

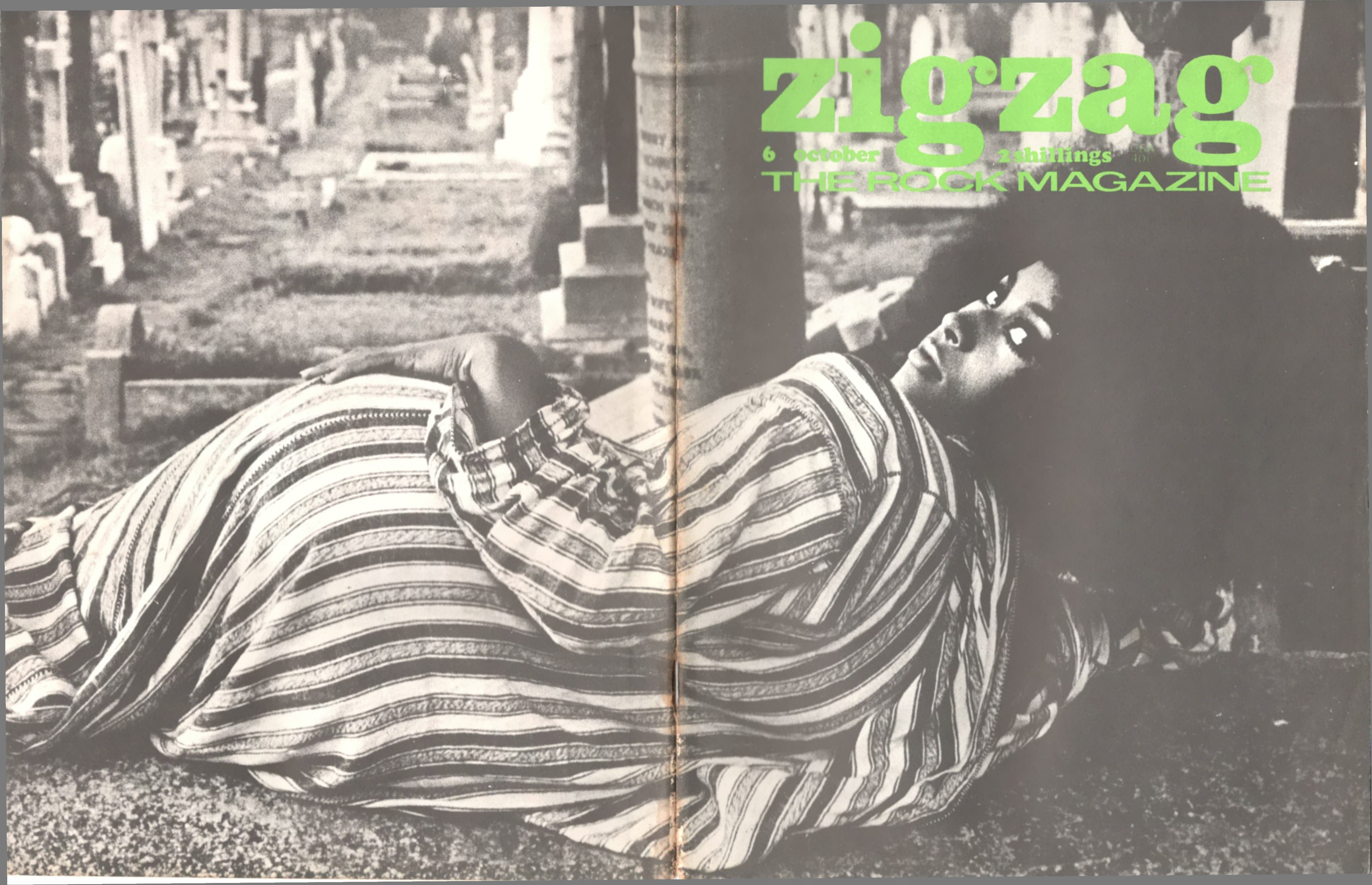
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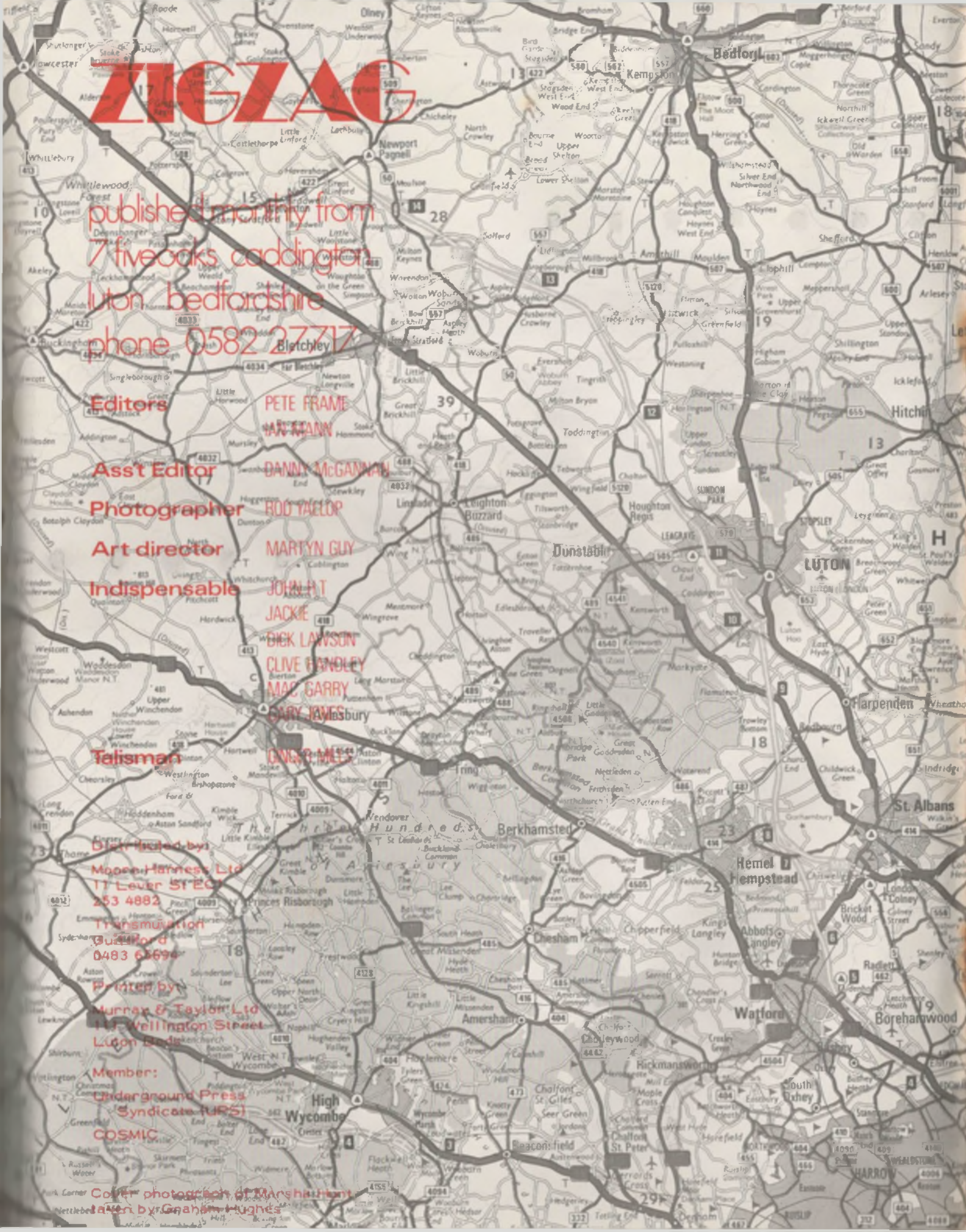
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MOTT THE HOOPLE IS TWO MILES FROM HEAVEN



Island ILPS-9108



Island Records Ltd.
Basing Street, London W.11.

Produced by Guy Stevens Illustration by Paul Whitehead



A band with apparently no hang-ups; a band spawned by an optimistic 'renaissance' in the underground and 'Interzone A'; a band just beginning to hit ecstatic audiences. Jake on drums, Sambhu on bass, Allan lead, Raja Ram (Ron) flute and amazing percussion, Shiva vocals and Maha Dave on rhythm... Quintessence. They're a family, a community group whose music should reach as many ears and heads as possible.

Onstage their presence is that of spiritual and musical oneness. They build from jazz flute solos to a massive guitar centred rock sound, until 'the audience becomes the musicians' collectively singing 'Hare Krishna', and knowing how it feels. On record, the music is fuller, more intricate, and still the stage vitality is there. Right through, Quintessence is a good vibrations band.

This interview was recorded on three separate occasions, mainly at Morgan Studios, while the 8 tape tracks were slowly being laid on to each other. Ron and Shiva explained how the group was originally formed:

R. The band got together merely by putting an ad in Melody Maker. It was a gradual process of auditioning the 250 or so people who phoned up, for which we hired the All Saints Hall - the old reliable. One night we had 28 drummers down there to hear in two hours, so it was a pretty bad type of scene until we felt different vibrations coming from various people... and it gradually refined itself down until we got the six people who are with us now. None of us had known each other at all, but it turned out that most of us lived in the Grove.

Z. You're into the album very soon after getting together.

R. We wanted to get it done as quickly as possible because we had the material worked out. It's all original stuff, and we've got a lot of ideas... we're already starting work on the second one.

Z. What differences have you found between playing to live audiences and studio techniques?

R. Well there's far less freedom in the studio, because you have to do it separately, whereas on stage we can really freak around and dance and improvise to a far greater degree. Here, we have to lay down each track individually, which started to be a big hang-up for the first couple of sessions, but we ironed it out, and now we're adjusted to the techniques and we can do a pretty good job on it.

Z. Was John Barham your own choice as producer?

R. Actually Stanley (manager and lyricist) put us on to him. John came in just as we started the LP, and he seemed to have a terrific sensitivity for the music we were doing - he really helped us get it together, and showed us the way to do it. He has the most phenomenal ears in the business - we just consider him a genius. He can hear on multilevels when anything's right or wrong, and we're very happy working with him. It's actually the first album he's produced - but he's done a lot of work as a session musician... he was on 'Wonderwall', for instance.

Z. You chose him because of your particular sound then?

R. Well, he was into the Indian thing a great deal and it felt the vibes were very close. But rather

than Indian, our music is Eastern influenced... although we use Indian chants and ragas as a launching pad.

Z. What is that flute attachment you're using?

R. It's got what they call a 'multi-vider', which can get about ten different sounds electronically. I managed to pick it second hand... but they're very rare in this country - it dispenses with the microphone because it plugs directly into the flute and you can wear it round your neck. You can get different sub-basses and basses, you can make it like a bassoon or soprano sax or a tenor - I'll be using it all the time because it gives such fabulous freedom... you don't have to stay with the mike, and I can actually walk into the audience and freak around.

Z. Shiva, could you tell me about the opera that you're planning?

S. It's about man's quest for realisation of God, and it starts off in London, in Ladbroke Grove - this fellow starts his search for the reality, and the music describes the various transitions going on.

Z. This search seems to be the direction of all your music.

R. We are trying to find God realisation through our music, because it's a very divine form... if we can try to put down the rhythms of the universe, we'll be very happy.

Z. And is this opera already finished?

S. No, we've done about half of it. It goes through a lot of different types of music at the beginning, covering different countries. This person, representing many people, heads towards India, finds this guru, climbs to the top of Mount Kailash and goes through different bardo levels until eventually he sees the pure white light. We're all working jointly on this - we've all contributed equally. Our personal little flavours give it those different colourings.

