircraft.

It was in order to foil the plots of shady foreigners like the members of OPEC that Britannia once thought it advisable to rule the waves. But those halcyon days of empire and exploitation have gone forever (sigh), and in the modern world we must occasionally put up with the galling experience of being ordered about by our ex-slaves.

Above all, we must compete on the world market. Which brings us to our internal problems: the class war, as reflected in labour relations, and the mechanical inefficiency of our industry.

It's partly conservatism that stops us re-equipping with the new electronic gadgets discussed last week; the export drive has, after all, been very successful over the last ten years — to the extent that producing for foreign markets now accounts for a third of both our Gross National Product and our total workforce. But competition on the world market is rapidly coming to be dominated by those countries

most geared to automation and, unless British industry adapts accordingly, our export performance in the '70s won't receive a curtain-call in the '80s.

Should this happen, there would not only be mass lay-offs in the export industries, but also a sharp down-turn in the cycle which brings in the extra food to feed that troublesome surplus.

BLOCKING THE ROAD TO maximum efficiency through maximum automation are the unions and their codes of restrictive practice. An increasing proportion of disputes revolve around the introduction of new technology, the trick for employers being to keep such issues local and well away from national debate and party manifesto.

It's on the cards that the CBI may shortly make a show of accommodation with the TUC over re-equipping so as to keep things off the boil while the first stages go through. The idea is that, once the men begin to see the machines replacing their less skilled mates, they'll come over all cowed and "Thirties" and trade their national strike weapon for specific assurances in particular factories.

Taking for granted that there will be some big show-downs in areas thinly insulated against the realities of mass unemployment, the selling out of the more obsolescent by the less obsolescent could well become the dominant trend of events — at least for the first few years. There are good reasons for supposing, as employers do, that greed and insecurity have washed the old idealism out of the

labour movement: the strikes of skilled workers in 1977-8 for the restoration of their differentials; the inter-union row at the Isle of Grain; the fiasco of May 14's 'Day of Action'.

On the other hand, unemployment will sooner or later reach such intolerable proportions that socialism in its utopian guise is bound to make a come-back. There may even be a mass movement against automation, rallying around a call for people to be preferred over machines, for an emphasis on quality instead of quantity and a return to traditional values.

Such a movement, doomed to about as much lasting success as CND, would be labelled neo-Luddite, a "vote against prosperity", and be opposed by a support-British-industry campaign funded by some City-based league of patriots. Fascism would then be just a cheer away. (The idea of socialism turning against the machine holds a poignant irony for those who know Chapter 12 of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, but it will happen nonetheless.)

The British establishment has long regarded the Marxist extreme, particularly in regard to its organising capacity within the unions, as this country's "internal enemy". Should a movement of the broad Left begin to agitate against automation in a way threatening to industry, the definition of the "internal enemy" will be sure to become correspondingly broad. As a matter of fact, scenarios envisaging some sort of future struggle between UK security forces and "the people" have long been the subject of serious consideration at high levels.

The dangerous truth is that if there were fewer of us, there'd be more to go round — an argument that could

easily be raised from the plane of bloodmindedness and translated into noble rhetoric by a future political group ruthless enough to face the consequences. For there are sound reasons for seeing surplus population as the basic cause of inflation — a potentially explosive political fact which can be examined in its various historical contexts in *Can Britain Survive?* (W. M. S. Russell: *Prices, Wages and Population*).

Edward Goldsmith, editor of this book, wrote in 1971: "It is difficult for those living in present-day affluent Britain to accept that they are soon to be faced with a serious food-shortage, yet this is the only conclusion that is consistent with the available information."

And summing up: "Unless the British government transforms itself into a ruthless dictatorship, one is forced to predict the eventual breakdown of political control."

The name for Britain in 1984 was Airstrip One. This is the story of how they built Airstrip One and what happened to the surplus people who live there.

IN 1950 BRITAIN ENJOYED ONE OF the highest living standards in Europe; now it has one of the lowest. Iron Curtain countries like Czechoslovakia and East Germany are better off *per capita* than us and soon we shall have been overtaken by even the Soviet Union.

How did this happen?

In simple terms, through living on the never-never. As we dismantled the empire which, for nearly a century, had allowed unprecedented numbers of us to live in relative comfort, we simultaneously embarked on the so-called "revolution of rising expectations", perpetual mover of the consumer society. To draw gratefully on the creaking clichés of modern British oratory, we thought the world owed us a living.

Once the unions had caught on to the "rising expectations" part, the rules of the familiar game were established. Since 1964, when the Wilson government inherited the unbalanced books of you-never-had-it-so-good Conservatism, the idea has been for the unions to demand wage rises that beat price rises and for the establishment, blue or red as the case may be, to decide whether to agree an incomes policy or club the proles back into line with new laws.

When strikes and inflationary wage-claims began to break through Labour's incomes policy in the late '60s (semi-mythical era of the 3% ceiling), the Wilson government began with some embarrassment to toy with changes in union legislation. Their blushes were spared, however, by the election in 1970 of what socialists always refer to with a toothy grin as "the Heath Regime".

Edward Heath attempted to bring the unions to heel with the Industrial Relations Act and the result was a

Illustration:

RALPH STEADMAN



2. Mere Details



The Building of Airstrip One

» Continues over



From previous page

head-on collision between capital and labour on a scale not seen since the General Strike of 1926. Britain found itself working three days a week by candlelight. Political violence in the period 1971-4 was the worst the country had experienced this century.

Finally the 1974 miners' strike persuaded the Prime Minister to dissolve parliament in search of a mandate from the people. However, sufficient of the people had had enough to allow Labour to wrestle clear with a narrow majority.

The fate of the Heath Regime, as we shall see, concentrated the mind of the establishment wonderfully. But it would take a further six years of struggle and decline to put enough iron in the soul of the British electorate for it to dare call upon the Fell Lady of Finchley.

Stephen Haseler, writing about the future in 1975 (*The Death of British Democracy*), saw no answer to our endless woes. For him, the politics of Consumerism were devoid of principle and shackled to the short-term decision. Under pressure from nationalists and unionists to decentralise power, an enfeebled Westminster would totter from crisis to crisis, unsure of when and where to apply the law, in the end allowing the country to fall into ungovernable pieces.

For there to be a strengthened central government, there would first have to be a sea-change in British political life and the only parliamentary body likely to assume such a role was a Tory pressure group called the Centre for Policy Studies, starring Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher. To Haseler, the implementation of Thatcherism was about as likely and desirable as a Trotskyite coup. Should she ever get her way, he predicted a "traumatic upheaval" involving "such a degree of social and economic dislocation" that Britain would never pull out of it. Welcome to his nightmare.

THATCHERISM BELIEVES IN exterminating inefficiency by controlling the money supply and cutting public spending. As a cure, this is rather like giving a comatose elderly patient shock-stimulation to the heart: whilst it might get the body's systems working again, in the short-term it stands an equally good chance of causing convulsions and death.

That unemployment will reach two million by the end of 1981 is agreed by all forecasters, including the government's. Thereafter, predictions diverge.

The Independent Treasury Economic Model Club (ITEM), a Conservative group chaired by Edward du Cann, has used the government's economic model to prove that unemployment, contrary to official assurances of an early peak, will continue to grow after 1981, topping three million by 1982. Confirmation of this view has recently come from the influential National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Both groups trust that the 1982 figure will not increase thereafter.

This is scornfully dismissed by the arch-enemies of the item, the Cambridge Economic Policy Review Group (CEPRG) who, beginning with a high score of 2½ million out by the end of 1981, forecast a staggering four million unemployed by 1984.

How come? Well, the CEPRG don't think British industry is strong enough to respond to harsh treatment. They predict convulsions and death — less metaphorically, a disastrous 10% fall in industrial output in 1983 which will finish Britain's career as a prosperous nation.

This, says the government, is alarmism. But the CBI, on behalf of firms squeezed between inflation, foreign competition, and high interest rates, is already begging the Downing

Street dominatrix to stop her dogmatic flogging of the economy and give industry a chance to catch its breath.

(This was written in May. Since then unemployment has leapt up by over four hundred thousand in only two months and pundits now predict two million out of work by Christmas. At this rate, the extremely black future predicted by the CEPRG seems our likeliest option.)

The signs are bad. Everyone but Mrs Thatcher and the TUC now wants an incomes policy and a tight one (3-5%). Moreover, the CEPRG and many export businesses want protection from foreign competition which, beyond the most gingerly selective measures, would effectively mean coming out of the Common Market, already the rallying-cry of the Labour left.

In 1932 the setting up of trade barriers seemed to stave off the worst of the global Depression, though it took a world war to get the economy moving again. Today, with sixteen million extra people aboard and a crucial dependence on our export trade, it would be foolish to shut out foreign producers lest they do likewise unto us. Besides, protection would mean higher home prices, diminishing consumer freedom, and inevitable economic stagnation. In no sense would such a state of affairs conform to Conservative dreams of a miracle-working "climate of enterprise".

The facts are brutally simple. Unless workers begin, against the trend of the last twenty years, to accept pay-cuts and a considerable fall in their living standards, the firms they work for will go broke. (Production figures for the first quarter of 1980 are very much worse than feared and redundancies — 123,000 — twice those suffered in the same period in the previous three years.)

The government, meanwhile, promises an eventual levelling-off of prices and a resumption of growth — even a "return to full employment" which, in the age of the silicon chip, is tantamount to wanton surrealism. With the uncertainty of inflation eliminated, it argues, fresh investment and enterprising new businesses will spring up to exploit labour resources and super-technology, and we'll all live happily ever after.

But why rehire humans when you can buy cheaper, more efficient, less bolshy machines? And who will buy the goods produced by all this bright-eyed, let's-get-this-show-on-the-road free enterprise? The 30% unemployed of Merseyside?

There can be no down-turn in unemployment in today's automated world. Eventually, the combined effects of crippling social security payments and lost tax-revenue will cause a hard-pressed government to face the fact that large numbers of British men, women, and children are no longer needed.

And that's when things get tougher than tough.

WE HAD TO DECLARE WAR on them and the only way you could declare war was to attack the vulnerable points. They were the points of energy; the power stations, the coal depots, the points of supply. And this is what we did."

Thus Arthur Scargill, describing his military-style "flying picket" operation mounted on behalf of the National Union of Mineworkers against coal industry chiefs and the British government in 1972.

The amount of disruptive power in the hands of organised labour had been hinted at two years earlier with the go-slow in the electricity supply industry, but even a ten-week overtime ban in the pits (designed to run down stocks) failed to alert the government to the real situation in 1972. When a mass picket of 15,000 closed down the Saitley coke depot in a famous week-long trial of strength between the NUM and the Birmingham police, Arthur Scargill hailed a historic moment:

"Here was living proof that the working class have the way to flex its muscles and it could bring government, employers, society to a total standstill."

Not unnaturally, the powers that be interpreted Scargill's campaign as a political strike, aimed not so much at affecting pay and working conditions in the mines as at undermining the existing order by a strategic withdrawal of labour.

Its best fears were confirmed later in the same turbulent year when the TUC called for a one-day general strike to force the release of five dockers jailed for contempt of court during the container dispute. Again menaced by a political strike, the government climbed down. And when in September building



workers in Shrewsbury rioted against strike-breakers and Action Committee leader Desmond Warren announced, somewhat prematurely, that "this is a revolution, not a strike", there seemed little room for doubt.

The mass-picket at Saitley and subsequent confrontations amounted to an escalation of the class war. Even as the police were losing their struggle with the massed battalions of the proletariat in Birmingham, soldiers were being quietly moved into the city in case the establishment should choose to do a little escalating of its own.

But committing troops against workers in 1972 would have been too much too soon. In order for such tactics to be accepted by the public, there would need to be a period of conditioning during which the sight of troops on our streets would gradually be made unremarkable through the device of using them in strikes and security exercises. Escalation is perceived in relation to what you're used to. Thus British police prefer the more obviously brutal truncheon to Continental methods of riot-control because, in this country, tear-gas and water-cannon would be seen as upping the ante.

So the Heath Regime didn't use the soldiers. But what it did do was set up

assume that all advanced industrial states that aren't living in Cloud Cuckoo Land have similar plans of their own. Even Marxist countries like to keep a bit of a grip on things.

The reprehensible aspect of such plans is not even their obsessive secrecy which, as you will see, is quite understandable.

In 1919 the spectre of the Russian Revolution haunted liberal democratic Europe with fears of general strikes and civil wars. With this in mind, the Lloyd George coalition government asked a former member of the war cabinet, Sir Eric Geddes, to come up with a national plan to cope with the worst that could be imagined: the revolutionary overthrow of central authority.

Blending the "us and them" ideology of the class war with the topical notion that *digging in* was what one did when threatened, Geddes came up with a scheme in which the country would be divided into 16 districts, each under a colonial-style District Commissioner, and each capable of acting autonomously using local police, civilian volunteers, and designated army units to control the proles in their area.

Under the Emergency Powers Act (1920), troops could be used to break



THE FORCE POLICE

Left: the shape of police to come? This figure — battle-dress, armour-plated helmet, machine pistol and two other guns — made its debut at the 1980 Chief Police Officers Association conference.

Right: police surveillance on and over Britain's streets, 1980. The camera, incidentally, is in downtown suburban Croydon.

Below: just another high street battlefield, with the now familiar police riot shields in evidence. This one? An anti-fascist demo in Leicester, April 1979.

a proletarian uprising. Apart from a change in the identity of the Bad Guys, the only notable alteration in the scenario was the replacement of District Commissioners with Regional Commissioners.

After the war, the new Labour Government disbanded the Civil Defence Corps but prudently put Plan Y away in a safe place. Within three years, the threat of a rocket-war with Russia had brought Civil Defence back again. The plan, however, stayed under lock and key.

During the '50s, the authorities gradually came to assimilate the significance of Hiroshima. Bluntly, it was a choice between spreading funds thinly in an attempt to protect the entire population, or spending it all on ensuring the survival of a privileged few. The former option being either frankly cosmetic or unthinkably expensive, the latter was adopted forthwith.

Plans for national survival in nuclear war were secretly scrapped in 1959 and the powers began digging in, working on the old Geddes formula of regions. There were twelve in all, each to be ruled from a subterranean stronghold called a Regional Seat of Government (RSG) staffed by four hundred civil servants and army officers.

Civil Defence Corps was again disbanded (in 1968), nobody noticed. The *Protect and Survive* booklets, cajoling us to stay at home and die, were printed but not distributed.

Following the violent events of 1972 and the formation of the National Security Committee, the secret survival network, now known as the National War Plan, was examined to see if it was usable as a base from which to conduct peacetime emergency operations against an "internal enemy". The Emergency Services Division of the Home Office (a police unit) suggested that the army check it out on the quiet and there followed a secret two-year military survey of the entire country — every road, bridge, and installation.

By 1974 the survey was complete. The Sub-Regional boundaries were adjusted to fit the new county lines drawn up under the 1972 Local Government Act (a big centralisation scheme designed to rationalise the UK into rural and metropolitan blocks). Simultaneously, the boundaries of the local police forces, of the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve areas, and of the army's own United Kingdom Land Forces Districts were shuffled so as to merge with the grand design.

The Geddes Plan had come full circle.

during industrial action. To the left, they are official strike-breakers; to the rest, the mysterious people who keep the electricity on when the power-workers are out.

Founded, like so much of our modern state machinery for control, just after the miners' strike of 1972, the CCU does its own research and draws up its own closely-guarded plans. In times of strife, it has the dual function of (1) preparing intelligence reports for the Civil Contingencies Committee of the Cabinet and (2) running its national crisis programmes through a network of Regional Emergency Committees (RECs).

The RECs, first seen during the 1979 haulage drivers' strike, are eleven in number and linked closely with army regional commands, though staffed by civilians reporting to the CCU via the Emergency Operations Room of the Department of the Environment. Each REC is autonomous in its own area and expected to take care of ground-level organisation without chocking up the higher authority with unnecessary feedback.

To do this, they often use army intelligence. Moreover, during a food shortage, the RECs are empowered to requisition supplies from the home defence emergency units, whose depots are permanently stockpiled

industry. If the supervisors walked out, nothing could prevent the development of a very smelly situation. Within 48 hours, sewage treatment plants would start discharging untreated effluent into rivers and back-siphonage from the mains supply would bring contaminated water into homes. In a week, there would be sewage in the street.

There are many mighty challenges democracy can meet and vanquish utterly, but turds in the gutter isn't one of them.

Even if the entire British army was available to help civil servants and police, there is absolutely nothing a government could do to keep either the country or democracy going in the event of a General Strike. In 1926 citizen volunteers helped run buses and trains, but when the private armies raised for a similar purpose by ex-soldiers like General Sir Walter Walker and Colonel David Stirling were offered, in 1974, as reinforcements to the uniformed branches, they were politely turned down.

Long before they ever got their longed-for call to arms, the government would have taken to the hills and the installations beneath them.

Rivers" as Aberdeen, there was another round of shooting, this time from the Scottish Nationalists.

Riot-control in the UK, for a century the exclusive province of the police, could only be popularly accepted as an army function if circumstances were widely felt to be serious enough. And even in the most serious circumstances, a sudden and unprecedented use of troops in the built-up areas of Britain would in itself constitute an escalation of aggression likely to increase, rather than diminish, the violence it sought to contain.

In other words, there existed a need to find opportunities of getting both civilians and soldiers re-acustomed to the idea of military exploits on the doorsteps of Old England.

During the cort of national strike graded as seriously disruptive by the Civil Contingencies Committee, the Prime Minister has the option of calling out the army under the Emergency Powers Act (1920). This Act allows the government to authorise energy-rationing and troops to requisition property and equipment in order to maintain essential services.

Using the 1920 Act means declaring a State of Emergency. This in turn means that parliament is required to vote at monthly intervals on whether

up of generals and civil servants.

It was realised as early as 1970, when soldiers were called out to help during the dustmen's strike in Tower Hamlets, that Section 2 of the 1964 Act could be so interpreted as to allow military aid to the civil ministry during an industrial dispute, hitherto the province of the old 1920 Act. The difference was that, under the more recent law, no State of Emergency needed to be declared and no parliamentary approval sought thereafter.

It was the loophole that authorities had been looking for. Subsequently, troops "helped out" in a number of other disputes, beginning modestly with two municipal strikes in Glasgow and moving up the scale to pitch in during the national strikes by air-traffic control assistants in 1977 and by ambulance drivers and industrial civil servants in 1979. As a result of this freedom, the army have, according to a spokesman to the *Daily Mirror* (17/12/1978) "gained greater efficiency in operating control and communications centres in a High Street environment which would formerly have been a political minefield".

It was the breaking of the firemen's strike that alerted the left to what was going on. Bulletin 4 of the magazine *State Research*, questioning the legality of using troops in a national dispute without first declaring a State of Emergency, pointed out that the section of the Queen's Regulations covering operations under the 1964 Act specified that the use of the army in such circumstances was to be "limited and local".

Queen's Regulations aren't voted on. The Defence Council simply amended the text to eliminate this "superfluous" phrase and remove the difficulty. By this quiet stroke of the pen, the powers that be have seen to it that there is no longer any effective parliamentary or legal control over the use of troops in strikes. Getting the army onto the streets is now little more than a matter of the Cabinet tipping the wink to the Defence Council.

Very interesting — but undemocratic.

THE ARMED FORCES AND THE police have a professional conscience. They respect the law and the Constitution, which is not the case in the majority of Latin-American countries, and this constitutes an exception in this and even in other countries."

This benignly incoherent statement was made by President Allende less than two years before the armed forces and the police killed him and overthrew his democratic dictatorship on behalf of a bourgeois establishment. The economies of Britain and Chile both happen to be run on the monetarist principles of Milton Friedman. One wonders whether they might have anything else in common.

To the extent that it has given them a taste of civil administration in a non-democratic community, Ulster has "politicised" the officer corps of the British army. Moreover, it must have struck many of them that, if only there were no politicians around to make life difficult and the military were free to act without parliamentary restraints, Northern Ireland could be knocked into shape in a couple of months.

The depth of the army's secret yearning to break the bondage of democracy can be gauged from a book like Colonel Robin Eveleigh's *Peace-keeping in a Democratic Society*, which betrays the traditional soldierly impatience with what is seen as a tendency towards bungling compromise on the part of career politicians and gutless bureaucrats.

Military authorities always expect civil authorities to stiff a crisis. Discussing ways of dealing with insurgency, Sir Frank Kitson has pointedly warned against "fumbling" and advised firm action at an early stage. Only a man made pessimistic by experience would bother to tell his country's leaders something as obvious as that.

But it's not simply a matter of natural antipathy between practical men and ideologues. The modern army being technically a tremendously complex organisation, there is also a very strong element of professional elitism.

The tendency to look upon civilians as a mass of half-baked amateurs has also become quite common in the higher circles of our police force. There have recently been several instances of clashes of opinion between county councils and their Chief Constables over the limits to police power and the need for closer agreement with civilian authorities

Continues over



CLASS WARFARE

a research group called the National Security Committee to redraw the National War Plan on the basis of an "internal enemy"; and, by creating an intermediate level between normal and emergency operations ("contingencies"), to redefine those situations in which the military could be called upon to aid the civil power.

Since the National War Plan is a secret, it's necessary to explain a little about its background and history. Readers in need of more detailed information should consult the standard work in this field, Peter Laurie's famous *Beneath the City Streets* (Panther paperback, £1.95).

BRITISH GOVERNMENT PLANS to handle general strikes, insurrections, nuclear attacks, and general chaos go back to the end of the First World War. Marxists profess to find the very existence of such plans indefensible and further confirmation of the scheming evil of Capitalism, but it's only reasonable to

strikes under parliamentary supervision, but if things got completely out of hand democracy would be suspended and the Geddes Plan brought into play. As it happened, the nearest the Plan got to being used was during the General Strike of 1926 — though parts of it were activated during the railway strike of 1919 and the miners' strike of 1921.

