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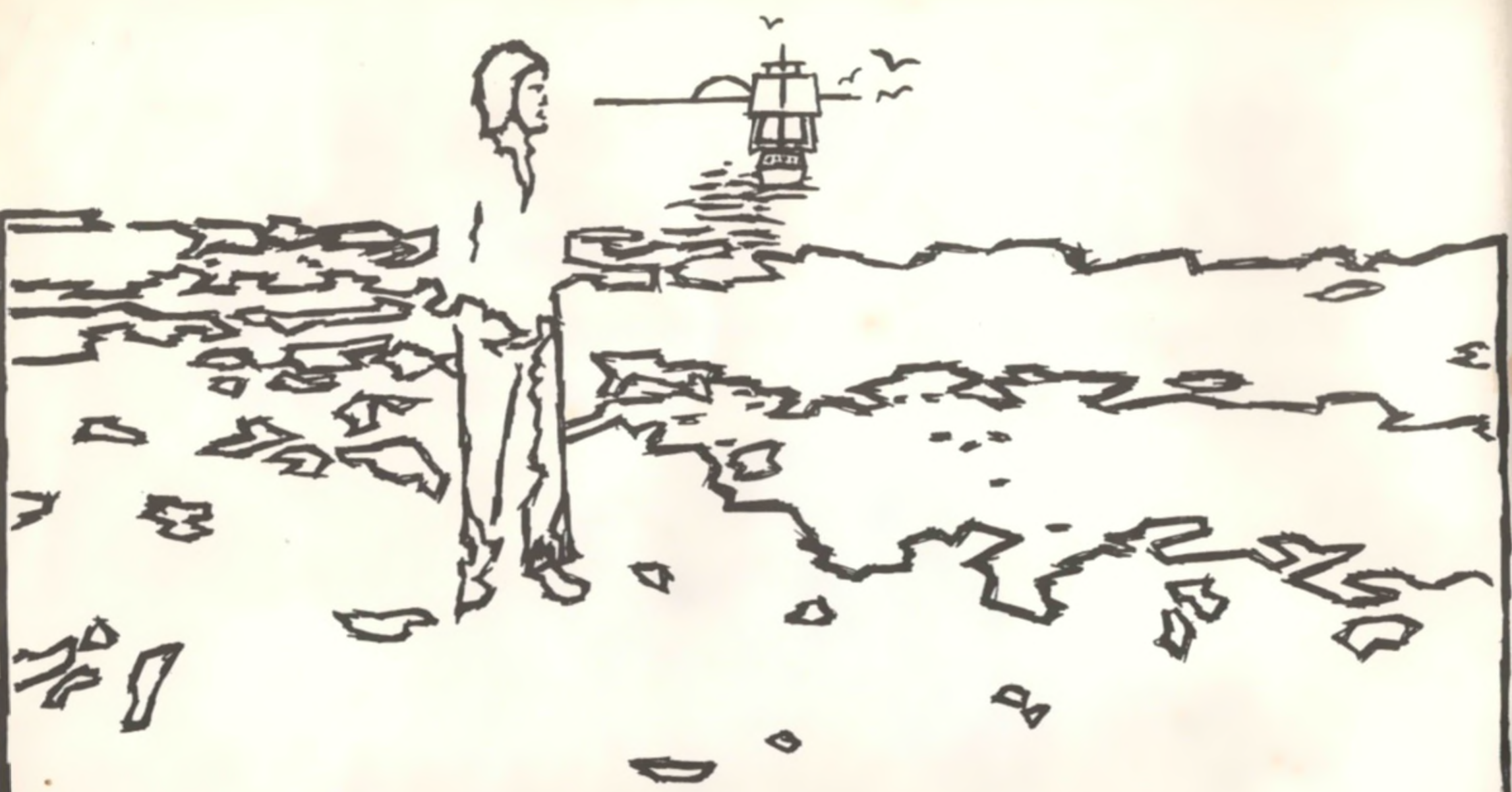
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THE ROCK MAGAZINE



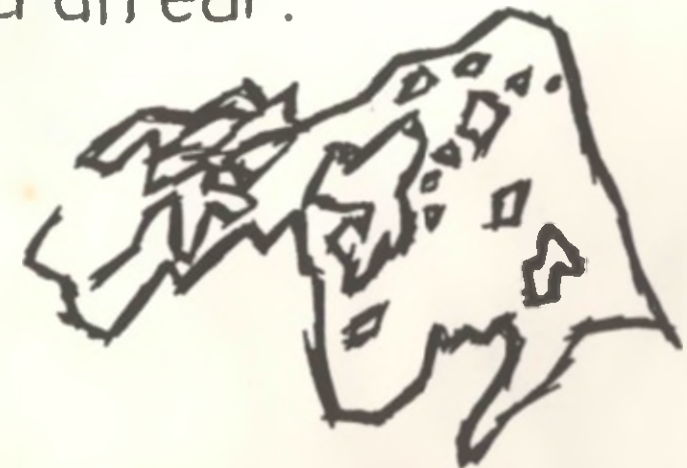


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ZIGZAG

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No 4 August 1969

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HOW BIZARRE
IS SLEAZEBAG

Talking with Arthur, Edgar, & Steve about the EDGAR BROUGHTON BAND

If this interview lacks a degree of fluency in places, it is due to vicious editing of the taped discussion, which lasted several hours.

Z: Apart from essential establishment tie-ups, like record company etc, I reckon you are the underground band in the real sense of the word. Yeah?

E: Well, this is how I see it; you've got a band, say like East Of Eden, who I really like, and they are an underground band because people that relate to, and identify with, the underground and believe that they are a part of it, like their music. But we're coming out of the underground to the other people. You know, there are bands that play for the underground, but we go out and tell people "Look, there are people that know, that care, and want you to be as free as they are"... free - meaning free thinking, free from hang-ups.

We're almost like a news sheet, a broadsheet, for the underground... not for them, but almost by them. We are a product of the people, a mirror of the people, which couples up with the 'message' of this and the last few weeks; "You've got the power!" we realised it at Hyde Park, so we said it. Power to do whatever you want to do - to make money, or throw money out.

Z: But often it's the case that they only have the physical power - other ideas are so limited by law.

E: As soon as you think in terms of Establishment, which is legal power, you've had it. Regardless of all that they still have the power - they made it and they can take it away if they want. I mean if they choose not to, because they disagree, then that's cool. We don't vote, and I'm sure you don't, but we don't advocate not voting. We just say, "What an interesting position if no-one voted". A few people who haven't thought about it before will say, "That is interesting"... it's food for thought rather than orders for the day. This is why we're different I think. A lot of people have said "OK, this is the message - get it together. Kick out the Jams" - but that's not really our scene. Ours is more of a community songsong - and although we do all of the singing, they are into it, they really participate.

Underground, in its literal sense, because of what it consists of - whether it's a press medium, or a music medium, or just one voice speaking - has got a purpose, which is subverting what's above, and that's what we want to do.

Z: In fact, most of these people who bandy the word don't realise that it has this subversive meaning - it's just a label - some twat'll bring out "underground soap" soon.

E: Yes, that's it...

S: A lot of people have put us down for going with EMI... How can you be underground with the biggest recording organisation in the world? But we go with EMI because we feel we can get to more people.

E: But EMI are on our list, and it's rather ironic...

S: Yeah, like if we sell as many records as they would like us to, and if we sell as many as we want to, eventually we're going to turn people on to burning EMI down...

E: By then, of course, the Head Revolution will have taken place, and EMI will be not what they could be, not what they should be, but what they really are... but without the hang-ups. Like EMI is like us, but with hang-ups.

Z: But Harvest aren't putting any pressures on you - dictating your direction - are they?

E: Oh no, credit to them... Harvest are on the fence and EMI are both sides of the fence, and they can pull it one way or the other...

S: but they only gave Malcolm Jones a free hand because they knew they could make bread - they don't really know what goes out. I'm quite sure that most of them don't know what our stuff's all about.

Z: Do you feel that this revolution is succeeding?

E: Oh yes, I think so... because, like Harvest is a product of the revolution, I.T. only exists... it may on one issue profess to be the revolution, because it is so sick of the apathy, and fair play to it. But these kind of things only exist... I mean, the revolution is always people and people buy a thing because it's their voice. It's certainly working.

Z: A lot of your lyrics are, for want of a better word, message...

E: It's comment, social comment.

Z: Yeah, if not direct, they are advisory. Do you think that people are going to catch them. Like a lot of your songs really bombard the senses to the extent that the music carrying the lyric, evokes other emotions than the desire to listen to the words.



S: I disagree with your word advisory, because that's not really what it is. The music is just the vehicle - something they can associate with. Like this "Greyday" thing we do - it starts off with a Canned Heat riff, you know - 'On the road again', and people get into that... bopping along... and then it suddenly stops and they listen. But we don't actually tell people "Now look here, you ought to be doing this", we just put the idea there and let them think about it. And we are getting a lot of feedback now, that people are thinking about it and trying to do things.

E: Yeah, "Greyday" is about a business man that gets killed. We don't say go out, get your guns & shoot. If anything is the message, it's at the end; it's the old story... evil is evil, he who lives by the sword dies by it - it's his own fault. I mean Krupps, he was lucky - but if he'd been killed, he'd have been "Greyday".

Z: But a number like "Dropout Boogie" is really a sound trip than comment.

S: Yeah, we do that because we enjoy playing it, but basically our whole act on stage is built around things like "Greyday". It's a build up... if they groove with the band, they're much more likely to listen to the words.

E: Yes, "Dropout Boogie" is, as you say, a musical thing, or rather, a sound thing... and we got a sound thing from it. When I heard the Captain do it, I felt there was something in there but I didn't know what - I wasn't into what he was saying, but

thought it was a terrific vehicle... you know, to throw something out on that riff, and in actual fact, when we do a gig, that song is the diary of the day of the band. And it's amazing how people read things into it - which is good in a way. I mean, people come up to us and say, "Oh, too much, man. I got this from it", which is great, because it means that they want to have something going on inside their heads.

Z: When you decided to come down to London eight months ago, you were very fortunate to tie up with Blackhill.

E: Yes. Whereas most bands think of their management as just being there to get them work and do all the other little things as well, and as an expendable thing, which I suppose any agency is to a group up to a point, we can't ever visualise working with anyone else. I mean, technically, they are employed by us, but we never think of it that way, and neither that we are employed by them. I just can't see any other agency being as much a part of the group as Blackhill is a part of The Edgar Broughton Band.

Z: I saw in some article that you were vehemently opposed to obscenity. What was all that about?

E: This is very weird. The guy that asked me that question, this was over the phone as well, he said,

"How do you feel about the current wave of obscenity?"