We've got a few people who have worked in that field a lot, and they are working out possible ways of presenting it onstage. We'd like to have an orchestra and certain different sounds like a sitar player, tamboura players and a choir of all our girls who sing with us; and we're sure we could show the transition of various moods and feelings.

R. But we want to sort of draw on all the cultures - and let Quintessence be the mouthpiece.

Z. Is it that you're expressing the community idea on a musical level, and a dance level, and so on?

R. Most of our things involve personal contact; like we don't give concerts so much as sort of picnics - and that's the sort of gig we dig... we just set up our candles and incense and things, not so much for others - who dig it anyway - but for ourselves. That's the environment we feel that's most like our living room.

Z. When I first met you, the immediate impression that I got was that the music is just part of the whole ritual which you are living completely, the whole time - both on an individual and a community basis. This seems to relate to your music, to the poetry behind the lyrics, and the philosophy towards



way you do things... down to details like the artwork for the album.

R. Well, the artist who did that painting, which is really incredible, lives above Shiva... like we're all in the same sort of houses, and everybody does something... there are poets, and writers, and all sorts, and everyone joins in and adds in his own way. There are about four or five poets actively working with the group; and Stanley, of course, who has been doing a lot of our managerial things, is one of our lyricists and a lot of the things on the record are his. Four of the group are into painting and a couple of the others are designers... and we find we can do the whole thing within our community. We don't have to go anywhere outside to the straight scene because it's all happening here, in the Grove. You know, on practically every aspect, it's covered by somebody in the family.

Z. How big is the family?

R. It seems that we have about 50 people around us when we go to a gig - we have to have quite a few trucks to transport everyone around - and it's growing all the time... because we're open to everything and everybody as long as they're cool.

Z. Most of your gigs have been in London. You don't think that the out town audience is going to react very differently to a London audience - particularly the All Saints people?

R. It's funny... I think you can actually change the audience. I mean, they are there to hear the music, and you set the mood, and it depends how authoritative it is... if it comes through. The mark of a good performance with us is how the conscious nesses rise in the audience. In the first couple of numbers, it's usually very slow until people familiarise themselves with it, and then it starts getting very hypnotic and trancelike. People get into weird frenzies and all sorts... it's done with repetition and layers of sound - you've heard it yourself. When the audience becomes the musicians and they all run onstage, the musicians become the audience, and you can't tell one from the other... and that's how we really like it. At a performance like the Roundhouse, it's just a fantastic mixture... people singing and playing instruments, and we end up in the audience singing 'Hare Krishna'. So it's really a funny reversal; but that's a great in and out flow because we don't want to be exclusive and us to be the musicians. Everybody's mus-

ical... it's just that we've all forgotten. We pass out a lot of hand instruments to people, and there's a good feeling of reciprocity.

We went to the Speakeasy, and that audience is far from the audience that we usually have communication with, yet we completely broke through and they enjoyed us on our level. They swung over, and we had them dancing 'Hare Krishna' on the tables - it was quite a freakout with these fat businessmen. And that has happened with other concerts too, but the provinces are the real testing grounds and it's going to be quite interesting finding out... it's a good challenge.

Z. You don't think this head revolution is just a London phenomenon then?

R. Well no, it seems to be fantastically universal. We've had Greek people come up out of the audience, and we had - at the Roundhouse last week - some really square Americans who told us how much they dug it, and even young kids of 11 and 12 are turning up, and they seem to dig it; so I think it's a pretty heavy communication - because our music is eclectic... it's not as if we're in one bag - we're into jazz, rock and the

Eastern thing. It all comes through - we just play music... they're the same old notes, it's just the way we arrange them.

Z. The other thing about your attitude, is that it seems to be utterly optimistic.

R. Yes, well I read that thing about the cat saying there's nothing much happening in the Grove anymore, and I think that's a load of bullshit. I think we're on a renaissance right now. There are more guys breaking through into fantastic new things all the time - I seem to meet them every day; painters, poets, writers, musicians, and like, it's there man, that is where it's happening.

Z. And the whole point is, it's not just music.

R. It's everything; it's just the whole groove and lifestyle that's going on - people are becoming much more spiritually minded, much more expansive in their way of life. Things are very good.

Z. Quintessence is bubbling through very fast - is this part of the good feeling?

R. Yes, the phone rings all the time - the biggest to the smallest want us. But once again, the style that we want to do it in is not with the cats with the biggest bread, but people who can fit into the family way of thinking. Obviously they've got to be heads to start off with I think, because it seems that they are the

loosest people around; on the other hand, there are a lot of heads around in business - like it's the social thing to do - and they are shucksters and hypesters and the whole bullshit. We made a good choice with Island - we're very happy there, but as far as publishing goes, we may even go so far as to form our own publishing company.

Z. What the underground really needs is this together thing - like a printing press for instance...

R. Right. If we started getting the bread we'd certainly buy a printing press and donate it to the underground. That's one of the first priorities, because you just can't rely on these straight people very much. And the underground is getting to be stronger and stronger. I mean, if we just sold records to them, it means a potential of about 60 or 70 thousand.

Z. Would you be happy just to sell records to the underground?

R. No. I think music's universal. If it's not, it's not good. We want to go to the States at the beginning of next year, and we'll see what it's like over there. I think the time is right for our music now - it's just a question of being able to voice all the modes together.

Z. Shiva, can you tell me something about your spiritual advisor?

S. I met him through Raja Ram. We had very similar philosophical views

about life - we both meditated and were both getting deeply involved; more so every day. Since we met him, he has initiated us into Hindu philosophy and that is basically the religion under my, and Raja Ram's, aspect of the music.

Z. This is where the mantra chants are involved?

S. Yes, that's right. Hare Krishna. Working the spirit of Krishna into us, filling us with divine bliss, divine happiness, which is the reason we chant. We have a regular chant on sundays at the Quintessence Ashra - sometimes with as many as 50 people present. The swami is in the middle giving discourses and singing chants, and teaching us new chants. It's really beautiful. There are little snippets of some Indian chants on the album in different places.

Z. Will the chanting be expanded into the opera?

S. Actually, there won't be that much chanting in the opera, because it's more of an earth-plane thing.

R. The only chanting will be before the ascension; to call the deities before actually rising, and the second part of the opera will be more on the astral level. It's going to be pretty far out.

Interviewed by Dick.
Photograph of Ron Rothchild
by Friars.
Group photograph
by Ron Reid.



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WHAT PETE TOWNSHEND THINKS ABOUT KING CRIMSON

An uncanny masterpiece. An uncanny masterpiece. Title? Song titles? You might know more than I, but I've got the ace card cos I've the album weeks before release to review no less. What depths one has to stoop to to hear new albums before everyone else. How marvellous is the feeling when I walk in a room and say, "you haven't heard it? More's the pity!" Cos I've heard it and its fucking incredible.

But its also over careful, cautiously rampant guitar solos scream all over you but never miss a note. Silent drums drum and a million bloody mellotrons whine and soar like sirens down a canyon. Endless, or at least seemingly endless passages through extemporised classic non-effervessant secret-keeping become boring. Drums click and sniff, mellotrons breathe, unidentifiable woodwind multiplies, a voice reminiscent of a Zombie sings. Its time consuming and expensive but somehow, even if you don't get into their complex musical fantasies and indulgences you have to stand and straighten your back when out of all that comes THE COURT OF A CINSONGKRIM. ("The Ultimatum" says Plum) Bob the roadie comes round, he is already a fan of KING CRIMSON and is extra eager to listen. He doesn't leave his seat until the album is finished, then, after having hung around for about two hours decides to leave. I know when he's had enough.

You must have gathered its good. Undeniably. But in some ways too good too soon if thats possible. You will only know what I'm getting at when you hear it for yourself, its akin to being a ritual it really isn't. The ritual is future worship. The adulation of unnecessary perfection. I hear it, and I know it had to cost at least ten thousand pounds to make. If they chucked out as much as I think they did in order to embrace the remainder it could have cost twenty thousand. I can't tell if its worth it.

A friend listening to the album from a room below says, "Is that a new WHO album?" Deeply I'm ashamed that it isn't, but I'm also glad somehow. That kind of intensity is music not Rock.

Twenty first century schizoid man is everything multitracked a billion times, and when you listen you get a billion times the impact. Has to be the heaviest riff that has been middle frequencied onto that black vinyl disc since Mahlers' 8th.

An American chick comes round with a friend and tells me, "They're all real musicians." I don't know where to look. I was never more aware of any other single fact.

Oh well. YINGYANGYINGYANGYINGYANGYINGYANGYINGYANGYINGYANGYINGYANGMYGGGGGGGENERATION.
OOH and by the way, THUNDERCLAP NEWMAN. Same to you.



ILPS 9111. KING CRIMSON



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THE DEVIANTS



Transatlantic
Where The Electric Children Play



STEREO TEA 3M

San Francisco - part 2

As a follow up to Alan Lord's article in Zigzag 4, here is a complete list of albums released by the rock groups of San Francisco and surrounding areas. Some groups i.e. Linn County (from Chicago), the Youngbloods (New York), Mother Earth, Sir Douglas, Shades of Joy (Texas) are adopted San Franciscans. Labels and numbers are US catalogue numbers... where they have been released in the UK, information is shown in brackets.

A.B. SKHY
A.B. Skhy
AUM
Bluesvibes
BIG BROTHER & THE HOLDING COMPANY
Big Brother & the Holding Company
Cheap Thrills
BLUE CHEER
Vincebus Eruptum
Outside/Inside
New! Improved!
THE CHARLATANS
The Charlatans
CLEANLINESS & GODLINESS SKIFFLE BAND
Greatest Hits
CLOVER
Clover
COUNTRY JOE & THE FISH
Electric music for the mind & body
I feel like I'm fixin' to die
Together
Here we are again
E.P.
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
Creedence Clearwater Revival
Bayou Country
Greenriver
CROME SYRCUS
Love sycle
FAMILY TREE
Miss Butters
FIFTY FOOT HOSE
Cauldron
FLAMIN' GROOVIES
Sneakers
FRUMIUS BANDERSNATCH
EP
GRATEFUL DEAD
Grateful Dead
Anthem of the sun
Aoxomoxoa
GREAT SOCIETY
Conspicuous only in its absence
How it was
DAN HICKS & HIS HOT LICKS
Original recordings
H.P. LOVECRAFT
H.P. Lovecraft
H.P. Lovecraft 2
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY
It's a beautiful day
JEFFERSON AIRPLANE
Takes off
Surrealistic Pillow
After bathing at Baxters
Crown of creation
Bless its pointed little head
LINN COUNTY
Proud Flesh Soothseer
Fever Shot
LOADING ZONE
Loading Zone
MAD RIVER
Mad River
Paradise Bar and Grill
EP
STEVE MILLER BAND
Children of the future
Sailor
Brave New World
MINT TATTOO
Mint Tattoo
MOBY GRAPE
Moby Grape
Wow/Grape Jam

