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The Doors

MAD SHADOWS/MOTT THE HOOPLE

2nd album recorded live in the studio/produced by Guy Stevens

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THE DOORS

I don't know what sort of an idiot attempts to compress the entire Doors story into 2 pages, but that's what we're about to do; so it's bound to be sketchy and incomplete (to complement the sketchy and incomplete Morrison interview which follows), but we hope at least to impart some information in response to the requests for such a piece.

The story doesn't really start at the point in time when Elektra signed them, but it's a good jumping off place because it was largely the perception of Jac Holzman, Elektra's president, that thrust the Doors into international prominence. Until 1965, Elektra had been little more than a respected (for its executive/artiste relationship) and powerful folk label, dealing with traditional and then contemporary singers, but Holzman was aware of the slowly swinging interest of 'folkies' (for want of a better term) to 'Beatles music' (ditto); he'd seen the origins of the Byrds (briefly on his label as the Beefeaters), he'd seen the way John Sebastian's head was going (Sebastian had been an Elektra session man up to his forming the Spoonful, who were also briefly on Elektra), he'd seen and acted on the excitement caused by Butterfield in Chicago, and he realised that there were whole areas of rock 'n' roll which had been totally ignored by the commercial labels. It was Dylan's electric debut at Newport folk festival in 1965 which made it all click into place, and started him looking for electric groups.

Early in 1966 Elektra signed their first real rock group, Love from Los Angeles - a band very much ahead of its time in relation to its contempories. "Then later in 1966, after the success of Love, I went to the Whiskey A GoGo in Los Angeles to see them (Love) on stage and there were the Doors ... the Doors who had previously been under contract to Columbia and had been released by Columbia. Well, I just knew it. It took me 3 nights before I could begin to tell there was something there, because they were kind of loose and dishevelled as a band, although they had been together for some time. But the fourth night they sang 'Light my fire' and that was the night I knew they were it. We signed the group after much difficulty and after several months we were able to come to an arrangement with them, and it's been a very satisfactory, happy relationship. They've had the freedom pretty much to do what they wanted to do, they've been good to us"[1]

The Doors were in fact conceived early in 1965, growing out of a group called Rick and the Ravens - which included Ray Manzarek and his 2 brothers Rick and Jim, and which pumped out the old standards 'Money', 'Louie Louie', 'Hoochie Coochie Man' etc. to the clean cut college boys. Manzarek (Ray) then happened to bump into Morrison (so legend would have it), who for some strange reason chose to sing 'Moonlight Drive' for Ray's benefit (it's all in the press handout, folks). Manzarek: "When he sang those first two lines "Let's swim to the moon, let's climb through the tide, penetrate the evening, that the city sleeps to hide", I said "that's it". I'd never heard lyrics to a rock song like that before, so we talked for a while before we decided to get a group together and make a million dollars"[2]

Morrison and a college room-mate called Dennis Jakob had often joked about forming a rock duo called the Doors: Open and Closed, which would have a repertoire of 2 songs; 'I'm hungry' and 'Want'. The group decided to use the abbreviated title of the Doors, which had orignally been pinched from Wm. Blake's "There are things that are known and things that are unknown; in between are doors".

John Densmore appeared in mid '65 (Ray met him at one of the Maharishi's meditation centres, would you believe?) and slipped easily into the mould of the drummer, excellent at his craft but outwardly thick in a studied sort of way: "Their songs were really far out to me. I didn't understand very much, but I figure I'm the drummer, not the lyricist"[2] His last group had been called The Psychedelic Rangers!

On ... to September 1965 when six Morrison originals including 'Moonlight Drive', 'Summer almost gone', 'End of the night' and 'Break on through' were recorded as a demo for the Aura label Ray was on piano, Rick and Jim Manzarek on guitars, John on drums and an unidentified girl bass player was also present. She left soon after with Rick and Jim M, and, to continue the fairy story, Robbie Krieger, an ex jug band bottleneck player with degrees in psychology, happened to bump into Ray and John at their meditation centre.

The romanticism of the tale sags at this point, because the Doors then began a four month residency at a Sunset Strip club called 'London Fog', playing 7 nights a week, 4 sets a night, for 20 dollars a night. A bit of hard graft which had them supplementing their small original repertoire with stuff like 'Gloria', 'Little Red Rooster' and 'Who do you love'. So there they were, slogging away, and on the point of slumping into oblivion ... ah, but wait - there is a twist in the tail. On the last night of their engagement (it's in the handout, honest) they were seen by the Whiskey A GoGo girl, who booked them into the club, where they played second billing to everyone from Them to the Turtles.

"I knew that Morrison had star quality the moment he started singing" said Miss Ronnie Haran, the booker. "They needed more polish, but the sound was there. Unfortunately, none of them had telephones - Morrison was then sleeping on the beach - and it took a month to contact them again, but I finally did it".[3] Around this time, it was rumours of their mammoth drug consuming capabilities which glamourised their music (this was before the nouveau-boutique-tight leather trousers had made Morrison's bulge one of the band's biggest assets); according to one source "Morrison was so consistently high on acid that he could eat sugar cubes like candy without visible effect."[3]

The music, however, got better and better - which is where we came in.

At this point we could shove in a lot of stuff about "the soft and gentle beauty in Morrison's face, like an angel in a Renaissance painting", and we also have access to some very ridiculous information such as Krieger's favourite food is peanuts, Manzarek's favourite colour is blue, Densmore likes sensitive girls, Morrison's favourite way to pass time with a girl is to talk, and so on ad infinitum. Presumably you're as uninterested as we are in such unvital statistics and would rather read about their music.