Z: Oh, he forced the question...it looked as though you had raised it.

E: Yeah, and what I actually said was; "I don't know what you're talking about, but obscenity - and I don't know what that means - where it occurs in the way I think you mean, is...well if anything is purely for its own sake, no matter what it is, it must be bad. You know, it's an obvious thing. Full stop." And then he went on about it, so I said, "OK then, I'll say this; where anybody uses anything at all to help whatever he's doing, and if it's valid, OK. We are totally opposed to any sort of censorship. And the painter, musician, film maker, whatever, should have the freedom to present his finished product as he wishes"...that's what I said, and the interview made it look as though I was condemning obscenity. S: And following from that...did you see that letter in Mailbag a couple of weeks ago? It said, "I read the article on Edgar Broughton last week (a different article), and I wonder if any of your reporters were at the Camden Fringe Festival. The act was full of 4 letter words. Does he have to be vulgar to be revolutionary?" Which was really stupid - but it was a good letter, because it made people laugh.

Z: Yeah well, about 90% of the people who write to Mailbag are of a 'Talkback' mentality.

E & S: We wrote a letter ourselves actually - about this guy Mark Lindsay from Paul Revere and the Raiders. He said in 'Blind date' about "Electric Citizen" (the B side of our single); "I really love blues - I dig it". That was blues! "But it should be spontaneous." Then he said, "Judging by the tape hiss at the beginning, I would think that the voice is overdubbed and it was recorded in a very small studio." So we wrote back saying that the whole thing was totally spontaneous, recorded in 15 minutes, there was no overdubbing on the vocals whatsoever, the tape hiss was from a fuzz box which was audible before the track started, and the studio - No 2 at EMI - was probably one of the biggest in the country. And they printed it with the heading 'prejudice' - which was good, because we didn't suggest the title - they just construed it as prejudice, which it obviously was. But he knocked everything - he had all that space, and filled it with garbage - he finished up saying "I'm sorry I didn't like anything you played me", you know, I'm sorry you couldn't provide anything of a high enough standard for me. I feel sorry for the guy really because, let's face it, if you're going to be cynical, they are one of the biggest bubble gum bands that ever hit the market.

Z: Do you feel the lower age limit of your audience stretching down...I mean the extremes must have widened with all the publicity - what sort of audience are you attracting now?

S: Well, we did this thing at All Saints in Notting Hill Gate the other week, and they made it pretty obvious that they had gone off us - because we had

brought a single out...and that's not done. We get this feeling, I don't know...

E: no one's actually said it to us, but we sense this atmosphere that people would have preferred us not to bring out the single...because we were "letting the side down, man." Singles are always a commercial scene to them...so narrow sighted.

Z: Yes, it's strange how even those that presume themselves to be ultimately hip, are bound by convention.

S: Yes, in the Gate, they are the Establishment - they've created the Establishment.

E: It's a pity they feel like that, but "maybe the LP will show that we're not on a bread scene". You know, that's what they want us to say, so I've said it...and it doesn't mean anything really, does it?



Interview conducted by Pete Frame.
Photographs: Front cover and page
5 by Rod Yallop. Page 6 by Ian Mann.



The Ten Cent Life of Fred Neil

by Ian Mann

Fred Neil's name has been buzzing around quietly over here for some time now, but few people have yet managed to attach much identity to it. It is not really surprising, as even in the States, where he has a considerable following, he's rather hard to find. Journalists commissioned to interview him, usually miss their press deadlines, or rush in a last minute piece about the fun they had looking for him and how all the friends of his they've met reckon he's a really good cat.

It seems, in fact, that at last we have a genuine introvert who just wants to be unbothered and untroubled in his daily life. Not the classic type who likes to appear on as many front pages as possible, shouting, "I hate publicity". On his penultimate LP 'Fred Neil' there is a phrase among the credits saying: "Fred Neil, courtesy Mrs Fred Neil". More than a mere indication that the sleeve note writer is part of the US matriarchal society, it is the truth, disguised as a compact quip, that Fred Neil prefers family life in his native Coconut Grove, Florida, to the instant bonhomie hosed about in the haunts of the professional, too available 'publicity shunners'.

To get back to his name. Until John Fred and his lot produced "Judy in disguise", Fred was not a name seen much in the round world of record labels, but with Fred Neil's voice, you don't need a name like Ethelred Hucklepink. The memorable voice gives ample motive for remembering a forgettable name.

Unfortunately, of the four albums bearing his name, only one has been issued in this country, al-

though the others are available on import. It was released in 1965 in US, and in 1968 in Britain, when Clive Selwood of Elektra was delighted at finding it in his files. The title, 'Bleecker and MacDougal', refers to a Greenwich Village street corner which has felt the footprints of John Sebastian, Tom Paxton, Dave Van Ronk, Bob Dylan and many others. It's a part of New York where Fred used to be a frequent caller, and where his singing quietly influenced those around him. On this album, Felix Pappalardi - late Cream producer - and Sebastian are among the sidesmen, and you can be sure that had there been more room in the studio, a lot more big names would have been there just for the pleasure of being present.

The Bleecker/MacDougal district was once considered to be the centre of big city folk revival, and it was. Now, the people who made up that scene have split in their separate musical directions, and the LP remains as a memento to that fruitful period which included a rich mixture of folk, blues, lightly disguised rock and a lot of unclassified musical and verbal trends - many of them represented here. Instantly recognisable is the Neil composition "Other Side Of This Life", a song which has been recorded by the Lovin' Spoonful, Jefferson Airplane and the Youngbloods, but here it is done slower and with more emphasis on the words and the thoughts behind them. Whereas so many of the folksy songs of that period now, after only a few years, seem blushing naive, "Other side" is still relevant to any city trapped individual, bum or ballpoint pen pusher. The

tencentness of city life - which must be even rougher than a ten newpenny life - is a dominant theme in Neil's song-reflected attitudes. It also accounts for the fact that he is so elusive when sought in concrete contexts.

God knows how it's possible for a bloke to have a voice which, without much noticeable change, is absolutely appropriate for every mood, rhythm and backing - but that's the way it is. It's a mahogany voice, deep and warm, or deep and sad; sometimes deep and happy, but always deep, very real and immediate; impossible to ignore, it goes down and down as if searching for something below the surface. It's almost true to say that on one level 'the medium is the message'. Neil's voice is so pleasant that it is often completely satisfactory to sit and listen to it without any attention to the statement of the song - and for many, this is a traditional (and often appropriate) listening habit, engendered by so many rock lyrics intentionally clichéd to focus the attention on the voice as a musical instrument rather than a word-bubble former. Neil exploits this well in several songs with frequent repetition of a euphonious phrase or the use of a chorus of sounds rather than words (In "Badi-da" for instance).

On the other hand, one aspect of his voice irks a little. I often feel that his melodies suffer because he is unable to resist the plunge to a low note, often at a musically inappropriate juncture, to put his voice through it's paces. A bit like a girl I knew who loved steering the conversation towards the fact that the buttons of her blouse kept flying off. I was only too aware of those melodic mammaries without verbal reminders. Similarly, Fred's over frequent low register descents often seem a bit superfluous. Still, breasts are very nice.

But there is a lot more to be appreciated than the voice. Fred is introspective in many of his songs, but somehow he manages to make them widely applicable, concerned not only with what is going

on in the sphere of his own life. No man is an islet. In the "Dolphins", he says

"This world may never change the way it's been
and all the ways of war can't change it back again,
& I've been searching for the dolphins in the sea..."
- a simple statement of the futility of war, and the dolphin as the symbol of peace, but he adds

"Sometimes I wonder, do you ever think of me?"
He involves his self vision with his world vision and avoids the triteness of the 'anti' singers who for so long have been saying "The world's in a mess, but everything will be alright when I have a stable bank account in Zurich".

Most of his songs are in the first person, though by no means in a self-obsessive way; sometimes almost apologetically. In 'Wild child in a world of trouble' he sings

"There's been a world of trouble way before I
came here..."

There'll be a world of trouble after I'm gone." Here, the first person becomes no more than a point of time reference, a quiet but involved bystander.

In the title track of 'Bleecker & MacDougall', he sings about the desire to be back in Coconut Grove. He is ever torn between his city life, where he became the influence that he is (you've probably heard his songs sung by Nilsson, Spanky & our gang, the Spoonful, etc), and the country life with it's sailing boats and dolphins - the life which enables him to see the world in its own undistorted perspective. It's good that the city side of his life dominates at times, because that's how his four splendid albums came into existence.

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------------|
| 1964 | 'Tear Down the Walls' | US Elektra EKS 7248 |
| 1965 | 'Bleecker & MacDougall' (released here in '68 on Elektra EKS 7293) | |
| 1966 | 'Fred Neil' (Get this one first if possible, it's the best) | US Capitol 2665 |
| 1967 | 'Sessions' | US Capitol ST 2862. |

Another sadly ignored record is the fine Jackie Lomax album, where he is accompanied by gentlemen with names like Clapton, Harrison, Hopkins, McCartney, Starkey, Voorman and Knechtal (remember the early days of Duane Eddy?). Sour Milk Sea is just a total gas.

Good records to dig throughout August are the new Murray Roman, Ram John Holder's 'Black London Blues', and an LP called 'Stink' by a Canadian group called the McKenna Mendelson Mainline.

Saturday July 5th 1969 - what a day for anyone who believes in the goodness and beauty of music. The resplendent dignity of the Stones in Hyde Park followed by the 'Last night of the Proms' at the Albert Hall - not a stone's throw away. There we had the grease stimulating Chuck Berry - one of the original Stones' inspirations - still great... & then the Who. I'd like to have seen any other group extract the tumultuous applause they did, out of such a full-drapes/bootlace audience. What a tremendous group the Who is.

Photograph on page 33, of Roger Daltrey at the Albert Hall, was taken by Graham Hughes.

JOTTINGS FROM JOHN

Three exceptionally fine bands - Steve Miller, Mother Earth and Quicksilver Messenger Service - can be found on the sound track album from the film 'Revolution' (which is never likely to be shown around the country). The record, which has loads of good sounds including the Quicksilver version of the Buffy Sainte Marie song 'Codeline', has been out for nearly a year. Seems to have been forgotten, or unnoticed, so have a listen before they delete it - its on United Artists SULP 1226.

UA have also released an oldie but goodie LP - 'The Sue Story', which has a lot of old classics & a few bum tracks.

Interesting to see that Clive Palmer, who is slouching around on the cover of the Incredible's first (and many claim best) album, is now a member of the Famous Jug Band, who's first LP is just out.

Delaney & Bonnie are undoubtedly known to all appreciators of good sounds, but few people seem to be actually purchasing the record. Very strange.