MGM SE4628
Sire SES 97007 (London SHK 8401)
Mainstream 56099 (London SMT 8377)
Columbia CS 9700 (CBS 63392)
Philips 6002 64 (SBL 7839)
Philips 6002 78 (SBL 7860)
Philips 600305 (SBL 7896)
Philips 600309 (SBL 7903)
Vanguard 79285
Fantasy (not yet released)
Vanguard 792 44 (SRVL 19026)
Vanguard 79266 (SRVL 19029)
Vanguard 79277 (SRVL 19006)
Vanguard 792 99 (SRVL 19048)
Rag Baby (Takoma)
Fantasy 8382 (Liberty LBS 83259)
Fantasy 8389 (Liberty LBS 83261)
Fantasy 8393 (Liberty LBS 83273)(Nov)
Command 925
RCA Victor LSP 3955
Limelight 86062 (SLML 4030)
Snazz 2371 (10" LP)
Limited Edition
Warner Bros 1689 (W1689)
Warner Bros 1749 (W1749)
Warner Bros 1790 (W1790)
Columbia CS 9624 (CBS 63476)
Columbia CS 9702
Epic BN 26464
Philips 600252 (SBL 7830)
Philips 6002 79 (SBL 7872)
Columbia CS 9768 (CBS 63722)
RCA Victor 3584 (compilation put
RCA Victor 3766 (out here SF 7889)
RCA Victor 1511 (SF 7926)
RCA Victor 4058 (SF 7976)
RCA Victor 4133 (SF 8019)
Mercury 61181 (SMCL 20142)
Mercury 612 18
RCA Victor 3959
Capitol 2956 (ST 2985)
Capitol 185 (ST 185)
Limited Edition
Capitol 2920 (ST 2920)
Capitol 2984 (ST 2984)
Capitol 184 (ST 184)
Dot DLP 25918
Columbia 9498 (CBS 63090)
Columbia CXS 3 (Wow-CBS 63271)

69
Truly Fine Citizen
MORNING GLORY
Two suns worth
MOTHER EARTH
Living with the animals
Make a joyful noise
MOUNT RUSHMORE
High on Mount Rushmore
69
NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND
Notes from the underground
OTHER HALF
The Other Half
PRINCE ALBERT & THE CANS (PURE)
Prince Albert & the Cans
QUICKSILVER MESSENGER SERVICE
Quicksilver Messenger Service
Happy Trails
SALVATION (ARMY BANNED)
Salvation
Gypsy Carnival Caravan
SANTANA
Santana
SAVAGE RESURRECTION
Savage resurrection
SEA TRAIN
Sea Train
LEIGH STEVENS (ex Blue Cheer)
Red Weather
ALEXANDER SPENCE (ex Airplane/Grape)
Oar
SERPENT POWER
Serpent Power
SHADES OF JOY
Shades of Joy
SIR DOUGLAS QUINTET
Sir Douglas Quintet
Plus two Honky Blues
Mendocino
SONS OF CHAMPLIN
Loosen up naturally
SOPWITH CAMEL
Sopwith Camel
SWEET LINDA DIVINE
Sweet Linda Divine
TONGUE & GROOVE
Tongue & Groove
DINO VALENTE
Dino Valente
WEST
West
Bridges
WOMB
Womb
Overdub
YOUNGBLOODS
Youngbloods
Earth Music
Elephant Mountain
Columbia 9696 (CBS 63430)
Columbia 9912
Fontana 67573
Mercury 61194 (SMCL 20143)
Mercury 61226
Dot DLP 25898
Dot DLP 25934
Vanguard 6502
Acts 38004
FUNK!
Philips (not yet released)
Capitol 2904 (ST 2904)
Capitol 120 (ST 120)
ABC 623 (UAS 92062)(Nov)
ABC 653 (UA next year)
Columbia CS 9781
Mercury 61156 (SMCL 20123)
A&M 4171 (AMLS 941)
Philips 600 (SBL 7897)
Columbia 9831
Vanguard 792 52
Fontana 67952
Tribe 47001
Smash 67018
Smash 67115 (SMCL 20160)
Capitol ST 200
Kama Sutra S 8060
Columbia CS 9771
Fontana 67593 (STL 5528)(Nov)
Epic BN 26335 (CBS 63443)
Epic BN 26380
Epic BN 26433
Dot DLP 25933
Dot DLP 25959
RCA Victor LSP 3724
RCA Victor LSP 3865
RCA Victor LSP 4150 (SF 8026)
Collections
REVOLUTION SOUNDTRACK
Steve Miller Band, Quicksilver
Messenger Service, Mother Earth
A POT OF FLOWERS
Wildflower, Harbinger Complex,
Other Side, Euphoria
Coming soon on the projected Fillmore Label:
Cold Blood, Frumius Bandersnatch, Sanpaku,
Dancing, Food & Entertainment, Country Weather.
P.S. Thanks to Ian at Musicland, without whose help etc etc..... A.L.

IT'S THE BLIMP. IT'S THE BLIMP

Captain Beefheart is alive in Hollywood

by MILES

Gail Zappa picked up Frank (her husband) and me at TT&G Studios at Sunset and Highland. As the Buick Riviera sped silently up the twisting canyons of Laurel Canyon Boulevard, headlights illuminating palms and semi-tropical vegetation, Gail said, "Don freaked out today and burned all his manuscripts and books. He was over at the house earlier and seemed very depressed about not having a band and everything." All Frank could reply was "Oh brother!"

Later it was found that copies had been made, so the 40 books of poems and songs and drawings were still in existence, only the originals were gone.

A few days later I met Don Vliet myself when he came over to the Zappa household. Captain Beefheart is a big man, a prickly presence, a warm humanity, a large smiling hedgehog, a friendly Dickensian uncle, eyes that sparkle and dart - quick as humming birds - seeing everything, missing no details at all. His grey top hat and overcoat a little incongruous in the warm Southern Californian night. A man just too creative, too human for the 20th century, so interested in people that he surprises them; ending each sentence with "You understand?" and waiting for the affirmative before continuing. A person you know instinctively you can trust.

His first album he wasn't too pleased with and his second he was screwed over; his producer taking the tapes, mixing them himself without Don knowing, forming a record company - Blue Thumb - and releasing it. Don didn't approve the mix or receive any money. Eventually he found a lawyer, ... they would settle out of court, Don would drop the case for 35 thousand dollars, the producer agreed. So Don dropped the case, then the cheque bounced. Don feels strongly about the evils of the record industry. He returned to his old friend - Frank Zappa - who he knew would give him complete artistic freedom and no hustling on the financial side. 'Trout Mask Replica' is exactly as Don wanted it. Few artists can say that.

"Come outside and we'll talk", so we went at 4 a.m. out into Frank's garden. Georgie the alsation was still sniffing round and a phone was ringing up by the pool, and there were people up by the changing rooms beyond the trees. "I'm a big cat, I know that, but I'm gentle, I couldn't hurt a fly." It's the American way; because you're

big, you must fight and be one of the boys. The American way; because you're a freak and wear weird clothes and a beard, the police want to stop you and push you around. The old white Jaguar Don used to have had its seats all slashed to pieces by the LA police looking for the drugs which they didn't find. No compensation.

"Why do you want to leave Hollywood?"

Don: "Because the police in Britain don't wear guns - you don't realise how important that is. People are treated as people. Life is respected. People are good to me there."

"You won't miss the sun?"

"I hate the sun. Look at me! I never go out in it." It's true... the inventor of fast and bulbous jelly is as pallid white as I am, and after all those years in Southern California. "I've got to get back to Britain, I must live there... I just want to live quietly... why should I ever want to come back



here?....?"

Don recorded a large part of 'Trout Mask Replica' at home and only a few studio sessions were needed. The group layed down backing-tracks for Don to sing over, but Don refused to wear headphones. Naturally the tracks couldn't be played in the studio for him to hear because they would have got onto his vocal track and made mixing impossible. So they played the backing tracks in the control room and Don would stand in the studio and listen to the faint leakage through the sound proof glass. Of course, as soon as he opened his mouth, he couldn't hear a thing. This accounts for some of the weird timing on the album. It's fortunate that Don is fanatical about rehearsals and knew all the music backwards by heart anyway...

The band was shut up in the house for weeks on end, with no contact with the outside world. Don had persuaded them that chicks and sex would interfere with their music, and so they played day and night, day and night. Unfortunately there was no money either and they starved, came down with illnesses, and were found wandering in search of food - one of them in a woman's dress, boots and a helmet, a crazed look in his eyes. Eventually they all left, some to return, most to find food and recuperate and maybe even find a job with a band that made just a little money.

"I'm a great poet, better than those cats like Ginsberg, because I let it flow, I can't stop it... I've got books and books of stuff. I'm a great horn player, man - I've already exhausted the instrument. I've done everything that can be done with it. Really I need a whole new art form."

He is creative in too many directions, to develop just one seems impossible. He is torn by creative energies, musical, poetic and visual images flash by faster than satellites, as nervous as the crickets at his feet, or the long winged moths in the foliage. He is a beautiful guy.

Another day, back at TT&G Studios. Don and I are in the ante room where the coffee and candy machines are. In the distance the Mothers are recording. Don looks out of the window at the lights of East Hollywood, "I can break glass with my voice, it's that powerful, man." The volume is incredible as he strides round the room. After it has subsided, a distant voice can be heard: "What the fuck was that?".

In Britain, Don should find some of the facilities he needs; a more relaxed pro-life social environment where freaks are tolerated and the police don't wear guns; an appreciative audience, a less crooked and uptight business community.

His recording contract is with Frank Zappa's 'Bizarre Records' and is of course absolutely straight and honest. (Some American promoters on the other hand...) He is lucky to be with Frank who regards him as a genius. In return, he loves and respects Frank and declares him a genius. They are not however, a mutual admiration society.

It is 6.30 am in Zappa's basement studio.

Beefheart: "That was an earthquake... did you feel it?"

Zappa: "Yes, but it was so small, it made the people seem enormous."

Beefheart: "It could have been the blimp..."

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Kinks Currency Revalued



Coming home from an interview with Ray Davies I felt inspired to talk to my fellow human beings, and in the rush hour tube chose a girl with a typically English face and asked her what she knew about the Kinks. After getting over the horror of thinking maybe I was trying to pick her up she replied, in deep American tones, that she was crazy about 'You Really Got Me', but that was the only song of theirs that she could readily recall.

Encouraged, I stopped for while and questioned two more girls, English this time, who also liked 'You Really Got Me' and other Kinks material of that period, but had dismissed them as a provider of joy for teenyboppers and had never really listened discriminatively.

And this is the general situation in Britain these days. In spite of the success of thought provoking masterpieces like Sunny Afternoon and Waterloo Sunset, the image of the early days of those super-chorded sprung rhythms has stuck here, and the fact that for some time they seem to have been relatively inactive has contributed to the impression.

Meanwhile, back in the USA, the Kinks have earned themselves quite a different status. Perhaps 'learned' is the wrong word - changes of status, whether positive or negative, are given, only seldom earned. Their status in the States is due rather to a more attentive audience - look at the altogether more interested reception given to 'Village Green' - than their own efforts. Record buying opinion, above the soapy-throat ballad level, is not easily swayed by efforts at image-changing. Nothing so trivial can account for the US attitude towards them, and any examination of their material indicates that they deserve more distinguished attention over here.

Trivial music arouses no interest or comment, is ignored. For anything to receive either extreme praise or extreme criticism is in itself an indication of some kind of profundity, and aspects of recent Kinks output have been labelled 'revisionist' by some Mao-orientated groups. Such views are, in my opinion, absolutely mistaken and their causes are not hard to find. A lot of Kinks songs concern the working man - this is especially true of their latest album 'Arthur' - and in general, their manner of dealing with the proletariat has always been open to misunderstanding. They merely point out predicaments... the solutions are for theorists. Many would say of 'Dead End Street' that the people who live there are being satirised for their apathy, but Ray says: "Basically, everybody is a poor sod. Those people only stay there because they're afraid to get out".