The first time we saw the Doors (and the only time until the Isle of Wight this August) was in early September 1968 when they did 4 sets at the Roundhouse. Their equipment was phenomenal, giving them a clarity and separation which has never been surpassed at that rotting dome, and the music was nothing short of brilliant, but there were criticisms that I tend to go along with. Morrison was just too clumsy and solid to do all that leaping and cavorting, a sort of animated potato sack, and so much of their act was obviously well rehearsed trickery which half

gave the impression of chimpanzees going through a zoo tea party routine with a sort of temporary sincerity and enthusiasm. I remember though, that I was utterly captivated by Densmore's concentration on the drums, Krieger's peculiar picking style and Manzarek's almost motionless hunched playing position ... and whether it was just a ritual or not, thewhole theatrical presentation of 'The Unknown Soldier' was real, gripping and thoroughly amazing.

A TV documentary of the occasion was diabolically bad, and I had to answer the sneering condemnation of those I had beseeched to watch it. All the atmosphere and anticipation of the event had been withered, and the vocals had come out so thin and distorted that the producer must have almost felt like rejecting his film.

Now it's not that we're lazy or want to rely on other people's minds or anything, but we (being a couple of Doors freaks) could go on all night about their live music, their 6 albums, and do a chronological history of milestones in their careers and probably bore the pants off you; so we've decided to have a look at what various other people have had to say about them and trust that you'll find that incomparably more interesting. Since their rise to fame, all manner of writers and critics have explored every pore of the Doors and their music and consequently some very extraordinary conclusions have been drawn. We've split them up into obvious sections.

THEIR MUSIC:

"They are unendurable pleasure indefinitely prolonged"...Lillian Roxon.[4]

"How can we dismiss anyone who gave us 'The End' and 'When the music's over', which have got to be in some sort of pantheon when the rock era is ultimately re-evaluated. They have approached Art, no matter how much they have offended, amused or even thrilled the rock critics. The standards by which their art must be measured are older and deeper"...Harvey Perr.[5]

"A veritable tidal wave of pungent electric sound that heralds a major breakthrough in contemporary music"[2]

"Contagious music is alive and well wherever Jim Morrison and the Doors appear. Morrison himself looks every inch the street punk gone to heaven and re-incarnated as a choir boy. His lyrics - amplified by the relentless rhythms of his fellow Doors - become a mighty myth of catharsis, with an Oedipal backbeat. 'Break loose' is his most frequent command, and its mere utterance sends waves of sheer rapport through an audience"... Richard Goldstein [6] on 'The End'.

"The Doors were abysmal. Since watching them drag their weary way through that embarrassing set. It must be fucking hard work for people who dug the band in the past to keep those pretty illusions floating around. They were bored and apathetic; to them it was just another gig to keep the charisma going; but this time they blew it"...John Coleman on the Isle of Wight.[7]

Nik Cohn[8] brackets them with Iron Butterfly and Blue Cheer as exemplifying hype at work - asserting that their success is mainly due to the bullshit which surrounds their music and image; he puts them down (in a nutshell) as showbiz/well rehearsed theatre/little more than competent musically (which is about how a lot of heads think about them; they are a good, even great group but their self imposed mystique of paganism (going to seed of late) and their predictable theatrics put them off the live group).

"Jim's really an artist. I kept feeling that he was creating right in front of me. The sound waves are his canvas, the group is his brush and their talents are his colours. Right there he has enough to create a masterpiece. Then he puts himself into the middle of it and becomes part of his art. It frames him and he IS and CREATES at the same time"...Kris Weintraub.[9]

MORRISON'S SEXUALITY, which is the major reason for some heads rejecting the Doors as being a strictly teenybopper type band ('The men don't like it, but the little girls understand!). This subject also appears to have drawn vastly more comment than their music.

"I have never seen such an animalistic response from so many different kinds of women"...Howard Smith.[10]

"There was a pretty girl called Andres from Eye Magazine, who did an article on the Doors last month. She knew Morrison's sexuality too well, from the viewpoint of the adult woman, to stay in a teenybopper state of admiration for him. She got a cigarette burn on the left boob to show for the interview" (!?)...John Kreidl.[11]

"The king of orgasmic rock, whose records currently outsell any others in the US, screamed obscenities from the bandstand, appeared to masturbate in full view of his audience, exposed himself and assaulted officials of the concert hall"... The Miami Herald 1/3/69 (which is all we propose to mention about the Florida bust, because presumably everyone is familiar with the whole event.

"The Doors are missionaries of apocalyptic sex"...The Saturday Evening Post.

"In print and the spoken rumour, Jim Morrison has grown to be the sex-death, acid-evangelist of rock...a sort of Hell's Angel of the groin"...Mike Jahn.[12]

"We Could Be So Good Together is a straight forward invitation by cocksman Morrison to screw, and should turn on his younger female admirers. But is Light My Fire about sex, drugs or revolution"...Jay Ruby.[1]

"Morrison said 'We can play music all night if that's what you want, but you don't really want that do you? You want something more, something different, something you ain't never seen before, don't you?" Indeed that is what the poor creeps came for, and quite rightly too, for that is what their publicity mill has been building all these months. It was 14000 roller derby pop fans waiting to see the crack up, the Naked Door" ...John Carpenter.[5]

"The Doors are about as sexy as skinpopping phlegm. It isn't the Doors that turn me off, especially not that nifty guitar player, it's that pretentious slob Morrison. Come on baby, bite my tyre, yech! The Duke of Mucous. Although I like and would enjoy balling to The Unknown Soldier, Moonlight Drive and Love Street"...Peter Stampfel.[9]

"In addition to prodigious feats of sexuality, he is credited with some bizarre episodes of exhibitionism. At university, Morrison reportedly climbed the 16 storey bell tower with a willing lass; and in a moment of exhuberance, swung out on the bell-tower shutter, 200 feet above the heads of terrified onllokers - all this stark naked".[3]

THE DOORS AS GODS

"I believe Morrison to be a being not of this earth"...mystic and voodoo adept L Silvestri (we can't trace the source).