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"TROUT MASK REPLICA"??? THE CAPTAIN **MUST** BE MAD!

by Dick Lawson

IT'S THE BLIMP, IT'S THE BLIMP...

And how. Beefheart is the blimp. The Captain is unique. No band in the world could manage what he and his magic men achieve. They tear and slash at the guts of their music, ripping its lungs out, grinding and crushing the bones, then pull it all together in a couple of bars. Their songs - both lyrics and rhythms - destroy the tired-out bullshit conventions of every contemporary musical field. Saxs jag in and out among rasping guitars, the drumming is what 'heavy' used to mean, and Beefheart hasn't managed a drink or a screw since he climbed out of the Imperial Valley after his diet of turtle-come, radishes and acid. That's how he sounds... itching to get at someone or something... and he gets rougher with every cut. The real value of the music is its texture, its depth, and the subtlety of reaction between rhythms and melodies - harsh as they may seem.

When Beefheart hit England in spring 68, the hip press (prodged by Peel) immediately seized a new underground music hero. Yet, in retrospect, it was largely because Don Van Vliet was the freakiest cat in the country for those few weeks. Musically, the band wasn't that far out. No put down. It was only his presence and that grinding voice that did it. Then 'Strictly Personal' followed and everyone nodded quietly. Yes, 'Safe as milk' was nice, but this shows where it's at. And now 'Trout Mask Replica' - the same Beefheart, but a new mind behind the lyrics; a new band; Zappa producing - whose groin (not to mention pocket) is this one going to hit?

Zappa warned that Beefheart's English followers would be shocked by the new double set (see ZZ 3), but despite the changes in line-up/record company/producer there aren't that many shocks. The basic progress this has made over his last record is that it has clarified Beefheart's musical position (and not just by printing out the lyrics). It's an album that he and Zappa are pleased with. The Captain now knows where he's at. The progress made may mean rougher vocals and more crashing, raping instrumental work, but the roughness is tempered by beautiful, stoned, surrealistic lyrics... groups of hallucinatory alliteration and repetition. Similarly, the crazy patterns weaved on guitar hold together - somehow - the cross rhythmic sax playing. This is the major shock of the album... the extended use of sax - with Beefheart dropping mouth harp and strich for soprano and tenor. This makes the Magic Band nearer to the Mothers than before, and strains of Coltrane, Taylor and Ayler are heard again.

HAIR PIES

Edgar Varese is possibly the most influential music freak of the 20th century. Someone wrote of him; "While his harmony is often very unusual, it is the total sound of his music that at any one moment claims the attention. The sound is the result of carefully planned and powerfully imagined dispositions of sonorities, every note must be in the right place, and that is to say, in the right place in the right instrument." Sounds like Zappa conducting the Mothers onstage, or producing Beefheart (he breaks in on one track to mumble "Uh shit, how did that harmony get in there?").

The Varese thing does apply to 'Trout Mask'. The total sound is similar to 'Strictly Personal' - a sharp sympathy between the bass line and the solid drum patterns, and the waving slicing guitar balanced by Van Vliet's cement mixer voice. But the make-up is different - 5 of the 28 tracks are either instrumental or unaccompanied songs, snatches of narration (thanks to Rockette Morton), two tracked or simultaneously played saxes, and a greater flexibility in the production - at least one track recorded in a field. The old band's idea shows through on numbers like "Moonlight on Vermont" and the beginning of "Ella Guru" - generally on those tracks where sax isn't used, where the guitar is played on the cross current to carve up the lyric melody and the solid, crunching 'rhythm section'.

On the instrumental tracks - "Hair pie, bakes 1 & 2" and "Dall's car" - the new depth and freedom speaks for Zappa's influence. The guitars still slice over tight, multi structured rhythms... Zoot Horn Rollo (on glass finger guitar) and Antennae Jimmy Semens (on steel appendage guitar) wind up to some incredible mesmeric harmonies - presumably they were accidental - while they move in and out searching for a musical identity with the constantly changing background of the bass and percussion. Then the sax piles in, following the rhythm at first, then slashing them down like a machete through the jungle. The Cap plays good and relaxed. Not great in terms of tenor sax players, but it sure extends the range of the band... and when he uses bass clarinet - Jesus - it may just be me, but that's a mother of an instrument.

It's the density of the music, not the total sound. And the density is complex; sequences change freely with perfect control, and new patterns are constantly introduced, as if the band is consciously fighting against domination by the Captain's vocals. (No credits for a drummer... could it be Frank Zap-



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pa in a last ditch attempt to get his cruddy drumming played on the radio?). It's fast and bulbous, and surprisingly tight - theme, variations, theme is the progress of every tune - not experimental, but often free form, forced by the drums towards a musical identity, an identity which each track finds. The total album sound is unbalanced - there's no single impression. Yet each track clarifies Beefheart's multifaceted musical position.

TITS TITS

OK. So the music stretches with wild hard violence, searching always for simultaneous ecstasy with the lyrics. Always changing, expanding, and finding that ecstasy...and the process seems harsh, but for the lyrics, which are soft, gentle word-trips with associations from rural blues and folk -

"Moonlight on Vermont affected everybody
Even Mrs Wotten well as little Nitty
Even lifebouy floatin'
With his little pistol showin'
with his little pistol totin'
Well that goes to show what uh moon can do"
or harder, disorientated image-groups -
"Lucid tentacles test'n sleeved
'n joined 'n jointed jade pointed
Diamond back patterns
Neon meate dream of a octafish."

The range is vast, and the impression is of a breathless leaping from Guthrie/Dylan tenderness to a verbal Dali, juxtaposing the unreal with the real. This is where the Captain's self-effacing freaky humour shows itself (and all that crap). Some of it's just so funny...like "The Blimp" which is basically an hysterical voice screaming "It's the blimp" over a distorted PA system. You can feel the vast portentous shape shadowing the sky -
"Tits tits the blimp the blimp
The mother ship The mother ship".

Compare that with "Dachau Blues" (which Jerry Rubin reckoned would have been a great song if a human had done it), where he writes about "those poor Jews...still cryin' 'bout the burnin' back in World War Two". Beefheart's voice may make a strained evil sound, but the songs he writes have a weird gentle sadness to them.

Somehow they show a bizarre feeling for humanity. Most of the songs are like love - poems for mankind, and often individuals - Ella Guru, Pena, Big Joan and Lousey - which really isn't the world's present impression of the Captain's sentiments. It's almost impossible though, to write in detail about the lyrics without reference to the musical structures which hold them, and which they soothe, except in the unaccompanied tracks like "Orange Claw Hammer". The tune here is reminiscent of 'North Country Blues', and lines like "the air breaks with filthy chatter" bring to mind "the sky cracked its cheeks in naked wonder". The association doesn't really end there. Dylan would sympathise with Beefheart's 'nature-and-love-trips', but the Captain is faster and more bulbous (and he's got his band). But this is it. In straightening out his music, he's found some kind of religion. It may be in hair pies (yes!) or in Frownland, but mainly it's people, children and country men and women. And this is a new delight for Beefheart - a rough outdoor hum-



No. You're all wrong. This is NOT Sir Francis Chichester discussing routes for his next circumnavigation. This is a genuine location-posed photograph of Captain Beefheart & his Magic Band. In the foreground is the half-human ANTENNAE JIMMY SEMENS (steel-appendage guitar (?)), and standing around looking suitably attentive are (left to right) ZOOT HORN ROLLO (glass finger guitar and flute), the CAPTAIN himself - wearing the coat Gracie Fields gave him at his last Middle Earth appearance, the clean-cut all-American boy - THE MASCARA SNAKE (bass clarinet), and former exploding boot mechanic ROCKETTE MORTON (bass & narration).

anity blended with humour and a rich verbal vomit of imagery.

F.Z. & D.K.

Technically the album belongs to Frank Zappa, the producer, and Dick Kunc, the engineer - the same team which did 'Uncle Meat'. If that was a great double set, this is possibly better - The Mothers used 'Uncle Meat' to extend the reach of their many musical facets over four sides; Beefheart

uses 'Trout Mask' to dig out the real roots of his sound - and in so doing, opens up the most original mind and vocal chords in contemporary music. Zappa gets it down perfectly; he's the absolute catalyst for a guy so freaked and so positive. It's a beautiful set; not a weak spot anywhere.

Varese himself wrote, "I do not write experimental music. My experimenting is done before I make the music. Afterwards it is the listener who must experiment". Try this with 'Trout Mask Replica'. Do anything and everything to it. Experiment. It's the sound of farmyard hard-on.

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ROD YALLOP

photographer

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Some people are confused by their music, some relate it to the manifestation of strange occult forces, but most just groove to it, unaware of any religious or mystical connotations. Glen Sweeney, their drummer, talks about the inception, development and music of

THE THIRD EAR BAND

I was kind of outcast, first from the straight jazz scene, then from the free jazz scene, because wherever I played I found this set of rules you must obey - even on the free jazz scene. I found that if you tried to play 8 bars of straight rhythm, they all pointed to the door and you were out, and I finally sussed that even the idea of free had become a kind of fixed idea. So I gave up music altogether for a while and just became what was popularly known at the time as a beatnik.

It wasn't until I met Dave Tomlin that I found a kind of like-spirit - somebody else who had sussed out what I had - and he got a group called the Sun Trolley together at UFO, which was a tremendously fertile place for ideas. And together, Dave and I and various other guys who sat in with us, we tried everything, and it was during that time that I got the germ of the idea for what is now the Third Ear Band. Dave got busted, and at that time I was really interested in eating - you know, staying alive - and there was this sort of free jazz group passing through UFO at the time, so I immediately leapt aboard. The group, the Hydrogen Jukebox, was run by one of those mad tenor players, you know, who had an incredible Black Power ego thing, and he eventually wound up accusing about 5000 people at the Roundhouse of having killed Coltrane - and I think that's where the Jukebox collapsed.

The prototype Third Ear was electric, and we were doing what we called 'electric acid raga' - which was terribly pretentious, and in fact was the most diabolical thing you ever heard in your life. This cat on guitar, he had the most powerful amp, and he was on acid about nearly every day in the end, and you just couldn't stop him playing, until he eventually flipped.