Once the Depression had stunned the workers into passivity, the Plan was laid aside and allowed to gather dust. But not for long. The rapid rise of Fascism soon made clear the need for a scheme for national survival in case of bombing or invasion, and the Geddes Plan was revived as being equally suited to an external as an internal enemy.

Thus, the Civil Defence Emergency Plan Y (1940), a genuinely humanitarian programme for succouring the people in the event of a blitzkrieg, was based closely on an earlier plot by the establishment to foil

"It was certain that, sooner or later, something would go wrong and we should be forced to make our exports balance our imports: and when that happened the British standard of living, including the working-class standard, was bound to fall, at least temporarily. Yet the left-wing parties, even when they were vociferously anti-imperialist, never made these facts clear. On occasions they were ready to admit that the British workers had benefited, to some extent, by the looting of Asia and Africa, but they always allowed it to appear that we would give up our loot and yet in some way contrive to remain prosperous. Quite largely, indeed, the workers were won over to socialism by being told that they were exploited, whereas the brute truth was that, in world terms, they were exploiters."

GEORGE ORWELL: *Writers and Leviathan*

In 1963 the Spies for Peace movement uncovered the RSG network. The government pleaded innocent, but could not satisfactorily explain why, if the set-up was part of Civil Defence, some 360,000 CD volunteers knew nothing about it. Since the authorities were publicly pledged to taking care of the populace in a nuclear war, it was difficult to make the obvious deduction that the existence of the RSGs meant dirty work. Aided by the diverting antics of The Beatles, the scandal died down.

In 1964 the RSG system was re-organised to throw the bloodhounds off the scent and the present system of Sub-Regional Headquarters (SRHQs) and Armed Forces Headquarters (AFHQs) emerged. Or rather, failed to emerge. In the following year, the Wilson administration blandly issued a Defence White Paper contending that nuclear war would now never happen because neither side could gain from it. This was welcome news. When the

Now that the designers of Airstrip One had built their control towers, it was a matter of flattening ground for runways and getting in a few practice flights.

ONE IMPORTANT RUNWAY consisted of the new intermediate level between normal and emergency peacetime operations: contingencies.

Long before the Prime Minister could ever rise in parliament to announce the suspension of democracy and the implementation of the Royal Sub-Regional Government, there would have to have been a marked escalation of the class war and an unusually protracted State of Emergency. During such preliminaries, the agency charged with co-ordination of national planning would be the Civil Contingencies Unit.

The CCU is a very hush-hush advisory body specialising in the maintenance of essential services

against nuclear attack. Thus, through a private network of telephone and telex lines, the Civil Contingencies programme is plugged directly into the National War Plan.

The CCU grades emergencies according to the industry involved, No. 1 being the electricity supply. It's thirty years since soldiers were last sent into a power station and the equipment was too much for them even then. Whilst an unofficial strike of manual workers could be coped with providing control-room staffs stay on to supervise the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, the army would be at a loss in a modern station by themselves.

Should an official strike remove boilermen and technicians, the national grid would go off and stay off. Under these circumstances, Britain would simply stop. Unless such a strike was called off after a few days, chaos and Sub-Regional Government would be sure to follow.

The same applies in the water



Right: Major-General Sir Frank Kitson. Believes troops should combat British "insurgents". Above: Big Brother, 1954 BBC TV version.

BIG BROTHER?

IN THE WATERSHED YEAR OF 1972, the view of the state concerning the future role of the army in mainland Britain was still tentative. So sensitive was the issue that when Brigadier Frank Kitson suggested that troops might meday be used to combat unspecified homegrown "insurgents", the anger of the left turned his otherwise academic study *Low Intensity Operations* into the only famous military manual since Clausewitz.

Eight years on, knighted and raised to Major-General, the poker-faced master-mind faced BBC cameras filming the series *War School* at his army sub-officer training college at Camberley. Replying with a pained frown to the suggestion that he harboured secret ambitions to head a British military dictatorship, Kitson was later seen supervising a counter-insurgency exercise in which troops fired on rioters in the mutinous town of "Two Rivers". When The Times subsequently identified "Two

the State of Emergency should be renewed. The vote effectively provides a democratic check on the possible development of excessive authoritarianism under these conditions, consequently entailing a degree of civilian surveillance of army operations.

There have been eleven national States of Emergency declared since the Act became law, no less than five of them occurring during the ill-starred rule of the Heath regime. Since 1974, the Act has lain unused — and yet Jim Callaghan broke the firemen's strike of 1977-8 by the use of 21,000 British soldiers. How did he do it?

There is another Emergency Powers Act on the statutes, made law in 1964. Codifying the post-war practice of using the army in the event of regional emergencies, such as natural disasters, the Act places troops mobilised for such purposes at the direction of the Defence Council, a non-parliamentary committee made

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1984



From previous page
and with the public.

Merseyside council chairman Sir Kenneth Thompson, recently embroiled in a public row with his Chief Constable, Ken Oxford ("Sometimes he is downright arrogant"), had the following to say on the subject of his local police:

"They have been saying outspoken things like 'We are the experts'. Well, they are on policing, but there is a limit to their expertise as far as it stands on other things. If you create a force capable of handling every situation in society, then you create an army of occupation. This could lead to a situation where other services are not needed any more and the police then have too much power."

The "army of occupation" simile has been acknowledged by the more thoughtful police chiefs, such as John Alderson, Chief Constable of Devon, for whom the modern constabulary seems to be tending increasingly towards an ominous "quasi-military reactive concept":

"The modern generation of police officers are beginning to see themselves as mobile responders to incidents. Technology is seductive. The car, the radio and computer dominate the police scene."

And yet this quasi-military stance is not entirely of the force's own choosing. In effect, it was virtually imposed on them by the way post-war town-planning, in particular the metropolitan re-housing programmes of the early '60s, made obsolete the old tradition of policing by consent and co-operation.

The sociologically much-lamented distance between police and community is largely the consequence of the creation of "concrete jungle" council estates which are impossible to patrol by the old "beat" method and which also happen to produce a greatly-accelerated crime rate, especially in the areas of violence and vandalism.

From this vast alteration of the environment grew the concept of "fire-brigade" policing, as coldly different from the old friendly ways as Z-Cars from *Dixon of Dock Green*. In fact the ultimate police "fire-brigade", the notorious Special Patrol Group, owes its origin in 1965 to Deputy Metropolitan Commissioner Douglas Webb's idea of organising a mobile unit, based on New York's 'Tactical Force', for "preventive patrolling of estates subject to hooliganism and housebreaking".

The use of SPG-type groups in all urban constabularies has turned into a major factor in the steady deterioration of police-community relations. Dealing almost exclusively with the violent and repressive aspects of police work, such groups risk drifting into an aggressive, predatory attitude towards the normals on the street. (So hated by the local people did the Merseyside 'Task Force' become during its first two years of operation, that it had to be disbanded and replaced by a unit of a different name.)

But it's not just down to over-excited constables and sergeants that the SPG approach to policing becomes a frequent cause of community indignation. Strategy decisions issued from the group's senior command in the Commissioner's Office of New Scotland Yard frequently exhibit a callous insensitivity towards the rights and feelings of ordinary citizens harmlessly going about their business on the streets of the inner city.

An example is provided by the policy of "saturation policing" of "high crime areas" (usually signifying black communities like those of Brixton, Notting Hill, Hackney, Lewisham and Peckham). One such operation took place in November 1978 in Brixton. Two-thirds of the entire London SPG (140 officers in about 25 Transit vans) whiled away a

month in midnight raids and daytime stop-and-search tactics at such a level of gay abandon that what was left of police-public trust in the area was effectively ruined.

Said Graham Pycock, a Conservative councillor for the borough:

"There's no doubt the police have taken decisions they had no right to take and treated innocent citizens to activities that would not be acceptable in a normal democratic society. If there is a breakdown in confidence between the community and the police and people are afraid — despite their innocence — of what will happen to them in a police station, the police will forfeit any trust, understanding or co-operation."

Every city in Britain now has its own SPG hiding behind a variety of different labels. (Anything with "special", "tactical", "support", or "task force" in it is SPG.)

No doubt they have a devastating effect on certain sections of the local crime figures, but it's a moot point whether that isn't outweighed by the equally devastating effect they have on public confidence in the police as a whole.

Nevertheless it's hard to see a solution to this problem without a removal of the underlying conditions. Local authority planners and architects have made our bed for us; short of blowing the whole thing up and starting again from scratch, we must learn to lie in it.

MANY CONTINENTAL countries maintain, in addition to army and police, a paramilitary "Third Force" for riot-control and combating terrorism. The oldest and most infamous of these brutal elites is the French CRS, formed just after the last war and recently seen, with their water-cannon

the British police.

His first step was to centralise control by re-organising the existing 122 forces into 51 larger ones, tailored to the new simplified county map of the UK drawn up under the Local Government Act. So as to reduce the necessity for calling upon the army for help (the left hand, as usual, ignorant of what the right was doing), the compact new forces had unprecedented sums spent on them to make them more mobile and better equipped. Plans were laid for a Police National Computer, celebrated bugbear of all civil liberties campaigners. And the Regional Crime Squad was formed: nine forces covering the country like a plainclothes SPG, controlled by a national co-ordinator.

The overall establishment (number employed) of the British police rose by 25% in a decade and continues to grow. The rate of arming of police climbs steadily every year. But the most sinister aspect of all this busy consolidation of power is the gradual removal of local forces from the control of their related Police Authorities.

These surveillance bodies, once called Watch Committees and made up of local councillors and magistrates, are supposed to vet and regulate the operations of their local constabulary. In recent years, the power of the Police Authorities has slowly declined; these days the national forces are effectively answerable only to the Home Secretary.

All in all, it's a story of the rapid reshuffling of a diffuse and parochial operation controlled by local councils, into a highly centralised and technically proficient organisation subordinate to the whims of the government of the day.

Merlyn Rees, the definition of "subversion" became broader and vaguer and, from the meagre statistics available to public scrutiny, it's possible to deduce that Special Branch activities and manning-levels underwent a corresponding increase. Apart from this, what they get up to seems to be their business.

In the same way that isolated groups working mostly in a violent context (like the SPG) tend to grow more isolated and violent as time goes by, so clandestine groups working in a secret context tend to get progressively more clandestine, inward-looking, and — not to put too fine a point on it — paranoid. Following the guiding law of machine society that if it's technically feasible it will be done (whether it's necessary or not), surveillance groups like the Special Branch store huge quantities of information on us, much of it gathered for no better reason than that it was possible to do so.

Since the Euro-terrorist boom of the early '70s, the feeling amongst left-wing circles is that the security forces of Britain and West Germany have dropped into the habit of exceeding their legal limits in information-gathering and invasion of privacy. In the UK much of this over-developed curiosity has been encouraged to flourish under the auspices of the celebrated law that came to dinner and stayed for four years: the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 1976.

Under this law it is an offence to withhold information concerning terrorism from the state, the penalties for those unwilling to talk in these circumstances being detention or imprisonment. Note that a person who has no knowledge of terrorist activities at all, and is therefore not so much unwilling as unable to supply the state with information, cannot easily be distinguished from a genuine accessory.

Laws on refusing to inform not only have a nasty Stalinist flavour — they can also be used to deprive literally anybody of their freedom at the drop of a helmet.

FOR THREE MONTHS DURING their campaign against the Ananda Marg assassins, Anti-Terrorist Squad officers tapped all the public telephones in a substantial area of Hampstead surrounding the sect's headquarters. In the end, of course, it worked. One of the sect slipped off to a call-box which he assumed must be safe and unwittingly delivered to the listening detectives the information they needed.

(Area-tapping is also used against the IRA. It is therefore inadvisable to conduct intimate or otherwise naughty conversations from any public phone in Kilburn.)

The UK national phone-tapping centre — officially known as the Equipment Development Division of the Post Office Operational Programming Department (and referred to by the police as "Tinkerbell") — is located in an anonymous office-building in Chelsea. First revealed to an unsuspecting public by one of Duncan Campbell's most dramatic investigations (*Big Buzby in Watching You in New Statesman*, 1/2/1980), the EDD was set up — guess when — in 1972.

Built in such secrecy that even Post-Master General Christopher Chataway knew nothing about it, "Tinkerbell" was designed to a 1,000-line capacity, since believed to have been increased five-fold. To be able to tap this many phones is, apart from anything else, a huge technical advance on the situation only a few years ago. At the time of the Birkett Commission report on bugging in 1957, only 30 taps a year were being mounted; by the mid-'60s, the total had crept up to around 600.

Up to this point, the tappers were still using banks of two-track tape-decks to store monitored conversations automatically. Though such an arrangement had tiresome drawbacks in terms of the man-hours taken up in listening, transcribing, and analysing, it was all that was technically possible at the time.

Times have changed. In 1974, the National Security Agency of the United States developed a computer called Harvest which, by using a voice-recognition system programmed to watch for key-words, was able to monitor 75 million calls in a single year, sorting out just under two million of them for human analysis. Co-operating with the NSA, and adding its own refinement of digital analysis of vowel-sounds, Britain's top-secret Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) was able to design "Tinkerbell" to hitherto unforeseen heights of technical

excellence.

Taps are fed along the Defence Communications Network running parallel to the everyday civilian lines (thus preventing ordinary Post Office personnel from detecting malpractice), into the Chelsea centre and onto specially-built slow-speed tape-decks capable of recording up to a hundred calls each at a time. The combined key-word alert and digital print-out then automatically transcribes and computerises any conversation of interest to security experts.

The question arises: how does a system that big come under political control? The obvious answer: it isn't.

Though the law says that the Home Secretary is supposed to personally OK every single tap the EDD puts on, it's hard to believe he has the time or even the opportunity. In any case, it's known that when M.I.6 mounts one of its area-tapping campaigns — such as the bugging of the Patriotic Front during last year's Lancaster House negotiations — it applies, not to William Whitelaw, but to its own top politician: Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington.

In practice, taps are normally authorised not by elected ministers but by high-ranking civil servants. And calls recorded are sent directly to whichever agency commissioned them: M.I.5, M.I.6, Special Branch, even GCHQ itself.

Who are the Brain Police? Dunno. Why don't you write to 93 Ebury Bridge Road, SW1, and ask?

THERE IS A SECRET HIERARCHY of power in Britain, waiting patiently for the day when it will be asked to take over.

This hierarchy will, like the mole, live in a hole. Or more accurately, a warren which will be ruled, to paraphrase Orwell, not by rabbits but by stoats: a national grid of underground forts designed not to bring help to a disorientated populace, but to impose on them an authoritarian rule of law.

When Sub-Regional Government arrives and all our telephones go dead, who is it that will be down these holes, warm, well-fed, and ruling us rabbits with the gun?

Each SRHQ will be the seat of a Regional Commissioner: an elected junior minister of our ex-democratic government. Below him will be a triumvirate of power: the Regional Controller (a civil servant), the Regional Chief Constable, and the Regional Military Commander. And the triumvirate pattern will repeat itself at descending levels: County, District, Area.

These positions have already been designated and the system can go into action at a few hours' notice, whether in answer to a nuclear attack or an internal breakdown. What will then happen to our elected representatives — our MPs and councillors — may depend upon the political philosophy to which they are affiliated.

What is clearer is that the army have ensured their own effective primacy at all levels of the hierarchy, doubtless out of a determination not to be shackled by the inhibitions of the civil ministry should events demand the exercise of "firm action". The apparatus for this already exists. According to Bulletin 10 of *State Research*: "There is a capability for the police and the military to operate throughout the country relying almost entirely on their own bases and centres and communications systems, thus by-passing the local government structure."

True power will reside in the AFHQs. The prospect of totalitarian Britain run by a feudal alliance of Major-Generals is quite real.

Even the police need to watch those soldiers.

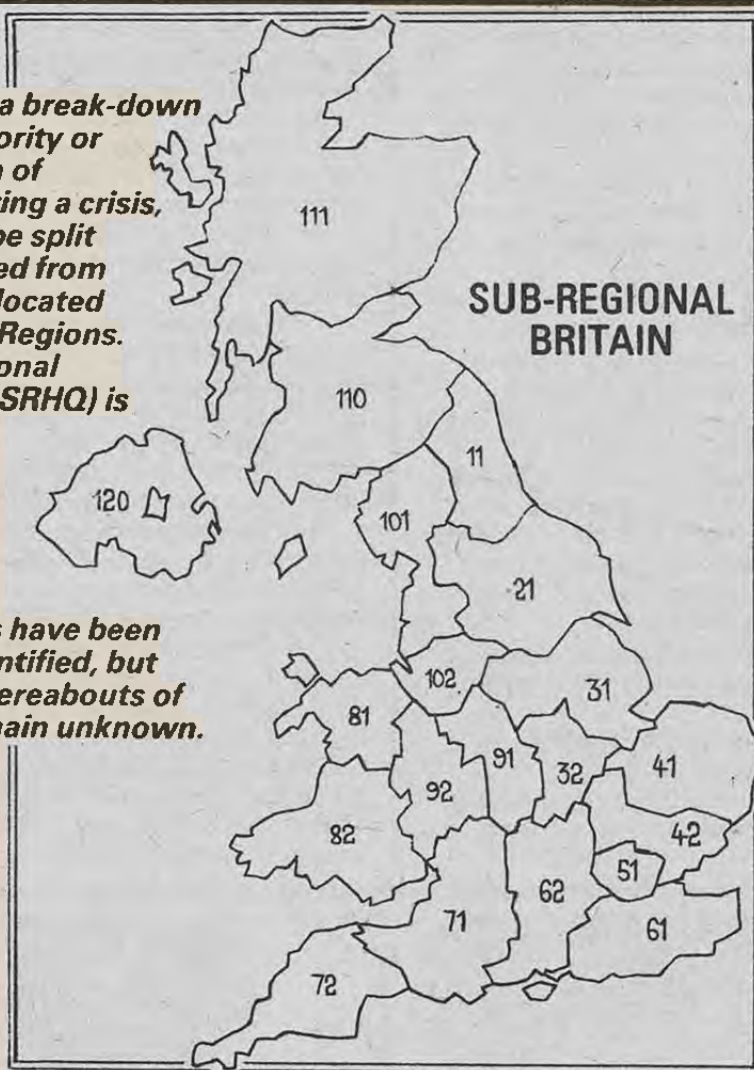
The Administration of Justice Act (1973) redefined the "civil authority" which, according to Queen's Regulations, controls the use of troops in any given area. It used to be a committee of mayors and magistrates. Now it's the police.

But the army doesn't surrender so easily. Queen's Regulations also states: "Even though the civil authorities should give directions to the contrary, the commander of the troops, if it is really necessary, is bound to take such action as the circumstances demand."

They say it can't happen here. History says: if it is "really necessary", anything can happen.

Airstrip One. Ready for take-off.

In the event of a break-down of central authority or the suspension of democracy during a crisis, Britain would be split up and governed from secret centres located in twenty Sub-Regions. Each Sub-Regional Headquarters (SRHQ) is linked to an Armed Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) in the corresponding Army District. Several SRHQs have been unofficially identified, but the precise whereabouts of the AFHQs remain unknown.



Key to numerals: codes refer to the twelve Regions underlying the system, ie., North (1), Yorkshire (2), East Midlands (3), East (4), Greater London (5), South East (6), South West (7), Wales (8), West Midlands (9), North West (10), Scotland (11), Northern Ireland (12)

and gas-shells, in action against Communist demonstrators in Paris and anti-nuclear protesters near Cherbourg.

Whilst it would be naive to pretend that there aren't strong arguments in favour of the existence of such units, it would be rank imposture to deny that they are also by nature totalitarian and, simply by being there, serve to bring 1984 one step nearer. With a Third Force, a government is constantly tempted to use repression as a substitute for negotiation. Without a Third Force, the conventional police must take up the strain of handling riots, bombings, and sieges — which means weapons practice and quasi-military crowd-control exercises (both now a mandatory part of British constabulary training).

Scotland Yard denies that the SPG is a Third Force or that it trains with tear-gas and sub-machine-guns, as claimed by the left. The latter is a question of fact, the former of opinion.

What is more certain is that all the major trends in police organisation and practice over the last decade are, by the abstract principles of measurement proposed in last week's issue, intrinsically totalitarian and tantamount to further refinements in the planning of Airstrip One.

When Sir Robert Mark became Metropolitan Commissioner in 1972, he immediately set about rationalising

WORKING QUIETLY IN THE background, away from noisy TV reports on the Special Patrol Group and the front-page political speech-making of Britain's new wave Chief Constables, are the men who watch you on closed-circuit television, take photographs of you on demos, file facts about you on computers, bug you, tap your phone, and open your mail.

The ins-and-outs of our secret police system — M.I.5, M.I.6, the Special Branch, and others about whom even less is known — are too complex to go into here. (Interested readers might try Tony Bunyan's *The Political Police in Britain*, Quartet paperback, 1977; or take out a subscription to the *New Statesman*.)

The Special Branch may justly be called the political wing of the British police. Set up in 1883 to protect the state against "subversion", they work through surveillance of political meetings, literature, and marches, also maintaining the country's running check on the comings and goings of activists and undesirable aliens by watching our ports and airports.

Though technically accountable to the Chief Constable of the force to which they are attached, nothing about the activities of Special Branch officers is ever mentioned in annual reports to the Police Authorities. During the Home Secretaryship of

1984

**Next week:
Is there really
no hope for 1985?**

A Touch Of Zen The Valiant Ones

Both directed by King Hu
Both starring Hsu Feng, Pai
Ying and Roy Chiao (*Osiris*)

COMING IN at the arts end of the martial arts spectrum, Hong Kong director King Hu's absorbing kung fu tapestry *A Touch Of Zen* (1969) has taken more than a decade to get a limited release here, although it pre-dates the chop suey Eastern boom begun by the late Bruce Lee and the David Carradine TV character.