"Had the Doors not existed, they would have been created out of a need so intense and so American that it overshadows not only the deities but their offspring, not only the musicians but the music"... Robert Somma.[9]

"There isn't another face like that in the world. It's so beautiful and not even handsome in the ordinary way. I think its because you can tell by looking at him that he IS God. When he offers to die on the cross for us, it's ok because he IS Christ. He's everything that ever was and all that can ever be and he knows it"...Kris Weintraub[9]

Some quotes from Morrison:

"I was less artificial, less theatrical when I began, but now the audiences we play for are much larger and the rooms much wider. It's necessary to project and to exaggerate - almost to the point of grotesqueness. I think that when you're a small dot at the end of a large arena, you have to make up for that lack of intimacy with expanded movements"[13]

"You can say I'm an actor-dancer-musician-politician...there were five of them, what's the other? Oh yeah, writer, that's it".[1]

"The Doors are basically a blues oriented group with heavy doseages of rock and roll, a moderate sprinkling of jazz, a minute quantity of classical influence and some popular elements. But basically, a white blues band".[3]

"I don't think you can divide humanity into the young and the old. The more important distinction is like the old story of the ant and the grasshopper. In every human being there is a conflict like the ant and the grasshopper...to play and work...and more or less, we are all afflicted with this conflict. Music appeals to the grasshoppers. They might be as hardworking as anyone. Just the way that many older people tend toward the working style, there are some that tend toward the playing style. Music appeals to the grass hoppers - it's a change from the daily grind. It provides an alternative. It's not so dim as the ant style".[13]

"I am interested in anything about revolt, disorder, chaos, especially activity that appears to have no meaning".[2]

"We're getting tired of waiting around
Waiting around
With our heads to the ground....
We want the world and we want it
NOW". John/Mac

(There is a good interview with Morrison in Rolling Stone/July 26 1969).

Albums:

The Doors	EKS 74007
Strange Days	EKS 74014
Waiting For The Sun	EKS 74024
The Soft Parade	EKS 75005
Morrison Hotel	EKS 75007
Absolutely Live	2665 002.

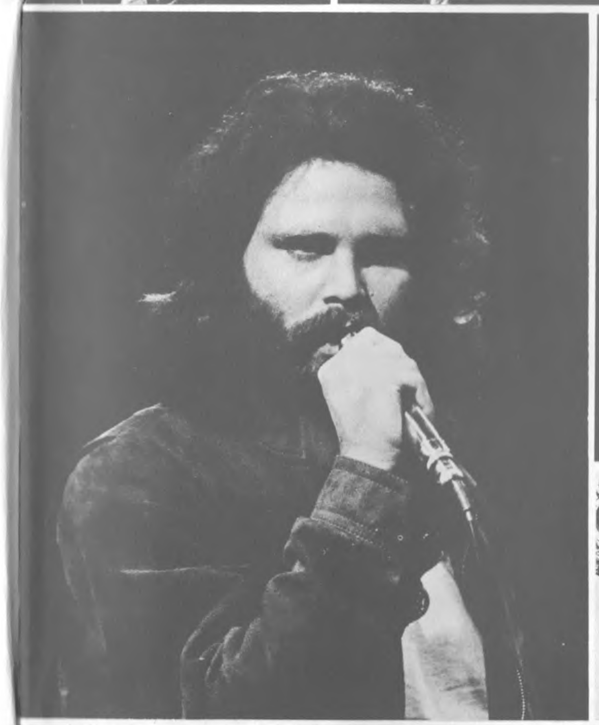
Opposite: A random selection of photos showing the changing face of Morrison.

References:
1 Jazz& Pop (various issues).
2 Early Elektra press hype kits.
3 Eye Magazine (defunct NY) April 1968.
4 The Encyclopaedia of Rock (USA only).
5 Los Angeles Free Press(various issues).
6 The Poetry of Rock (Corgi Books) 1969.
7 Friends.
8 Pop from the beginning.
9 Crawdaddy (various issues).
10 NY Village Voice.
11 Vibrations/Boston May 1969
12 Jim Morrison & the Doors; an unauthorised book. (not published here).
13 Rock, a world bold as love. (USA only).

THE doors











Whilst at the Isle of Wight festival, John managed to interview Jim Morrison:

Z: I've discovered a book on sale at this festival called "The Doors Song Book", which appears to be a pirated version of all the words off all the albums, including the new one. What do you reckon about that?

J: Well, I don't mind if they've got all the words spelt right. A lot of the time they really screw up the meaning, just one word or one semi colon can ruin the whole thing.

Z: Do you approve of having the lyrics on the back of your album or on the inside sleeve, because in England, two of them have had the lyrics and three haven't. Do you think it makes a difference? We didn't have the words to 'The Unknown Soldier' for instance.

J: Yeah, they really got botched up. I don't think it matters. I don't think it's necessary but ...