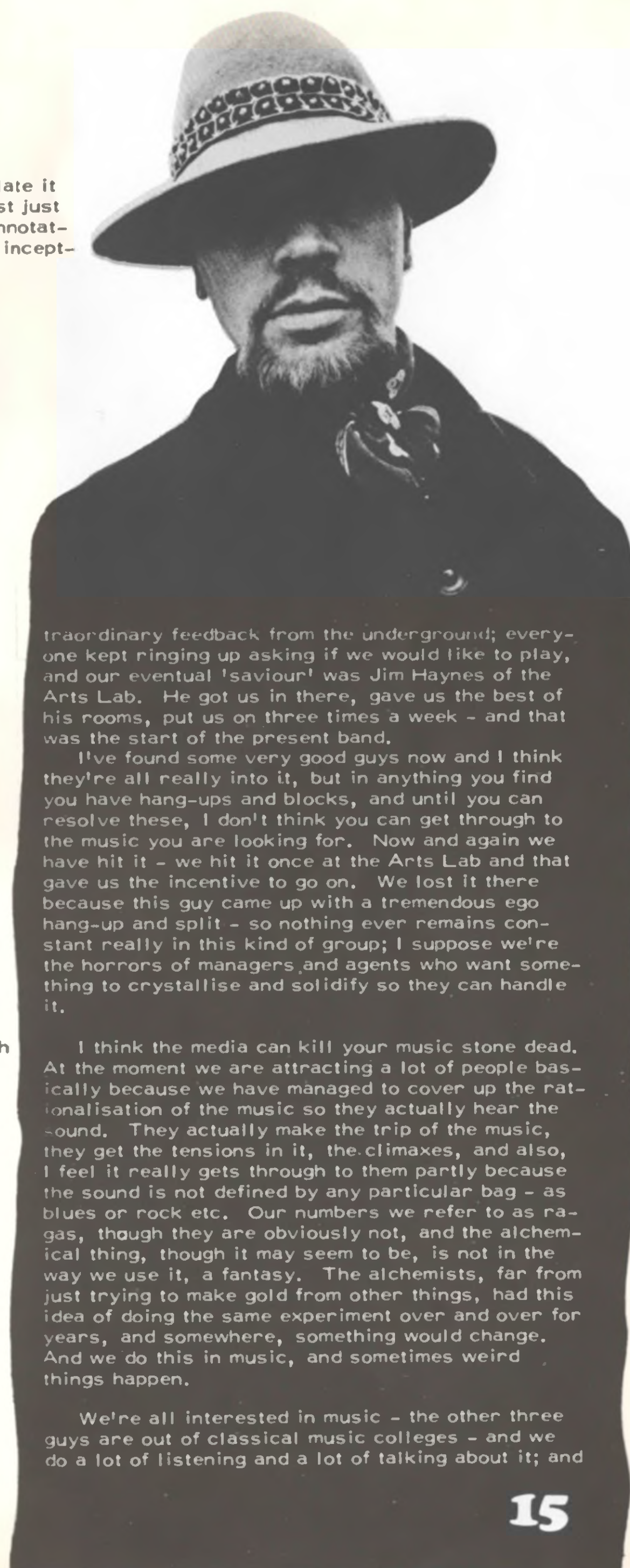
After that, most of our equipment was stolen, and we found ourselves with just oboe, violin and hand drums - and we were really depressed, we thought it was the end really. But we had such ex-

traordinary feedback from the underground; everyone kept ringing up asking if we would like to play, and our eventual 'saviour' was Jim Haynes of the Arts Lab. He got us in there, gave us the best of his rooms, put us on three times a week - and that was the start of the present band.

I've found some very good guys now and I think they're all really into it, but in anything you find you have hang-ups and blocks, and until you can resolve these, I don't think you can get through to the music you are looking for. Now and again we have hit it - we hit it once at the Arts Lab and that gave us the incentive to go on. We lost it there because this guy came up with a tremendous ego hang-up and split - so nothing ever remains constant really in this kind of group; I suppose we're the horrors of managers and agents who want something to crystallise and solidify so they can handle it.

I think the media can kill your music stone dead. At the moment we are attracting a lot of people basically because we have managed to cover up the rationalisation of the music so they actually hear the sound. They actually make the trip of the music, they get the tensions in it, the climaxes, and also, I feel it really gets through to them partly because the sound is not defined by any particular bag - as blues or rock etc. Our numbers we refer to as raga, though they are obviously not, and the alchemical thing, though it may seem to be, is not in the way we use it, a fantasy. The alchemists, far from just trying to make gold from other things, had this idea of doing the same experiment over and over for years, and somewhere, something would change. And we do this in music, and sometimes weird things happen.

We're all interested in music - the other three guys are out of classical music colleges - and we do a lot of listening and a lot of talking about it; and





left to right: Paul Minns (oboe), Glen Sweeney (hand drums), Richard Koss (violin).

we've got a basic theory that music, or sound or whatever you like to call it, came a long time before musical notation...and working along that theory we found that Western notation is a kind of symbolism which has been evolved in order to kind of measure the music. It's a very authoritarian sort of thing really because it's all around the idea that one guy can write it down so that other guys will be able to play it more or less exactly as he wrote it. So we did a lot of research into music which is way back before the time of that kind of notation, and this led us into what they call the magic area - and we found that in those times, the music was viewed from a more cosmopolitan point of view; you got the seven notes, which were related to the seven planets, or the twelve thing which was related to the zodiac. And this is why the Third Ear Band is still out there. Because all of us are into research - and some of the stuff we try out is based on these principles; like the thing we do called "Druid". And I don't say all of us, but three of us firmly believe that with music you can do a lot more than just titillate peoples' feelings...like in some of those books there are mind blowing theories - like that music actually built the Great Pyramid...things like that.

Our musical structures came by accident really,

and by sheer necessity, because we had set tunes with the original Third Ear, but the guy who wrote them was the one on acid, and he ended up in a nut-house. That left the three of us and none had any real idea in that direction, and we found ourselves in the Arts Lab without a tune between us virtually. But Jim said not to worry, just get in there and see what happens. And that was what we did...I suppose that if you listen to enough music, it's inside you somewhere - and the sheer necessity of the situation produced it, and what came out was what we call structures. We still use, and improvise on, these structures; sometimes we play them almost the same - it depends how each member is feeling. If you're feeling beat, you tend to repeat more or less what you played on the last trip...but if you're feeling really good and something new crops up, you put it in, and everybody changes their thing to fit.

We are now getting into a very strange scene regarding audiences. We're beginning to attract teenyboppers, for Christ's sake, and at the last thing we did at Norwich we had, I suppose, about 8 very thick mods - real hardnuts - and they were digging it like mad...one of them stripped off. So I don't know how big the audience is really.



We could have used a brown paper bag for a cover and it would still be one of the best Island albums ever produced.





SAN FRANCISCO

by Alan Lord

During the last three years, the rock bands of San Francisco, California, have produced a vast amount of brilliant, original, and exciting music. Much has been written about the obviously successful groups, but many have never had their music heard outside the city. A great number of very interesting albums have never been made available in this country, and even some of those which have been released have got lost in the rush.

This is an attempt to list, with comments and observations where possible, the bands that during this three years, have lived and worked in the Bay area.

The very early days of the San Francisco rock boom found several groups forming the main nucleus. They were the Warlocks (now the Grateful Dead), the Charlatans, The Mystery Trend, The Great Society, and The Daily Flash. Two of these bands are still together, and, though the line-ups have changed during the years, the music of the Dead and the Charlatans is still entirely indigenous.

During 1966, the commercial possibilities of the "San Francisco Sound" hadn't reached as far as the record companies, but several local groups had landed contracts as 'pop groups' with sound hit potential. At this stage, geographic location was not a factor in the show-biz hype.

The first 'top ten' record from a San Francisco based group came during late 1966. The group, the Sopwith Camel, though originating in the Bay area, were not strictly speaking an S.F. band in the same sense as the Dead or the Charlatans, as they spent considerable time on the East coast recording for Erik Jacobson of Sweet Reliable Productions (released through Kama Sutra). The hit (Hello Hello/Treadin' - KA 217) made the top ten in the States, but was to be their last success. Their follow-up, 'Postcard from Jamaica' ('Hello Hello' sideways) crept into the Top 100 solely on the strength of the previous hit. The Camel did leave behind a fairly interesting album (Kama Sutra 8060) which included their two finest recordings, 'Frantic Desolation' & 'Cellophane Woman'.

By the end of 1966, the first album by Jefferson Airplane was made available in the USA (Jefferson Airplane Takes Off - RCA Victor 3584). The album suffered on several counts - not least, the production by Matthew Katz, a notorious Bay area promoter and then manager of the group, and Tommy Oliver, a producer more used to working with the likes of the 4 Freshmen and Johnny Mann Singers - but despite the problems, enough music came through to give the indication of how important the group was to be. Later during the year, the Airplane managed to shake off Mr Katz - something which Moby Grape couldn't achieve until it was almost too late.

The rock scene in S.F. grew through the last half of 1966 with the dances at Bill Graham's Fill-

more Auditorium, Family Dog's Avalon Ballroom, and smaller clubs like the Matrix and the Straight Theatre. During this time, one of the most popular groups was the Charlatans - a group which for many "started it all".

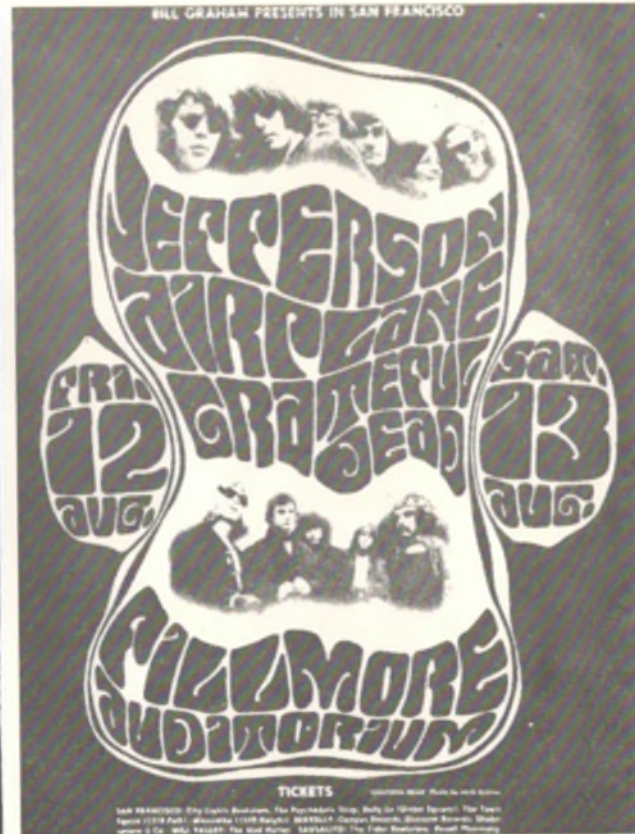


The final acknowledgement that the music had arrived as a commercial possibility was made in the Billboard of May 6th, 1967, which included a special supplement called "America's Turned-on City".