It's been worth the wait. Unlike his commercially orientated counterparts, Hu's less concerned with visceral kicks than providing a suitably accurate (atmospherically speaking) framework for the disciplines and attitudes necessary to the practitioners of martial art, which he achieves in *A Touch Of Zen* through a deliciously controlled, almost unbearably slow pacing.

The plot, unfolding naturally over three hours, concerns a timid portrait painter Ku in Ming dynasty China (1368-1644), who's continually henpecked by his mother for not being married at 30. Enter beautiful silent heroine Yang (Hsu Feng), who moves into the haunted fortress next door, draws Ku into a complicated court intrigue and eventually gives herself to him, before running away.

He pursues her, tracking her down to a monastery run by her Buddhist teacher Hui Yuan (Roy Chiao), where he's presented with their baby and again deserted. However when he gets into another scrape, Yang and Yuan come to his rescue. Hui's mortally wounded in the attempt and bleeds gold as he achieves nirvana during the final

SILVER SCREEN GOES EAST AND REDISCOVERS KING KUNG

Or: Zen And The Art Of Screaming
"HAAAH" And Killing People Cleanly

stunningly photographed scenes.

As spectators, we progress with naive Ku as he struggles through the forest in search of the woman, bringing us eventually to the film's final extraordinary moments. Like him, we're amazed and bewildered by what we see: beautifully choreographed battle sequences owing more to acrobatics and dance than bravura displays of individual strength.

Though Hu's heroic martial

arts experts display becoming modesty, they make no less engaging movie characters than Bruce Lee. Especially Hsu Feng, who plays another silent woman in *The Valiant Ones*, this time as the wife of the exemplary swordsman Mr. Wu (Pai Ying). They're a part of the magnificent seven style team hired by a weak Ming emperor to clear the coast of Japanese pirates, after his own generals and corruption-riddled court had failed to do so.

They undergo their task with stoic determination, despite interference from jealous officials, laying a series of traps for their venal opponents. That they're not really tricky enough to fool a drunken mouse is beside the point, as they're really only there to provide the film's brilliant set pieces. More athletic leaps and bounds, in which our heroes calmly outwit their dull opponents. Which makes the fatal finale a bit of puzzle.

The death of the good guys (and gal) and the movie's closing rider wouldn't have appealed to Hollywood's old Hays office code of ethics, as the pirates win and continue to live off crime for another few hundred years.

Made in 1974 its more frequent action is an obvious commercial nod in Lee's direction, but the film nevertheless contains magical moments, if not the touch of zen attained earlier. It's only slightly spoilt by the Americanisms in the subtitles. Was 'goddam' really a commonplace expression in Ming period Mandarin Chinese?

Chris Bohn

Women's Liberation
Mandarin style (right) as Ms
Wu makes a point. Mr. Ku
(left) is left holding the baby.



ON THE BOX

Friday August 29
SING AS WE GO: A J.B. Priestley-scripted Gracie Fields comedy vehicle from 1934 — an early foray into the bleak, industrial North? Basil Dean directed. (BBC1)

BOX OFFICE

London

- 1 **Airplane** (Directors: Jim Abrahams/David and Jerry Zucker)
- 2 **The Empire Strikes Back** (Irvin Kershner)
- 3 **Fame** (Alan Parker)
- 4 **Being There** (Hal Ashby)
- 5 **The Sea Wolves** (Andrew V McLaglen)

Regions

- 1 **Airplane** (Abrahams/Zucker)
- 2 **The Empire Strikes Back** (Irvin Kershner)
- 3 **Friday the 13th** (Sean S Cunningham)
- 4 **The Waterbabies** (Charles Kingsley)
- 5 **The Seawolves** (Andrew V McLaglen)

(Screen International)

Saturday August 30
CHEYENNE AUTUMN: In the twilight of John Ford's career, the great western director at long last displayed a passion for those Indians systematically destroyed during the white migration westwards, shown in his earlier films. And really this true sympathetically told story of half-starved Indians deserting the reservation to re-locate their homelands fits in with his poignant later themes of a shrinking west no longer tolerant of frontier individualism. With Richard Widmark, Carroll Baker, James Stewart and Edward G Robinson. (BBC1)

THE BEAST MUST DIE: Routine ending to BBC2's horror movie season stars, of course, Peter Cushing as a werewolf expert invited to a lavish party by millionaire big game hunter Calvin Lockhart.

Sunday August 31
THE SANTA FE TRAIL: American anti-slaver folk hero John Brown (Raymond Massey) tracked down and killed by Cap'n Jeb Stuart (Errol Flynn) in a Michael Curtiz-directed movie that favours action above moral judgement. Box office hit Errol Flynn is cast on

the side of officialdom, and you can look out for an early Ronald Reagan appearance to see where he stands. (BBC1)

THE CONVERSATION: Made by Francis Ford Coppola during the height of 'watergate paranoia' of 1974, *The Conversation* jabbed at a few nerves with its story of electronic bugging. Gene Hackman's the expert suddenly stricken with the guilty feeling that the couple he's been spying on are about to be offed and sets about re-tracing them to warn them. (BBC2)

Monday September 1
AN INVESTIGATION OF MURDER: Bruce Dern and Walter Matthau as two cops picking up the pieces after a grisly mass murder in San Francisco in an ambitious but not entirely successful detective story directed by Stuart Rosenberg in 1973. (BBC1)

Wednesday September 3
THE ICEMAN COMETH: Sprawling four hour Eugene O'Neill play powerfully adapted by John Frankenheimer for the silver screen, with Frederic March as Harry Hope and Lee Marvin less successfully cast as the proverbial iceman. (BBC2)

Jack Kerouac fathered the "Beat Generation",
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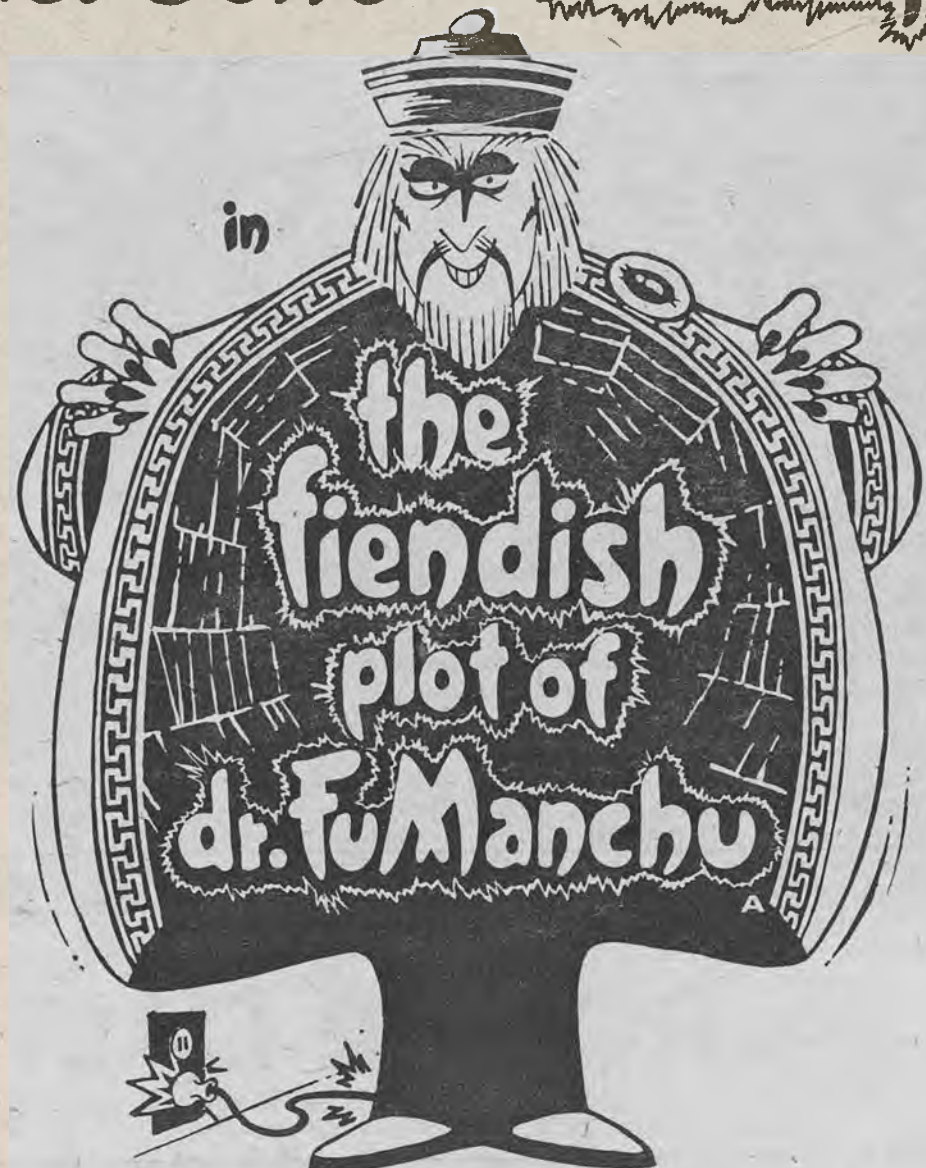
NICK NOLTE SISSY SPACEK JOHN HEARD
(as Neal Cassady) (as Carolyn Cassady) (as Jack Kerouac)

Directed by JACK NITZSCHÉ Featuring ART PEPPER on Alto Sax.

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**AND AT SELECTED
LONDON CINEMAS FROM
SUNDAY**

The men behind the men behind the glasses

THE RUMOUR
Purity Of Essence (Stiff)
THE ATTRACTIONS
Mad About The Wrong
Boy (F-Beat)

THE GOLDEN age of paisley! Discreet touches of that most loopy of prints crop up in the attire of Steve Nieve (new spelling; please adjust preconceptions accordingly) on the back of The Attractions' 'solo' LP, while The Rumour take things to the usual Stiff extreme by presenting themselves in paisley shirts in front of a paisley backdrop, drinking from paisley glasses, reading paisley-bound books, smoking paisley cigarettes, peering over paisley shades... when Jake Riviera gets a cold, an entire section of the British rock community sneezes.

It is, of course, unfortunate that both of these albums by men behind men behind glasses should have been released simultaneously, since the temptation thereby arises to make comparisons more directly than might be justified. Nevertheless, both albums have flaws in common: flaws that are not simply the result of the projected knowledge that both groups are customarily heard in a supporting role.

The central flaw that runs through both albums is the lack of a distinct vocal personality or unifying vision. Neither album — interestingly enough — gives specific track-by-track lead vocal credits, so one is tempted to assume that the various composers are singing their own songs (except on The Rumour's album, where songs have been composed by such luminaries as Bacharach/David, Randy Newman, Nick Lowe and Graham Parker). However, the general impression received throughout is that the primary consideration of all the vocalists was that of

staying in tune. At no time does a vocalist actually do anything drastic to seize the listener's attention.

'Mad About The Wrong Boy' is a slick, glossy album with a smirk on its chops. It gives the impression of wanting to be a 10cc album (or at least 'Pretzel Logic' at 45) and of considering that facile cynicism is in itself sufficient. The Attractions stay below the surface of their sound, all bright and flat and tricky, and prod the surfaces of their subjects with a long stick. The album is a surface-to-surface missile that reaches its target but never connects.

Bruce Thomas and Pete Thomas (bass and drums respectively, but all three Attractions are credited with vocals and guitars) do their instrumental paces as well as one might expect, which is extremely. They team up to write five of the album's 16 songs, the rest being the work of Steve Nieve either on his own or as half of the enigmatic 'Brain & Hart'. The songs are all slick misogyny and smug pokes at conformity ('High Rise Housewife' manages to be both) with nary a break. 'Motorworld' ineptly parodies Gary Numan, and 'On The Third Stroke' with its speaking-clock overdub actually achieves a rare moment of compassion.

The Rumour's collective personality is considerably more likeable than that of The Attractions. Martin Belmont and Brinsley Schwarz's chugging rock and roll guitars make for a tougher, lumpier outer layer than Nieve's light, chilly keyboards, but their very plainness gives them conviction. Their speciality version of 'My Little Red Book', which leads off the album, sets a standard seldom reached elsewhere,

but ultimately it's that plainness which lets them down. They're too relaxed and comfy: no adventures take place, few sparks are struck.

A song like Randy Newman's 'Have You Seen My Baby?' requires a more distinct voice than that possessed by whoever sings it here simply because it's such an extraordinary song, and Nick Lowe's 'I Don't Want The Night To End' carries the same requirement for precisely the opposite reason: because it's such an ordinary song. Elsewhere, there's the question of why Brinsley found it necessary to rewrite the words of 'It's Gonna Work Out Fine' (personal reasons?) or — indeed — why it was considered necessary to record the song at all. How long was it since 'Bop Till You Drop'?

The Rumour's last album 'Frozen Years' (easily the best of their three, for my money) was pretty much dominated by Bob Andrews, but Brinsley wrote two of its best tracks

and 'Writing In The Water' is far and away the best of the new songs here. Just as it's too easy for The Attractions to retreat behind polished smirks, it's too easy for The Rumour to play ordinary penny-plain rock and roll.

In this particular little contest (a purely artificial one created only by coinciding release dates), Geep's team come out ahead on points, mainly because there's nothing I'd want to hear again on The Attractions' album, but neither of these albums are what I'd call a compulsive purchase. There are certain records that you hear at a friend's house and buy for yourself at literally the first opportunity, and these are not like those. They are well-made and well-played, the products of good musicians, and that is as much as can be said.

The future of rock music — hell, the present of rock music — depends on people who are more (or less) than 'good musicians'.

Charles Shaar Murray

ALBUMS

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Bowling Balls From Hell
(Clone)

AKRON-BASED Clone Records were partially responsible for some of the stuff on Stiff's 'Akron' compilation of a few years back, when the location was the zenith of industrial chic. Unlike that scrappy mishmash of post-punk modernism and rock ordinaire, this compilation focuses on fewer artists, gives the bum's rush to the rocky mainstream retreads, and consequently hangs together well as a high weirdness - quotient album in its own right.

Several of the survivors from that earlier enterprise are featured here in one guise or another. The Waitresses open the album with the coy, tongue-in-cheek 'Wait Here, I'll Be Right Back...'; and Debbie Smith and Sue Schmidt (of Chi Pig) turn up on Hurricane Bob's 'Andrea', a wonderfully cruddy piece of repetitive pop in the 'Nuggets' vein, which also features Chrissie Hynde's brother Terry on sax.

Most interesting of the survivors is former Tin Huey constituent Ralph Carney, who contributes three tracks of varying degrees of oddness and absurdity, one ('Sunset In Hibernia') in collaboration with Pere Ubu's David Thomas. Multi-instrumentalist Carney's bizarre musical vision should, in fact, appeal to Ubu-freaks of all creeds and colours, and the Residentially-minded in general; cult status is his for the taking.

Haff Notz's 'Ride, Rider', a slight concoction of acoustic guitar, viola and Farfisa organ, lacks any real clarity of construction and winds up as the weakest track here.

The rest of 'Bowling Balls' consists of solo - synthesiser *entractes* from one Dennis DeFrange, spaced alternately between the other tracks like conceptual cement holding the album together. A risky gambit, this, at a time when many are suffering from a surfeit of slapdash synthesising, but DeFrange has both the imagination and the ability (good sense?) to encapsulate that imagination in brief, easily digestible thematic pieces, where others might spin them out to a side apiece. They range from the frantic activity of 'Sector Wars' to the epic, open-space awe of 'The Last Pin', reaching their apogee on the 'Bowling Balls Theme' itself, a strangely beautiful combination of hope, euphoria and melancholy.

Andy Gill



New Age Laurel and Hardy

PERE UBU
The Art of Walking (Rough Trade)

1. Pere Ubu is haywire, rudimentary, and patiently documentary. It operates on a yield of snared and shared rhythms, on symptoms that have been stitched and made up many times before.

On this basis, it is obvious that (the history of) Pere Ubu should not be thought of in terms of a linear development — reducing its entire operation and presence to an exclusive concern for 'working and succeeding in' rock and roll. Unfortunately, most criticism — of Pere Ubu, of many other folks — assumes that words have one meaning, that desires point in a single direction, that ideas are logical; it ignores the fact that the world of language, noise and desire is one of lack, insecurity, interruption, struggle, blundering, disguises, ploys, embarrassed grins.

2. Pere Ubu records the singularity of events, of emotions, outside of any monotonous rock and roll (life) style; it seeks them in the most uncompromising, in the most common places — in sentiments, routines, love, sleep, instincts; it is sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the residual curve of their revolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they are engaged in different acts.

3. Best of all, Pere Ubu call out those instances where all such reminders are absent; the moment when they betrayed you.

4. One song of 'The Art of Walking' has the sway: 'Here's to the details that often get overlooked / The way one day fades into another / The way simple desires get expressed... / The smallest victories are often the biggest / As one day fades to another / As the past gets filled up with failure... / The smallest details, the finest points: they all add up.' A song: 'Go'.

5. Pere Ubu patience and a knowledge of

impatience (a lover's impatience); it depends on a slow accumulation of references and bonds; its work is constructed from small and apparently insignificant truths (not Truth as in Art, but truth as in the art of Walking) and accordingly — especially now that Pere Ubu includes Mayo Thompson — to a flexible, headstrong methodology; they are not, as often the doubt plagues us, the product of large and well-meaning errors. Pere Ubu is related to Humpty Dumpty (clumsiness as metaphor, the original mythical schizophrenic): See 7.

6. Pere Ubu rejects the metahistorical deployment of 'ideal' messages, opposes itself to the search for 'perfection'. Pere Ubu is, efficiently, pre-fiction.

7. The seventh consideration is the relation of Pere Ubu to humour and irony. Those who listen to Pere Ubu without laughing, without laughing a lot and loudly, might as well not be listening to Pere Ubu. I have never understood the need to introduce everywhere anguish, industrial solitude, the dread of communication, the whole received tragic nature of Pere Ubu.

Pere Ubu cultivates the accidents and details that accompany everyone. A comparison that springs to mind is Laurel & Hardy backed by later Miles Davis: its moments of banality, its extending periods of farcical agitation, its fascinating spells.

8. 'The Art of Walking' includes a Miles Davis tribute, a (probably unintentional, but very funny) physical cerebral parody of The Rolling Stones, and a song full of Tin Drums. It is generally a fusion of jazz, mockery, rock, abstraction, vocalese (language has priority over meaning), diaries, folk, poetry, mess and intention.

9. A fourth album; a record company that loves them.

10. Realism without guarantees; the realist fantasies.

Ian Penman

Full page pic: Chris Gabrin

Inset pic, l to r: Tony Maimore, Mayo Thompson, David Thomas. Pic: Joe Stevens.

LEO SAYER
Living In A Fantasy
(Chrysalis)

WHY anyone should want to sit down and actually listen to this album I can't imagine. Presumably it's something to spin on the hi-fi that fills those awkward pauses in cultivated social chit-chat. Possibly its classy, tasteful sound is chosen to match the lounge carpet and curtains, or perhaps it enhances the decor of the dining-room. 'Living In A Fantasy' comes guaranteed to present a smooth, elegant show of pseudo-emotion which won't in any way disturb the restful atmosphere or upset the digestion.

If this sort of mass entertainment rests on the lowest common denominator of its huge audience — that which seeks to offend the most people least, rather than aiming to inspire the greatest number most — then this album oozes blandness like cold blancmange.

'Living In A Fantasy' (and he said it) portrays poor little Leo as the tender, touse-headed victim of unfeeling females. But why waste sympathy on the cute, ageless country-boy? He's making plenty of money from his synthetic misery, manufacturing a graceful, sentimental sloop of sweet soul muzak for Adult Orientated Rockers to heave a soft sigh or shed a crocodile tear to. The trouble is, Leo's not singing

about love but his own simple smugness. All the sadness is set out in easy-to-read ciphers that are instantly recognisable but ultimately utterly empty.

Of course, alternatively 'Living In A Fantasy' is an impeccable album that's meticulously crafted, skilfully arranged and beautifully sung. I suppose it all depends on your design for living.

Lynn Hanna

TED NUGENT
Scream Dream (Epic)

IF BLUE Oyster Cult are the critics' heavy metal band, Ted Nugent is their cuddly hairy pet: likeable, louder than life and always good copy.

Unfortunately the more entertaining aspects of his vulgarity rarely carry through to his music, which is after all only another gnarled and mangled variant of an already well-chewed over standard cud.

Ted's been doing it for a long time now, some 15 years, but he hasn't changed enough to upset traditionalists, and there's no reason why we should expect anything different from 'Scream Dream'. Needless to say he doesn't disappoint, and if you really need more of distant rhythmic thuds, Ted's distinctive caterwaul of a voice and idiosyncratic brand of guitar strangling, then this is for you.

Chris Bohn



Ronnie Spector smiles through the tears. Pic: Joe Stevens.

The exorcism of the Spector

RONNIE SPECTOR
Siren (Polish)

NOT SO much an album as an assortment of period ideas which have been left out to spoil, 'Siren' — why has this record been named after an old Roxy Music album? — bears the curious message 'This is Ronnie's first LP' scratched into the roll-off groove on the first side. A less auspicious 'start' to a career could hardly be imagined.

Producer Genya Ravan has assembled a hand-picked crew of cliché-mongers from a variety of ensembles including Mink DeVille, The Dead Boys, The Heartbreakers and The Cherry Vanilla Band and set them loose on a collection of songs including The Ramones' 'Here Today Gone Tomorrow', Chip Taylor's 'Anyway That You Want Me', Elkie Brooks-Pete Gage's 'Happy Birthday Rock And Roll' (interspersed with snatches of 'Be My Baby' and 'Baby I Love You' for added poignancy) and Frankie Miller's hit 'Darlin''. The results are, without exception, appalling; unnervingly like a bad imitation of the Ellen Foley album which was itself a bad imitation of classic Ronettes.