Z: You don't mind that somebody's making some bread out of your words?

J: No, what harm could it do?

Z: Is this the first festival of this sort you've played?

J: Yes, it is.

Z: How do you find it? I mean the chaos and the devastation and the ... you know, it's OK in here, but have you been outside?

J: Well, it's kind of hard walking around out there. I did get around back around the campsites a little bit, but this one seems to be pretty well organised for such a huge event. I didn't have such a good time last night, because I had to perform, and I'd just gotten off the plane. But tonight, I came back, and I can see why people like it. I think all these people who say that huge festivals are over and dead, I think they're wrong. I think they're going to become increasingly significant in the next three or four or five years.

Z: When I talked to some cats who came back from Woodstock, like Clive Selwood, he said it was terrible. You know, the sheer inability to cope with the multitudes, and now they've made the film, and everyone's saying "Wow! Beautiful revolution".

J: I'm sure that these things get highly romanticised but I was kind of that opinion myself when I saw the film. It seemed like a bunch of young parasites, being kind of spoonfed this three or four days of ... well you know what I mean. They looked like victims and dupes of a culture, rather than anything, but I think that may have been sour grapes, because I wasn't there, not even as a spectator, so I think that even though they are a mess, and even though they are not what they pretend to be, some free celebration of a young culture, it's still better than nothing. And I'm sure that some of the people take away a kind of myth back to the city with them, and it'll affect them.

Z: I take it that you don't believe in this sudden, miraculous revolution that's being spoken about as if we're all going to go back to London and take over.

J: That would be unreal to me. I don't want to say too much because I haven't studied politics that much really. It just seems that you have to be in a constant state of revolution, or you're dead. There always has to be a revolution, it has to be a constant thing, not something that's going to change things, and that's it, you know, the revolution's going to solve everything. It has to be every day.

Z: I figure that you've got to convince people gradually to change, not to say "Pow, we're coming in!" like the Black Panthers.

J: There have to be Black Panthers too. They have to change too, to become leopards some day, right?

Z: You played mostly tracks off your first two albums last night. Why was that, because you thought we'd know those better?

J: No, we knew them better.

Z: You don't do many gigs at that rate then?

J: Yeah, we do, but never anything like this. I don't think that our particular music style holds up very well in a huge outdoor event. Ithink that the particular kind of magic that we can breed when we do, when it works, works best in a small theatre.

Z: Like the last time you came to England?

J: Yeah, that was beautiful, I think.

Z: Yeah, right, I saw the last set; you know, when the dawn was breaking on the Saturday, and it was incredible.

J: I think that was one of the best concerts we've ever done.

Z: I was talking to the guy this morning who made the film, and I said -

J: Which one?

Z: The Doors are -

Continued on page 35

JIM MORRISON JOHN DENSMORE RAY MANZAREK ROBBIE KRIEGER

COCHISE...

Mick Grabham's natural Durham modesty prevents him revealing too much of his musical background - that's his excuse anyway. Suffice it to say that he once plucked his Telecaster for a flash in the bogpan pop band famed for its lack of worth, its nominal plasticity and its chart buster. Well, if that's got you crossword cluehunters guessing, forget it...because the very same Mick Grabham saw the light through the window, and in August 1969 he crawled out in one sane piece, his integrity intact, to form Cochise - a band I recommend without reservation (that's a joke, d'you see?). Around him he gathered Brian Cole on pedal steel guitar, Ricky Wills on bass, Willie (known to some as John Wilson) on drums, and Stuart Brown (latterly replaced by John Gilbert) singing, and together they made some demos with the intention of impressing someone.

Well, they took their songs to Dick Taylor, once a Pretty Thing and once (so legend has it) a Rolling Stone, who recognized their potential as a group and his potential as their producer. So, he introduced them to some of his contacts and, after the usual offers, arguments, contracts and hassles, they signed up with United Artists and made a management/agency deal with Clearwater.

Where do they all come from? Well Brian Cole comes from Nashville - the Nashville Room in Hammersmith, that is, and used to play country music to half pissed Irishmen on the West London pub Hillbilly circuit. "The trouble is that in England the only chance a steel guitarist gets is playing in pubs or American Air bases - it's so limited, and that's why most of them over here aren't any good. Apart from the obvious exceptions, most are Irishmen with more money than sense - usually labourers who lash out and buy a steel in the hope that they'll be able to play it". He's been learning and playing the instrument - his is a ten stringer with foot pedals and knee levers - for the past eight years, and since the number of proficient and inventive steel players could be counted on the fingers of one hand, he could screw plenty of money out of being a session man. As it stands, he prefers to choose his music and apart from Cochise, has done only a few sessions - he played on Humble Pie's last album, for instance.

Ricky and Willie had played together in Jokers Wild, an East Anglian conglomeration which somehow failed to set the world on fire. When Stuart left, Ricky remembered John Gilbert from some gig they'd done and they dragged him down from his remote Northern outpost to seamy Bayswater, where their management work like mad to get them gigs - shouting down phones and leaping around amidst a squalid roomful of empty coffee mugs, lean and hungry musicians, broken amps, defunct harmoniums, torn posters, a toilet which would rupture a sanitary inspectors eye, and several littered desks from which they dispense their rubber cheques and hard luck stories.

During the summer their gig frequency slumped from good to dismal - a national trend I fear - but with the return of wayfaring students, 'Bonanza' on the telly, dark evenings and other factors which seem to fill up venues, things are on the up once more. Mind you, the publicity they are attracting these days, together with the critical acclaim accorded to their album has obviously helped to tip the scales, and they are averaging 5 gigs a week these days.