Take 'Well Respected Man'. The song is purely a series of observations about the office worker trapped in his 9-5 syndrome. Purely observations. There is no recommendation for him to break out of his routine or to demand a more varied life. All conclusions are left to the listener and it's in this direction that the danger lies. Too many people are happy to let other people's words filter through the layers of their own preconceptions and ascribe the resultant nonsense to someone else's head. By this process, in many minds, Ray Davies is wrongly thought of as just a critic of his

own former background. Their own interpretation of his words is only one of many, but they take their view as his view, and their criticisms are often in effect merely a revelation of their own unconscious prejudices.

He is aware of this, and in conversation his intense concern for repressed and bullied individuals is very evident. He forcefully asserts that he is not laughing at people. He knows too well what it is like to be laughed at. He observes, and his refusal to offer concrete advice to the kind of people he is observing leaves him open to obvious misinterpretation. "I hate people saying 'Oh, here is a new Kinks record, it'll be a great tongue in the cheek record' because a lot of the time I'm trying to be deadly serious", he says. At the same time, he acknowledges that a certain amount of tempered cynicism and a sense of humour are necessary to make people think - witness 'Dedicated Follower'. Perhaps he overestimates a lot of people in believing that they are capable of reaching their own conclusions without some fairly obvious guidance. Even some people who basically understand him are very reserved in their public comments respecting his work, which they recognise as being thought-provoking, while evading the problem of giving their own personal point of view.

Some are less reserved. And rightly. A few years back, in the Observer, Barry Fantoni declared unashamedly that he thought Ray was the best songwriter of that time. In some fields, I'm sure he was, and is. Read almost any of today's poets' flaccid attempts to convey effectively the atmosphere of city life and a genuine nostalgic feeling for romance within our highly industrial-

ised society, and then give an ear to 'Waterloo Sunset' or 'Dead End Street'. I think you should then agree that to call Ray Davies the nation's leading urban folk poet is not a flamboyant exaggeration. The message of the six words 'sunday joint of bread and honey' outstrips the effect of 'Up the Junction' and 'Poor Cow' put together (though Donovan's soundtrack did relieve the tedium of the latter).

The new Kinks album, 'Arthur', will provide everybody with ample basis for re-assessing the Kinks. Even without the Granada production of the same name (written jointly by Ray Davies and Julian Mitchell), the success of this self-sufficient, fifty minute collection of twelve songs seems guaranteed. Many of the subjects dealt with needed attention, and few of them have been so well brought into focus by songs before. After 'Arthur', people will think more carefully before being conned into that £10 trip to Australia; they'll laugh at politicians' vacuous talk of selective conscription (the need for so much transparent advertising crap portraying the army as one big happy football team already shows that the military mentality is as dated as cod-pieces); they'll re-examine the Churchill myth; wonder why people ever bother to read Hickey/Greville type columns; look back to their pubescent days; question their relationship with Britain as an entity; ponder the ramifications of a widening generation gap; and rethink the concept of personal possession. And much more. If they really listen.

Yep. Think about the decline and fall of empires, look back and look forward; and re-assess the Kinks. Ian.



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Everybody knows the secret,
Everybody knows the score;
Stevie Winwood is a winner,
Eric Clapton is a bore.

And Blind Faith is better than Cream, but not any-
where near as good as Traffic.

The scene now shifts to a TV studio, where
a panel show is in progress. The show is called
'Can You Dig It?'. The contestant comes out and
tells what turns him on. The m.c. then asks the
panel "Can you dig it?". If the panel, made up of
five famous swingers, says "Outsight!" then the
contestant is a swinger and is allowed to mingle
with the In Crowd, but if they say "It's a bummer",
the contestant clasps an asp to his breast and dies
in disgrace.

Also on Captain Badmouth's shitlist... the
MC5. Dull/loud.

On the A list (goodies)... Cat Mother and the
All night Newsboys. Fun/loud - simple rock 'n'
roll done well.

In New York there are, or were, sex news-
papers with names like 'Kiss', 'Screw' and 'Plea-
sure'. The police are trying to harass them off
the stands. We have been writing fictional, spicy
stories for 'Kiss', the first (appearing this week)
concerning a rock star and his 12 year old fan.
We are also in the process of writing a book about
the history of lead guitar, and the sexual advent-
ures of a growing boy. (Huh?). It's called 'Sup-
per in Space'.

The Kinks are coming to America in October.
Hooray! It'll maybe make up for the paltry music
being offered since the Mafia caused The Scene to
close down.

We're on this big anti-snobbery kick. By
snobbery is meant putting down people like Tommy
James and the Shondells, who have a hit here at
the moment called 'Crystal Blue Persuasion'. The
'hip' stations do not play this record... in fact one
dogsucking snob gave the record as an example of
the sort of thing he would never play. Then the
twerp proceeds to play Phil Ochs. Phil Ochs has
never recorded anything that can touch 'Crystal
Blue Persuasion' or the Shondells' last big hit -
'Crimson & Clover'. Most of the Shondells' stuff
isn't as good as these two, but goddam... credit
where credit is due.

Heard a track called 'Flying Horse of Luis-
iana' by Knowbody Else. It's on the Hip label -
Hip is the ofay branch of StaxVolt. If the rest of
the record can touch 'Flying Horse', then the
Knowbody Else is fantastic.

I'm getting awfully sick of people who hit
you for spare change in the street. I like smiling
at strangers when I go for a walk, but half of the
people I smile at immediately want money. Spoiled
brats.

Lower East Side slang of the month: This
cat is playing his guitar when a squadron of evil
spades with rifles come through the door and rip
off his guitar. Rip off means to steal... the phrase
having replaced 'take off' (I took his dope off) and
its archaic root 'off' (I offed his dope).

Tooka lotta listening to understand/hear the
Beck-ola album - partly because our phonograph
was malfunctioning for a while and would have noth-
ing to do with the record, especially side two, and
partly because it takes a lot of listening to under-
stand/hear Beck. He still surprises the shit out of
me.

We played with Creedence Clearwater in New
Jersey. They are so fine. John Fogerty, who is
responsible for those songs, that lead guitar and
that singing, told us that all his songs were based
on Beatles structures - I don't know if he was kid-
ding. Their new album is as good as can be - with
surprises too... like the old standard 'Night time
is the right time', which they do gloriously.

Album by Raven is good - they're the only
blues band that I'd rank with Taj Mahal and Canned
Heat. They're from New York.

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Tom Fogerty, Stu Cook, Doug Clifford and John Fogerty

What's in a name? Creedence Clearwater Revival

The Blue Velvets (1958-1963) became the Golliwogs (1963-1967), who became Creedence Clearwater Revival (1967-?) - a name which, according to Time magazine, was contrived to indicate simultaneously "their belief in themselves, and something deep, true and pure, through which the light always shines". When I read that, I could just picture the band seeing how far they could stretch the credulity of the gullible, straight reporter; so the other week, when, by the courtesy of Liberty Records, I was able to speak to John Fogerty - the group leader, spokesman, vocalist, lead guitarist, arranger and producer - I asked him about it.

"Yes, that was our press agent. He got really carried away; most of it was a lot of boloney - much too poetic, you know - we don't think in terms like that... yeah, that was really corny".

"Our name is what it is, firstly because it sounds good... that's the main criterion for a name, especially for a group when they're trying to get noticed and known. Creedence was the actual name of a friend of the group, not a close one, but we admired his name, which was what brought him to our attention - he was called Creedence Newball." At this point, I began to envisage a smirking Fogerty at the other end of the phone - wondering how far he could stretch my credulity. "The other parts are a bit corny I guess... but the Revival was... like, I'd just got out of the army,

and the band had been together all this time, but floundering... and we needed a resurgence or a revival within ourselves. It had nothing to do with a Rock 'n' Roll revival, or a Good Time revival, or that sort of thing... it was just a personal thing. The Clearwater part came from an anti-pollution TV commercial... you know, not crudding up the rivers and bay, and the song that was going on in the back was 'I can give you clear water', and I was really struck by that - so that's the only poetic part of the whole thing."

The Blue Velvets, who were Fogerty, Stu Cook (bass), and Doug Clifford (drums), were all 13, and played around San Francisco and Oakland at sock-hops. (All the flat top cats and the dungeree dolls, are heading for the gym for the sock hop ball! - Little Richard... ah, the mysterious of teenage America). Their sharp tuxedo/Tony Curtis image was replaced, after some managerial insistence, by casual shagginess in a contrived modernisation programme, which also encompassed name and repertoire changes - mainly to imitations and derivatives of pre-acid revolution West coast stuff. But "outside obstacles, mainly the Military" were major factors determining their failure to surface during the 'boom'. "Some of us were in the service, and it's pretty hard to convince your CO to let you go to San Francisco and freak out".

Lack of original direction was obviously

another reason for their remaining a local group - Fogerty admits that attempted commerciality was the main ingredient of their music at the time. Also, in contrast with the nationally popular Bay area bands, they seemed to have no 'cause'... they did not advocate revolution, freedoms, or tout acid.

"Ah no. Just because we didn't and still don't go around shouting "kick out the jams", that doesn't mean we don't have any causes... but I think it's silly to say the same thing over and over in every song... pretty soon people wouldn't listen to you anymore, like the boy who cried 'Wolf'. But anyway, the first thing we are is entertainment - we're a rock'n'roll band, and actually, I don't think anybody would be interested if I said I was against the war. I mean, if Elvis Presley said he was against the war, it wouldn't bother me to know what he thought. I don't think it's the role of rock musicians to make that their thing, but if they do choose to... if it's entertaining - OK, or if it makes you think - alright, but hearing the same theme with different words through a whole album does get rather boring. Many of our songs are orientated to different facts of life, I guess, but it should be done subtly if its going to be entertaining at the same time... I mean, anyone down on the corner can say "peace!" or "smoke dope".

The ultimate name change occurred when John got out of the army, and the 'floundering' group, a quartet since brother Tom Fogerty had joined in 1965, did the traditional seclusion/six months/rehearsal/emergence to the recording studios bit. Fantasy Records, to which they were contracted as the Golliwogs, had undergone a change of ownership in their absence, and the

new owner - Sol Zaentz - gave Fogerty the opportunity to record his songs.

Paradoxically, the ensuing success of this 'Third Generation' Frisco group, as Ralph Gleason called them, stemmed from the recording they made of 'Susie Q', a song they have been doing in their act for over 6 years; but it was the new album material, particularly that which suggested the rejection of straight life for the leisure of the Bayou country which, as well as hooking the hip audience, increased their nightly earnings a literal thousandfold in less than a year.

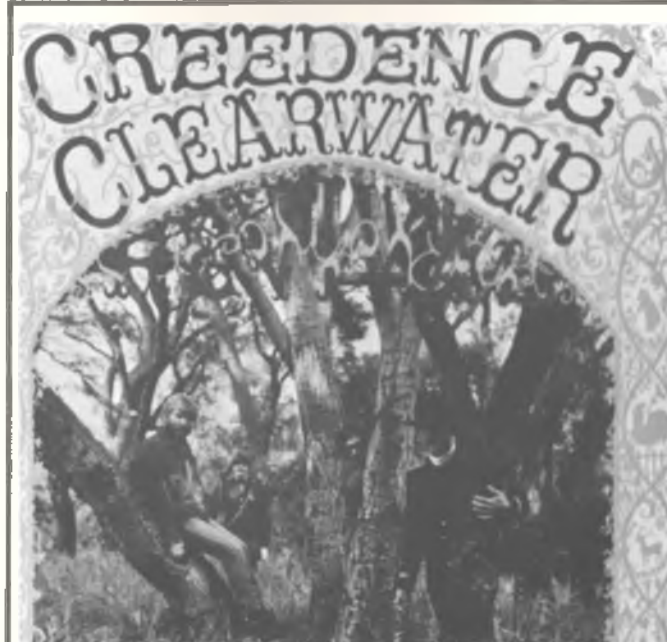
I was intrigued to learn why, since they were obviously not natives, so many of his songs were concerned with the Gulf area.