On the second side, The Diamond Dupree Band (whoever they are) back up Ronnie on three of their songs, and things improve slightly: the music hauls itself to the highest peaks of mediocrity. 'Dynamite' provides the best and least self-conscious musical moment in the entire package with Bobby Blain playing some light-hearted Jerry style piano.

With its 'seductive' cover and rancid music, 'Siren' makes an unanswerable case for its nomination as 1980's most miserable rock album. If this is indeed Ms Spector's first album, then one must fear that no significant number of people will be looking forward to her second with any noticeable degree of eagerness.

Charles Shaar Murray

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VARIOUS
The Shape Of Finns To Come — The Best Of Finnish Rock (Cherry Red)

VARIOUS
Unzipping The Abstract (Manchester Musicians Collective)

UNEXPECTED territories but familiar sounds. From Finland we have regurgitated '60s pop rehased '77 power style and from Manchester's sub-alternative culture come 15 unknowns desperately striving to sound different with varying degrees of success.

Past Euro-pop experiences have rarely been happy ones — until recently at any rate — so maybe I was wrong to hope that Finland's physical isolation would've encouraged a real independent indigenous scene. But the compilers give the game away in the sleeve notes when they state the problems the Finns have in fitting their language to rock. Exactly! So why haven't they found a form suited to it, instead of tamely copying their styles direct from tired, old English and American rock and roll.

If this compilation is as representative as it claims to be, then the whole scene's dishearteningly bleak. Six bands have picked up on their favourite periods, adapting them with a minimum of local colour to their rarely witty and too often plain love-of-life songs. Eppu Normaali strike a

'correct' '77 attitude on 'Boredom's The Word', but set it to clear Creedence-styled guitar figures. No wonder another of their selections is called 'John Fogarty' (sic) — about their wonderful local girls.

Top Rank take up a similar stance, but match it with grinding rhythm and roll, complete with dour Strummer style vocals. Artpop Kombo whine cheerful drunken ballads in a Dylany voice, backed with keyboards dominated semi-acoustic rock. Vox like The Kinks (me too), Loose Prick, who at least sing in Finnish, betray a love of The Buzzcocks. Which leaves The Duck's daft, funny 'Secret Of My Success' — aftershave lotion and a beautiful smile.

The Manchester Musicians Collective is a useful organization geared towards helping local bands and musicians maintain an output independent of the music business — and the sort of people they're working with are even independent of the established independents! It would be easy to be cynical and say that nobody else would be interested in the 15 bands on display, but that would be to ignore positive signs of life in their assorted fledgling thrashings and doodlings.

All of them come in from weird angles, which might be okay on one-off singles, but their accumulative quirks become overwhelmingly uniform, ironically making the

Toast and tease

PRINCE FAR I AND THE ARABS
Cry Tuff Encounter Chapter Three
(Daddy Kool)
MIKEY DREAD
World War III *(Dread At The Controls)*

FIRST THE parallels: both albums cut at Channel One with a certain number of musicians in common, and then finished off elsewhere. The musicians in common being Erroll 'Flabba' Hold (bass), Lincoln 'Style' Scott (bass) and Bingy Bunny and Noel 'Sowell' Bailey (guitars). Both go into the 'dub' rack. That's it for parallels.

Divergences next: Mikey Dread's album was mixed at King Tubby's by Oberton 'Scientist' Brown and Mr Campbell himself with a final London touch-up by Bill Price. Far I mixed in London with a horde of overdubs from Steve Beresford and David Toop and a drop of Ari Up backing vocal (the latter makes the album a natural for Slits completists of course). Mikey Dread confronts the forthcoming conflagration in as light and upful a manner as possible: as bright and positive as his subject matter is gloomy and threatening. Prince Far I maintains an ominous vocal silence except on the opening 'Plant Up', where his Beefheartian growl is matched by a bass thump and drone so heavy

that it annihilates every set of speakers through which I have attempted to play it.

Michael Campbell presents some affecting moments at various points on 'World War III': his plea to 'Tear Down The Walls' (that separate us) on the track of that title and his demand for unity on the title piece.

Elsewhere, he gives Scientist credit as "the apprentice master" (guess who's *the* master) and toasts away relentlessly whether he's got anything to say or not.

The Far I album was recently compared by a knowledgeable person of my acquaintance to those godawful 'Electric Mud' and 'This Is Howlin' Wolf's New Album. He Doesn't Like It' blues / acid rock fusion efforts of the '60s.

What with Steve Beresford's synth overdubs and the general *Space Invaders* ambience of 'Cry Tuff Encounter', it's certainly heavy on the gimmicks, but it works even though the actual sound of the chorale on 'Shake The Nation' (Ari Up, Elizabeth Archer and Viv Goldman) is more effective than what they're singing: "Prince Far I come to shake up the nation / Prince Far I come to tell it to the young generation".

Judicious selections from both albums, therefore, would enhance anybody's next dub'n toast tape. All you've got to do now is blag someone you know into buying them.

Charles Shaar Murray

Left: Mickey Dread Campbell.
 Pic: Jean Bernard Sohier

Right: Prince Far I. Pic: Jon Grey.

Below: Merger's Winston Bennett. Pic: Peter Murphy and Claire Hershman.

MERGER Armageddon Time (Emergency)

THE RELEASE in 1977 of the first Merger LP, 'Exiles In A Babylon', coincided with one of the periodic eras of optimism for reggae music. Yet again normally wise men were predicting the imminent acceptance of JA music into mainstream British musical thought. This time round it was widely assumed that reggae



more traditional zippy pop of The Still's '9.5' sound freshest.

Nicest though is Cajun Cutie's scatty jazz blues 'Black Man's Hat', while Dislocation Dance's 'You Can't Beat History' makes it on a frantic drum beat. Manchester Mekon's 'Must Have More Wheels' is noisily engaging, but much of the rest is Velvet Underground's 'What Goes On' guitar filtering through Cabaret Voltaire.

At worst, most, if not all, of these bands have been recorded far too early. Come back later when they're better prepared.

Chris Bohn

BRIAN BRAIN Unexpected Noises (Secret)

BRIAN Brain is in the contradictory position of being relatively well-known, though nobody's exactly sure what for. Easier recognised as Martin Atkins, the PiL drummer who survived dates in France and the US before being purged, it's nevertheless still uncertain just what he contributed to their 'Metal Box', arriving as he did near its completion.

While part of the Corporation he released a solo single 'They Got Me In The Bottle', a rather jolly incursion into the familiar, if corny electronic pop territory of hammy insanity. It wasn't great enough to leave people hanging on tenterhooks for a subsequent album, but it was good enough to make 'Unexpected Noises' something of a disappointment.

Then I suppose Atkins' chosen alias of Brian Brain should have revealed something of his infatuation with slight jokes. It's carried through into the making of a shambolic collection high on enthusiasm and the joys that went into its creation, but neither really compensate for a lack of real imagination.

An ambitious craftsman,

Atkins overstretchs himself by mostly writing, producing and performing alone. 'Unexpected Noises' sees him scrambling around desperately for ideas, picking up occasionally on tested ones without really grasping their meaning. Only once does he really manage to rise above the general level of mediocrity — on the appallingly titled 'The Hots For You'.

Forget for a moment the song's lousy come-on lyrics and concentrate instead on the attractively undulating rhythms that recall — by accident I'm sure — Der Plan's insidiously subversive approach. But whereas they deliberately ensnare the listener to deliver them some pithily witty wisdoms, Atkins sticks his chest out to whisper hoarsely a crass mating cry.

The matching pair of 'The Asthma Game' and 'I'm Suffocating' are okay, recounting tales of attention-grabbing hypochondriacs above uncertain, cleverly undemanding rhythm modulations.

Elsewhere the music degenerates into awkwardly-played bass-heavy synth romps, like the openers 'Another Million Miles' and 'Our Man In Hong Kong', which cover plenty of ground without really getting anywhere.

Someone's obviously got faith enough in Atkins to let him make records, but they'd have really served him better by forcing him to develop his ideas first. Allowing them to be heard in their early formative stages isn't going to help advance his career much.

Yet the few glimmers of hope are enough to indicate he deserves more than to be dismissed as just another also-ran, attempting a swift fame-by-association ascension before his 15-minute PiL allocation is up.

Chris Bohn

music was about to be catapulted from its alliance with punk into large-scale popularity, and that British-based reggae bands would play an important role in this new currency.

Yet the Merger record was dull, as generally was the group itself, as indeed are most English reggae bands: it was obviously the group's lucky day when Bob Dylan wandered into the 100 Club, caught them playing, and demanded Merger be put on the Blackbushe bill: there were many dissenters though, who believed Aswad or Misty were both more deserving and much more able.

And, though JA-made music has wriggled insidiously into a position where it's now a major influence on English white rock, it's even rougher today being a UK-based reggae act: the rise of 2-Tone has resulted in groups with real songwriting strength

like Steel Pulse being deemed obsolete as rapidly as came the demise of Little Feat, say, when Punk appeared.

Starting with its uninspired title, Merger's new LP, 'Armageddon Time', illustrates many of the problems of British reggae.

The record is dominated by the songs of lead guitarist and lead vocalist Winston Bennett, the only remaining member from the line-up that cut the previous album. Winston is obviously a great fan of Peter Tosh: not only are his voice, phrasing and intonations nearly identical to those of a Minister Of Herb with weaker throat muscles, but his song-writing is exceedingly fond of Tosh-like structures. 'You Are To Me As Love', the second song on side one, sounds as though it's straight off a Virgin era pre-Disco Tosh LP, as, to a lesser degree, do the other four Bennett numbers, title-track included.

Though I've played the LP at least half a dozen times, there is still not a single tune that truly lodges in my head. Nor is there a single instrumental flourish or lump of dub that excites me, even though — paradoxically — I'm consistently impressed by the six-piece group's immaculate playing. 'Armageddon Time' is also impeccably produced, but that would be regarded as a backhanded compliment if used to describe any white rock band's output. As can be judged by the glib way in which each anonymous number slides into the next, Merger are making with this LP the reggae equivalent of hip easy listening — there's an odd conceit about its meaningless "sophistication". And while it seems callous to be so harsh about a presumably self-financed record, 'Armageddon Time' does seem terribly pointless.

Chris Salewicz

IAN MATTHEWS A Spot Of Interference (Rockburgh)

A CAREER that peaked with early '70s folk and country rock isn't among the more fashionable antecedents for the current musical climate. But considering Ian Matthews' past — Fairport Convention, Matthews' Southern Comfort, a hit single with the Woodstock anthem — this album isn't such a depressing exercise as you might imagine.

Portrayed on the cover in a

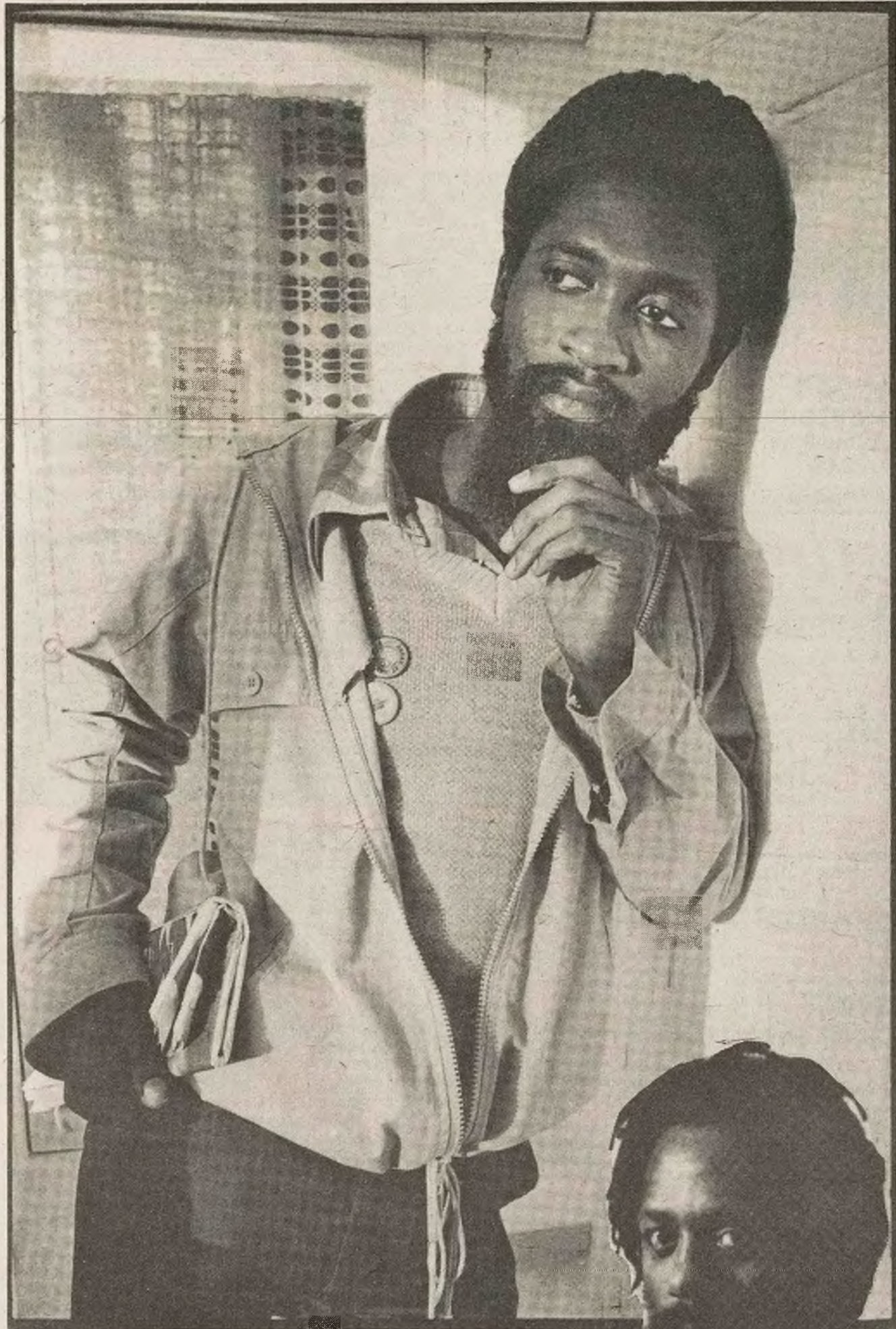
teetering stack of televisions, Ian Matthews sounds a bit wistful, faintly regretful, largely resigned but not entirely emptied.

The titles of the tracks alone — 'I Survived The 'Seventies', 'I Can't Fade Away', 'Driftwood From Disaster', 'Why Am I?', 'What Do I Do?' — are good enough clues for this album's contents. 'A Spot Of Interference' is a tasteful collection of sleek rock sounds that is perfectly acceptable if you regard artistry as some sort of substitute for creative desperation.

The songs are tuneful, skilful and sweet. He includes elegant losers' love songs and some puzzled quiet questions about his own incongruous role. It's not passionate enough to be poignant, but the album isn't without its own poise and dignity: the sound of a man not so much coming to terms with the modern world as pursuing his nostalgic craft with gentle persistence.

Just the music of an old almost-star not fading away, gracefully ...

Lynn Hanna





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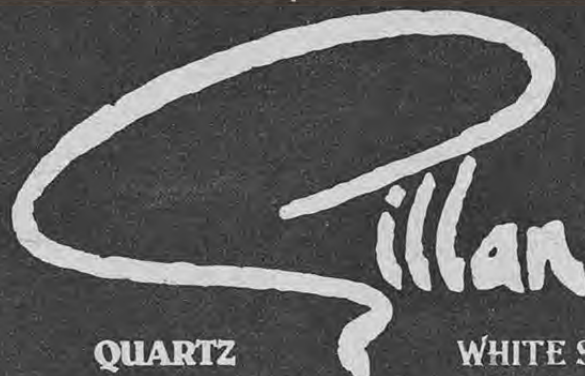
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SOFT BOYS

Underwater Moonlight (*Armageddon*)

SEXY Malcolm McLaren wouldn't care for these A-Level chaps. Maic likes them 14, C-60 stupid and all done up in depression gold (for which he earnestly hopes, one day, to own the franchise). Soft Boys, thank God, have a mind of their own. It belongs to plucky Robyn Hitchcock who plays guitar, bass, writes most of the material and whose singing is so appallingly rank it amounts to an act of faith.

The same might be said for the lyrics. These too are scooped from deep down within. From the very crevices of his fibre. It is for this reason, for the all round straight-backed delivery that I grow fonder and fonder of this shoddy package.

If it's to be tagged, I would tag it late '60s West Coast. Just prior to themes and concepts when three minutes of magnificently contrived pop music was beginning to be considered counter-revolutionary trite. Idiotic, yes. But I've got a feeling Soft Boys are already free falling into the same intellectual snake pit.

They show a keenness to Chinese-wrestle themes that warrant no more than a nod. 'Insanely Jealous' for instance is portentous waft that would have washed far better sans the thinking caps (do I hear a drum solo in the offing?). And 'You'll Have To Go Sideways' is nothing so much as a stoned riff that would best have been dumped next morning with the cigarette butts and beer cans.

But, strangely, it is these same traits that pull me towards the work. The earnestness, the open, unrepentant buffoonery. Ah yes, warm yer feet.

Andrew Tyler

THE KORGIS

Dumb Waiters (*Rialto*)

The Korgis' lead singer, James Warren, stares thoughtfully into space with the look of a kid whose mind is on greater things. He's the typical fifth form swot, neatly cut though slightly ruffled blonde hair, an insipidly pale complexion, National Health glasses and shallow squinting eyes. This is his chosen pose for the album photograph. The soft boy. The wimp that everybody wants to bully.

Teacher's pets are renowned for producing meticulously neat and precise work. And it's clear that James and his chums have worked suitably hard on this album. The production is velvet smooth. Celestial strings, soothing and melodious, are layered onto tame guitars whose jagged edges have been carefully blunted. The drums are softly muffled and never too loud. Yes, teacher would like this record.

The finicky perfectionism continues through the songs. Once they are composed, they are programmed into a computer which ensures they contain the optimum number of gratifying note sequences. On 'Perfect Hostess' the keyboards are introduced at just the right moment to ensure a deadly hook. 'Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime' is a tailor-made British hit, simple, trite but unmistakably effective. And the romantic 'It's No Good Unless You Love Me' is a similar piece of saccharine sweet pop music; harmlessly sentimental, lethally catchy.

The Korgis are the epitome of the type of band record companies love to have around. They sell a lot of product. They

make nice records. They are nice people. They play lovely, candy-floss pop music for all the nicest boys and girls. I hate them.

Mick Duffy

THE GADGETS

Gadgetree (*Final Solution*)

THE GADGETS are a trio of quirky Berts who deploy synthesizers, voices and electronic gadgetry to quietly unusual effect.

To a background of gently pulsing rhythm machines, you get strange noises — 'Eraserhead Singing'; parodies — 'Making Cars' (David Byrne), the two 'UFO Report' tracks (early Bowie); conceptual jokes like 'Singing In The Rain' and 'Shouting Nispers', (which consist respectively of someone doing just that) and a few quite 'serious' and fairly hummable tunes.

With 18 tracks in all, The Gadgets are careful not to harp too long on any one point and the album sounds more like a compendium of wisecracks, ideas and intriguing noises, each lightly sketched then left well alone. Only 'Termite Mound', a sort of electronic Chipmunks track, outstays its welcome.

'Gadgetree' seems such an off-hand; unassuming album it discourages grandiose claims but... The Gadgets mix electronics and pop in a fresh and imaginative way that does augur well both for their own, and the genre's future. That they do it with such deftness and wit makes it also a present pleasure.

Gary Numan should be so surreal.