Their album, they reckon, is pretty good (and so do I): "There are lots of things that could have been better - the production, playing and so on, but it's OK for the time we did it in and for our stage of development. Yeah, we're pretty happy with it. On some of the songs we haven't managed to capture the power that we get on stage - there again on others we were able to improve on our live version by the use of double tracking and things."

"At the moment we do all original material except Paul Simon's 'Feeling Groovy', but we're thinking of incorporating 'A whiter shade of pale' into the act... it could sound pretty good with a pedal steel, if you think about it".

Cochise, the name? "It's just a nice name - more natural than Charles Forethought & his Psychedelic Rainbows. Then we realised that Indians were everywhere on the record scene - Brinsley Schwartz, Keef Hartley and various others were using Red Indian symbols on their sleeves, so on our cover we decided to get away from those ideas. I mean, if we're not careful someone's going to start talking about 'Redskin Rock' or 'Heap-good-medicine-music'...and how we're loitering within tent". As it is, the record sleeve which shows the sun setting over the mountain breasts has had more impact than the music on some critics. They don't care.

What musicians do they admire, or rather what musicians do they talk about as they drive to gigs? "Well, Buddy Emmons, Kenny Buttrey, James Burton - have you heard him on that live Elvis LP; there are some of the best guitar solos you're ever likely to hear - people like that".

Their next album is currently being conceived and will be produced by the group themselves....their first was completed - recording and mixing - in 5 days, and they want to put more thought into the second. They're slightly dubious about the promotion they've had; "We're just not consulted. If we were consulted then we'd be happier, but the standard press photo, for instance, isn't very good at all". Talking of press, they reckon that they are getting a fair amount but derive amusement from the way that most journalists like to pull strings around groups - like lumping together all groups which feature a steel guitar.

Festivals cropped up, and so did the usual tales of woe which now seem inevitable when discussing this subject. They did the Midnight Sun Festival in Sweden (where Hawkwind made the national dailies as the group who sold contraceptives to the locals. In Sweden? "Right, we've got plenty of spare leads, plugs, skins, strings, sticks, let's go"). But when they arrived they found that the airport was some distance from the Festival, and had to embark on an extremely long and tedious bus journey, which left them more or less knackered....what with the heat and all. Consequently they were something less than stunning when they eventually played. But memories of such events are eradicated by recollections of better gigs - like a big charity concert in Leeds where the audience went crackers and booed the poor old man who came to remove the generator because of the late hour. What about Phun City? Yeah, what about Phun City?

But they're getting experiences of large audiences now, and by playing at the Lyceum and Marquee have become very popular in London. Their Top Gear performance, however, disappointed them: "It was a diabolical rush job. Dave Swarbrick had his instruments pinched and we stood in for Fairport. We only had 2½ hours to record 3 tracks".

There you go.

John

John Gilbert

John Wilson

B.J. Cole

Ricky Wills

Mick Grabham

Key Largo

BRANCHES

ROCK WITH THEM

Key Largo may best be described as a collection of musicians seeking to create something fresh and unique within the supposedly limited musical boundaries of what most people would simply term 'blues'.

But blues roots grow in all manner of places and in all manner of directions. African tribal rhythms. Mardi Gras. The Memphis Sound. Chicago Southside. Downhome.

Such elements may be found within the content of this album.

BLUE HORIZON RECORDS LTD

30 ST. GEORGE ST. LONDON W1

Dave Mason: still feelin' alright

There was a group, many moons ago, called The Big Three. Based in the bowels of New York's murky recording studios, the unit consisted of the pre-Mama Cass Elliot, the pre- "Hey Joe" Tim Rose, and the post-folk Jim Hendricks.

Disregarding their peculiar lineage, the Big Three were a perfectly valid entity: both in terms of writing and singing. Nothing spectacular, you understand, but fired with the kind of enthusiasm that easily projects to an audience. Unfortunately, in the case of the Big Three, there was very little of that audience response, as they never toured and cut but one now-out-of-print album (On the ultra-small FM Records label, called "Live at the Recording Studio").

As an entity, they faded-out, each going their own way.

But fade-back-in in 1970 with the formulation of an even more potent group: the new-found duo of Dave Mason and Mama Cass Elliot.

Parallels abound. You have Cass Elliot again, hip-deep in those richly-infectious harmonies. And you have Dave "Alone Together" Mason, who not only equals and surpasses Tim Rose's song-writing abilities, but is one of the most technically and emotionally competent musicians on the scene.

In the early stages of this new alliance, guitarist Ned Doheny (once with Charles Lloyd) was also involved - to the extent of the group going under the working name of Mason, Cass and Doheny - but he left in early September.

Mason, the impetus behind many of Traffic's finest recordings and recently a friend of Delaney and Bonnie, took three months to perfect his Blue Thumb/Harvest solo album "Alone Together", which rapidly emerged as one of 1970's most highly-praised efforts and is currently practising with Cass and a three-piece backup group ... anxious to get a tour going before the end of the year.

Z: How'd this union ... with you and Cass come about?

DM: Cass and I have known each other for about two years. After Traffic, I came over to America and met her and we became good friends. I came over to her house a lot and we'd play together. Then I was up in Canada for a while and Cass and I got to singing together.

Everything felt right between us and we decided to join together. So we came back to L.A. to get a band together.

Z: Did the promise of this band weigh heavy in convincing you to leave Derek and the Dominoes?