"Well, the folk Americana of that area is, to me, very real - though intellectually, I can say that that's a really corny reason. But the slowed down pace of not having to rush off to work every morning and so on - it just sort of represented an anti 20th century approach... besides the fact that so many of the people I like came from that area."

Side two of their new album 'Green River' (released next month), begins with 'Bad Moon Rising', which, musically and technically, has great shovelfuls of the 'You're right, I'm left, she's gone' part of the Presley/Jordanaires era - especially the treble guitar notes slotted into the last chorus... but Fogerty denies any circular trend;

"I read about it every day... supposedly, now in this country, we are the spearhead of a rock'n'roll revival, which I think is a load of hogwash, because rock has always been the centre of

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MARSHA

Z. Do you find that you have a lot of things to fight against - the public image from 'Hair' and Vogue and so on?

M. Sure. The crazy thing is that I live a very divided life... I mean, sometimes I am that model, and on the other hand I'm the singer, and then on a completely different level, I was that person who ran in and out of the Shaftsbury Theatre, and getting that together. No-one seems to be able to put me anywhere, because I am associated with the above board things like fashion, and I think that's good - the less that I can be identified, the more categories I can be dispersed among; the better off I am... It gives me more room to move around.

But to me, none of them are pretences, but different sides of me which I am fortunate enough to be able to surface all at the same time. But the thing I fight hardest is being a chick... because it really is a drag. In work it's a drag - the bands don't know how to relate to you... they don't know whether they're relating to you as a chick, or like just another musician, and anything you put down they're not sure how to take because they still identify you as a woman first. It's kinda funny... I feel sexless on stage - I'm neither man nor woman. I mean, I do Jagger's 'Sympathy for the devil' and I don't play that little game - like the first line is "Please allow me to introduce myself, I'm a man of wealth and taste". Well, I sing "I'm a man of wealth and taste", and when I'm singing it, I'm pretty damn well a man at that point. It's funny because a lot of people think I'm terribly butch, and in a way I guess it's a defence to counteract all that femininity that exists on the other side - like every time I sit down in front of a photographer for a page in Vogue. I think musically, as far as my head is concerned, there's no time for being a woman - there's just time for laying things down in a chick's way. I mean, when I move I'm obviously not moving up there like a real man... I mean, not like a real man.

Z. In a previous interview you mentioned that you went to a Black Power meeting over here, and it seemed like a pretty bad trip to you...

M. Well, it wasn't a bad trip. It was just that I went thinking that it was going to be one thing, and it was something entirely different - I got the impression that I was visiting, when I didn't go to visit

but to be a part. Perhaps the problem was my own... I didn't exactly feel that I belonged there. A lot of the things they discussed were things which I didn't really understand - I mean, I'm not suffering here, and in that I'm not suffering and that I know no-one that's suffering, I don't know what their problems are - I just know that you can't get a flat if you want one and that gets a bit heavy, and I do know that ghettos exist. I don't really understand them, because the things you suffer in America, you don't suffer here... not on the same level.

Z. I first saw you onstage about two years ago - with the Steampacket.

M. That was still the era of shy Marsha, looking down at her feet. I mean, they used to have to beat me before I went out on stage.

Z. That was after a period with Alexis Korner, an R&B thing?

M. Right. The funny thing was, I didn't shout and scream then at all. I literally sung each song like it was 'Love is a many splendoured thing' at The Talk of the Town, and that was the whole problem - everybody wanted me to rip loose and rave more, and I couldn't get into it.

Z. When did you start ripping loose?

M. Oh well, I'm still not ripping loose - I mean, I scream and holler a little bit more, but I wouldn't call it screaming in the R&B sense... It tends to be sporadic - suddenly out of nowhere I'll start screaming and, like, yell a little, but I still don't think that my vocal approach is in any way an R&B style.

Z. What style then?

M. I'm just influenced as anyone is; influenced without being aware of it - picking things up and not knowing it at the time. I have been close, musically, to a lot of people - at one point it was John Mayall, at another it was Marc Bolan, and people will say they hear those things in your voice. But I haven't injected them purposely.

Z. You said earlier that you were very together with White Trash. Did their playing make you sing hard?

M. Definitely - I sang much harder with White Trash than I've ever sung in my life, and they en-

couraged it. My voice is low anyway, but they always got me to sing a couple of notes higher than I thought I should have, and in doing that you push a little more, and you do find new things in your voice when you push harder. They were really incredible for me, and without them I just couldn't exist as I do now.

Z. They pushed a little too far though...

M. Yeah, they pushed a little far and the voice split. I didn't really think it was fair of me to continue to ask them to turn down, because that was part of their presence... it would have been like insisting that I scream a lot louder than I was capable of doing, so it was only fair for both of us to go our separate ways, though what we had together was very beautiful.

Z. The new band (Pleasure) is less heavy then?

M. It's not less heavy, it's just a completely different thing. First of all, we don't have an organ, which means it tends not to be as melodic, it tends not to have the same intricate arrangements that one could anticipate with White Trash, but it's still what I want to do... it's still basic. The lead guitarist is excellent, and the nice thing is, he plays what I feel without me having to ask him to play that way. I just hope that what happened to White Trash doesn't happen with this band - I don't want them to be considered a backing band. I mean, I would like to feel a part of the group... I really don't want to do a star bit.

Z. You've been using a lot of extra drums...

M. Well, now I'm not. We tried using a few conga drums and it obviously needed a lot of rehearsal and a lot of patience, and we had 4 days before the Isle of Wight concert and that's not really enough for any band, let alone a band you're trying something new with.

Z. You've been doing a lot of Continental gigs?

M. Yes, it's hilarious. I did a gig in Morocco too - I went over to sing for the king's birthday, and it was so weird. Everybody was speaking in French outside of the TV studios - that really got my head into speaking French - then I got into the studio and they asked me if I spoke Spanish, which completely blew my mind. My French wasn't good enough for them, and I didn't understand enough Spanish, so we played this huge game and it was a nice show - it was good doing it.

I'd been to Belgium once before to do an R&B gig, but when they found out I wasn't Aretha Franklin in disguise, I lost the job. And this time when I went over they did this whole huge tap-dance, and I didn't know what for - I couldn't understand why the people knew me. But the whole thing on the continent is funny... they're not really sure how to take me... I guess I'm even suffering from that.

Z. Why did you originally come over to England?

M. To get away from America, and all the paranoia.

Z. You don't find any paranoia here?

M. I'm not into the same thing, so... I mean, it was like living in a slightly junked up campus community - the man was knocking at the door all the time trying to find things. I'm less involved in that now.



At the moment I'm working so much, I'm never home long enough to worry about anyone knocking on the door.

Z. Apparently David Jacobs laid something pretty surprising on you, much the same as once happened to Mick Jagger on a TV studio programme?

M. That was absolutely absurd. He made an outrageous statement - that he knows I'm a drug taker, and my friends are drug takers. Doesn't it get a little boring to talk about things like that to people? Like I'm tired of explaining, because you can't explain what it's like to be black, what it's like to be a chick and so on. Discussing the drug thing is really getting out of hand because it's being discussed on such inane levels, as not even to be understandable. But it has much more effect on the public - people believe every word they say, and it's really a load of bullshit.

Z. The Jagger thing was similar - full of generalisations about 'degrading filth' and so on.

M. Oh yeah. I was hit with the whole immorality bit. But why is my or Jagger's opinion about morality anymore valid than the little old lady next door who drives a cortina? The whole Jagger thing is ridiculously funny - the numbers that people put down on him, he must be a total giant to survive all that. He's a man who's gone through a lot of heavy changes and because of that, has the presence he has. I mean, can you imagine what it must have been like to exist for four years and every time you walked outside there were thousands of chicks after you, and every statement you made, people took it to be either the word of the devil or the word of God?

Z. Don't you think that in a lot of cases, for people socially committed there is something to say?

M. Oh yes. For people like Zappa, people who feel they do have something to say, who feel that what they say will affect others. I don't really feel that way.

Z. You just feel as a musician, or an actress?

M. I just, like, feel. John.



Beauty & the beast: Marsha buys an ornate belt made by Ginger, our 'talisman'. Photo by Macleod. Photo on previous page by Graham Hughes.



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The Youngbloods

by Mac Garry

Visually, Jesse Colin Young used to resemble the standard American creep. He wasn't quite in the Frankie "please-don't-muss-my-hair" Avalon bracket, but had the studied casual aspect of the folk-boom smoothie folksinger - which he was... 'spanning folk, blues and pop, often producing a curious and happy combination of the three'. That is to say, he wasn't so different from the hordes of American singers of the period, and like most, he was snapped up by the breadmen when they were glutting the folk artery in the early 60s. After a grand total of 3 professional appearances, US Capitol signed him and released an album which is untraceable (I've been looking for years) like his second which was called 'Young Blood', and came out on Mercury in mid 65.

Shortly after this he paired up with a very successful (locally) Boston area folk/blues singer called Jerry Corbitt, and as a duo they made a Mercury single - 'Hey babe!'. More changes - nominally, musically and geographically: they became Jesse Colin Young and the Jerry Corbitt Trio, Jesse Colin Young and the Lonely Knights, Jesse Colin Young and the Youngbloods, and ultimately, just the Youngbloods, when they left the slack East Coast during the San Francisco gold rush. They had, by then, developed into a fully co-ordinated and unified folk/rock/blues group, with a 'relax and have fun' musical policy - a style born of a fusion of good-time, jug band, and other East coast rock influences. In fact, they just picked up any ideas that suited the song in hand, and implemented them - but despite this absolute eclecticism, they still had a stamp of originality, their own personality, though their work wasn't staggeringly innov-



ative.

They signed with RCA Victor, who had (same old story) no idea what they had or how to handle them, using the band as a segment of their abysmally conceived 'Groupquake' hype. Their first album, establishing their 'easy to dig anytime' music, was recorded in late 66 with Felix Pappalardi twiddling the knobs. "I was a session musician when Herb Gart, their manager, called and asked if I'd like to produce the album", he said in a *Crawdaddy* interview. "I hadn't developed any style whatsoever, and the object at that point was just to get the album done. It took a long time, and I hear, 28 or 29 thousand dollars... it was unbelievable".

They spent all that bread on the record, and then goofed on the sleeve, which was, as Robert Somma (again in *Crawdaddy*) said, "particularly ugly, really repulsive in the studied lack of imagination". There's been a grubby, well fingered copy of the record in One Stop's import rack for as long as I can remember, so it was probably just as well it wasn't released over here - though it did well commercially in the States. And it does contain the definitive version of 'Get together' - the anthem of the American head revolution, the Youngbloods' live version of which has contributed as much to the San Francisco love vibrations as the Grateful Dead or the Diggers. The song (it's just been released here as a single, due to its top 10 success in the States - it took three years) was written by Dino Valente (or Chet Powers as his commercial pimps called him at the time), whose own version doesn't exist on record.

The second album, illogically (to me) called 'Earth Music' (late 67), was also stuffed with goodies, but was again packaged by buffoons. For the sleeve, the photographer must have said "OK boys, we'll go to the woods and get some groovy location shots which we can also use in the teen pix mags". On top of that, it was advertised in the straights' idea of hip vernacular - 'Underground super sound - a new electrock album which is elsewhere!' (It reminds me of a cinema advert in which John Mills declared the magazine he was touting to the kids to be "really with it". Amazing!).