At the time of the Billboard feature, (a significant event) the second Airplane album had just come out (Surrealistic Pillow - LSP 3766) and was to become a very important album. Almost immediately after its release it found its way into the Top Five of the US album charts, something that no previous "underground" album had managed to do. Much of the success of this record could be attributed to the chart activity of the group's previous two singles; "My Best Friend" which made the Top 100, and the song Grace Slick brought with her from the Great Society, "Somebody to Love", which made the top 5.



Early 1967 photographs of PIGPEN - organist in the Grateful Dead (photo by Fred Roth), JANIS JOPLIN and JAMES GURLEY - vocalist and lead guitarist in Big Brother & The Holding Company... and a poster advertising a dance at Bill Graham's Fillmore Auditorium.



The great commercial success of Surrealistic Pillow brought a sudden eruption of albums from record companies who had managed to sign a Bay area group. Columbia issued the first album by Moby Grape (CS 9498), accompanied by an enormous promotion campaign - including the simultaneous release of five singles taken from the album. The album, which was very fine indeed, consequently arrived on the charts and acted as a spur for other companies to take part in the San Francisco crusade.

From Warner/Reprise came the Grateful Dead album (Warner Bros 1689), an album which somewhat disappointed the many people who were eagerly awaiting its release. But, true to form, this did make the charts, along with the first offering from Country Joe & the Fish (Electric Music for the mind and body - VSD 79244), and the first Frisco onslaught was complete.

During the early part of 1967, Toby Anderson - the lead singer of the Airplane - was replaced by Grace Slick, who had been with a lesser known local group - The Great Society. They made only one studio recording; Somebody to love/Free advice, on the defunct Autumn label (now available on Vault LP 119), but last year some five tapes, recorded at the Matrix club, were sold to Columbia, who released them on two albums. The quality of these albums was very poor, but the music is of great interest in the light of Jefferson Airplane's great success. (Conspicuous only in its absence - CS 9624, How It Was CS 9702).

By the summer of 1967, the "San Francisco Sound" had become an accepted part of the record industry hype, and all the companies had either got one of the Bay area bands under contract, or had signed Los Angeles groups which were purported to have come from San Francisco.

The first album by Big Brother & the Holding Company was released in mid 67 on the independent New York Mainstream label, and was almost a tragic record - all 22 minutes of it. Nothing was right with recording or performance, and it made reports of the group being the most exciting of all, very hard to believe.

In 1967 the most important bands in the area were The Grateful Dead, The Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother & the Holding Company, The Charlatans, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Oxford Circle, The Other Half, Country Joe & the Fish, The Miller Blues Band (later Steve Miller Band), Everpresent Fullness, The Mystery Trend, and The Sons of Champlin, and the sudden upsurge of talent was now starting to attract A&R men and scouts from all the major companies. The Dead were already with the Warner Bros label, Big Brother signed to a small company called Mainstream, Quicksilver and Steve Miller went to Capitol, Country Joe was already on Vanguard, the Other Half signed with Acta (a sub division of Dot), The Mystery Trend and The Sons of Champlin went to the locally based Trident Productions, owned by Frank Werver who teased the

finished tapes to Verve. The Everpresent Fullness and Oxford Circle disappeared.

The only record made by The Mystery Trend, who's singer John Gregory was a founder of Sea Train, was a single Johnny was a good boy/ House on the hill - Verve VK10499.

The Charlatans describe their music as "Cowboy Rock" or "Gold Rush Rock", and live and dress in an atmosphere of wild west Victoriana, resplendent in straw hats, cowboy boots, etcetera. Their signing with MGM proved to be most unsuccessful; label changes within the Corporation caused havoc, and they ended up on Kama Sutra with Erik Jacobsen producing. Shortly after this came a complete breakdown, and they were released from the contract. (Their first album has however, just been released on the US Philips label).

During and after mid 1967 many new groups grew up within the S.F. area, and many more moved in from the East, Texas, and to a lesser extent, the Mid-West. From Texas came Mother Earth - featuring ex-Butterfield Band member Mark Naftalin, & a fine girl singer Tracey Nelson (who had previously recorded a rare Prestige album with Charley Musselwhite), and the Sir Douglas Quintet. Texas was already an important influence on San Francisco as the homestate of Steve Miller of the Steve Miller Band, Janis Joplin - then of Big Brother, and more recently for two bands who have not yet recorded - the Conqueroo, and Chiva's Head Band.

Towards the end of 1967 and early in 1968, more releases by local bands had been thrust upon the record buyers. ABC issued the first album by Salvation, a very much under rated group who were previously locally known as The New Salvation Army Banned. Columbia released the disastrous Wow album by Moby Grape, which had just about every gimmick in the book going for it - including a give-away album called Grape Jam (a sort of fore-runner of Supersession) and a track which required playing at 78rpm. The standard of the album came nowhere near their earlier release.

Blue Cheer made their recorded appearance on Vincebus Eruptum, released on Philips in early 68. The album confirmed reports of a group with bass, guitar and drums, and a mountain of Marshall amps being the loudest band of all - and despite all the criticism thrown at them for being unmusical, they proceeded to be very successful and, for the most part, very enjoyable.

This then has been an attempt to document some of the San Francisco rock scene from mid 1966. In part two, I will endeavour to go into more detail.

Perhaps the best way to finish would be to list some of the bands which have left only a name for us to conjure with. RIP Blue Crumb Truck, CIA, Congress of Wonders, Electric Train, Everpresent Fullness, Freedom Highway, Flying Circus, Factory, Harbinger Complex, Haymarket Riot, Justice League, Immediate Family, Junior Peaches, Liberty Street, Living Children, Living Impulse, Motor, Phoenix, Nimitz Freeway, New Delhi River, The Only Alternative & his other Possibilities, Oxford Circle, Pacifist Choir, Purple Earthquake, Surrealistic Game Co, Soul Purpose, Trans Atlantic Train, Tow Away Zone, Tears, Tiny Hearing Aid, Wildflower, Yellow Brick Road, US Mail, and my two favourites - William Penn & his Pals, and Walter Wart and the Pickledish. That's a lot of music.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITOR AND OTHERS from 'Midnight Court' disc jockey Andy Dunkley.

Dear Zigzag Wanderer,

Methinks one of your wanderings wandered a bit off course.

Since your 'come back Middle Earth' comment (& so say all of us; very heartily) obviously referred to the Midnight Court at the Lyceum, as the d-j at this venue, I thought a reply would not be a miss.

Let it be said, first of all, that I dig playing at the Lyceum. It is, at present, the largest venue available for me to play the sounds that I (and you) like and believe in. That's what I'm in discjockeying for. So, obviously, the larger the audience, the more it appeals to me.

This is not to say that I necessarily like the atmosphere... but have you stopped to think why the atmosphere is like it is; why there is a necessity for bouncers? Monsieur Stable hit the nail very succinctly on the head in the same issue as your comment... the answer is, of course, drugs.

The very first night the Midnight Court opened, the pushers turned up in droves. Not only that, the smoking was blatantly obvious amongst the audience. Now, these are the things that closed the Earth. It is totally selfish to take drugs onto club premises, particularly those of the nature of Middle Earth, Midnight Court etc. The Establishment doesn't want these clubs and the easiest way they have to close them is to charge the owners with "allowing their premises to be used for the consumption of illegal drugs". By all means smoke at home or outside, but for God's sake don't take drugs into clubs.

Peter Smith, the Lyceum's manager, really enjoys the music - he wants it to succeed just like you or me. But he also has to run the Lyceum on other nights, and if the venue is closed, it will be closed TOTALLY - have no fear of that. Therefore he has to keep the place clean; it seems almost certain to me that he has been leaned on heavily by certain parties not a stones-throw from Scotland Yard.

A further point... "making a fortune out of the underground" (Ugh, that word). Sure people are making money out of the Midnight Court - let's not be naïve about this. So are the groups that have to go to America to make enough money. With the system as it is, it's ludicrous not to expect profits to be made. Even Middle Earth attempted to do this. Apart from the gain aspect, how else can one expect a venue to expand?

The Court is an experiment. If it works, Mecca may open other such venues up and down the country. At present there are few large venues in the British Isles - that is why all our best groups disappear to the States. The Mecca circuit could be the answer to the draining away of the life blood of England's music.

If you feel the atmosphere at the Lyceum is oppressive - the answer lies in your hands. Do something about it... don't smoke at the Midnight Court... don't carry drugs... and don't just stand there moaning about the atmosphere. It's up to you to liven it up!

Help the venue stay open... we ALL need it.



PAUL WHITEHEAD

HIGH TIDE

by
ALAN
LORD

In September, amongst a mass of albums released by British record companies will be an album by a group called High Tide. Title - "Sea Shanties".

September is always a big month for record companies, with many of the big labels saving their best and strongest product for the month when both record buyers and record dealers have returned from their sunshine package holidays. So, due to the magic of market research and the fact that it won't be finished until then, High Tide's recording debut is set for September.

High Tide consists of Tony Hill (guitar, vocals, ex-Misunderstood and still misunderstood), Peter Pavli (bass), Simon House (violin), and Roger Hadden (drums). Also, non-playing members Wayne Bardell (manager & "getting it together"), Denver Gerrard (producer), and various friends who have been almost a part of the group from its inception.

The basic sound of High Tide developed at odd weekend hours at Apple Studios in Savile Row, using either borrowed or makeshift equipment. The frustrations of being without bread or any equipment to speak of, is a problem which has faced and broken many a new group, but amazingly High Tide kept going... and, even more amazingly, were writing & arranging some incredibly powerful music.

Soon, enough was ready to take into a studio, so hiring and borrowing the necessary equipment, High Tide took some time at Morgan Studios to put their sound on a demo tape. The finished result was such that one American label wanted to release it as it stood. The next development for the group was the signing of a recording contract with Liberty/LA Records which a) solved the problems over lack of equipment, b) gave them important rehearsal time in the company's small basement studio, and c) gave

them a deal in which they could choose their producer and get a chance to veto art work, advertising and so on.

The next step was to get the whole show in front of some humans. Hampstead's Country Club supplied the necessary humans, who turned out to be suitably impressed with a group who were making their first public appearance. Having survived this ordeal, the band was now ready, and during the following weeks completed their first album and, as a special bonus for Liberty, half their second one as well.

High Tide's material is all original and mostly written by Tony Hill. The first album is representative of the group as it is now, and is in many ways a testament of the group's struggle to get it all together over the last few months. The material can be put into two categories, as in fact can all their songs - namely, the 'arranged' numbers, which have a definite though complex form (eg "Walking Down Their Outlook"), and the improvised (eg "Missing Out") numbers which start with a basic song to act as a leaping off point.