DM: Well, it really wasn't the right sort of thing with Eric, in the first place. Then my album started happening here and the idea for this new group started coming on and it all added up. So instead of staying with Eric and doing his trip, I figured I'd like to get a trip of my own going.

Z: What kind of material will be done by the new group ... all original stuff, things from your album?

DM: Yeah, we'll be using mine ... we'll be using anybody's material if it's good. Whatever's a good song, we'll do it. That's why we come together so well ... it's a good vocal sound. There'll be a lot of harmony involved. But there's so many possibilities ... we can do any combination on the vocals. I would have liked to have included more voices on my album ... it would have brought out the melodies more.

Z: What kind of backup group are you getting together?

DM: The standard ... drums, bass and a keyboard player.

But I want to do all kinds of things with the group; acoustic sounds, electric sounds ... everything. In format, actually, it'll be like Crosby, Stills and Nash. When Traffic formed, I wanted it to be a vocal trip and an instrumental trip at the same time, but it didn't work out. Four years ago, with Traffic, I was really trying to get them to do one half of the show acoustic and one half electric. All those ideas were floating about then, but everybody was really too hung up about how they thought it should be.

But as long as it's a good sound ... that's the main thing for me. So it'll be that kind of format ... but with different material and different sounds.

Z: What about material ...

DM: Well, probably everything from the album and a lot of stuff I did with Traffic: 'Feelin' Alright', 'Don't be sad' ... Everything.

See, for a live thing, it's a different trip; as long as you can present something that moves when live ... that has variations. As long as it can come over strong. It doesn't necessarily have to be that material, cause that material is out now or something like that. But it's all good material, so we can use it all. Most of it hasn't been done live that much anyway. Traffic certainly didn't play that much live. And the only person who's really got it on live with 'Feelin' Alright' has been Joe (Cocker).

Z: Do you think this could eventually evolve into a "Mad Dogs" type of thing ... with a lot of friends joining in?

DM: No ... I doubt it. With Mad Dogs, there was just too many people. I thought of joining Mad Dogs myself at one point, but I decided that it was much too loony for me. At the last count, there were forty-nine of them on stage, including dogs, roadies, wives and kids.

No, with our group, we'll just do with the people and talent which we have ... which is plenty.

Z: How about your solo career? Will you still be recording solo albums?

DM: Oh yes, definitely. And I'll be doing some solo gigs at small clubs, too. But that's what I want to do ... keep busy and work. I haven't worked for a long time and I really want to get back into it.

It'll take me time to get back into it ... with the crowds and all and the stage. It'll be good to get back in front of people.

Z: With this impending tour in mind, what kind of places do you want to play ... clubs, concert halls ...?

DM: Oh, no clubs. We're jus. gonna do concerts, because this thing has to be presented in a certain way. It has to be done right. And I know what going on the road is all about. I ain't about to go on the road ... like most rock and roll bands do.

With this band, I just want to project a nice sound. A nice sound, and inoffensive. See, because I want to take this band around the world. I'd like to take it to Moscow, for instance. There's a lot of places to make good music. The kids over there are starved for music.

Z: It seems that, judging by the reaction Blood, Sweat and Tears got recently when they went behind the Iron Curtain.

DM: Right. I've played behind the Iron Curtain, in Budapest ... with Traffic. And that was the best gig Traffic ever did. The kids really pick up on you ... they pick up on individual people. Over here, with so many things going on, you have to

(Please turn to page 28)

It's not so much that Peter Bardens is reluctant to talk about his past, he'd just rather talk about the present; "I can't imagine that anyone's going to be interested in what I was doing in 1964 any way". I explained, or tried to explain, that his charisma as a solo artiste was due to the reputation he'd built up over the last 6 years or so, and eventually coerced him to embark on a graphically detailed account of his musical history, which now follows in a highly simplified, much precised form.

Whilst playing with his first group, Hamilton King's Blues Messengers, he was approached by a friend called Eddie - "a gawky guy with national health specs and rabbit teeth" - who wanted to start a group, which he wanted Peter to manage. Exactly what prompted him to climb down from his organ stool and don a brown mohair manager's suit is unclear, but that's what he did. "I went off to try to get them gigs, and their first job was playing in this terrible dive in Meard Street, full of out of work ponces....and that was the start of the Cheynes. Others in the group were a bloke called Peter Hollis on bass, and a 15 year old Mick Fleetwood played drums".

It transpired that Eddie, the instigator, was unfit for the rigours of subterranean Soho -"he used to have nervous breakdowns between sets" - and they got someone called Roger Peacock (now a nightclub singer in Rome) in to sing. Phil Sawyer, later briefly with Spencer Davis, played guitar, and Peter jacked in the management bit to concentrate on electric piano.

From my vague recollections of The Cheynes, I reckon they stood with the Yardbirds, the Stones and the Downliners Sect as one of the best of the underground bands of the day. It was all derivative stuff - Bo Diddley, Howling Wolf, jimmy Reed and the rest of the R&B boom - but it was done well. Not only that, but they used to perform in frilly yellow shirts and suede pullovers (pause for mirth at the memory of days when groups wouldn't be seen dead without matching gear).

Enthusiasm for the group was pocketed in various provincial strongholds of R&B, but unlike the Animals and the Yardbirds, they never got out of the dingy clubs. A single - 'Going to the river' - went nowhere fast, and EMI subsequently decided not to extract an album from the group.