Graham Lock

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 Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Sky Diver**
 Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Titan**
 Blackpool Scamps: **Dansin Obscure**
 Bradford Queen's Hall: **Disco Students**
 Brighton Concorde: **Bananas/Techniques**
 Burntwood Troubadour: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
 Coventry Dog & Trumpet: **The Sting-rays**
 Coventry General Wolfe: **R.P.M.**
 Croydon The Cartoon: **Majority**
 Edinburgh's Eric Brown's: **Strange Broad**
 Edinburgh Napier College: **(week) Fire Engines/Theatre P.K.F.**
 Fort William Community Centre: **Z & The Arabs**
 Glasgow Douen Castle: **Thirty Bob Suits**
 Grangemouth International Hotel: **H20/Mudsharks**
 Gravesend Red Lion: **Pagan Altar**
 Hastings The Crypt: **The Pulsaters**
 High Wycombe Nags Head: **Rye and the Quarterboys**
 Hull Lamworth Country Club: **Geno Washington**
 Hull Wellington Club: **Devotion**
 Ilford The Cranbrook: **The Dave Jacks**
 Jacksdale Grey Topper: **Strange Days**
 Kendal Brewery Arts Centre: **George Melly & The Feetwarmers**
 Kingston The Three Tuns: **Kashmere**
 Leamington Spa Centre: **The Body-snatchers**
 Leeds Richmond Inn: **Gary Boyle Band**
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 Lincoln Cornhill Vaults: **Spider**
 Liverpool Whispers Wine Bar: **Stun The Guards**
 London Camden Dingwalls: **Hazel O'Connor's Megahype**
 London Canning Town Bridge House: **Clock DVA/Blancmange**
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 London Deptford Albany: **Au Pairs/Mike Malignant and the Parasites/Oxy and the Morons/Fast Relief**
 London Fulham Cock Tavern: **Back To Back**
 London Fulham New Golden Lion: **The Books**
 London Hammersmith Clarendon Hotel: **The Spectres/Thompson Twins/Guns For Hire**
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 London Kensington De Villier's Bar: **Gold Dust Twins**
 London Knightsbridge Pizza On The Park: **Ike Isaacs Duo**
 London North Finchley Torrington: **Juice On The Loose**
 London NW2 Hog's Grunt: **Commodor Jazz Band**
 London Oxford St 100 Club: **Nightdoctor**
 London Putney White Lion: **Soul Band**
 London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: **Buzz & The Flyers/The Polecats**
 London Victoria The Venue: **Charlie Dore's Back Pocket**
 London Waterloo Royal Victoria: **Freddy's Feetwarmers**
 London West Drayton Youth Centre: **Red Box/Urban Collapse/The Standards**
 London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Vibrators/The Cheats**
 London Woolwich Tramshed: **Fool/The Sharpees**
 Manchester Cyprus Tavern: **Naughty Boys**
 Manchester Develles: **X.O.Dus/Foreign Press**
 Manchester Rafter's: **The Pop Group**
 Newcastle-under-Lyme El Syd's: **Tribal Oust**
 Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Drug Squad**
 Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gaffa**
 Portsmouth Central Hotel: **Harvey Andrews**
 Portsmouth The Cumberland Tavern: **The Time**
 Preston Warehouse: **Mistress/The Cheaters**
 Shifnal The Star: **Viza-V**

FRIDAY

Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Situation Critical**
 Bishops Stortford Railway Hotel: **Black Jack**
 Bognor Regis Sussex Hotel: **F.I.I.K.**
 Brighton Cinescene: **The Piranhas**
 Bristol Crookers: **False Idols**
 Cardiff Top Rank: **The Bodysnatchers**
 Charing Sports Club: **The Pulsaters**
 Coventry General Wolfe: **Ice**
 Coventry Rhyton Bridge: **Streetlife**
 Croydon The Cartoon: **Seven Year Itch**
 Edinburgh Eric Brown's: **The Associates**
 Edinburgh Festival Dominion Cinema: **George Melly & John Chilton's Feetwarmers**
 Edinburgh The Moon: **The Significant Zeros**
 Exeter St George's Hall: **Third Programme/T-34s/The Living Daylights**
 Ipswich Kingfisher: **Lizard**
 Kirklevington Country Club: **Nine Below Zero**
 Knaresborough Mitre Hotel: **The City Limits**
 Knighton Norton Arms: **The Accelerators**
 Launceston White Horse: **Tosh**
 Leeds Fford: **Dick Smith Band**
 London Camden Dingwalls: **The Flatbackers/The Gas**
 London Camden Southampton Arms: **Jellyroll Blues Band**
 London Chiswick John Bull: **Junco Partners**
 London Clapham 101 Club: **The Direction-sors**
 London Clapham Two Brewers: **Sad Among Strangers**
 London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Freshies/Zero Zero**
 London Ealing Town Hall: **Seventeen**
 London Enfield Havard Hall: **London PX/Six Minute War/Insecure/Eratics**
 London Fulham Cock Tavern: **Jazz Sluts**
 London Fulham Golden Lion: **Ram Jam Band**
 London Greenwich White Swan: **Nuthin' Fancy**
 London Hackney Queen's: **Avenue**
 London Hammersmith Clarendon Hotel: **Misty & The Enchanters**
 London Hammersmith Riverside Festival: **Breakfast Band**
 London Herne Hill Half Moon: **Talk**
 London Holborn Princess Louise: **The Scoop**
 London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Ricky Cool & The Rialtos**
 London New Cross Royal Albert: **Rubber Johnny**
 London Notre Dame Hall: **Bauhaus**
 London NW2 Hog's Grunt: **West End Stompers**
 London Oxford St 100 Club: **Nightdoctor**
 London Peckham Walmer Castle: **Shadowfax**
 London Putney Star and Garter: **Snatch 22**
 London Putney White Lion: **Juice On The Loose**
 London Stockwell The Plough: **Southside**
 London SW1 Maunkberry's: **Lynsey Moore**
 London Victoria The Venue: **Marsha Hunt**
 London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Johnny G/Fay Ray/Guy Jackson**
 Luton Baron of Beef: **The Coconut Dogs**
 Manchester Winsford Bee's Knees: **Night Visitors**
 Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **Dedringers**
 Milton Keynes Navigation Inn: **Russians/The Flying Ducks**
 Oxford Oranges & Lemons: **The D.S.**
 Perth Plough Inn: **The Marks**
 Reading Target Club: **Jeep**
 Scarborough Taboo Rock Club: **The Expressos**
 Shifnal The Star: **Bleeding Heart**
 Truro William IV: **The Crew**
 Winsford (Manchester) Bees Knees: **Terminal Music**
 Worcester Kings Head: **Wild Boys & Silence**

SATURDAY

Basingstoke Magnums: **The D.S.**
 Bedford Amptill Parkside Hall: **Blackjack**
 Birmingham Bogarts: **Stray Dogs**
 Birmingham Golden Eagle: **Urge/Rockers**
 Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Handsome Beasts**

SUNDAY

Birmingham Railway Hotel: **The Out**
 Birmingham (Yardley) The Swan: **Video**
 Bradford College Vaults Bar: **Proposition 31**
 Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): **Bill Scott & Ian Ellis**
 Cambridge Midsummer Common: **Fire-mans Ball/Motorhead/Inner City Limit**
 Chester Poyton Folk Centre: **Plexus/Peter Hughes**
 Edinburgh Festival Dominion Cinema: **George Melly & John Chilton's Feetwarmers**
 Ellesmere Port The Roc: **Dave Berry & The Cruisers**
 Glasgow Doune Castle: **H20**
 Kendal Brewery Arts Centre: **The Albion Band**
 Lasswade Town Hall: **The Significant Zeros**
 Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Windows**
 London Battersea Nags Head: **Jugular Vein**
 London Brixton George Canning: **South-side**
 London Camden Brecknock: **Nuthin' Fancy**
 London Camden Dingwalls: **Nine Below Zero**
 London Charing Cross Duke of Buckingham: **The Invisibles (4 days)**
 London Chiswick John Bull: **John Shepherd's Golden Oldies (Disco)**
 London Clapham 101 Club: **The Spoilers**
 London Clapham Two Brewers: **The Suggestion**
 London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Kleen Heels/Dynamos**
 London Covent Garden Endell Street: **(open air gig) Real To Real/The Cheaters**
 London Dalston Pembury Tavern: **Avenue**
 London Hatfield Stonehouse: **L. A. Hooker/Powerhouse Heavy Metal Roadshow**
 London Fulham Cock Tavern: **Soul Band**
 London Fulham New Golden Lion: **Pete Bardens Noise**
 London Herne Hill Half Moon: **Stray Cats**
 London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Martian Dance**
 London North Finchley Torrington: **Johnny Mars' 7th Sun**
 London NW2 Hog's Grunt: **Rod Hamer Band**
 London NW3 Swiss Cottage Open Space: **Winchester Festival '80 (evenings)/Catch 22/The Towers/Astronauts/Silly Boy Leon (free rock concert)**
 London Putney Half Moon: **Julian Bahulas**
 London Soho Pizza Express: **Will Michael**
 London Swiss Cottage Open Space: **(Free Rock Concert) Lies/Astronauts/The Towers/Catch 22**
 London Wandsworth Kimber Road Carnival: **(free) Steel Survivor/The Clangers + supporting bills**
 London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Nightdoctor & Reggae Disco**
 London W14 The Kensington: **Seventeen**
 Maidenhead Leisure Centre: **1st National Festival of Reggae/Steel Pulse/Aswad/Cimarons/Misty**
 Manchester The Squat: **Mud Hutters/Outer Edge/Hard Lines**
 Newbridge Memorial Hall: **Dedringer**
 Newquay Central Hotel: **The Winners**
 Norwich The Cottage: **The Stringays**
 Nottingham Calverton Club: **Strange Days**
 Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Medium Medium**
 Southend Shrimpers Club: **Eric Blake**

MONDAY

Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Gangsters**
 Birmingham Golden Eagle: **Circles**
 Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Gentleman Jim**
 Birmingham Railway Hotel: **The Ramparts**
 Birmingham Romeo & Juliet's: **Dedringer**
 Bristol Stonehouse: **Android Pups**
 Burnley The Inn Place: **The Enigma/God's Gift**
 Cambridge Raffles: **Easy Prey**
 Cheshire Poynton Folk Centre: **Peter Hughes and Singers**
 Edinburgh Playhouse: **Gerry Rafferty**
 Eton The Christopher: **The Pictures**
 Ewell The Grapevine: **Avenue**
 High Wycombe Osbourne Arms: **Sharx**
 Ilford Cauliflower Hotel: **Original East Side Stompers**
 Ilkley Rose & Crown: **The City Limits**
 Kendal Arts Centre: **Geno Washington**
 Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **The Woolly Trunks**
 Leicester Fosseway Hotel: **Religious Overdose/Service**
 London Camden Dingwalls: **T-Boys**
 London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Dynamos/Soft Touch**
 London East Ham Ruskin Arms: **Fool**

London Fulham Cock Tavern: **Loaded Dice**
 London Fulham Greyhound: **Thompson Twins/Local Heroes**
 London Fulham New Golden Lion: **The Blues Band**
 London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Modern English/Naked Lunch**
 London Kingston Three Tuns: **The Sound**
 London Knightsbridge Pizza On The Park: **Al Haig Duo**
 London N.4 The Stapleton: **The Syndicate**
 London Putney Star & Garter: **Penny Royal**
 London Richmond Snoopy's: **Then It Rained**
 London Wembley Arena: **Stevie Wonder (1 week except Thursday 4th)**
 London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Artery**
 London W.1 Gillray's Bar: **Fred Rickshaw's Hot Goolies**
 Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Bad Publicity**
 Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gwaihir**
 St Albans Horn of Plenty: **The Coconut Dogs**
 Watford Verulam Arms: **Clientelle**

TUESDAY

Bathgate The Fairway: **The Frauds/On Parole**
 Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Cromo**
 Birmingham Fighting Cocks: **Brjuo**
 Birmingham Mercat Cross: **The Ramparts**
 Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Speed Limit**
 Bradford College Vaults Bar: **New Kings Snakes**
 Bromley Cross (Bolton) The Railway: **Terminal Music**
 Cambridge Great Northern: **Junction 13**
 Cambridge Raffles: **Mad Chateaux**
 Hull Wellington Club: **Artery**
 Leamington Spa Crown Hotel: **UXB**
 Leeds Warehouse: **Spyder Blues Band**
 Liverpool Star and Garter: **Stun The Guards**
 London Camden Brecknock: **Red Hot In Alex**
 London Camden Dingwalls: **Tenpole Tudor**
 London Camden Music Machine: **Vardis/More**
 London Clapham 101 Club: **Rock'n'Roll/The Combination**
 London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Opposition/Eazy**
 London Fulham Cock Tavern: **Small Brothers**
 London Fulham Greyhound: **Hotshots**
 London Fulham New Golden Lion: **The Spoilers**
 London Hornsey Kings Head: **Main Avenue Jazzband**
 London Islington The Hope & Anchor: **The Flatbackers**
 London N.4 The Stapleton: **Brett Marvin & The Thunderbolts**
 London N.W.1 Brecknock: **The Suggestion**
 London Plumstead Prince Rupert: **Avenue**
 London Soho Pizza Express: **All-Star Jazz Band**
 London The Mall ICA: **Au Pairs**
 London W.1 New Merlins: **The Coconut Dogs**
 Southend Annabell's: **Bastille**

WEDNESDAY

Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Reality**
 Birmingham Bogarts: **Money**
 Birmingham Mercat Cross: **M. S. Night-work**
 Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Ezra Pound**
 Birmingham (Yardley) Bulls Head: **Roses**
 Bradford College Vaults Bars: **Seven Year Itch**
 Cambridge Raffles: **Rank Amateurs**
 Cheltenham Plough Inn: **Roadsters**
 Croydon The Cartoon: **Basil's Ballsup Band**
 Ewell The Grapevine: **Avenue**
 Exeter New Vic: **S.L.X.**
 Harrow Weald Middlesex & Herts Country Club: **Mickey Jupp**
 Hatfield Downs Farm: **Fool**
 Hereford Rotters: **The Accelerators**
 Inverness Murtion Hotel: **The Significant Zeros**
 Liverpool Scamps: **Visual Aids**
 London Camden Dingwalls: **Merger**
 London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Brooks/The Leopards**
 London Fulham Cock Tavern: **Rye and the 1/4 Boys**
 London Fulham New Golden Lion: **Thieves Like Us**
 London Islington The Hope & Anchor: **The Tea Set**
 London Knightsbridge The Grove: **Fred Rickshaw's Hot Goolies**
 London Richmond The Castle: **The Dave**
 London Ruislip Youth Centre: **T.V. Scandal/Matt/Mayhem**
 London S.E.19 The Crystal Palace Hotel: **White Spirit/Ian Gillan Band/Powerhouse Heavy Metal Roadshow**
 London Soho Pizza Express (4 days): **Tony Mann Trio**
 Norwich William IV: **The Stringays**
 Nottingham Ad Lib Club: **Menticide/The Void/Vox Populi/The Devices/Subway**
 Nottingham Passive Resistance: **Razor**
 Nottingham Britannia Rowing Club: **Circles**
 Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Gwaihir**
 Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Some Chicken**
 Manchester Beach Club: **The Diagram Brothers**
 Reading Target: **Sharx**
 South Woodford Railway Hotel: **Original East Side Stompers**
 Swinton The Towpath: **The Woolly Trunks**
 Torquary 400 Club: **Geno Washington**

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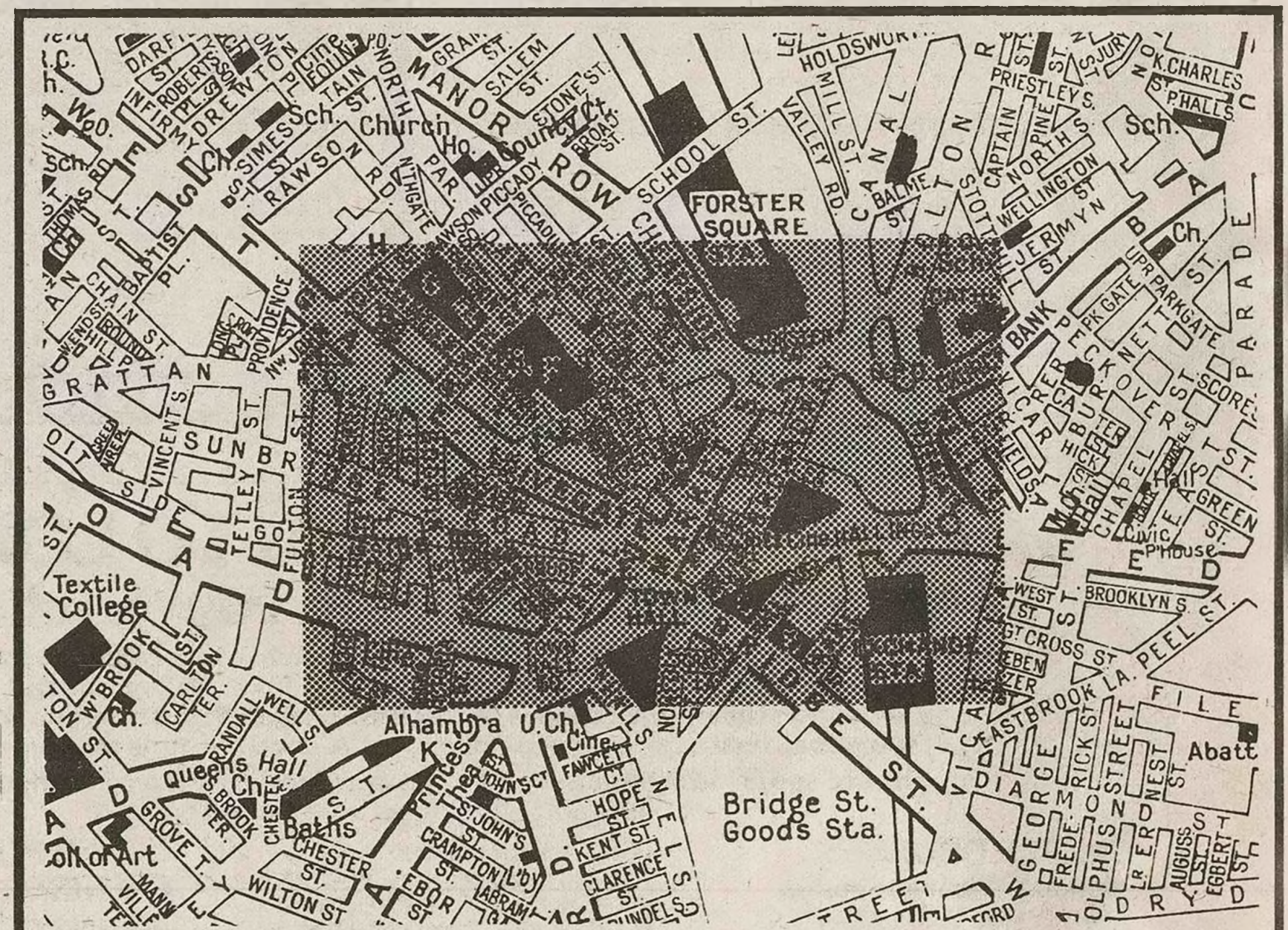
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Jerry Lee demonstrates the ancient rite of hair combing.

Return of the Sun gods

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Kings Of Rock And Roll (Pickwick)

40-TRACK two LP compilation from the
apollonian Sun archives of recordings made
during the years between 1956 and 1960:
ranging from the familiar with Jerry Lee's
'Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On' and 'Great
Balls Of Fire', fellow pioneer Carl Perkins'
record breaking 'Blue Suede Shoes' and big
Roy Orbison's 'Ooby Dooby' debut; through
less frequently anthologised territory such as
the wild Billy Lee Riley's 'Flyin' Saucers Rock
& Roll', a slapped bass rocker with novelty
lyrics that achieved some status with early
'70s cultists, to those tear ups of more recent
a bop like, uh, Warren Smith's 'Red Cadillac
And A Black Moustache' (hi Gina!) and 'I've
Got Love If You Want It' circa 1976/7
confederacy.

These days of course much of this music
has run its course of the rockabilly brethren's
listening habits, with the black R&B jump and

doo wop that influenced it making increasing
encroachment on the cooler of cats' playlists.

Surprisingly enough, 'The Kings Of Rock
And Roll' does not sound quite as jaded as
many other collections of its sort. This is a
nice cross section of white blues and country
sides of its period, showcasing both the lyrical
and mercenary aspects of the era, with some
gems like Johnny Cash's lilting 'Get Rhythm'
and the aforementioned Warren Smith titles,
plus some of the label's own competent cover
versions, the Jerry Lee Lewis interpretations
of Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley.

It is the King's death that provides the LP's
one jarring moment, a ghoully tribute
released shortly after his death by female
sessioners Misty (not in roots) entitled 'DOA',
righteously reviled by Tony Parsons at its
time of original issue in 1977.

For the rest, I couldn't understand a thing
they said, but that crazy beat it just a stopped
me dead.

Penny Reel

PRETTY THINGS Cross Talk (Warner Bros)

IT'S BEEN five years since
'Savage Eye', the Pretties' last
album, emerged on what
seemed the all too aptly named
Swan Song label. Since then,
the only sign of life has been a
best-forgotten Euro-issue from
Phil May that seemingly
escaped before it was even
mixed.

But now, amazingly, the great
neglected are back with a
line-up that recalls the band's
'S. F. Sorrow' era, with
founder-members May (vocals)
and Dick Taylor (guitar),
appearing alongside John
Povey (keyboards), Wally Allen
(bass) and Skip Alan (drums),
plus lead guitarist Peter Tolson,
who's still the new kid, having
only joined the band in '73.
Despite the pension-book
personnel, the music comes
spotty-faced and '80s youthful:
as far removed from, say the

Pretties' 'Parachute' (Rolling
Stone's album of 1969,
remember?) as that creation
was from 'Big Boss Man' and
'Rosalyn'.

Nowadays there's less
emphasis on melody and
all-embracing surrounds.
There's more space, the band
cutting back to the basics and
laying the emphasis on May's
stronger-than-ever vocals,
which currently come
chameleon-like, full of Costello
hiccups, Ferry yelps and other
bits of business.

His lyrics, sharp but often
odd-fitting, deal mainly with
love — illicit love, unrequited
love, tough love, hot love. The
sort of love where the
characters involved both sweat
and bleed. Mills and Boon it
isn't.

And, though there's been an
obvious attempt to disregard
much of that which has gone
before ('I'm tired of

remembering what it was like to
buy a cup of tea with Mick
Jagger for 4½d," May once told
Nick Kent) strong hints of
yesterday do sometimes
remain. 'No Future', which is
not the re-titled Pistols' anthem,
serves to remind us that Taylor
was also a founder-member of
the Stones, while 'Falling Again'
is pure Tommy Roe, replete
with handclaps, fast tom-toms
and chorused "doo doops".

I guess that it's far too late in
the day for the Pretties to make
any real breakthrough, even
with this well-produced (by Jon
Astley and Phil Chapman)
album. But 'Cross Talk', if it
does nothing else, succeeds in
proving that the band — now 16
years on — is far from being a
spent force. Jagger and Co.
could well learn a few lessons
here.