The Earth Music varied from ordinary to very good - listen to 'All my dreams blue' and 'Dreamer's dream', and you'll see how Jesse Colin Young improved as the group progressed. But technically the record wasn't much to get excited about - it was still a mediocre production. But by this time, the Youngbloods were standing on solid reputation - Ed Murray in *Broadside* magazine said "They are the most versatile group performing today, producing music ranging from ragtime, through mid 50s rock, to contemporary sounds, with technical perfection and a fantastic degree of involvement".

But still their appeal was limited even within the hip community - they still weren't billtoppers (go and check on the SF posters in the Dog Shop). They were appreciated, but every critic had his reservations... eg Monroe Stoner in *Vibrations*: "Their name really suits them - a combination of youthfulness, freshness and vitality, with old rock blood. They made everyone so goddam happy and elated that they got a standing, screaming ovation (at the Fillmore East in dec 68). I had to admit to enjoying them, but I didn't become involved".

'Elephant Mountain', supposedly a lump of

Californian topography, mythical or otherwise, and also the title of their third album, converted tepid reception to deluging enthusiasm. "One of the most encouraging albums I've heard in months" said *Rolling Stone*. "Invariably superb" said *IT* (in 2 consecutive issues). "They present a perfect synthesis of just about everything that's happening in American rock" said *Fusion*. "38 minutes of beautiful music" said the *LA Free Press*.

And yes... it's all of that and more, and RCA have released it here. Amazing! The Youngbloods, a trio since Jerry Corbitt left for a solo career (album on Polydor), have become, as Robert Gold says in the *LA Free Press* "everything a San Francisco band is supposed to be: they're loose, they're groovy, they write their own material and it is excellent, they play their axes with great assurance and skill and a fair amount of originality, they sing together pleasantly, phrasing deftly and supporting each others' voices beautifully. Their songs are about girls and boys, sun shine and rain, getting high and staying there, the beauty of nature, the nature of dreams, the dream of beauty".

The first track 'Darkness Darkness', which opens with unbelievably heartwarming strings and features a wondrously ringing guitar solo, shows a departure from the somewhat thin sound structure of the earlier records, to an altogether richer, more vibrant, more thoughtful approach to writing, playing and recording technique. It's a treasure, and exemplifies the feel of the, not exactly reborn or revitalised so much as well recorded/newly confident Youngbloods, who seem to have retained the happy spirits which the Spoonful lost. All the facets of the group's style are represented, from the blithe country 'Smug', through the jugbandy 'Rain Song', to the rocking 'Sham', and the entire easy groovin' production foams with elegance and gentle laughter.

Photographs of the group aren't plentiful, and the one we've used is the best we could find. Jesse Colin Young (bass/guitar/vocals) is the tall one, Joe Bauer (drums) is the blond one, and Banana (piano/guitar/vocals) is the be-goggled one, shown to better advantage as the sinister curly figure peering off the back of the sleeve.

Elephant Mountain is certainly one of the best American records released recently and I truly hope it's not destined for oblivion. Give the Youngbloods a chance; you know it makes sense.

The Youngbloods
Earth Music
Elephant Mountain

LSP 3724
LSP 3865
SF 8026.



JUST GROOVING ALONG AND DOING MY THING MAN

Jeff Claves

Easy Rider - "the movie that tells it like it is", says the publicity machine... Easy Rider, prizewinner at a film festival somewhere or other, much vaunted creation of Peter Fonda (son of famous film liberal dad) and aging hippie Dennis Hopper (who was a juvenile lead in *Giant* - the James Dean epic) is being given the full hard sell treatment. This alone is enough to put me right off - the timely arrival of a well publicised movie about motorbikes/drugs/hard travelling/rock and revolution seems awfully like rich Hollywood kids jumping on an already overcrowded bandwagon and raises all my worst suspicions.

However, the film is much better than that; it's no masterpiece, it's not great art, but it does raise some pertinent questions about what is going on now - ie what many like to call 'The Revolution'. The film concerns the adventures of 'Captain America' and 'Billy', who, having made a killing selling cocaine, stash the take into their petrol tanks of their Harley Davidsons and set off across America to visit the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. The beginning of the film is terribly slow and taxed my patience to the limit.... Captain America is established as the thinker, ie he broods and sets his jaw, and gazes into the distance a bit. Billy, played by Hopper, looks like a latterday Buffalo Bill and is amiable and dense. They both smoke... you know, 'smoke', through out the film. In fact, they both seem a bit thick, and I'm really not sure whether this is the intention of the film, or a limitation of their imagination and acting ability. Any way, after many lengthy shots of sunsets and the thinking Fonda, the film begins to warm up. The riders stay at the ranch of a happy farmer with hundreds of kids. The boys repair a bike while the farmer shoes a horse, they dine with the family - out of doors - grace is said, Billy



forgets to take off his hat, and a ponderous point is made about the value of the simple life. The farmer appears to have achieved the American dream, but we know nothing of the peons who work the farm. The film continually points up the affect of the appearance of our heroes on other people (Fonda wears black leathers and stars and stripes on his back, helmet and tank), and they are refused admittance at a roadhouse and take to sleeping outdoors. Soon they pick up a hitch-hiker, a silent bloke who looks like Clint Walker, and he leads them to a drop out community, and the film begins to get interesting. Our heroes (city boys?) were edgy at the farm, but in the commune, Billy, in particular, is completely out of place. Curiously, although the drop outs and Billy wear the same gear, their ethic is entirely different.

At this point, I begin to get an inkling that film had something to say about 'style' and the length of hair, etc, being not enough.... It's not appearance that changes things, it's ideas and the will to carry them out. The glimpse of commune life is interesting - their life is agricultural and seemingly polygamous, their style is christian simplicity/American pioneer, and they sow wheat by hand and pray for a good harvest. They are entertained by their own mime troupe. I felt that it wouldn't be long before the whole set up became puritanical and authoritarian, and they were running off strangers for looking at their women. I suspect that this sequence may have been filmed on an actual commune, and it had a fierce reality about it.

When Billy and Captain America leave the commune they head for the south, are arrested for 'taking part in a carnival cavalcade without a licence', and spend a night in the nick. There they meet George, memorably played by Jack Nicholson, who is a civil rights lawyer and plain

old fashioned drunk. George pulls a few strings and gets our heroes and himself out and decides to go to New Orleans with them... he digs out his old football helmet and a sleeping bag, and they hit the road again. George wears a crumpled linen suit and a parting pocket, but unlike our hip heroes, George knows what's going on. In a very funny sequence he smokes with Captain A and Billy, and launches on a garrulous but accurate dissertation about the nature of freedom, and we get to the real core of the film at last. The script is credited to Hopper/Fonda and Terry Southern, but, whether this part was written or ad-libbed by the actor, this is the first part of the film (with the exception of the music) that is worth listening to... the rest of the script is invariably monosyllabic and frequently inaudible.

Before George disappears there is a nasty scene in a roadside bar where the easy riders are treated to the observations of the local southern sheriff and his self appointed posse. In an atmosphere of barely suppressed violence, it becomes apparent that they are not going to be served and that they'll be beaten up if they stay any longer. The teenage girls in the bar obviously fancy the captain and Billy because of their different clothes, and Georges prophetic remarks about even appearance being a threat to the 'freedom' of straight American society begin to sound ominous.

From here on I found the film rather implausible and flat without George. Our heroes reach New Orleans but miss out on the Mardi Gras by going to a baroque brothel and tripping out with a couple of the girls instead. The LSD trip isn't badly done, it's just that the whole idea is a bit tired... there seems to be a muddled christian message somewhere in the core of this one, but maybe an oblique point is made about drugs getting in the way of things you want to do. Certainly Captain America, in a burst of garrulity, observes "we blew it Billy"... but Billy doesn't understand what he's talking about. The boys set off, rather sadly, on the return journey to the inevitable, but not overstated, climax, and George's prophecy is fulfilled.

The film is beautifully served by its music and, as in 'The Graduate', they've chosen good existing recordings rather than having music specially written. There was a credit list of bands at the end, but I can't remember most of them... Hendrix was instantly recognisable with a drug song, one of several in the film, and the Byrds were outstanding. Most of the music had a

country rock feel and sometimes images of riders, landscape and the music were superb.

The faults of the film were, I thought, its slow pace, over indulgent and narcissistic close ups on the riders and a general lack of tightness. But paradoxically, these are also the things which interested me most... because, unintentionally I suspect, the film reveals that that's how it is. Our heroes are no rebels - they are just business men who have a lucky break. They are passive, uncritical, and they are beguiled by the American Dream of the good life. Their route is via selling drugs; and beyond wanting to be left alone, there is no commitment - merely a bland acceptance. George's argument that even looking different puts one at risk in America is interesting but... while the machine makes huge profits from fashion and music and the most outspoken advocates of revolution and drug culture still find record companies, still go on world tours, still make enormous profits and demand fat fees, we must ask what risk? The outward appearance of things change, but underneath nothing changes. War is the health of the state - now as ever... I heard a member of a British rock band blandly tell a BBC interviewer that their music was "to cause a revolution". What a load of old rhubarb that is! It's precisely because they are such an empty threat that the new revolutionaries are allowed so much freedom to get on with it and 'do their thing'. What are the Beatles if not old fashioned capitalists?... they wear the clothes of the new revolution, but they are still managers and employers of other people - bosses we call them. And Lennon complained the other week that he was down to his "last £50,000 or so". While every newspaper in the country reported that Dylan was to receive £38000 for his IOW gig, he tells a reporter in the Sketch... "It's not the money I'm interested in, I just want to play music".

Of course, I can see that even

the mild non-conformity of Billy and Captain America does arouse hostility and even violence in the south, but to put the matter in perspective, they wouldn't raise a second glance on the West Coast. And anyway, just looking different isn't going to bring about any significant change in society, let alone a revolution. It's very difficult to judge how much Hopper/Fonda associate their views with the views of America/Billy... certainly the Captain's remark about "just grooving along and doing our thing" may well be their philosophy too. I can't help feeling that Hopper/Fonda are aligned very much with the emerging underground which seems to be dissipating its energies promoting Rock as the saviour of the world, muttering "just grooving man" to each other and making movies about free rock concerts and each other.

I wonder how many films will be made about the Isle Of Wight festival which will later be produced as evidence of the growing 'revolution'. What worried me about our heroes in Easy Rider was their complete incomprehension of the forces at work in America, their indifference to the fate of George, their deadening passivity. And the same thing worries me about pop festivals. Every newspaper and all TV and radio coverage pointed out how well behaved, how polite, how friendly people were on the IOW. Some interviews I heard on radio 4 with Dylan fans seemed to bear this out... of course, it may be mis-reporting, I don't know I wasn't there, but I suspect it's accurate enough. My response was how BLOODY PASSIVE they are! If the total effect of rock and pot is to produce this army of lotus eaters, we shall soon have state promoted pop festivals and pot on the NH. One reporter likened the spirit of the festival to the Aldermaston March... that's not how I remember it. In its heyday the march was anything but passive, and was thick with angry people who had ideas and energy. It was certainly not dreamy and introverted... obsessed

with a mad desire to disappear up its own musical arsehole.

The Melody Maker, in an other wise good coverage of the IOW, came up with the following gem... the organisers "should be congratulated for their enterprise and success in proving that music and youth is the most hopeful combination in Britain. Fans that tolerated 3 days of unavoidable discomfort, had come for something identifiably honest and real in a world of doubts, distortion and prejudice". The conartist who wrote that has probably convinced himself. Music and youth the most hopeful combination! - where's the evidence? In booming profits in the record industry; in fantastically rich singers and bands who write songs about revolution, but who are notoriously absent when anything happens and whose most revolutionary act is to be seen in the right macrobiotic restaurant or be caught in possession of cannabis; in a vast audience whose creative energy has been diverted entirely to increasing record sales?