Well, they weren't going up, so they split up, in late 1965. Mick went to the Bo Street Runners and Peter went off to replace Jackie McAuley in Them, playing on both the albums and several singles. He found that his musical ideas were very sympathetic with those of Van Morrison, who, as far as inspiration and invention were concerned, was head and shoulders above the rest of the group, though he was very difficult to work with (many Van Morrison tales flow out) and he had a lot of trouble communicating his ideas to the others. As well as that, there was always tension and conflict within the group - Van and Billy

Harrison, the lead guitarist, had great fights over who was leader, and sometimes "Van's eyes would get all glassy and you knew he was about to erupt, which he usually did". But despite a million tribulations, Peter's stay with Them was enjoyable until the unpleasant intrigue over the administration got the better of him and he left on the eve of their first American tour, after being with them for a year.

Taking up the Rik Gunnell agency offer to form his own band, he got together with Mick again, a long raincoated guitarist ("the sort who answers MM ads") called Mick Parker whos ambition was to become a real musician and play in a Palais band, and Dave Ambrose on bass. Peter Green replaced Parker (who realised his ambition) and the group went out as a purely instrumental unit called Peter B's Looners. "We weren't diverse or remunerative enough for our agency, so we got in two singers - Rod Stewart and Beryl Marsden - and changed our name to The Shotgun Express, which was a reasonably successful band for quite a while....that was in 1966".

When Pete Green split to fill Clapton's vacancy with John Mayall, they got John Morshead in, then Phil Sawyer again, but things lost momentum. "Phil often didn't appear for gigs, Beryl was always at the hairdressers, Rod was always in bed, and the administration got to be too great a problem. It didn't matter where we were playing, we never left for a gig before 4 o'clock, so we were always late. So when that eventually died a natural, I was at a bit of a loss as to what to do".

"During 1967 - flowerpower and all that - I played in about 14 or 15 bands, including the Love Affair (yes!), Julian Covay & the machine, and the Mike Cotton Sound, which was definitely an all time low for me because I didn't dig the music or the attitude of the group. I was really in a stale, unimaginative period of my life and I knew it....I used to do things like really get into Marvel Comics to try to escape from the reality of going to gigs feeling the way I did. I was with them 9 months, and it seemed like 9 years".

A concerted effort to get back to creativity came when he broke away from the steady income of tedium to form his own group Village, which lasted until February this year. "There were only 3 of us, organ bass & drums, and we all had a chance to play to the maximum, but it took 6 months before the trickle of publicity made people aware that we were going to happen. But we never got round to releasing an album - we had all sorts of hang-ups in the studio - and our breakthrough, which we were sure would come, didn't....and it just trailed off downhill. There were some high points, like doing the Albert Hall with Chicago, going to Holland and things like that, but we were always waiting to take off. Our single took 8 sessions to record, then did nothing - we had hang-ups with drummers - ten thousand dramas - equipment problems - a getting-it-together period in a country cottage which turned into nothing more than a vast acid loon - and so on - aaaargh!"

Which brings us more or less up to date. "A musician shouldn't have all these things to worry about - he should be able to concentrate on writing and playing. I wrote all the material for my solo album ('The Answer', recently released on Transatlantic) between February and July, because I had time to think and concentrate rather than squash into a van and shoot over England, but even so I feel that I want to get out and play again".

Reaction to the record has been pleasing; large lumps played by relevant DJs, good reviews, favourable feedback

Peter Bardens in his own right

and encouraging initial sales.

Talk about the record: "Well, Peter Green played guitar on each track but we were refused permission to credit him on the sleeve (as far as Peter B knows no reason was given, but he suspects that people are worried that it might detract from sales of Green's own imminent solo album), which is very irritating from his point of view as well as mine, because he played really beautifully and wanted to be credited. Various other friends helped me - Andy Gee, who's just left Springfield Park, on guitar, Bruce Thomas, who was in Village with me, on bass, Reg Isadore, who was Quiver's original drummer, and so on. We rehearsed for two weeks (without Peter Green, who picked it all up like magic at the sessions) and then we went into the studio, where we had a really good time and got everything down in one or two takes. Everyone really enjoyed himself, and I think the album came out very well - it's exactly what I wanted. It took 40 hours to make including reduction and a couple of spare tracks".

"If we do go out and do some gigs the basis of the band will be Reg, Bruce, and Andy - and I know that other people would come along. I've got in my mind a fairly big thing with 8 or 9 people".

"What I'd like to do, if this album gives me the opportunity, is go out and do about half a dozen fairly selective gigs with rated musicians, who would be given the chance to really play".

To support such a band, bread and equipment wise, would obviously require a mammoth purse and whether this can be found or not will determine the next step. "Anyway, I wouldn't form a band on a regular basis, rushing out to buy a van and gear - I'd hire the gear, get together for a couple of weeks for rehearsal and go out and do the gigs, without any real obligation on me to provide regular bread for the people involved. I feel that there is definitely room for an English band to do some really heavy, acid rock... really powerful stuff, because I think that's the music which creates the most excitement for the musicians and audience. And I'd like a good visual impact as well - about 9 people, some white some black, all leaping about and everything happening".

"As I say, it's all in the air at the moment, but if it does get going it'll be within the next couple of months or so. By then we should know how the record's gone ....I mean, if it just fizzles out like a damp squib, I'll go back to cleaning toilets, but I think it stands a reasonable chance. It's all a bit of a dream at the moment, but so was the album just a dream until a few weeks ago".

"Is this a drug crazed maniac I see before me?" "No lad, tis Guy Stevens, stricken by a frenzy of hoopling buffoonery.... being observed with some mirth by Mick Ralphs, Ian Hunter, Overend Watts, Verden Allen and Buffin".