Fred Dellar

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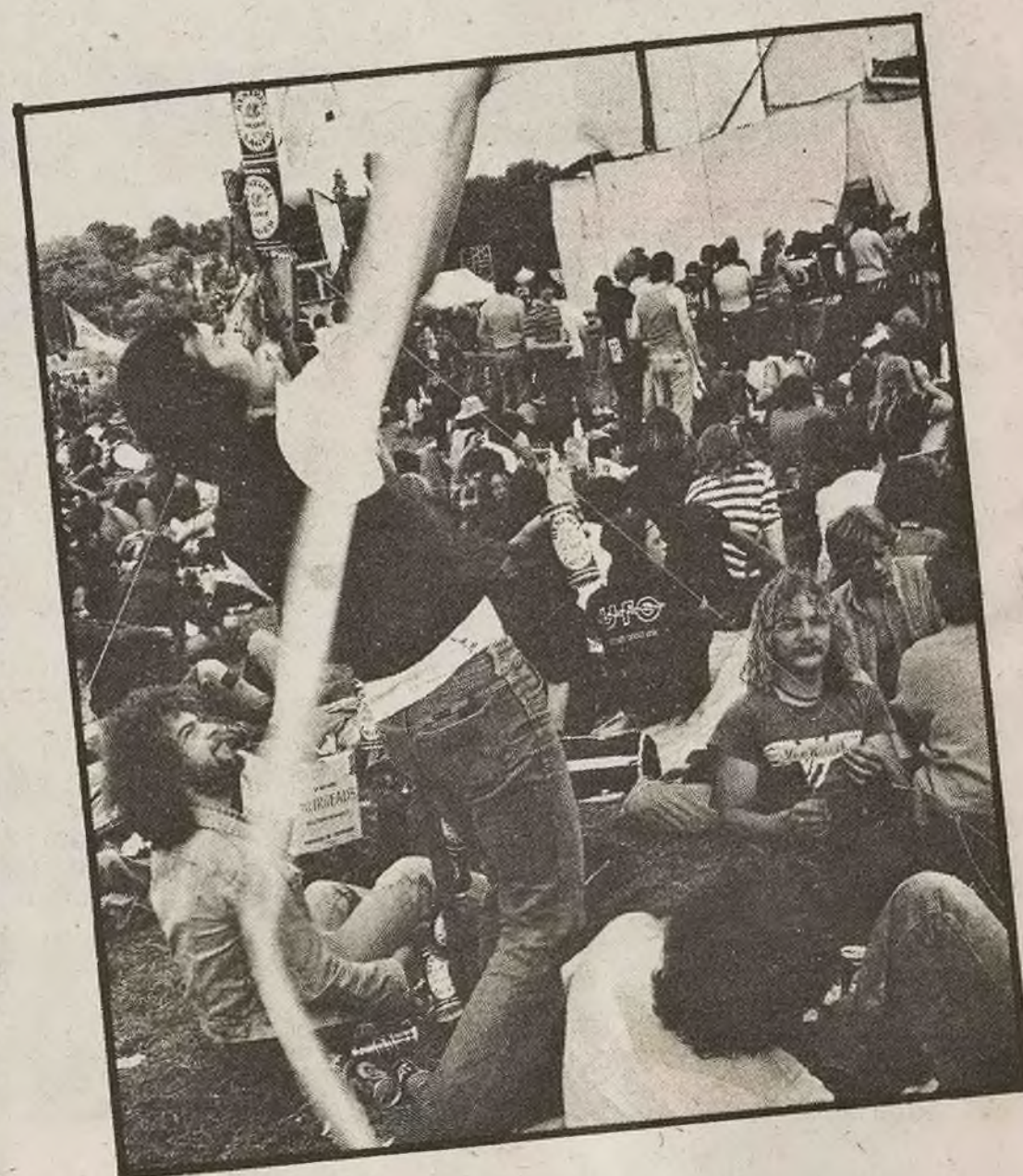
LIVE!

PHOTO SPECIAL

PIX PETER ANDERSON
WORDS DANNY BAKER

READING 80

Welcome to the
squalor show



is demanded and nothing attempted.

Whatever, here were 30,000 people who looked, acted and embraced defeat and were now hell-bent on turning it into a virtue. It's obvious to me why kids in 1980 should like the escapism and brute tactics of heavy metal, they're damned to it and I don't sympathise.

I just wonder what all these people would be doing and what would Britain be like if somebody had taken hold of the infant Chuck Berry and held his head under the water?

The majority of the newly recruited headbangers packed themselves in front of the two stages, eager to earn their wings by way of a crash course, stark and toe-to-toe, with these much publicised ear-crushing, head-splitting giants. The most deflating blow of all must've come when they realised how routine the whole affair was to be.

With barely 20 minutes between bands, there was no room for that all-important tension to build up, no sense of Event that so many HM gigs rely on. Imaginary guitar-playing was rationed and usually kids showed they were "into it" by sticking up the pointless old peace sign and waving it about hopefully in rhythm. A variation on this was to erect the index and little fingers while clenching the palm. I asked one kid what it meant and he said, "The sign of war." His mate said, "It just means rock'n'roll."

AS BANDS came and went the crowd — who'd never dream of questioning these Lords up there — found other less disrespectful ways of whooping things up. The favourite was free-for-all indiscriminate inter-crowd can-throwing orgies. For minutes on end the sky would darken as tin-lobbing reached its heights. Only one band was forced to quit because of the empties, and that was The Helions who feature ex-Damned guitarist Brian James. They were the only deviates from HM we were to see.

The local paper made much of this and of how The Helions

STANDING ON the edge of a ditch I look down on the unconscious body of a bloke who, I'd say is in his early 20s.

He's passed out drunk and tumbled down into this gully which serves as a communal urinal, lying there in his denims with shoulder-length hair, his jaw half-open. Others notice him as they unzip their jeans and nudge each other and grin at this wretch who's "really out of it".

Somebody thinks it'd be a crack to piss on him, but it's pointed out that he's already damp with the fresh mud running all over him with every rock'n'roller's release.

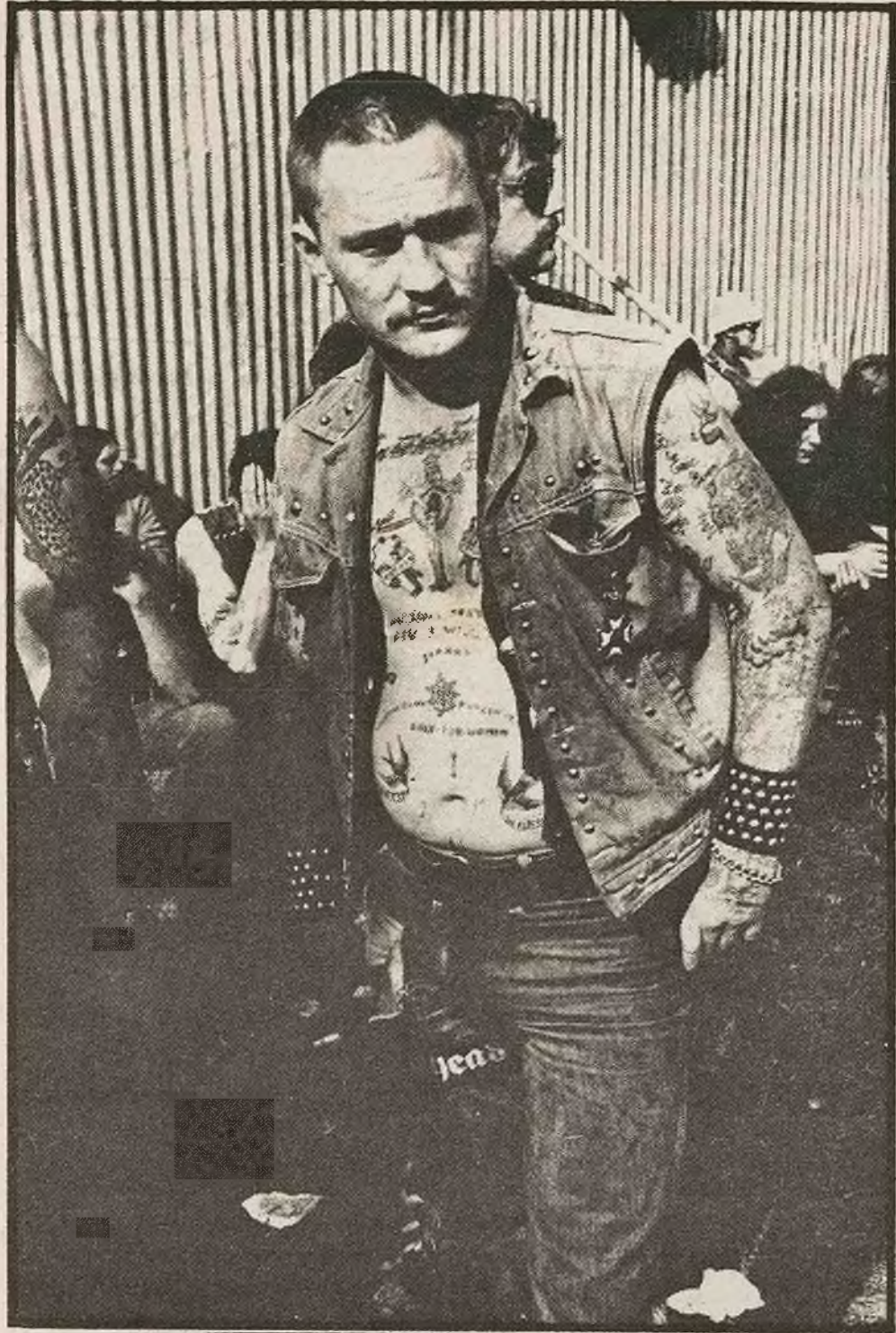
Looking up, I can see the outskirts of the main viewing area littered with similar, though not quite so badly positioned casualties, lying where they fell and — if not yet blotto — unable to speak through the dribble. But after only a few minutes on site, I'd got used to the shocking sartorial

scruffiness when each wandering rocker is in competition to be grubbier, more straggly, more outwardly degenerate than the person in front. It's a points sytem where you have to show you care less about things than that guy, and what's more, you've been caring less for longer.

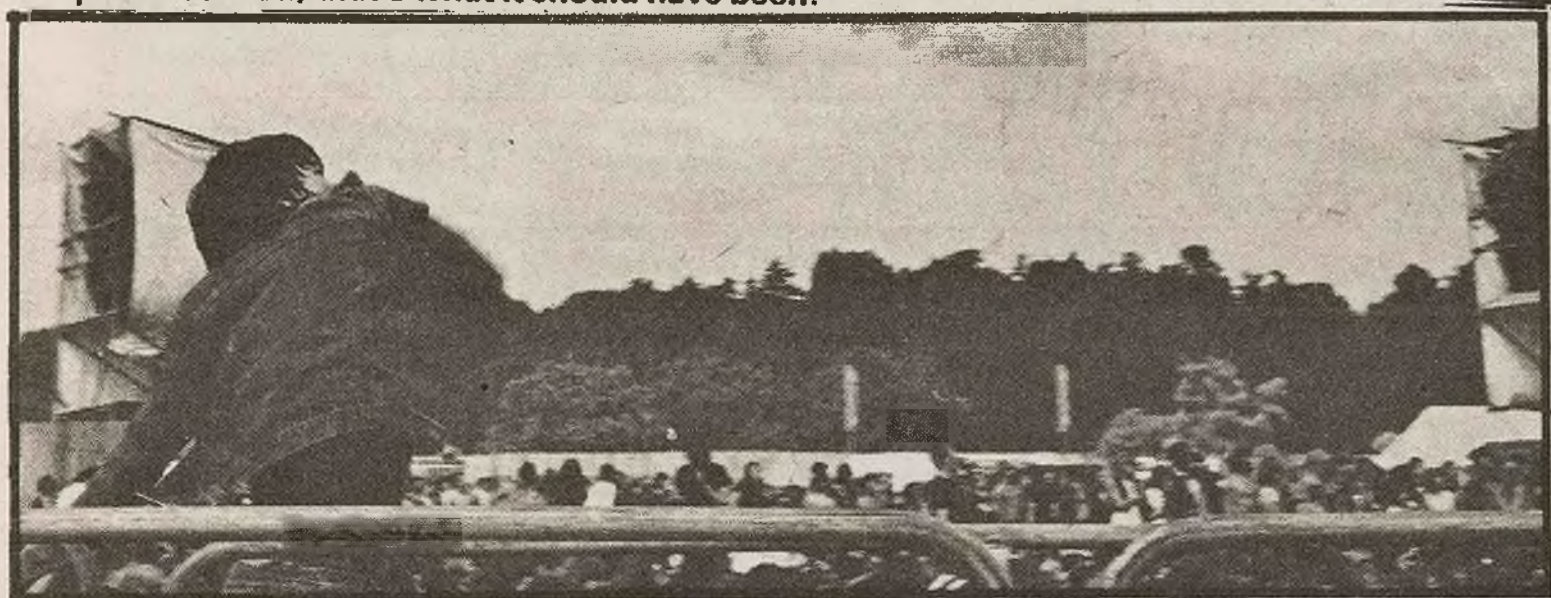
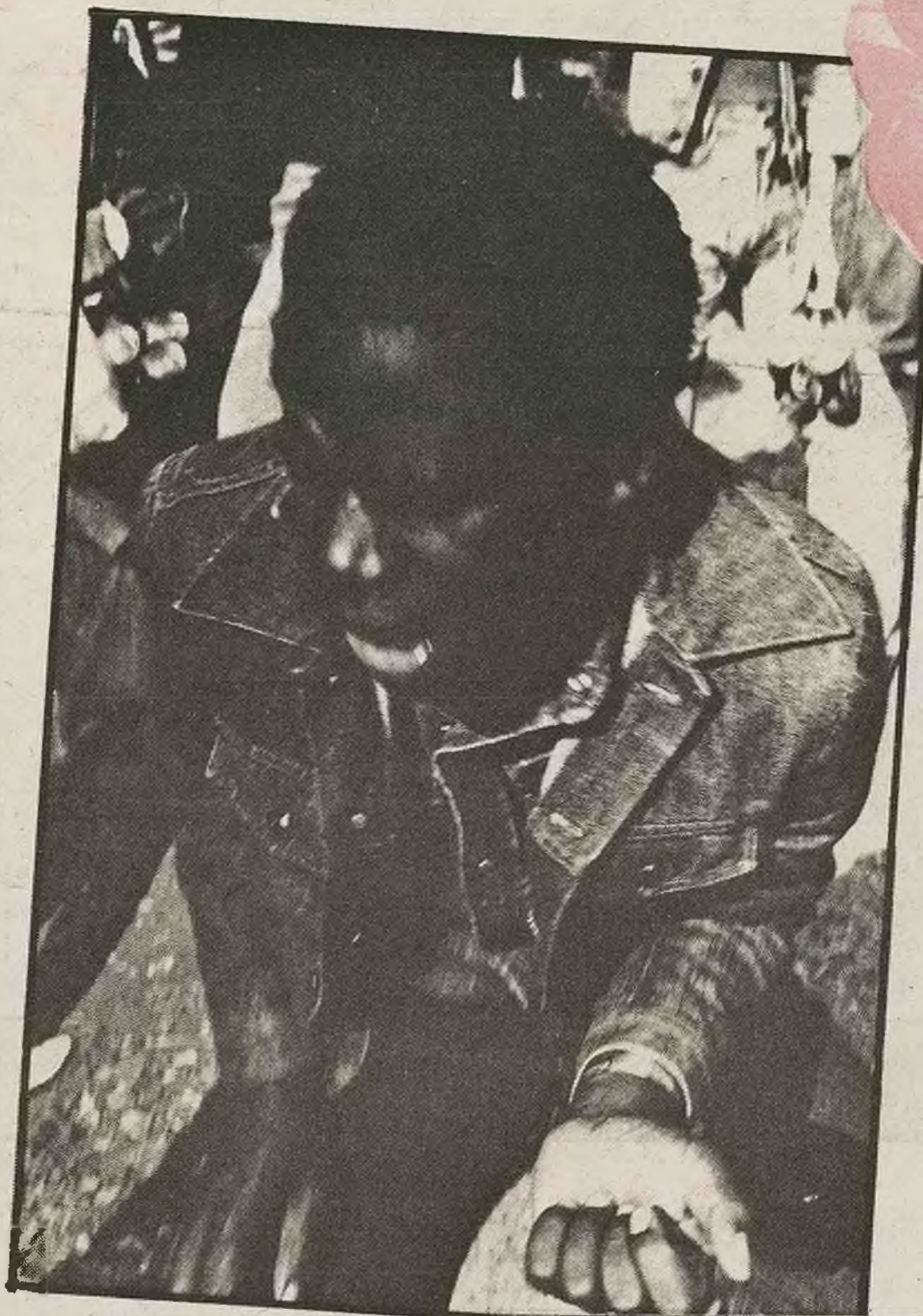
The wretch in the piss ditch was worth a good 50, plus a month's worth of friends' word-of-mouth: "Aw, man, y'should have seen Gerry at Reading. Fell into the piss ditch, man!"

Way over half the people here are under 25, and having obviously given up all hope for themselves, they wish for some fire-breathing, guitar-swinging overlord to underline their worthlessness and "blow them away".

MAYBE IT'S this country's thrust-down-the-throat materialism that crushes a youth's ambition and fire, maybe something as simple as the ever-changing fashions in music and its trappings that causes kids to put on the anchors and refuse to move another inch from a position where nothing



"festival n. & attrib. a. 1. n. Feast day, celebration, merry-making; periodic musical etc. performance(s) of special importance." Oh, *that's* what it should have been!



had branded the gathering as "imbeciles". But there were imbeciles backstage too. There was that character in the rapist mask from Samson; well, he's the band's drummer and he paraded around the VIP area in his outfit like it was the most natural thing in the world. (Offstage, you may note, he dons a patterned cotton variety with sequins.) Through the slits I could make out tiny areas of skin that were alive with sweat as he fought to hold down normal conversation.

Of course the really stupid thing is that, as no-one's ever seen his face anyway, he could have mingled quite naturally until ten minutes before showtime when, nipping into the toilet, he could have pulled his hat from a back pocket and emerged as Mr Mysterio reborn.

But no, he made the most of his twisto gimmick and then took his place onstage inside a special chrome cage where he proceeded to beat his heart out.

Watching Samson — with the drummer wishing he was *really* a famous guitarist, it struck me how close to wrestling the entertainment was; fools on stage while meek nobodies howled for blood in the stalls.

By Saturday most of the original alarm and anger had vanished. The sun shone, there were no fights, nobody got booed, the music never rose — and was never asked to rise — above simplistic "boogie" and the efficient organisation even had groups on and off stage on time.

It was an anti-climax, even I could feel it. This heavy metal overkill jamboree was trundling along with all the outlaw danger of the annual school sports day, even though each successive band would scream, "We're gonna tear this place apart," and "Are you ready to rock'n'roll?" And no, the local residents didn't object.

"Well, look son," one old boy told me, "each of these fans is buying ten to 20 quid of drink *each* before they go in, and then they've got to eat. We might be talking about three quarters of a million pounds being brought into the area.

"Oh no, I'm all for it."

The local paper revealed that fans were wheeling away supermarket trolleys to carry all the booze. ('It's The Wheel Thing'/'Rock Trolleys'.)

AT THIS point in the review I'm pouring over scribbled notes and trying to rescue one coherent, telling quote from the mass of mindless shouting (for bands or friends' names) that I got when I pointed the cassette at kids and asked them, "Why are you here?"

I asked real young kids and the only black kid I saw. I asked a couple of girls who weren't, for once, traipsing along behind some pair of grease monkeys. From the young kids I got gibberish about HM, "being better than Tony Blackburn and punk". The black and his white mates thought I was from the radio and cracked all manner of inane replies ("Don't he look like Jimi Hendrix?"), while the girls said they'd never seen so many dishy fellas in one place and had come to see Whitesnake. ("Can you get us up behind the stage?").

Nothing happened at Reading — nothing other than 30,000 mainly British people with nothing better to do than drink themselves stupid in a field and blunt themselves with the worst, most crippling music in the world; a music which does nothing to encourage personal endeavour, takes no stands. Paradoxically, it's the music that a bunch of unemployed men from Middlesbrough have travelled all this way to get lost in.

It's not enough to dance — they want something coarse to hammer out their frustrations. To dance makes you alive and sharper afterwards, you feel ten foot tall. But the heavy metal anti-dance is an exorcising anvil that pulverises the senses until you almost forget a stronger scourge exists, stretching tolerance until the scratching mundanity of day-to-day boredom seems a necessary breather until the next dose of brute force.

While they grimace, gyrate and throw their heads around it

must be the only portion of their lives that allows them true sensation. Our rather genteel idea of dancing is far too weak, possibly only the similar marathon strain of Northern Soul comes close. Perhaps we've forgotten what a luxury dancing for pleasure can be. Also what a thankful pressure-valve rock music is to the government.

But those inter-fan can wars show that in time the release is going to need to be greater or else rock followers are going to become as unruly and self-assured as football gangs.

In the meantime all these turgid bands like Angelwitch and Samson can bleat out rock'n'roll and believe these kids love them because of a deep appreciation of their musical dexterity, but they're just the Millwall, the Newcastle, the Man Utd that these smouldering youths are gathering around until their confidence peaks, or maybe hits bottom, and they snap, coming out flailing in all directions. That Plato quote from *The Republic* about 'As modes of music change, be warned, so do the laws of the State' is already distressingly true and it'll have an outcome so ugly that even The Clash couldn't find it romantic.

So nothing happened at Reading?

Sitting here away from the press drink-tents, the shining sun and the band/crowd harmony I'm not so sure. Here's a face of British youth that's recruiting all the time. You don't have to know a single thing about fashion, music or what's happening in London. Don't wash, shave or try to be better than the next guy. Just show up and swell the ranks. They've had enough of waving and yelling for attention and now they've begun to drop out in numbers. Sooner or later somebody will begin looking for them, asking for their vote, and Shazam! A ready-made army of youth who've already acknowledged defeat and are now just looking for a way back up. Any way back up.

Heavy metal is the serum that's keeping them in cold storage until then, and if rock ever again decides to get active, this time it may face opposition from within.



Edwyn of Orange Juice. Pic: Harry Papadopoulos.

Orange Juice

Paisley

EDWYN ditching the Roy Rogers outfit for a Victorian sailor shirt; the PA sounding like it's under attack by killer lichen: this kind of thing won't help the generally evolving impression of Orange Juice as shambolic, quirky, sloppy and merely amiable eccentrics — so let's put a stop to that *now*, before it becomes a myth.