Seeing or hearing the group for the first time, you become acutely aware of the blending of guitar and violin. Unlike most bands which employ violin, High Tide features the instrument on every number and by doing so, does not fall foul of the usual situation where the bass player simulates a Roland Kirk routine while swopping instruments mid-stream - thereby letting the bottom drop out of the band's sound.

High Tide



White Trash

"The real thing? There is no real thing Maya... It's all show business",.....William Burroughs.

White Trash come from Glasgow, and a few months ago they traded the despair and violence of the Gorbals for the violence and despair of Ladbroke Grove. The move was inevitable.

On their last trip to Amsterdam, White Trash drew standing ovations in the celebrated hashish parlours of the Fantasio and Paradisio ballrooms, from audiences more accustomed to reclining than standing.

A month ago, Marsha Hunt was in need of a band to showcase her vocal chords - she was engulfed in an avalanche of bookings, but no musicians in sight. ...when suddenly over the horizon, someone suggested White Trash, so Black Beauty asked them if they reckoned backing her, but not being a backing group. So, on the road they are - with White Trash doing their own 35 minute spot and getting half the bread. The entire package is a frenzied, well constructed 75 minutes of schizophrenia.

Their future with Marsha is informal and variable;

both contingents are capable of pursuing their own careers independently...but so far...splendid.

On Paul McCartney's suggestion, they are about to record an album for Apple - the label which released 'Road to nowhere'...which sold 50,000 and wasn't a hit anywhere due to ill timing rather than musical content.

Their repertoire is a pastiche of rock and blues, fitted to their own arrangements - and actually, that's what White Trash are about; they're the new wave arrangers of rock 'n' roll; eclectic as opposed to original, but not to say uncreative.

All five members of the White Trash Gang (listen to 'Born in the Gorbals') have been playing in groups since they were thirteen, and a lifetime spent in learning their craft in tacky Scottish groups has taken its toll (look at them). But when you hear them

...

Ian Clews - vocalist
Fraser Watson - guitar virtuoso
Ronald Leahy - keyboard
Colin Hunter Morrison - bass
Timi Donald - drums.

Dominic
Severese



Bent Frame

Three months ago, when the Who were at the Top of the Pops studio, Roger Daltrey was approached by a young man - Jack McCulloch - who asked him to listen to some tapes he had made with a group which had no manager, no record company, and no name.

Roger listened to the tapes and was so impressed that he became the group's manager, signed them to Track Records, and invented a name - Bent Frame.

As the Who were about to start an American tour, Roger installed them at his cottage in Berkshire, & told them to rehearse and rehearse and write new material - so that on his return, they could go into the studio. This they did.

When the Who returned, Jack McCulloch joined Thunderclap Newman - who needed a drummer - &

one of the Who's roadies, Tony Haslam, who had previously played with a group called Fusion, took over on drums.

At the moment Bent Frame are at IBC in Portland Place (where the Who and Thunderclap record) producing their first single - "Accidents", written by Speedy Keene. If Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey are both satisfied with the result, it will be released by Track in August.

The photograph: l-r; John Hetherington (guitar and vocals), Robbie Patterson (bass and vocal) producer Roger Daltrey, and Dave McDougall (organ). Drummer Tony Haslam is not shown.

pandora's web light show

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john mayall

INTERVIEWED BY
JOHN CARPENTER
reprinted from
The LA Free Press

Mayall's bands have provided the basic schooling for what reads like a Who's Who of British Blues. On his recent visit to Los Angeles I interviewed Mayall at a friend's Laurel Canyon home. He had just purchased a home in the canyon and declared his intent to use Los Angeles as a home base from now on.

C: Are you gonna keep a home in London, too?

M: I don't know, where the hell do I live? I can't really be anywhere. I can't really be anywhere, I'm everywhere. Just get on a plane and go to the next place and the next place. This coming weekend like—these are my few days off right now, these three days off, and then Friday we've got to go play in Phoenix, Saturday we're playing San Diego, Sunday we're playing Denver, and Monday we're playing Houston, and Thursday, Friday and Saturday is in Boston and then we go to England and get three days off there and then play ten gigs in the two weeks from next Sunday, then we go to Germany and play solidly every night there, all over Germany, and all over Scandinavia for the following week, Germany again another week, then a couple of weeks in England, then back here and that's half the year shot. Well, it's great if you can stand the pace but, you know...

C: You just finished one of these, too, didn't you? Your continental tour?

M: I suppose so, yeah...I've gone since I was there last, anyway.

C: What is it you like about L.A.?

M: Well, number one, the weather, and I just like the people here. I like the whole set-up here, you know...even though there's...it has its own distinctive brand of tensions...and so forth...but I think in America that's pretty...every town has got that...some kind of tension and problems.

C: It's not true in England?

M: No, you see in England you can take your choice whe-

ther you have this kind of thing, of living in a place of extremes in every kind of sphere, or you can have the more peaceful, relaxed sort of life but there's no opportunities, everything is reduced to one level so there's no excitement, there's no particular violence, there's no nothing, both ends of the scale...I thought of home as being England and you work out from England. It will be more the other way around now because I shall get a home here and work from L.A. rather than from London say, cause I should imagine this should be about eight months of every year and the ultimate aim is to sort of do gigs for about six or seven months a year or nine months a year and have a total of three months off to do with recordings and to record other artists on my own label.

C: You want to do that?

M: Yeah, I'm getting my own record label this year.

C: Oh you are. What are you going to call it?

M: Crusade.

C: Crusade? Do you have anybody in mind?

M: Well, the first one will be J.B. Lenoir who is about the most important blues man that came on in this century in America.

C: I don't know him.

M: And that's the whole point...you don't know him and nobody else does because he had the talent and he was the Lenny Bruce of the blues world. Always on about politics, and he said a lot of important things, current things, contemporary things in common with a lot of Negro blues people or most of them. They just don't have the same opportunities in music, you know and they become the victims (and always have been) of bad record deals with the wrong labels, small labels that never...so the world never found out who they were, really except a handful of diehard record collectors, and it shouldn't be that way.

C: I'm amazed when I'm over at the Bear's house and he plays me a record and it knocks me out and I've never heard of the artist.

M: That's right, that's the whole thing...so Crusade is a label going to be devoted to my pre-

senting people I think important. Like, J.B. really was killed by the system...he was only thirty-eight when he died.

C: How long ago did he die?

M: Two years ago. And so, you know, if there's a big market for blues and they're professing to like blues and support it, it's up to people like me, maybe, to say here it is, support this, you know, and this will separate the people who go for superstars and get all into that scene rather than actual real music you know, so I mean I'm going to just campaign for people I think are good. (It's just like making some kind of a scene, a conscience sort of searching...I want to shake a few people up anyway...I went to his widow's house on this trip and I taped her and tried to piece together something of it and it was very difficult and like she didn't have any of his records even, you know, living in complete poverty and everything, and never got any money at all for the records—he made about 50 records—never seen anything from it except she got a royalty check for twenty five dollars last year, thing like that.

C: How did you hear him? Through collectors?

M: Probably yeah...I heard him a long time ago and I met him in England.

C: Is he known over there?

M: Well, only through me because on the Crusade album that I made I started that sort of thing off of saying these are the people you should listen to, doing a number by him, and doing other people's numbers and that drew attention to a lot of people so they went out and looked for Buddy Guy records, they went out to Albert King, things like that and I had the track on Death of J.B. Lenoir and like that is really...became a heavy thing...so like people say, "who is he, where can I get his records?" and you can't get his records, I've tried for two years to get hold of...to get the rights to his stuff only I didn't have the facilities for using it then, but this year I will have.

C: Creedence recorded Screamin' Jay Hawkins "Suzy Q" and all of a sudden they're re-

aware of Screamin' Jay Hawkins, and I found out the other night that at the same time the record came out he's playing in a bar over in Hawaii for scale or something.

M: That's right...well, he was lucky cause he was actually working his music.

C: Where did they find Mississippi John Hurt? As a field hand in Mississippi?

M: Probably...but see, to me he's just a country blues artist and there's probably a whole world of those of that group and he's an old man and this is it, Negro blues artists—this has happened to so many of them—that the system being what it is and making it as a musician has been a very, very hard gig you know, so like they reach a part where they're in their early years, their best years, when they've still got a lot of optimism and enthusiasm and then the years and years go by and they don't make it, the guts goes out in the music that they play so when they get rediscovered they...it shouldn't have to happen to them that way cause by then the people who are coming say, "oh, you rediscovered him and he made some records twenty years ago and here he is again, this is blues"...it's wrong cause he's not playing anything that's good and it's doing harm to the blues, and it's even happening with the younger performers...

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C: The blues crusade did work...

M: Yeah, well I hoped it would, but I'm a bit of a pessimist anyway...I'm not all that optimistic about things...

C: ...Change the world with the blues?

M: Yeah, well that's another thing...that's an object...that's some kind of goal. I don't want to convert anyone to blues be-

C: Do you have a really big tape collection?

M: Probably quite big, yeah...my attitude, or the way I collect is completely opposite from the way the Bear does it...the Bear is a fanatic about having the ori-



Hub Bosboom

cause you don't force people to like a certain type of thing...it's like you want a platform or something to present what you do so people can have a choice of whether they like it or not but as long as you get that opportunity you know...you can present in an honest fashion what you believe in...present it to somebody...they can take it or leave it you know...that's been the philosophy all along...if there has to be a philosophy...

C: Do you have a really big tape collection?

M: Probably quite big, yeah...my attitude, or the way I collect is completely opposite from the way the Bear does it...the Bear is a fanatic about having the ori-

ginals, and collecting every record that has any blues content whether it be good or bad...he's just a die-hard freak for blues record collecting, where to me that isn't it. I'm not interested at all in that. If I can just find out of that just odd ones that I like they may just be one side of a certain artist and I'll go about to collect just that one and get it on tape...I don't want the record...

C: Have you heard any young black cats who are playing the blues? Have you gotten a chance to go down to the clubs and stuff?

M: No, I haven't got this time...I did a tape with Magic Sam though...things like that.

C: Do you want to produce him?

M: Yeah.

C: Who would you like to produce? Otis Rush, I imagine.

M: I can't get Otis cause he's already been taken over, but Sam says that when he's gotten out of his contract he won't do anything till he spoke to me first...we understand each other and we work well together.

C: Why do you want to produce?

M: I want to try and get that...their best points, who is the guy really and what does he do really...rather than get someone who's a name and also a good musician and just put him in a stock surrounding and just come up with a stock article like Bloomfield has done with Otis Rush on this...presumably has signed him up and

killed him for another five years.