I love Dylan's songs, I still think Sgt Pepper is a small masterpiece, Easy Rider is an honest, even a good film, but I can't pin any hopes of saving the world on Dylan and the Beatles or their fans, anymore than I believe that dropping out to form alternative societies will do the trick. If there is to be a revolution, then somehow we must take everyone along with it - the hip and the straight. The complacent and enjoyable game of being a revolutionary only in terms of dress and music, is, in Britain at least, dead safe and merely exaggerates the widening gap between the young and the middle aged, which is one of the greatest tragedies of western society.

"Something is happening, but you don't know what it is, do you Mr Jones?" I'm not sure that Dylan knows either, I'm certain Hopper/Fonda don't and I know I don't. Not knowing makes it exciting possibly, but it doesn't necessarily herald "something identifiably honest and real".

JEFF CLOVES

Another Clearwater Revival?

Out of the grey late-summer dust bowl of ashes that is Notting Hill Gate, rose a slightly battered phoenix in the shape of Clearwater Productions. Basically a head company formed to promote their own bands - Skin Alley and Trees - they began with little bread and one record company contract. They're still struggling, but the release of an album by Trees (through CBS), and the pending (deserved) success of High Tide, could straighten them out. They started by looking for venues for their bands, and to some degree managed it.

For three consecutive fridays the fabled All Saints' Hall rocked again - to the frustration of neighbours, council officials and Mothers' Unions. It was hardly a financial wow, but it gave new bands a chance to blow and be heard. Then it stopped. Just as radio announcements from Messrs Drummond and Peel had made the scene known. Possibly it'll get together on Thursdays, but whether it does or not, the hang-ups which Clearwater experienced in their first month or two of existence pinpoint two weaknesses in the current (or any) underground music revival. For a start, to get an agency/management/promotional thing going, you need a minimal amount of bread

and a gang (ie more than one) of hustlers constantly doubletalking to the straight entrepreneurs. Secondly - where the hell can you play? The prospects of decent venues - other than arse-ends of pubs - are remote anywhere in central London, and pretty impossible elsewhere. It's easy enough if you guarantee to make no noise, and can hire a hall for a fee that ensures a loss on bread taken at the door. So it's all down to money.

The music industry is one of mammoth hypes, but as soon as a band breaks through sans bullshit, sans everything, with the integrity to give and take from the underground, then perhaps the tables will be overturned in the temples of EMI House. Even John Peel's label, Dandelion (we're only in it for the musicians), owes its entire existence to large chunks of capital from CBS and Elektra. Presumably they think that with the cult-follower he has, they're going to come 'out for a £1'. It doesn't look as if they are at this stage, which in a way, is sad.

Anyway, Clearwater are still struggling, and now they have at least three bands who have improved enormously in the last few weeks. High Tide, who are affiliated to them, have an album out which lacks some of their stage onslaught, but



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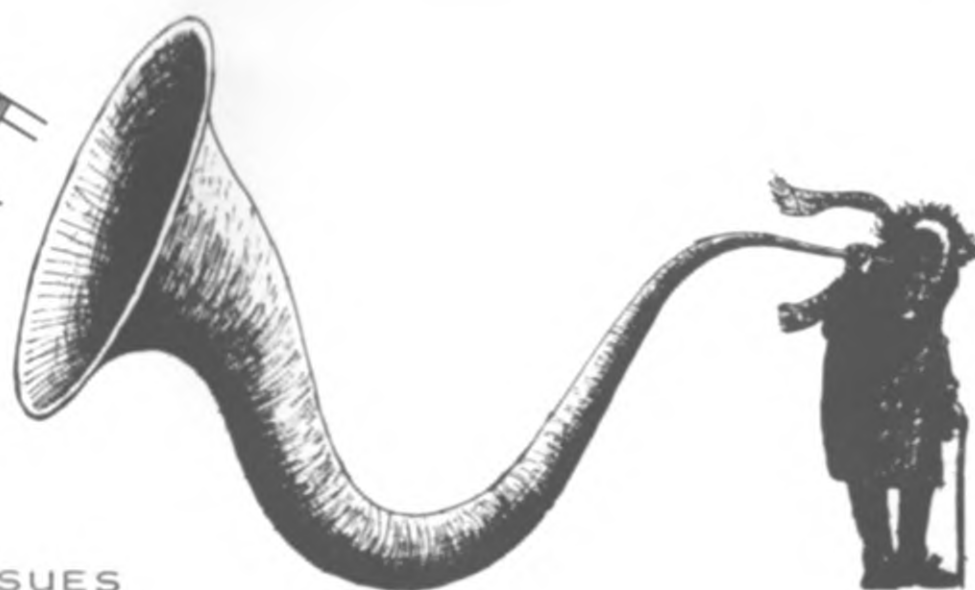
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TREES

previous page SKIN ALLEY

photographs by 'Jake'

which is worth buying to be numbed by the beauty of Simon House's violin, and Tony Hill's head slicing guitar. Onstage, their volume sometimes causes trouble with balance, but they produce the most spaced out sound I've ever heard. Try and hear them straight; it's a trip in itself.

Skin Alley, Trees and the unnamed Group X form the nucleus of Clearwater. Skin Alley has been around for some time - it's a rough jazz-driven sound, mainly powered by Christof's organ, and balanced by clever flute or sax under and overtones. The line-up is standard drums/bass/organ/flute or sax, but no lead, which is probably why they seemed to get the best reaction from the All Saints' audiences. They're recording soon too, and it's about time they did.

Trees have had a hard time. Formed only a matter of a few weeks ago, they've already laid down some tracks in the studio, and come smack up against the real hardness of the business. They have no bread, very little (and bad) equipment, and for most of the band, the few gigs they've played have been their first times in front of an audience. I first heard them in the studio where they live and rehearse, and they were fuller and more confident then than I've seen them since on live gigs. Their sound has an underlay of traditional folk, mainly supplied by the rich voice of Celia, which moves into rock patterns when Barry comes in on lead and Bias rocks away on organ and bass. It's good and original (any comparisons with the Fairport end here), but still a little hesitant. With better equipment and more encouragement, they'll be heard a lot more.

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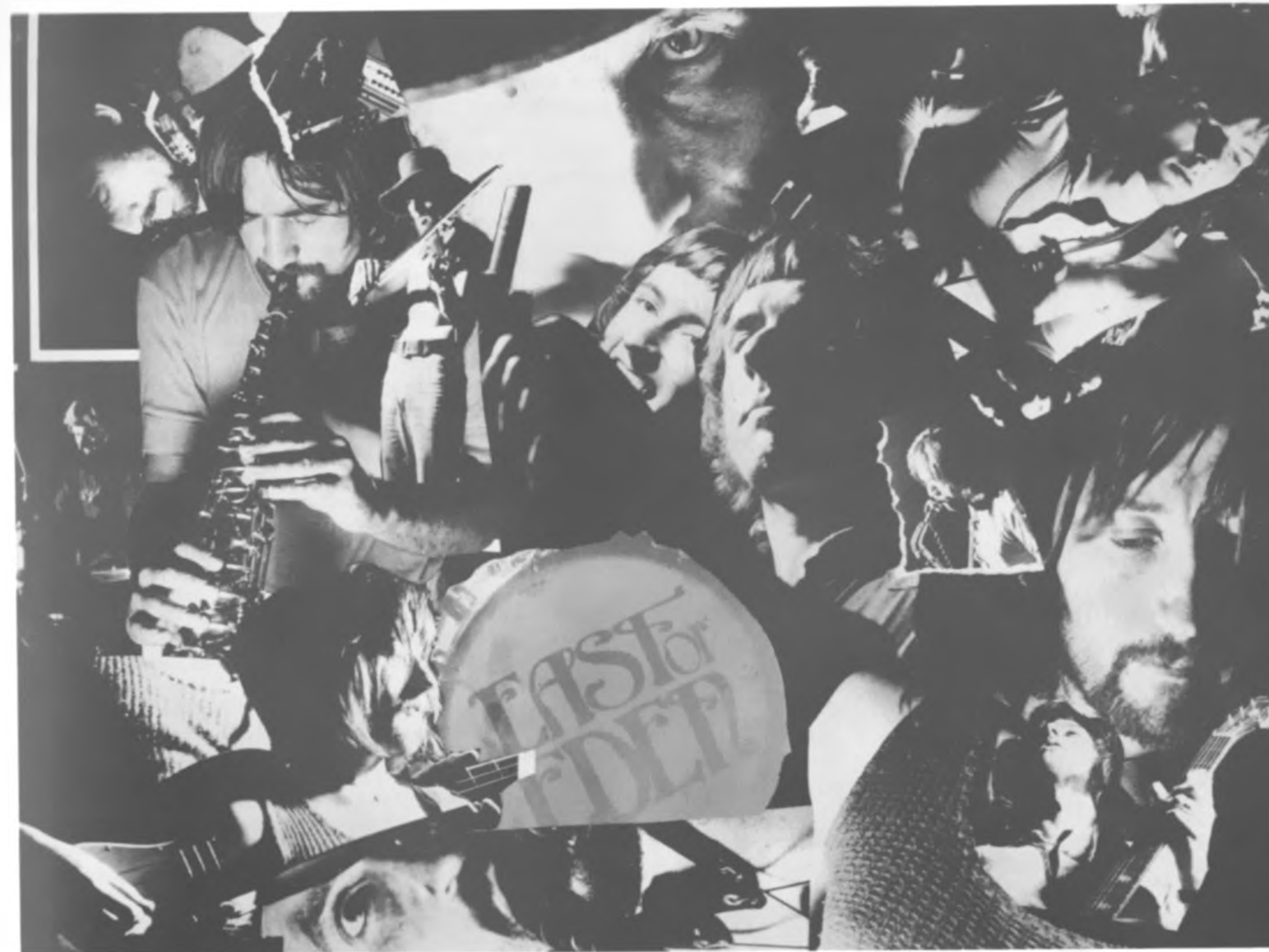
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East of Eden