Orange Juice apply rigorous standards. The songs have been refined with great craft and care, latent potential of melody and dormant hooks explored and exposed — and they have very specific ideas about how it should all sound. When it's right I think that from all my favourite groups (mainly Scottish these days — and *not* due to any misguided notion of 'patriotism'), I must enjoy Orange Juice the most.

Tonight, through a last-ditch PA, they're not quite as uplifting as usual. The sound is often rough and muffled — though no blame attaches to the band, who perform with as much verve and sparkle as ever.

They start with 'Holiday Hymn', one of Vic Godard's new

northern soul songs, investing it with special Orange Juice wit and charm. Then 'Falling and Laughing', the wonderful (if poorly recorded) first single, and the generous, euphoric 'Simply Thrilled Honey' (scheduled as single three).

These songs represent the basic O.J. sound. Like the Modern Lovers and The Feelies, they have adapted and absorbed aspects of The Velvet Underground (in this case the 'Live — 1969' album era), though the original structure is by now all but grown over with various O.J. obsessions, remaining apparent mostly in places like the long instrumental climax to 'Tender Object.'

From a distance they may suffer further superficial comparison, image-wise, with both bands. They can appear as a similarly warped kind of wholesome: strange, perpetually nervous boys squinting at you through fringes and laughing at things no one else understands.

It's not possible to file Orange Juice as easily as that. Isn't that how it should be?

"This is a country and western number, but it's an *existential* country and western number, so that makes it OK," says Edwyn (Collins — crooning, picking), introducing 'Upwards and

Johnny G

Ritzy

JOHNNY G plays games. He also has a certain sense of style.

Following a clip from one of those Kung Fu/sword movies featuring an oriental version of The Avengers, Johnny took the stage to play 'The Water Margin' from the recent G-Beat album. With Paul Hughes on double-bass and Richard Stephens on drums, the band resemble more of a beat jazz trio than anything else, and the variety of sounds they create against Johnny's guitar tips that visual comparison into the musical.

It may be that Johnny wants to be black; his vocals are high and pure, an earlier single, 'Call Me Bwana', had him satirising the existing

attitude of imperialist whites, and he claims in one song to have been 'ska'd for life'.

He was also relying heavily on reggae shuffle for most of the numbers at this gig, a benefit in aid of St. Matthew's Meeting Place, as a rather nervous black woman informed us at the end.

Occasionally he veered off the bluebeat trail into rock'n'roll with 'I Love The Life I Live', the jug band thump of 'The Belt And The Buckle', the bossa nova swish of 'Valerie' and the almost Hawaiian Bo Diddley riffing of 'Rubber Lover' — the subject matter of which seems to have been covered by everyone from The Police to Frank Zappa.

Between numbers Johnny chats in a strange, nervous way, as if talking to himself, which considering the response of the audience, he

Onwards' and another, increasingly important O.J. obsession.

C&W permeates Edwyn's songs in subtle ways, but asserts itself in dislocated, revitalised form for newer songs like 'The Day I Went Down To Texas', which can only be described as a honky tonk country-swing jazz hootenanny, and 'You Old Eccentric', featuring fantabulous guitarist James Kirk (real name) on completely inaudible vocals.

Edwyn says he wanted all the songs to be classics — the way bits of them tingle round your head for days, he may have pulled it off.

They continue with the delightful, wistful 'Felicity', a superb 'Intuition Told Me So' and both sides of the new single (of the year): 'Blue Boy'/'Lovesick', before being joined by Josef K's guitar hero Malcolm Ross for an Orange Juiced encore of 'Chance Meeting', Josef K's dreamy first single.

Orange Juice, and indeed everything connected with Postcard records, have such style, wit and inspiration that ailing record companies should be jostling at their door with cheque books.

Why aren't they?

Glenn Gibson

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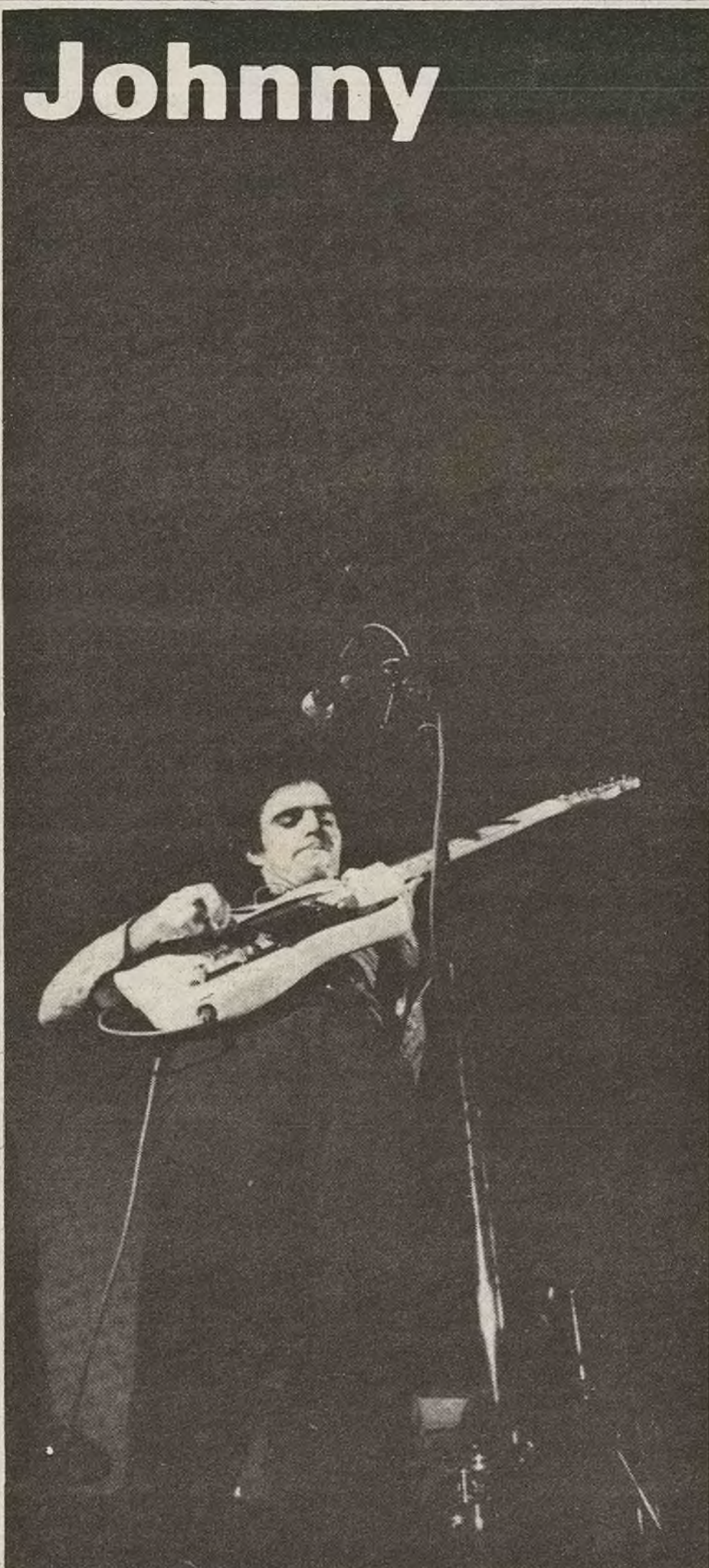
G-Up Johnny

might as well have been. There is a sly wit about him and his songs that appeals, though he sometimes appears too cool for his own good.

Quirky, singular music, it is typified by his latest single, 'Leave Me Alone (Blue Blue)', an object lesson in how to manhandle an old song into new clothes; in this case it's a revamped 'Blue Suede Shoes' and it concluded the set.

There was applause; there was bewilderment. I think he's interesting, and anyone who can sing the opening line to 'Suzy (Was A Girl From Greenford)' with a straight face must have something going for them: "There is a Greenford far away" . . .

Neil Norman



Pic Harry Papadopoulos

Minnie Pops

Manchester

THE FOLLOWING

conversation takes place in the Beach Club, Manchester, between two people in the audience, standing about 20ft from the front.

(Glum) Spotty Youth: I can't see a bloody thing 'ere.

His Good Looking Girlfriend: You'd think they'd 'ave a stage.

(Enter Minny Pops severally).

(Surprised) Spotty Youth: 'Ere luv, look at the size of 'im!

His Good Looking Girlfriend: Bleedin' 'ell, 'e don't need a stage!

This sweet, romantic pair are referring to Wally, Minny Pops' lead singer, whose height is maybe just a little extraordinary. He's a wiry, gangling figure approaching

Ram Jam Band

Marquee

ALL THAT was ever expected of the original Ram Jam Band was a well-drilled accompaniment over which Geno Washington could huff and puff his way through other artists' greatest hits. Things never quite descended into cabaret, though the occasional prawn cocktail stain was to be found on their satin shirts.

With guitarist Pete Gage in his former role as straw boss, the dilemma that besets the revived Ram Jammers is that they're still unsure of their function and keep putting the emphasis in the wrong places. With less than a dozen gigs chalked up, they've got to stop and decide whether it's a short-term beer and fags diversion or a serious endeavour.

If the latter, they've got to avoid becoming instantly type-cast. There may always be a transient audience for a live selection of Stax's Greatest Hits, but that very same crowd will move onto something else even faster than they picked up on the current, and far from realised, soul shuffle.

Now, not three months hence, is the time to re-structure and re-define, to refurbish their

seven feet tall. Sporting an ill-fitting plain dark suit with trouser legs and sleeves desperately short, an all-American-boy haircut and large, square-rimmed glasses, he looks like a caricatured Elvis Costello on stilts.

He is accompanied by a trio of seemingly under-nourished dwarfs who must be the proverbial Oxfam refugees; they're dressed in clothes that must have been salvaged from *Oliver*, or discovered in the attic of some decayed Victorian mansion, in the tea-chest marked 'Servants Clothes'.

You see, we British just don't realise how lucky we are, despite our so-called recession. Unfortunately Minny Pops come from Holland. They're over here for a while to record a single for kind and caring Factory Records, who'll probably look after them well enough. But then, I suppose, it'll be back to

a slavish existence of clog-dancing in the windmills of Old Amsterdam . . .

Minny Pops employ a bare economy of style that suggests a fascination for minimalism. Their songs are constructed around individual tiers of sound that are carefully layered onto an undulating beat of a steam drum rhythm machine. Weaving in and out of this web of sound are Wally's terse vocals which are sometimes dominating, but often purposefully intermingled, even to a degree of almost inaudibility, with the overall mesh of instrumentation.

The most interesting songs come near the end of the set. 'Goddess' features a rolling bass line that's as catchy as it is artlessly simple, and 'Dolphins' is a lively, rhythmic piece onto which stuttering, mono-syllabic vocals have been curiously but effectively

repertoire with even better originals than 'Stupidity' and '5-4-3-2' at the expense of the more predictable rabble-rousing standards.

Potentially, the eight instrumentalists are much too good to serve as an anonymous backdrop to Steve Hayes — their American vocalist — who attempts to come on hard and heavy like Southside Johnny only to run a poor second to Elwood of The Blues Brothers. I can't honestly recall if Hayes actually bellowed, "Sock-It-To-Me, Sock-It-To-Me" or fell to his knees with the ecstatic cry of "Good Gawd, Y'all," but in his attempt to perform what seemed like the complete works of the late Otis Redding, he came awfully close.

Aside from such embarrassing exhibitionism, The Ram Jam Band sell themselves exasperatingly short. In terms of both authenticity of sound and clout, they may (re)live their predecessors, but apart from trombonist Annie White and gutsy tenor saxist Raff 'Baker Street' Ravenscroft, the remainder of the Rammers seem content just to amuse themselves.

It's a case of a first-rate team displaying third-rate mentality.

Roy Carr

transposed. But many of the earlier songs are less immediate and perhaps less successful. Sudden bursts of distorted, screeching guitar or high pitched synthesized meanderings often destroy the fragile, swinging rhythms created by the bass and drum machine interplay.

Minimalists in sound and likewise in movement, they remain almost motionless throughout the entire set. Their feet seem to be firmly glued to the ground. They never smile, never communicate with us or each other between numbers. Occasionally one member, usually the bassist, attempts some half-second clockwork-clone jerk with his rigid limbs. Then all is still once more.

Minny Pops are interesting statues but alienating performers. There is no encore.

Mick Duffy

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NEXT WEEK IN NME

THE COUNTDOWN... on the final instalment of the harrowing NME Consumers' Guide to 1984.

THE LOWDOWN... on all that's hot (or should we say cool?) in the New York clubs and dives in a special despatch from Max Bell.

THE SHOWDOWN... between Costello, The Pretenders, Talking Heads and The B-52's at the most singular rock event of 1980, Toronto's Heatwave Festival.

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4. Sid and Nancy.	29. Gang of Four (logo).	54. The Akrylykz.
5. Johnny Rotten.	30. Gang of Four (photo).	55. Throbbing Gristle
6. The Clash	31. Delta Five.	56. Pere Ubu (modern dance)
7. Cash Pussies (99% is shit).	32. Devo (are we not men).	57. Fashion.
8. Public Image	33. The Cure (logo).	58. The Passions.
9. Cockney Rejects (photo).	34. The Cure (17 seconds).	59. David Bowie (low).
10. Cockney Rejects (ready to rock).	35. Patti Smith.	60. David Bowie (LP covers).
11. Ultravox (three into one).	36. B 52's.	61. Iggy Pop (metallic KO).
12. Ultravox (photo).	37. The Only Ones (rose).	62. Iggy Pop (stage pic).
13. Angelic Upstarts	38. The Only Ones (serpent).	63. Eno (Science).
14. The Damned.	39. The Only Ones.	64. Jov Division.
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19. Siouxsie leaning photo.	44. Magazine.	69. New York Dolls
20. Siouxsie stage photo.	45. Bill Nelson's Red Noise.	70. Johnny Thunders.
21. Adam Ant.	46. Tronics.	71. Lou Reed (transformer).
22. Toyah (logo).	47. Lonesome no more.	72. Lou Reed (st hassle).
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free four track EP (w/understand band!)	3.75
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Catapult Ventures - The Voice Of America	3.99
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Haze O'Connor - Breaking Glass ONLY	3.75
Ward - The Sound Of Madness (w/understand band!)	3.75
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Sofy Tey - The Sound Of Madness (Live Imp)	3.99
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Soxy - Ultrawave (New LP)	4.25
Vic Goddard & Subway Sack - What's The Matter Boy?	3.99
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X - Los Angeles (US Punk)	4.25
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The Negatives & More Superb Subcult Supplied	3.99
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The Minors - The Sound Of Madness In God?	3.99
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Jay Donovan - Unknown (New LP)	3.99
The Silts - Bootlegers: A Retrospective	only 2.99
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Human League - Travelogue	3.99
The Distractions - Nobody Perfect	3.99
Blague Babo - The Sound Of Madness	2.75

2010-01-01 2010-01-01 (excludes Scottish Bank) 116,111,111

Captain Beefheart	brood, highway to hell, high voltage	2.99
Tommy Bolin	Pretty Dirty Done	Clear Spot
Jackson Browne		Teaser
Saxon	The Pretender, Late For The Sky, For Everyman	Wrestle Of Steel
Ry Cooder	...Show Time, Ry Cooder's Chicken Salad + Lunch, Jazz, Into Purple Valley, Cocker Spaniel	Music, Bog Till You
Alice Cooper	Drop, Bombs + Steel	Drop, Bombs + Steel
Crosby Stills & Nash	Schools Out, Love's Life To Death, Killer, Billion Dollar Baby	Crosby Stills & Nash
Crosby Stills Nash & Young		...Data Via
MCS	Kick Out The Jams	Second Album
Chris Squire	Fish Out Of Water	Fish Out Of Water
Joni Mitchell	Hissing Of The Summer Lawn, Hejira, For The Roses, Court & Spark, Blue	For The Roses, Court & Spark, Blue
Montrose	GP, Grapevine	GP, Grapevine
Van Morrison	Moodsville, St Domincs Preview, Moodsville, Karal Weeks	Moodsville, Karal Weeks
Gram Parsons	Who By Numbers	Who By Numbers
Who	Modest, World	Modest, World
King Crimson	Wake Of Poseidon	Wake Of Poseidon
Jim Kwik	Here Come The Warm Jets	Here Come The Warm Jets
Rainbow	Long Live Rock N' Roll	Long Live Rock N' Roll
Rainbow	Rainbow Rising	Rainbow Rising
Rainbow	Blackmores Rainbow	Blackmores Rainbow
Various	801 Live	801 Live
Sinse & The Banshees	The Screamin	The Screamin
Pink Floyd	Dark Side Of The Moon	Dark Side Of The Moon
Pink Floyd	Meddle	Meddle
VARIOUS LP's		
Pink Floyd	The Wall	5.99
Urah Heep	...Wonderworld	1.99
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Clash	1st LP With Free Single	4.99
Dark Purple, Mark 2	Purple Singles (Purple Vinyl)	2.99
Anthony Phillips		2.99
Sides (With Free Copy Of Private Parts)		2.99
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The Grateful Dead	...Unlabeled	3.99
Stewie Wonder	Songs In The Key Of Life	1.99
Sammy Hagar	Danger Zone (With Poster)	2.99
Tini Lizzy	Johnny The Rock	1072.49
Black Sabbath	Sabbath Bloody Sabbath	2.49
Black Sabbath	...Paranoid	2.49
Black Sabbath	...Gnossens	2.49
Black Sabbath	...Black Sabbath	2.49
Black Sabbath	...Vol 4	2.49
Wings	London Town	1.99
Judy Pop	...Lust For Life	1.99

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2015 **Party** – Roxanne, Can't Stand Losing You, So Lonely,
 Walking On The Moon, Message In A Bottle (all in blue
 vinyl) (E1.05)
 2016 **Tom Petty** – Don't Do Me Like That + free T (E1.15)
 Jan + Start (E1.05)
 2017 **Dickies Gunglör** (yellow) (E1.05)
 Dead Kennedy's – Holiday in Cambodia (E1.05)
 2018 **Frankie & The Midnight** – The Midnight (E1.05)
 Charlie Harper – Barmy London Army (olive green)
 (E1.05)
 2019 **Mark & The Muffins** – About As Insnia (green) (E1.05)
 Clark Kent – Away From Home (USA, copy, green vinyl)
 (E1.05)
 2020 **Damned** – White Rabbit (E1.05)
 2021 **Stop** – 6 pack singles (E5.50 inc p&p)
 2022 **Stop** – Stop + Robbing + Pull + Call (E1.05)
 U.K. Subs – Teenager + 2 tracks (Pink) (E1.05)
 Jan + Going Underground + free single (E2.40)
 2023 **Franchise** – One For The Road (free single) (E1.15)
 2024 **Whitesnake** – Fool For Your Lovin' (luminous steel)
 (E1.05)
 2025 **Clark Kent** – Away From Home (green vinyl) (E1.05)
 Genesis – Dusschess (E1.05)
 2026 **Stargazer** – EP + 20th Century Modern, King Horse,
 Stand Up, Girl's Talk (E1.25)
 2027 **Woodward** – The Wood (all over dark colour poster) (E1.05)
 2028 **Buzzcocks** – I Believe (USA copy, great pic) (E1.05)
 Madness – Work Rest & Play (E1.05)
 2029 **Smugglers** – I'll Find You (cou, UK) (E1.05)
 U.K. Subs – Warhead/The Harper/Waiting For The Man
 (brown) (E1.05)
 2030 **Angie Upstart** – Out Of Control (E1.05)
 2031 **Sammy Hagar** – I've Done Everything For You (free on
 CD) (E1.25)
 2032 **Sex Pistols** – Fan Mail (poster sleeve) (trad) (E1.05)
 Joe Jackson – Is She Really Going Out With Him? (E1.05)
 2033 **John Peel** – The Hardcase (UK) (E1.05)
 U.F.O. – Youngblood (red) (E1.00)
 2034 **Sex Pistols** – Xmas Special (9p) (E1.05)
 2035 **999** – Found Out Too Late (9p)
 2036 **Sex Pistols** – Message In A Bottle/Landlord With Fold Out
 Cover (E1.05)
 2037 **Ian Dury** – Sweet Gene Vincent (E1.60)
 Blue Oyster Cult – Mirrors (clear) (E1.00)
 2038 **Sex Pistols** – Sex Pistols (UK) (E1.05)
 Generation X – Friday's Angels (Red) (9p)
 Ian Dury – Another Saturday Night (E1.25)
 Sex Pistols – Submission/New York (E1.05)
 Sex Pistols – Holidays In The Sun (E1.50)
 2039 **Sex Pistols** – Sex & Mad City (E1.05)
 Jan X – Valley of the Dolls (multi-coloured) (9p)
 2040 **Sex Pistols** – Little Fingers Nobody's Heroes/Ten Soldiers
 (E1.05)
 2041 **Stoouks & The Banishes** – Christina (E1.05)
 2042 **Stoouks & The Banishes** – Pulling The Strings (E1.05)
 2043 **Chapack Trip** 01 E.P. – Found all the Parts (with free
 single) (E2.99)
 2044 **Jan** – Breaking The Law (with free patch) (E1.05)
 Peter Gabriel – No Self Control (E1.05)
 2045 **Jan** – Dance (E1.05)
 2046 **Gary Numan** – Are Friends Electric/Down In The Park
 (E1.05)

Hugh Cornwall – White Room (65p)
 Jefferson Starship – Girl With The Hungry Eyes (65p)
 Cowsboys International! Nothing Doing (+ free flexi disc) (65p)
 Strangers – Schooldays (65p)
 Sham 69 – Questions & Answers (65p)
 Thin Lizzy – Waiting For An Alibi (65p)
 Pete Townshend – Rough Boys (65p)
 Merton Parkas – You Need Wheels (65p)

OLDIES

Jimi Hendrix – All Along The Watchtower (E.105)
 Sex Pistols – God Save The Queen (E.105)
 Bad Co. – Feel Like A Million 'Love (E.105)
 Dave Goodman – Justifiable Homicide (red) (E.105)
 Elvis Presley – American Traction (E.105)
 Pink Floyd – Money (E.105)
 Genesis – Spot The Pidgeon (pic) (E.105)
 Johnny Tiltonson – Poetry In Motion (Pic Disc) (E.105)
 Specials – Gangster (Pic) (E.150)
 Elvis Costello – Oliver's Army (Pic) (E.105)
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26 All try her in The Specials?
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1

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d-Bs Holsapple and Stamey. Pic Joe Stevens.