C: Why do you think that'll happen...cause of what Michael doesn't know?

M: Yeah, it just missed the point as far as I'm concerned. I know a lot of people who like it but to me it misses...it's buried the real qualities of Otis Rush...the important qualities that make for "who is that?"...

C: You think that's going to happen?

M: Well, it just isn't there...it's buried...it's just another singer somewhere in the back-ground, and a big, pounding soul session...Motown riffs and everything beautifully recorded and somewhere underneath it is a singer on it...that's what it sounds like to my ears...

At the beginning of September, the newly independent Warner/Reprise labels will be issuing a flood of fine albums... including TWO by Neil Young.

NEIL YOUNG

by Mac Garry



When Neil Young's first solo album appeared in Musicland's window, I bought it greedily, rushed home to play it, and was immediately plunged into despondency. It was just one long, plodding dirge - with as much musical variation as a string of Eurovision Songs or a Jake Thackeray collection. I couldn't believe it. Had he merely been a hitch hiker on the Springfield? No, of course not. What then? Why this incredible degeneration? It seemed as though he had just taken up his guitar and painted autobiographical jottings in the most dull black and white of routine. None of the exuberance, the zip and vibrance, or any of the qualities of his old group. Tragedy. Neil Young had fallen apart at the seams.

I was wrong, of course. A very hasty, stupid judgement - based on one hearing, compared with what I was expecting... ie songs done in the style of the Springfield; prominent twin lead guitars, vocal harmonies, etc.

When I'd played the album a few more times, I very soon discovered that some of the musical subtleties had insinuated their way into my head to the extent that I was walking around humming 'The Emperor of Wyoming', and recollecting the desperation of 'I've loved her so long', and finding the rhythms of 'The Loner' roaming my head, and the delightful ejaculatory moans of the assorted chicks who sing on 'The Old Laughing Lady'. I grew to love the record for its delicacy, its care.

Very stark looking, Neil Young. Always anonymous in all the group photos I'd seen (except for the unrecognisable effort on the back of the first Buffalo Springfield album), I am now aware - because of his freuded up annoyance at being expected to go everywhere in leather fringes - how to recognise him. The painting of him on the sleeve granitises his craggy face further... it's like on those old syrup tins - "Out of the strong came forth sweetness". He's big and tough looking, but sings with a quivering, delicate voice.

Though he strenuously denies some of the autobiographical implications, in the visual atmosphere he creates through music, he summons up beautifully shaded pictures of life; and the same could be said of this album as Paul Nelson wrote about the first Springfield record: "Each track is a separate world into which continued exploration yields nothing but more and more pleasure".

The Springfield split for diverse reasons - each had his own ambitions. Young - according to his US press handout - desiring quiet and seclusion from promotion hustles and hassles, cleared off to Topanga Canyon (Ah! the LA mysterious - someone send me a map so I can geographically pinpoint these magical names) to drink tea - confirmed by the liner photo (Lipton's!) - and write songs; "they are about my feelings really. Very few are about specific people - most are about frustration".

Some songs do sound samey, and some leave the impression that he wrote the metrically awkward words and had some difficulty fitting them to music. One song - 'The last trip to Tulsa' - is extremely

boring, but the others are fine... especially "The old laughing lady" - about escaping from the world, the fever on the highway, to the haven of a... prostitute maybe?

But it's the creation of mood and atmosphere, and the conveyance of microfeelings, that are so noticeable. They overflow from the speakers.

The second album, 'Everyone Knows This is Nowhere', is again superb, and much more an extension of the Springfield's sound. Whereas the first employed excellent (though unspecified) group musicians, the whole album overflows with Jack Nitzsche's string arrangements. Nitzsche, who used to work with Phil Spector, has been responsible for many a cacophonous cock-up in the past, but he obviously chopped his 15 piano, 206 violin, etc orchestra to a more conventional studio size for this record. All the same, Young's voice - which is often whispery - is sometimes buried in the score, the crescendo piano and general over-arrangement. On the new one he abandons the strings, his romanticised lust, and his wallowing in the whirling mess of life and love, for a happier, altogether more zingy attack. It's much heavier (to use an abused description) and almost Quicksilverish in places, with much more dependence on solidity of rhythm - clapping and all.

Young is accompanied by members of a disbanded LA group called The Rockets (their Whitewale album is a gas - though no-one I know endorses that opinion), who show their competence - and they are bloody good - in the lengthy instrumental breaks. Bobby Notkoff's scraping violin on 'Running Dry', for instance, would screw Jack Nitzsche's ears off, but it's wonderful and really makes the track.

Peculiarly, some songs sound very derivative - structurally, musically and in style. For instance the title track has rings of Richie Furay's 'Child's claim to fame', 'Running Dry' has more than a passing resemblance to a melody which Dylan also borrowed, and some of it sounds similar to the Donovan of the 'Sunshine Superman' era. But that's all nice - I like it when reminiscent melodies jog old songs out of the mothballs of memory.

Listen to the first track, 'Cinnamon Girl', for a sample of the quality. Long live the Neil Young/Rockets alliance.

A very good album, full of fine songs (contrary to the opinion of many, I reckon that the best melodies are those which you don't remember immediately), and like the first, this is in that category of rare albums which really glow brighter and brighter, rather than pall, on repetition.

Ooooh! (to quote Pippin).

I don't suppose it's often that anyone visits a record shop without specific intentions these days, but if you fancy digging around for something worthwhile and rewarding... try one of these.

'Neil Young'

RS 6317

'Everyone knows this is nowhere' RS 6349

('The Rockets')

WWS 7116)

AMERI KAKA! with peter stampfel & antonia

New Orleans! What magical visions that name conjures up! Jazz and the blues, swamps and voodoo queens... and never more so than recently, what with the music of Dr John and Creedence Clearwater. These two groups have created a mythical place unrivalled for sheer magic.

Creedence Clearwater recalls the days of the riverboats as they never were, but should have been. They sing of "chasin' down a hoodoo there... rollin' on the river", and their beautiful and fanciful accents are matched, if not surpassed, by those of Dr John, the Night Tripper. He is heavily mystical and magical, casting his own spell - starting from the swamps of New Orleans and working his way on up. His group is large, including two drummers & three incredible chicks, who wail and dance as if under the spell of some swampland aphrodisiac. When his entire group is assembled on stage, Dr John appears in robes of rags and sequins, and his face covered in sparkle dust. "They call me... Dr John, known as the Night Tripper... got my satchel of grisgris in my hand". He performs an incantation, throws sparkle dust into the audience, the girls begin to shimmy and wail, and the show is on... for over an hour, he takes the audience down to the bogs where God is alive and magic is afoot. A good place to be. Must go there someday and check it out.

The other week, we played at The Scene with a group called Sha Na Na. There are about 11 of them - mostly from Columbia University where they used to sing college glee club stuff with old fiftysrock occasionally thrown in. The fiftysrock went over so well that they began to do it exclusively, their arrangements being copied closely and accurately from old records - 'Get a job', 'Remember then', 'In the still of the night', 'Duke of Earl', etc. Several of them sing lead, and they all do it remarkably well. But skillful recreations are not their main point - they are what used to be called a show band (nothing to do with that Irish rubbish), that is, they put on a show.

Jesus, do they put on a show. All have short hair, combed in 50s style. One combs his hair between songs - did you ever watch someone comb his hair who was very good at it? This dude really combs his hair good - I mean I felt happy watching him comb his hair.

The three front men dress in gold lame - head to foot - and the rest of them look like archaic hoodlums or archtypical yoyos. Their choreography must have been worked out by R. Crumb - the Marx Brothers meet Dick Clark.

The dissolute cosmopolitan aware crowd at the Scene cheered Sha Na Na with ecstatic abandon. They made me happier than any group I've watched in a long, long time. They made everybody there happier than I thought anyone allowed themselves to get watching music.



MOORE ABOUT MERRILL

by Max Needham

Max Needham, known also as "Waxie Maxie", is almost solely responsible for the British success of Merrill Moore and is the 'helmsman' in the international 'Quest for Merrill Moore'.

From R&R's Hall Of Fame comes a belting, stomping, hands-flyin' pianoman - the fury of his 88-ing leaves behind an indelible impression - never to be forgotten!

MERRILL MOORE, guitar, piano, vocals. Born Algona, Iowa, September 26, 1923; he now lives in San Diego, California. I mean, let's face it, wildies, the first thing you notice about a Moore record is his powerful left hand 'rolling' the bass and blending flashfire boogie stomps with rolling country rhythms, and the second thing you notice is how much vocal talent - big clear range piping, he possesses. Agreed? Right, right, right!

Let's go on the "Wabash Cannonball" - and Merrill - give me a short burst of keyboard combat... thrash it, man - take off those suede shoes with the fat crepe soles. Slip off the sweaty yellow socks, limbshakers, and latch on, latch on - it's the "King Of The Country Rock Piano" - cracking down on the boogie - real wild too!

Moore's first release, "House of Blue Lights", was penned by the late Freddy Slack and Don Raye, and whammed out in Yankdom, by Capitol Records, on May 12, 1952!! His second release, "Bartender's Blues"/"Red Light", muscled into the shops eight months later, on January 26, 1953!! No doubt, one or two of you will remember "Bell Bottom Boogie", "Hard Top Race", "Rock Rockola", "Buttermilk Baby", and "Down the Road Apiece" - a slab of pure piano rock bloated with old-fashioned boogieballs. Well, he cut all these widely waxed chunes between May 12 1952, and September 23, 1958.

TODAY, he is known as "Big Chief Rock Boogie", to an international band of crusaders - for whom one would now of course, use the term "questers" - indicating membership to the worldwide "Quest For Merrill Moore". Merrill has, in two years,

become very much of a household name in Gt Britain, following the reissue of his total US Capitol recordings by Ember Records in this country. And after a lengthy hiatus - eleven years sans dinking - Merrill Moore has recently inked longterm with B & C Records (nee Action Records). In fact, his initial release under the B&C banner was a single slice called "Sweet Mama, Tree Top Tall" (CB 100).

"Merrill Moore has been kicking around San Diego as a singing, piano-playing dance-band leader for a long time", I quote from Frank Rhoades in the San Diego Union on Thursday June 19, 1969. "He has finally been 'discovered' - by the British. Because they heard some of his recordings made by Capitol as long ago as 1952, he and his three man group were invited to the International Country Music Convention in London in late April".

And... from B&C there rolled - nay, shot - to my shack the other week, a shiny black LP biscuit with the title "Merrill Moore: Tree Top Tall" (CAS 1001).