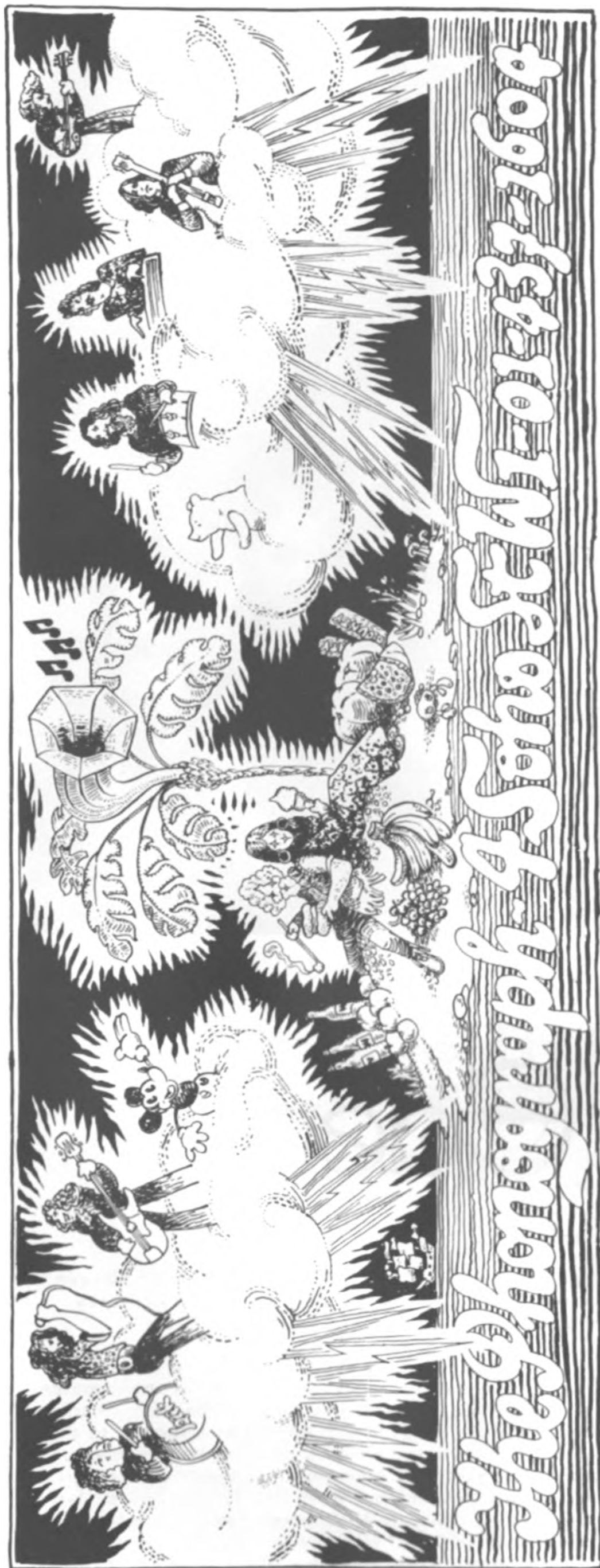
by JERRY FLOYD

It is unusual to find musicians who are stoically aware of the social significance of their music. "People are now very sophisticated about music", says Dave Arbus of East of Eden. "They know more about music than books or politics or painting. . . I don't know why - perhaps it's something to do with Dylan, or a plot on the part of the bourgeois press. On one level, we're happy to be playing the music we dig, but on a deeper level I'm not really happy with the music scene. Western culture as a whole is pretty messed up, and the music scene is a part of it".

In these days of the big hype, it doesn't necessarily follow that a famous group is better

than an unknown band. In fact many of the lesser known bands are better than those we regularly read about. Such a band is East of Eden.

The group is led by electric alto-soprano player Ron Gaines, who writes most of their material. His main influence is Charlie Parker - hence the jazz-rock label which has been attached to the group. The varied origins of the other members gives the music its rich texture; Geoff Britten on drums has had lessons from Philly Joe Jones, but was playing Country & Western before joining; on lead guitar is Geoff Nicholson, like Ron a disillusioned painter; Andy Sneddon plays bass; and Dave



Arbus, who plays alto and tenor (simultaneously), flute and electric violin. He's played straight violin in quartets and orchestras since he was fifteen and there is little doubt that he is the best and most experienced rock violinist in the business.

The group has witnessed the development of rock music over the years, yet fortunately retained their own style.

"I'd like groups to be more important - not in the way they are now, but if they took their music less seriously they could get into other things", continues Arbus. "For me, the only important group in the world is the Mothers of Invention... they have breadth, and they're multi-dimensional, whereas most groups are very narrow, just into music on one level.

"In the past few years things have got very polarized again; where the Beatles and Stones could get across to just about everybody, now you've got middle class pop, underground, bubblegum music and so on, with consequent social manifestations, like skinheads beating up guys with long hair. As for classical music, that's just another corner of the triangle and completely out of touch with the rest".

It is unusual to find a pop musician capable of articulating social criticism as intelligently as Arbus, but he's not on the same old boring pseudo-intellectual ego trip. He admits that amongst his favourite musicians are Brahms, Debussy, Ravel, Bartok and Coltrane, and similarly, he doesn't believe that everything underground is automatically good. "Gigs with honest audiences don't have to be underground. Underground clubs get bigger groups and the audiences get more narrow-minded and self conscious, turn on to being cool sitting there on some kind of pretended trip, like some symphony audience. I dig it when people try to enjoy themselves - it's nice when they dance.

"But I'm fairly happy in that a group like ours can survive and play its music and get across, because we don't compromise in any way whatsoever. We don't do anything that is consciously commercial, we just play our music, and we go down well, so in that respect the scene's good, it must be. But that's the only side of the scene I know, and the rest could be pretty sick, I'm not really sure about that. The BBC side of it is very sick, as we all know".

The group is currently recording a second album. Their first never did make it; "It was badly played, badly produced, badly promoted and presented, although the material on it was basically good... we still play music from it, and it goes down pretty well live. The new one will be heavier than the last, more instrumental and freer - nearer to what we do live... in the spirit of Beefheart and the Mothers in terms of production - we want a rawer quality using stage material and requests".

East of Eden is one of the most sophisticated and together groups playing anywhere at the moment and yet their music, as well as containing the eternal moving riffs of Parker and Mingus, has a direct and moving quality which is as old as rock itself.

Jerry Floyd, the author of this piece, is the famed DJ from the Country Club, Freeteasy, etc, etc, etc.

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL

continued from page 19

the circle, and different things shoot off in different directions. Rock will take what it wants - gospel, folk, jazz, c&w, etc - and discard the rest for awhile. But I don't think rock'n'roll ever left - people may have got sidetracked for awhile, but there's no revival as such".

What I was driving at was what seemed to be a personal return to old techniques and ideas, rather than anything on a national scale, and I pointed out that 'Bad Moon' had definite earmarks of the 50s which weren't apparent in any (many) other rock records of the late 60s.

"I see what you mean... when the song first came out here, I told someone that it took me ten years to write it." (A likely story). "When a songwriter sits down to write a song, he may write 100 that are close, but not the exact song he was trying to get at. In 'Bad Moon's case, I was trying to write that song for ten years, and so when I started, it was the Presley era". (Hey, just how gullible do you think I am?).

"What about these experiments into elec-

tronics that you said would be appearing on your next album?"

"Oh, that'll be something that happens very slowly - we won't make a whole movement into it, we'll just touch on it to start with. Like the track 'Sinister Purpose' uses stereo as an instrument - a sort of whining, feedback idea, but we'll never do a 100% jump into it - it takes years to get into a new style, so we're just bringing it in slowly as we feel like it".

A good singer and musician John Fogerty may be, but he's also an ace question evader, ball spinner to support sudden ideas and whims, and an expert at misleading telephone interviewers. I've seen 6 phone interviews he's done, participated in one, and read an in person discussion... and the number of times he contradicts himself is incredible. Whether this is a form of amusement (and fair enough if it is - I'd get pretty sick of being asked questions all the time), or even some form of self-deception (which in his spheres is not uncommon), I really don't know. Maybe "when the weather is clear" and the group come to England, someone will be able to establish some sort of rapport with him and perhaps find some of the real answers.

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Rod Yallop photographer 56 64273.

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ups

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ZIGZAG

ZIGZAG WANDERINGS

It seems that we have attained some kind of parochial image - probably because Friars at Aylesbury crops up a lot in the magazine. But the point is that the audience there has so much more cohesion than most London audiences, and what's more, a sense of real happiness and friendliness permeates the place. At a recent Implosion, I was amused by the number of lonely people who were wandering bewilderedly, pretending to be on some mission of great import, and not having any idea how to enjoy themselves. Mick Softley was singing folk songs in the bar, and one got the impression that most people were too embarrassed to look at him or listen, because his repertoire was slightly outside their terms of reference - and anyway, no one had told them he was a good performer. Mind you, the Roundhouse audience wasn't, for some unknown reason, very enthusiastic about anything that evening. Usually the atmosphere is tremendous and it's a very good place to see bands.

But in some cases, it is all happening in the sticks, and it's good to see that I.T. intend to do some link work. St Albans for example is FULL of creative people - poets, painters, sculptors, craftsmen and musicians, and so on - and their work is exceptional. A St Albans based group - Soft Cloud - is certainly one of the most interesting, musically and vocally, groups I have seen for a long time.

Anyway, Dave Williams has been awarded 27 points (the maximum).

The Isle of Wight. We had three people down there - Rod, Mac and Ginger, but, since the subject has been covered by nearly every other organ in the world, we aren't printing anything on it. (We apologise to anyone, especially John Lennon, who was abused by Ginger... he does tend to get carried away sometimes).

'Buy the original recording of Everybody's Talkin' by Nilsson, screams the advert. Whilst Nilsson is a tremendous singer, his version palls beside the real original by Fred Neil. It's only available on an import album ST 2665 from Musicland, but is imperative listening.

Because council officials refused permission for the people of Warwick to hold a concert of poetry, mime and music in a local park, the Edgar Broughton Band (natives of the town and prospective performers) hired a truck complete with generator, and blocked the town for about three hours, playing to about 1000 heads and Hells Angels. Any constables attempting to curtail the festivities were politely led away by the Angels, and the proverbial good time was had by all. An amazing spectacle - the sight of Edgar dominating the stage is awesome enough... what must he have looked like in Warwick High Street.

If Phillips withdrew Je t'aime because of prole opinion, let's hope for their sake and that of their 'decency image', that the same critics don't ever hear the Virgin Fugs LP which they released a couple of months back. I'd like to hear them trying to defend their principles on that one.

I saw East of Eden for the first time the other week, and their music really made me feel happy. Such is my ignorance, I was unaware that they had an album out. I'm obviously missing out on a lot of information about Decca stuff (I must be reading the wrong papers) because I recently heard a record called From Genesis to Revelation, which is quite pleasant, despite having been produced by Jonathan King.

New albums that I spend a lot of time with are the Kinks, the new Kaleidoscope import, Lothar & the Hand People, Rolling Stones, High Tide, Steve Miller and Van Morrison. I also like the new Aynsley Dunbar, which is far more interesting than its predecessors. Not only is the music very thoughtful, it's got a classic sleeve. Thought + skill + taste = A+. Whenever I see Aynsley Dunbar I think of Tim Rose, and smile. When he first came over, he used the Retaliation as a backing group, and tried to insist that they wore a 'uniform' of those Marks & Spencer slip-over-bogus-roll-necks. I could never share an enthusiasm for Tim Rose - I don't think he can sing either. (Letters from irate Kangaroo lovers).

Albums I wish I had the bread for include John Sebastian, and Creedence's Green River.

Amazing but true dept: Frank Zappa isn't quite as inventive as we had believed. There is a record of the Utah Symphony Orchestra on Vanguard 11048, playing 'L'homme et son desir', written in 1918 by Milhaud. "He anticipated such composers as Stockhausen by half a century" says the sleeve. The Uncle Meat Theme is virtually a copy of the work. Um.

It appears from the fervour and clamouring that Graham Bond, once he resolves some of his present problems, is destined for the bright lights again. He's attempting to re-assemble his original Organisation for an Albert Hall concert.

Dick Lawson is now writing for Rolling Stone. (Local boy makes good). Meanwhile, Rod Yallop has been so pre-occupied with Jethro Tull and Blind Faith albums, and Argent acetates, and orgasmic praises of the Soft Machine, etc, that he's forgotten to take any photographs this month.

One of the most boring ways to spend time is listening to other people's troubles - especially financial ones. So, unless hooked by curiosity, skip this paragraph. Instead of eroding the debt incurred when we started the magazine, we are, despite encouraging circulation expansion, plodding very slowly but surely, deeper into debt, as a result of the printing cost/distribution percentage mainly. We are sure that this is only part of the temporary teething troubles experienced in any venture, but to help rectify our plight, we are holding another benefit (see advert opposite). So please, for your sakes as well as ours, come and join in the bacchanalian romping and fine music. And to the people helping us, our sincerest thanks.

Like the man says: "Here comes the sun, it's alright".

DRAWING BY SQUEAK