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dB's

New York

THE dB's are four of the most casual, unassuming figures ever to take a stage in the name of pop music.

Chris Stamey looks neat in his Brooks Brothers shirts, but you could never accuse him of dressing up for the gig. Peter Holsapple in jeans and oversized T-shirts looks like he just rolled out of bed, fumbled around for his guitar and stumbled onto the stage.

Their casualness extends to their style, and it can work either for or against them, depending on the occasion. Between them, Stamey and Holsapple have enough great songs for several bands. Holsapple's more directly catchy, the kind of simple hooks that were the staple of

the glory days of AM pop. Stamey favours a more complex structure, bending sounds as if slightly distorted by a mirror. But they both understand what makes a great melody.

A good dB's set is a relaxed stroll through those songs. They can convey a sense of intimacy, a common ground between audience and performer. A bad dB's set is when that casualness robs the music of a needed sense of dynamics; when they don't do enough, put enough into the songs to put them over.

Most dB's sets are a mixture of the two. Usually, the smaller the place they play the better the show. Tier 3 is a good place for the dB's, intimate enough to feel more like a basement party than a club. They start off sounding

strong and confident. 'I Feel Good Today' is a Stamey song that has him and Holsapple blending voices with terrific skill and ease. 'Bad Reputation' is Holsapple's, one of those addressed-to-a-girlfriend ditties that means nothing, but is so damn clever you find yourself singing the chorus for days.

Stamey and Holsapple are trading off each other's presence in ways that suggest they've just started to discover what they can do together. The voices are just beginning to blend easily, and it sounds great. They are starting to sneak in some rave-up guitar interplay — like Television but with a less abrasive edge. Will Rigby and Gene Holder are the right kind of rhythm section for this

music, strong but understated, never flashy.

But by midset problems begin to show. The stop-start construction of Stamey's 'I'm In Love' kept threatening to lose its way. Other songs needed something — more energy, more effort

something — to push them from great ideas into great listening. The dB's were holding back.

To give due credit, they showed off several new songs, proof that their songwriting zeal is not flagging. I missed 'Big Brown Eyes' though, my nomination for Silly Love Song Of The Year.

They are obviously pop historians who have studied their record collections carefully. But nothing they do sounds contrived, nothing

seems to be there for any reason other than that they like the way it sounds. The neo-psychedelic tag stuck on the end of 'Soul Kiss', for example, with its jangling guitars and quirky rhythm, has no relation to fashion. It's just part of their vocabulary.

They encored with Television's 'Venus', and being somewhat fanatical about Television myself, I first thought, Oh no, sacrilege. But they had won me by mid-song, just by making it obvious they were pleasing themselves no end.

This is a songwriter's band, and they have many great records in them. As for reaching a roomful of people, they're not bad. But hey guys, a little more elbow grease. We know you can do it.

Richard Grabel



Roosters/Strummer

■ From page 23

any more, so why should I? It's a very negative attitude to take, but one that's all too common. I don't know if those people who write in the press actually realise it, but if you're really down, then something in a paper can really finish you off. It can be the last nail in the coffin."

I very much doubt if anything like this could cloud Garrie Lammin's demeanour.

"It was only after Joe took charge that we discovered why we could never get things sounding right in the studio. We simply weren't going over the top. And that's why The Clash's records are all so strong." Strummer's theory is that any performance gets defused during the taping, the mixing and pressing, so by the time it's completed you're left with a lot less than anticipated.

"Go right over the top at the beginning," gushes Garrie,

"and it should come out sounding just right on record."

WITH THEIR first album in the can, The Little Roosters may be looking to the future with optimism. A seasoned campaigner like Strummer, though, is starting to display the scars of cynicism. He long ago came to terms with the fact that, early in their career, The Clash got themselves stitched up contractually.

"As far as business is concerned, I've given up trying to be idealistic."

Having almost paid their way out of any obligations to former manager Bernard Rhodes — no, neither Strummer nor Jones are doing solo LPs for Rhodes as a final settlement — the problems of being connected with a multi-national record company continually manifest themselves. To quote Strummer verbatim would result in enough libel actions to cause a paper shortage.

"Companies like CBS," he insists, "just back up the

whole argument in favour of hundreds of small independent labels. They are the music scene's only real salvation.

"Anyway, the idea of being signed to a company like CBS nowadays is insane and if events prove that we've gotta take a dive with CBS I don't really care because they deserve it."

"I myself feel conned and I want to broadcast the fact that groups just starting out should be aware of the legal con-men who are employed by all major record companies."

"We all had high ideals but they've all been well and truly trampled in the mud. I've still got the same basic values, it's just that I've now learned to temper them with a bit more realism."

In what way?

"I don't expect nothing from nobody... you see, everything we tried to do has come to nothing."

Isn't that over-dramatising the situation?

"No, because that's what I

honestly believe."

As far as Garrie Lammin is concerned, it all comes down to money.

"I reckon," he says, "the worst thing for any band is to get rich too quick and too early in their career."

Strummer wouldn't know about that. "Every group," he suggests, "should only be allowed to become so successful. Once they've reached a certain level, they've got to cash their chips in."

"Right," retorts Lammin, "all I know from what I've seen is that once you give any musician any more money than he needs to actually live on, it's all over."

True.

"Well," jokes Joe, "that's encouraging, because as you haven't got a deal nobody might wanna release this album we've just done. Could be you'll end up pressing just a thousand copies yourself and flogging 'em at your gigs!"

Ah, the glamour and the tinsel of it all!

GASBAG

The Imploding Technicolor Dream Bag



MAN I sure hope someone will turn up to do this film with me because without it, it might turn out that children could no longer construe the term civilisation and you know if that goes what terms will the kids on the street have to construe? Like I'm there man and I know.

The way I see it, it's all sort of like a Mickey Rooney meets John Wayne movie. Like all these guys are riding horses and there's this older guy with a great non-sexist haircut man in front on a white horse and he's like silhouetted against the sun on the top of a hill. Then all these guys ride down the hill and they're all wearing anoraks and they've all got beards except like I say this white-haired older guy in front who's taking a few tokes on a spliff and then they come across an old empty aircraft hangar and they ride in and get off their horses. And these guys just sorta relax you know, read their copies of *Time Out*, swap Nietzsche anecdotes, call for solidarity with Astrid Proll and stuff but there's like this uneasy air hanging over the place because like they feel unfulfilled you know man. But this older guy is looking around this old deserted place and in one of the corners under an old tarpaulin he finds a pile of Stratocasters and a PA and he shouts out: "Hey guys we can hold our really angry sound of protest which could strengthen that turn in opinion away from the established routines of politics right here!" And all the guys with beards and anoraks drop their Tarot cards and stand up and all say together: "What a great idea."

And so they do it and they have a concert and you know people of all ages come and listen, you know 10, 11, 12-year-olds, all ages, and they think it's great sort of back to the days at Warwick or '67 in Paris. And these guys all get on their horses and go out and find some buses to lay down in front of and there's this older guy and his horse lying down in front of a number 17 and all these guys with beards and the 10-year-olds are singing "We shall not be moved". And then Carly Simon comes along with this gigantic cucumber you know as a symbolic cruise missile and lays down and but that bit might have to go because I'm having a bit of trouble with the budget you know man. Well like you know things are a bit tight after buying the tarpaulin.

Anyway, what happens is that the USA and Russia and everyone junk all their missiles and stuff man you know like live happily ever after. I know that if I can sort of get the film off the ground it will be great man and it will run and run. So if you've got any ideas on casting or like bread to invest or spare green shield stamps or stuff get in touch with me man. *Ingmar Bergmanman, Yorks* Some of us here can't quite relate to where your head is at regarding this one. And, hey, stay away from the brown stuff, huh? — PR.

WELL, *NME* does it again. The champion of the oppressed and the representative of caring humanity has again bombarded us with articles about the holocaust, suppression of dissidents in Czechoslovakia, genocide of Indians in Chile and other causes.

Don't get me wrong — I'm not knocking your coverage of these subjects (even if I do find it hard to get worked up about whales). It just seems strange that you deal with all these things and then dismiss events here in Northern Ireland as something that shouldn't be dealt with.

With the notable exception of Graham Lock, *NME* writers

who regularly give off about violations of human rights (who hasn't heard of The Plastic People of Czechoslovakia?) tend to ignore the Irish situation. They complain about police harassment of minorities in England yet ignore the daily obscenities perpetrated by the so-called 'security forces' in the ghettos of Belfast and Derry. They ignore the total disregard for such concerns as justice or even decency that keep the Northern Ireland legal system going; the H-blocks of Long Kesh are the inevitable result of this system. Yet when someone like Joe Strummer wears an H-block T-shirt he is condemned as irresponsible.

Is this because, unlike many of *NME's* pet subjects, the British government doesn't like coverage of something so controversial?

If people in England were put through a legal system which involved torture, lengthy internment periods, no jury courts and judgement by men obviously sectarian and partisan, we'd hear enough about it in your pages. *NME* is always going on about 1984 and state control. We live in a place where the state knows the colour of the wallpaper in your front room and if you can't remember it you come under immediate suspicion. (Can you remember the colour of yours?)

It strikes me that your political hobby-horses are all safe ones that cause little worry to those in power. The 'Troubles' have gone on for 11 years now and, more urgently, the H-block question for nearly four years. You have made yourself political and therefore your failure to cover these issues is not quite the same as *Sounds'* or *MM's* failure — they don't care at all but you claim you do.

Ignoring Ireland won't make it go away. The 'problem' might be solved if more people in England gave a damn. Do you care? Or is *NME*

really full of ostriches? *D Tracey, Derry, Mumph. — PR.*

As a student, I don't think that members of the public should be allowed into gigs promoted on university premises by the Students Union. My experience has shown that, if there is any trouble, it usually starts in this section of the audience, which invariably knows least about the music being played. So I cannot see any justification for allowing them entry and perhaps preventing a fully paid-up Union member from attending. *Jonathan Hicks, Nuthall, Notts.*

This is a genuine letter. — PR.

Thanks for making a stand and not reporting the 'Victoria & Albert' of rock — Knebworth — and that celebration of Culloden, Loch Lomond. *NME* readers don't give a toss about these boredom conventions where yesterday's heroes entertain time-warped freaks.

I really enjoyed your feature on that rising star Mick Jagger and didn't miss those has-been festival reports at all. I wish the Bowling Gnomes all the best and feel sure that they will have a Top Twenty record some day. Watch out The Blues Band, Stiff Little Fingers and The Jam!

Gary Longden, Bedford. Too cute by half. — PR.

Malcolm McLaren had some good ideas about 13-14 year-olds cheering themselves up, e.g. gold dust in their hair, roller skates, looking rich, etc. He mentioned them going African and getting interested in minerals. So-o-o, they should adorn themselves with African minerals — bright blue Azurite, gold/brown Tiger's eye, green/white Verdite and of course drink African mineral water.

The same day as I read this article there was a telly prog showing kids happily doing gym surrounded by tower blocks. That's the attitude, kids!

Miss Ingmind (teacher), Oxford.

P.S. Let's have more optimism in *NME*.

Why bother? No good would ever come of it. — PR. Yes it would — A passing optimist.

Dear Danny Baker, After reading several of your most entertaining and understandable(?) articles, I know that I can trust you as you seem to be — well — a beautiful person, with a bubbling charm, a fantastic character and an out-of-this-world personality. So now I ask you, as a friend (as I feel you are), to do me one small favour.

I have studied your behaviour and would find it hard to believe that you would let me down, even though to you I am a complete and utter stranger. Could you please buy Glenn Tilbrook a birthday drink on my behalf and I'll pay you when I'm next in your area. Money is no object — in fact, have one yourself. I'm not usually so generous but I am trying to mould myself on the perfect human... you. Gracious thanks. *A. Crawler, Belfast.* You'll be surprised to hear that Danny wasn't always so perfect. He used to be conceited. — PR.

Dear Mr Spencer, I find it ridiculous, even depressing, that you can justify the inclusion of *Garageland* in *NME*. You are in fact reinforcing the myth that there are 'real' bands, with big record company finance behind them, to be taken seriously, and 'Garage' bands, whose many and varied activities can be summed up in a paltry little feature that no one will probably read anyway. Classifying bands according to the amount of capital behind them. Christ, how elitist can you get.

True, a lot of bands operating through independent labels are by nature esoteric, with a very limited potential audience, but others (such as The Pits) have a wide audience in mind, but are denied a chance to put across information except in some tosspot column you may as well rename "losers and little people's column." You're as bad as *Melody Maker*.

Steve Hunt, Sandbach, Cheshire.

In fact we're so corrupt that in last week's ish we didn't even bother to print your news about a band with a recent number one single and major-label backing. Alright, so it was only Splodgenessetc. But you forget that separating the items in *Garageland* will actually serve to draw attention, though whether people read it or not is out of our hands. If anything, we're discriminating against 'real' bands. — PR.

Dear Mr Morley, I have listened to the 'Dirty Looks' album countless times and seen them play three times in London and America. I happen to enjoy the music they play and the way they play it, not because I work for Stiff Records, but because they're good, very good.

To you I may be old, and you may find the policies of this company despicable, but we work here because we enjoy it and believe in bands like 'Any Trouble' and 'Dirty Looks'.

If you think your review is going to make us give up and go home, you're wrong. Personally I couldn't give a fuck 'Dirty Looks' will be here in the autumn and a lot of people are going to enjoy them; not because we hype them, not because we bribe people, and not because we give away free tickets or albums.

Your Editor said at the *NME* Awards this year that few record companies understand the trauma or effort that bands go through putting out records and playing shows; that few record companies put in the effort that their artists deserve. I spend most of my waking hours working for Stiff, most of us do, comments like yours that mention age or ignorance are felt to be irrelevant.

Undaunted, we shall press on: because we enjoy what we do, because our artists deserve it and, most important of all, because most of the people who buy Stiff records enjoy it.

You can be assured, Mr Morley, that you are most definitely off the Stiff Records Press Office mailing list.

Nigel Dick, Stiff Records Press Office.

Paul Morley is currently at home wondering how he will ever be able to show his face in public again. — PR.

In view of the recent bombardment of nuclear weapon articles/interviews, are we to interpret the acronym *NME* as 'Nuclear Musical Express'? *Trident Maddaford, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.* Boom boom! — PR.



Designed by Caramel Crunch (third from right)
Edited by Paul Rambali (still in bed)

T-ZERS

"Oh Bondage, Up Yours" — Poly Styrene

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6	(4) Crass — Fight War Not Wars.....	20p
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Taking the 'performing animal' theory of rock to its logical conclusion, Samson's drummer played his stint at the Reading Fest encaged. And we thought Samson pulled down the pillars of the temple.

Pic: Peter Anderson.

come from north o' the border funsters **Simple Minds**...

Late flash: **Talking Heads** are now a 10-piece funk band and they're "really good." We take no responsibility for this information whatsoever...

And nor for this: according to the *New York Times*, the new Cher combo **Black Rose** (featuring **Les Dudek**) bear a more than passing resemblance to **Chrissie Hynde** and her **Pretenders**...

You're not impressed, huh? Well get this: the **Jim Morrison** biography *No-one Gets Out Of Here Alive* has just become number one bestselling paperback in the US of A, the very first time that any paperback of this name about any former singer with **The Doors** has ever

reached this exalted position...

STOP US if you've heard this one before: **Malcolm McLaren**'s newest charges in record company office trashing scandal horror shock outrage. **Bow Wow Wow**, for it was in fact they, celebrated their brief honeymoon with EMI (self-styled "Greatest recording organisation in the world") by storming an office of said concern and wreaking untold havoc. Untold, that is, by EMI who are remaining a mite tight-lipped about the incident. Whereas the Glitterbest people gleefully inform us that damage done included the time-honoured gold records out the managing director's window job. Absolutely, hee hee, disgraceful, ho ho...

And more exciting still, a revival-cum-reincarnation-cum-deja-vu rumour has it that **Paul Weller** is at present undertaking a course of sitar playing lessons in preparation for the next phase of **The Jam**'s career.

(So what's wrong with using Bangladeshi bus-conductors then, eh?) A gig in Abbey Road has been rejected but anyone in the vicinity of *NME*'s rooftop next week can expect a pretty historical impromptu session...

On a more serious note (DOINNGG!!! Thank you.) **Matumbi** trumpet player **Patrick Tinyue** was seriously injured last week when the van he was driving collided with a lorry. Patrick is now off the danger list, thankfully, but it's expected to be at least six months before he can return to work once more...

But who, you're probably wondering at this very moment, are the latest contributors to **John Lennon**'s recording stints at New York's Record Plant? Funny you should ask because we just happen to know the answer. Why, 'tis none other than **Cheap Trick** — who are, as we know, signed to Epic, the self-same record company for whom the Lennon person is rumoured to be signing himself! Pretty damned uncanny, what? And furthermore, the Trick's forthcoming album was recorded on an island in the Caribbean (an ocean) at a recording studio owned by, yes you guessed it, **George Martin**. We rest our case, whatever it is...

"Here is one man who is an Island", quipped the ever-hilarious *Daily Mail*, revealing that glamorous Island Records supremo **Chris Blackwell** ("Old Harrovian music millionaire" no less) has no plans to marry international socialite **Nathalie Delon**. Now there's a coincidence, neither have we...

Chris has doubtless got more important stuff on his mind, like Island's scheduled October release of the first LP in three years by someone called **John Martyn**, and another one from **Steve Winwood**...

By public demand, the return of the **John Lennon T-Zer**. Seems that the forthcoming record will feature two songs by **Yoko Ono**, one of them in French. And that, according to the aforesaid Ms Ono, Herr Lennon has been living "like **Howard Hughes**"...

Word has it in New York, not that we believe anything < that those people say, that **The Plasmatics** were not altogether taken aback by the recent GLC decision to ban their London show. Word has it, in fact, that they knew about it all along....

"Guess that's it till next week."



LET'S START with a serious star. You don't want to hear about where **Mick Jagger** buys lace curtains, croissants, chap sticks or cricket accessories...

What you really want to know is that our old friend and his, **Bruce Springsteen**, finally releases his new album in Britain on October 3, just one week after US distribution. And that featuring 22 tracks in all, the double elpee comes in a **Clash**-style single sleeve, under the good ol' CBS banner. And that its title is 'The River'. And that (you can't tell we're reading this, can you?) little news has escaped as to the precise identities of the musicians involved in Bruce's present musical preoccupations, the only clue to have emerged being a memo from CBS New York to CBS London urging that all names be kept confidential owing to the "sensitive nature of the project" (c'mon, how d'you hurt the feelings of a *project*, f'Chrissakes?)...

Or else you want to know all about (yes you do) the latest doings of our other, not-quite-so-old friend **Jim Wobble**. Well the news is that there aren't any — doings, that is — on account of how our hero has forsaken the ego-sodden and inexorably trivial Rock Worlde, at least for the time being, and is e'en now considering his station in life, his potential, his self, and his short wave radios, whilst operating a mini-cab in downtown Wapping. Wob is reportedly all mouth and hotspurs over some obscure Tottenham football team's jammy start to the season. *T-Zers* will need a car outside the Jonah And Whale, Surrey Docks, at approximately midnight Saturday, big tip possible...

On the other hand, what you almost certainly don't want to know about, but are going to be told anyway, is that the famous but non-legendary **Peter Noone** (that's **Herman**, of ye olde **And The Herberts**, young'uns) has recently resurfaced in a group named **The Tremblers**. Their debut album (once again, available exclusively on CBS Records and Tapes) will include a version of **Elvis Costello**'s 'Green Shirt'. So there...

And still on the revival, er, front, **The Chipmunks**' 'punk' album enters the Billboard chart at number 47. And that, fact fans, means 300,000 sold and rising!...

BACK TO reality, whatever that is, we pause to take note of the news that this year's Notting Hill Carnival passed off as policeably — sorry, that should read as peaceably — as you please, with arrests to a minimum and good vibes more or less the order of the day...

Which is more, very much more, than can be said of the same weekend's historically horrible Reading Festival (sic) at which no less than 160 luckless punters had their dandruffed denim collars felt on a variety of charges, most popular by far being possession of dope...

Moving right along, and digging back into the seamy past, *T-Zers* hears of the imminent arrival of a four and a half year old sex film — now translated on to video — starring talented thespian,

chanteuse and all-purpose personality **Hazel O'Connor**. Rumours to the effect that that her next film project is a co-starring role with **Roger Daltrey** in a disaster movie called *Chappaquidick* featuring an "explicit underwater romp sequence" are best regarded as the foul fabrication of a heinous body of liars bent on halting the sweet young lady's career before it stretches any thinner...

More cinematic revelations: **Peter Gabriel** to don hairpiece in £3,000 remake of *Oceans Eleven*, directed by **Spielberg** and starring **Billy Carter** as The Goatfather...

Ha ha. Believe that and you'll believe this: upcoming sci-fi movie *Deathwatch*, directed by **Bertrand Tavernier** and starring **Romy Schneider**, **Harvey Kietel** and **Max Von Sydow**, was shot on location (as we film critics say) in Glasgow! Note to Sassenachs: Glasgow is a city in Scotland and is hardly AlphaVille. Moreover, soundtrack contributions

ROBERT PALMER

HIS NEW ALBUM

Club