Now, y'lawl, I's gotta say for my tastes - and I'm a proper rock hyena - there ain't really enuff piano on this country-cum-rock slice. But on "Wabash Cannonball", Merrill generates a locomotive band and vocal ride. This is a real blast back to the roots and it goes like the proverbial clappers. I kid you not! It will have those wolfpacks of mad-faced, beat-hungry yahoos cheering and clapping! (Slight pause while the author drops to all fours and howls to the ceiling like a dog!).

And "Let the good times roll" is packed with undiluted rock-juice! I heartily recommend "Texas in my soul" - packed with piano rock protein. One other thing; the country combo crash along like a runaway Greyhound bus. Death then to anyone who doesn't rate this 86-proof package. But seriously, pussyfaces - I know you're gonna enjoy listening to Merrill Moore, the "King Of The Country Rock Piano". Aw shucks, buddies, try it, will ya?

Droppings from the Stable...

Before they broke up, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band made 3 albums... and the third, titled 'Alive' makes a very entertaining memorial. It was recorded live, and there is a tremendous rapport with the audience. Andrew Lauder, who will be responsible compiling and releasing the album, told me he is thinking of putting the best of the group's tracks on one album. I hope he'll include 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown', 'Buy for me the rain', 'Rock me baby' and the second version of 'Crazy words'. One of the best of the new tracks is one which makes reference to Blue Cheer, with whom they shared the bill at the Fillmore East. The album, import only at the moment, is numbered LST 7611.

Although Edgar Broughton now live in South London, they used to live in Portobello near the Third Ear Band... and both of these groups have just released Harvest albums. Edgar's is a heavy Blue Cheer/Beefheart sound, whereas the Third Ear is soft, serene and tremendously soothing - the sort of music to listen to after a hard day at the office, building site, or labour exchange. Harvest are looking for new acts - if you feel you have something good to offer, get in touch with the label's chief, Mr Malcolm Jones... you'll find him very helpful.

The Tyrannosaurus Rex album 'Unicorn' is the third from the poetic mind of Marc Bolan, and is by far the best. Apart from the words, which are far easier to understand, the instrumentation - which in some cases is electric - is very beautiful. 16 poems set to music make excellent listening or very pleasant reading, as the words are clearly printed on the double sleeve. By the time this issue comes out, the duo should be in America, where they have a large following.

Island Records just moved their head office to a site near Portobello Road, and in september, they hope to open a new 16 track studio for their own use, and later on in the year, a large one for orchestras and the like. Island have always been known for producing original, progressive albums, and now perhaps other companies will follow in their footsteps and open studios and offices in this area... because the W 10/11 district is becoming well known for new groups. The other day I heard a group who have a very beautiful sound, practising in a studio just behind Westbourne Park Rd. They play a sort of country/folk - not C&W, but old English country, with a rock backing. The name of the group is Trees and they have a girl vocalist - Celia Humphreys. They are managed by Douglas, 01-229 9309.

Although the second HP Lovecraft album has been out here on Philips for some months now, it



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seems that very few people are aware of its existence. I first heard it last November, when I imported a copy from the States, since when I have played it over a thousand times - and every time I hear it, it becomes a new trip. The original HP Lovecraft is the writer of many wonderful books, and the group have illustrated some of them musically in their songs. This album is essentially in stereo, as there are a number of effects in it - as at the end of 'At the mountains of madness' where the sounds cross and recross between the speakers... and 'Nothings boy', which was written and is performed by Ken Nordine, whose album 'Colours' some of you will remember. If you aren't too sure what this group sounds like - and they are extremely difficult to describe - take a listen to the new British group Gypsy, who have a similar sort of sound.

Two friends of mine are starting a musical agency and their aim is to provide good musicians for new groups and session musicians for recordings. Also they will supply on request, any information about concerts and shows in and around the London area. They intend not to charge the musician, hoping to be able to persuade the hirer to pay for the service. The name of the company is Headspread, and it will be operated by Rupert Harvey and Pierre Tubbs, from their office in Blenheim Crescent, W11. The phone number is 01-727 2895.

First there was 'Children of the future', then we were treated with 'Sailor', and now, the latest and greatest from the Steve Miller Band, 'Brave New World'. Unfortunately, until EMI get it together to release it, this is another import. The full title is 'We're travelling fast, from a dream of the past, to the Brave New World'. I'd like to pick you a track but the whole album is so good that I think it's better to just say "Put on side 1 through to 2 as loud as

you can possibly stand it, and come up with your head boiling over at the finish". It's on SKAO 184.

The difference between the English and American versions of the 'Oh Happy Day' album is that the sides have been reversed - i.e. side 1 is now side 2, and vice versa. The cover has also been changed so that it now has 2 rather delightful backs and no front. If you are into gospel sounds, these are some of the best I've heard to date. If you still do not possess the single, it's well worth investing 37/6 or whatever your local shop charges, as the stereo on the album is much better than it was on the single. A good place to hear this album before buying it is at the Magic Phonograph, where they have a row of stereo headphones, and you can freak out all to yourself. The number is Buddah 203025.

No doubt by now most of you will have heard the new Alexis Korner group which played at Hyde Park. Some of my friends didn't like them (I didn't see them - I was working in my record shop), but one particular friend of mine did enjoy them - and she's about to type a review of an album called 'Blues Incorporated' by the Alexis Korner All Stars. It was recorded over five years ago, in 1964, and the soloists include Dave Castle, Dick Heckstall-Smith, Danny Thompson and Herbie Golins, who is the vocalist on 'Roberta' which is somewhat similar to the Colosseum track 'Walking in the park' - the track I get most requests for at my discoteques. All the tracks are good, including a very nice version of 'Stormy Monday'. The sleeve notes are very interesting (says Steph) and I must agree - all about the 1962 Marquee jam sessions with Alexis, Charlie Watts, Mick Jagger, Brian Jones, Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce, Long John Baldry, Graham Bond, Phil Seaman, Zoot Money, Cyril Davies and loads more. It's on Transatlantic and costs only 15/6!

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ZIGZAG WANDERINGS

So many good records around. So many. Beefheart, Neil Young, Alice Cooper, Beefheart, The Third Ear Band, Martha Velez, Delaney and Bonnie, Beefheart, Sea Train, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Beefheart, Soft Machine, Edgar Broughton Band. And the Fairport Convention. All great... and as we were "going to press" (as we say in Fleet St, Caddington) we were waiting to get our needles onto albums by Blodwyn Pig (whoopie) and Jethro Tull (wahoo).

Frank Zappa doesn't like records with phasing on them. Got to admit that I do. Some anyway. I used to like the Radio London (Hey, it was nearly two years ago that I sat on the roof of Maggie's Farm, where I used to work, and waited in despair during their final hour) versions of 'San Francisco' by Scott McK and the Byrds' 'Captain Soul', which they phased. A track which is elevated to supreme ecstasy by this device is 'Trust in men everywhere' by T.I.M.E., which is released next month I think.

Like I said in number 1, the best of the 359 versions of 'Clouds' that I've heard is by Dave Van Ronk and the Hudson Dusters. Well... Heather of the Young Tradition is organising a tour here for him soon - and Tom Rush too. The Van Ronk album bearing the aforementioned grist laden track is unreleased here, but Transatlantic have just put out one of his Folkways LPs, which contains a selection of finely performed urban blues standards. 27 points are also awarded to Heather Wood for graphically untangling the relationships and peculiarities of the Blues Project/Blood Sweat & Tears/ Sea Train conglomeration.

We really goofed last month. (No-one's perfect; that's our excuse). We missed out a 4 in the STD code of the Friars advert, and some old dear who runs a chicken farm in Brill got pestered to hysteria. Sorry about that.

Anne of Indica Books tells us that 'The Poetry of Rock' which we reviewed last month, is available here as a Corgi paperback. It's good.

If you speak German, apart from the excellent Sounds magazine, there is a good Swiss publication called Hotcha - but I think the only place you can get it here is the Arts Lab.

Yes, Virginia... Captain Beefheart IS coming here soon. That's what the unconfirmed rumours say anyway. If we can find an interpreter who speaks his fast and bulbous tongue, we'll interview him.

If you read IT (and who doesn't?) you'll see that we both have Mayall interviews - but since different ground is covered in each, I hope no one will register complaint. One person who will, no doubt, is this cat who writes to us on behalf of Lucifer Black's Rock 'n' Roll Revivalists. He'll spot the mistake made by the interviewer (he's not worth his bragging if he doesn't) and send in screeds of stuff about how he feels sorry for us "progressive

types". He's OK really though - it's a gas to feel his enthusiasm.

Like most periodicals in their infancy, we are up to our necks in debts and optimism, but hope to get rid of some of the former by holding a benefit dance (see advert opposite). We really want to thank the groups and friends who are helping us, and hope that thousands of avid (and indifferent) Zigzag readers will arrive to make it a beautiful evening.

At the time of writing, it seems as if the Elektra newsletter (on which I sprinkled lavish praise last month) is to be discontinued. This is a drag. I've always liked the integrity of the label, and can think of very few albums that I disliked. I'm sure that a lot of people will feel the same.

The Barclay James Harvest record sure is good, and so is another single which may be less familiar. The Sailor by Robin Scott. Neither had I - but he's alright. The song has structural similarities to Dylan's 'I don't believe you', and a gas backing (it really is) by Mighty Baby - who we are all going to see at Friars.

Unsolicited testimonial: Last night we went to Friars - for a number of reasons. The Edgar Broughton Band was on; I wanted a chat with Andy Dunkley; it's our 'local'; and I wanted to see what kind of scene inspired these crazy ads we get. I knew it would be good, but I never expected it to be that good. In a word, it's about the best club I've been to for years - reasonable admission price, organised by cats you don't mind giving bread to anyway, no maroon suited thug bouncers - because there's no trouble, and an atmosphere that restored my faith in audiences. (That sounds a bit pompous, but it really was a gas - genuine audience respect, you could hear a glass drop). Bloody hot though - perspiration leaking out of my cranium in pints. It's run by this yokel/drop out/man of many facets/enthusiast called Dave, who's head is bursting with ideas and schemes - which actually materialise. The Edgar Broughton Band was superb - had the audience revelling in every song... and if the one-horse town of Aylesbury has any record shops, they'll have sold out of 'Wasa Wasa' by the next day. The entire evening was immaculate.

BBC 2 are re-running the Rowan & Martin series. Look out for the show which features our very own writer - Peter Stampfel - who is singer/violin player with the Holy Modal Rounders. Gasp in stark incredulity as Pete, clad in stretch pants no less, shouts and sings and saws his violin through "The YoYo song".

Next month, everyone will be broke. New records from Joni Mitchell, the Youngbloods, High Tide, Neil Young, Van Dyke Parks, Van Morrison and multitudes of others.

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