Mott.... Hoopling vigorously

Boredom doesn't have to come from a soft noise. Boredom can be loud, so loud that all your senses are dulled and you take a while to realise that you are bored, even unhappy, with the noises being presented to you. It is because of this that so many loud bands are able to exist, even build up a fair reputation, in spite of the fact that their talent is inversely proportionate to their decibels. Their loudness is a maxi-skirt chosen not to accentuate pleasurable curves, but to hide bandy legs and hairy thighs.

It is for this same reason that it is such a relief to see and hear Mott the Hoople in action. A relief because they are a loud band whose loudness serves to increase your exhilaration, not to shatter your senses and blind you to inadequacy. The jumping, whirling people in Mott audiences shake their heads and flay their arms to express their communion with the band, not - as so often happens with less creative groups - to try and make themselves seem to be part of something they are not. So much of the guitar playing which passes for virtuosity these days is the deterioration of an idea, the over prolongation of an initially well chosen phrase which is progressively diluted through a series of fuzzboxes, wahwahs, variable lags and what have yous - a sentence to boredom for a captive and unheeded audience, an exploration of the musician's isolation in the padded cell of his own self-importance, a mournful noise which becomes more desperate and pathetic as the search for inspiration in the distorted corridors of his largely vacant head nears its fruitless end.

(What? Calm down Frame and go and make yourself some black coffee).

Not so with Mott. Their appeal and growing success lies in the fact that their music is the antithesis of this non-communicative self-indulgence. Their musical excursions are constructive and co-ordinated - no 25 minute drum solos while the rest of the band go off for a pee or a grope - the band is together and highly capable of playing together and, more important, constructing together. When they come to the end of a number you feel that they've given you a condensed version of a lot of work done beforehand, leaving all the goodies in and chucking out all the blind alleys and wrong turnings.

Right. By this point it should be abundantly clear that this is a biased article. We love Mott The Hoople. Their music rings incessantly through the halls of Zigzag and has done for over a year. They are, simply, Ian's "favourite loud group" and I think that without a doubt they were the best band to come out of 1969. But do you see their name in any polls? No. One could argue that they are very much in their infancy as a unit, but on the other hand one of the most blatant injust-

ices perpetrated by the musical press is the way that any Mott articles seem to be nothing more than glossed-over jottings, superficial spacefillers which are squeezed into some odd corner not devoted to the gushing praise of groups who have gained some sort of mass acceptance... groups which often couldn't poke a nose into the stratum in which Mott operate.

They weren't always that good. I saw them several times during their first three months when the magic was still latent, but it was a question of confidence rather than musicianship. The first time I spoke to Guy Stevens (their manager/producer/sixth member) about them, they were just off to the continent for a fortnight's gigging in an Italian club, to serve as rehearsal before they launched themselves in Britain. Ian Hunter recalls:"It was an absolute failure.... after a few days the owner said we could either go home or continue on half money. We were ushered into this dressing room whenever we came off and felt like caged animals most of the time.... we weren't even allowed in the club between sets. It was a fortnight of hell". So they came back with even less assurance than before. Overend: "We were feeling really down - we made the first album alright, but the early gigs just didn't seem to make it - what with our uncertainty, our limited repertoire and various equipment troubles. We used to try to be as inconspicuous as possible onstage, try to blend in with the background" Ian again: "We were about ready to quit, literally, when we played this little club in Letchworth - the Leys club, a really gas place - and they went mad with delight. Not only did it save our bacon, but it started us leaping about onstage".

And slowly, during the closing weeks of 1969 and the start of this year, their perturbed anxious-that-something-would-go-wrong timidity into this uninhibited, whooping, hoopling hysteria that turns audiences into a sea of semi-naked, flailing Joe Cockers, all wrenching their arms off and shaking themselves half to death.

I used to watch Ian singing ".... and I'm just a rock'n'roll star" and think to myself "not yet you ain't mate, but it's just a matter of time". I suppose maybe now, 12 months or so later, with Mott having recently conquered the States, it's a lot nearer the truth.

We talked a bit about their visit to America:

ZZ: The tour got extended didn't it?

Ian: Yeah, we were there nine weeks.... there were four booked, and the other five were dependent on how well we went down; if we were diabolical they were going to kick us out, and if we were OK they would let us carry on - that's how it worked out.
Mick: We were averaging 3 or 4 gigs a week - sometimes we'd get three days off, then other times we'd be rushing straight off to Texas, Detroit, the West Coast.... everywhere.

ZZ: Wasn't it geographically organised then - to facilitate minimum milage?

Overend: Oh no - it was all over the place because the gigs came in as we were there. There was no set tour as such, which was a bit of a drag, but we got used to it.... and you've either got to fly or else not bother at all. For instance, we had the option of going by train once, and it worked out 26 hours by train and only 2 by plane. I suppose the average was about 1000 miles between gigs - and our date sheet differed from an English one because they put down all the plane times and time changes, because they have belts of different time all the way across - you have to keep altering your watch.

ZZ: What sort of places did you play?

Mick: Great big auditoriums, theatres, clubs, festivals, huge indoor stadiums.... all sorts of places.

ZZ: And you were presumably down the bill to Rhinoceros and people like that?

Ian: Yeah, Ten Years After, the Kinks, Jethro Tull, Leon Russell, Traffic, BB King, Albert King, Quicksilver..... all sorts of people. And they all went out of their way to be nice to us.
Mick: It's so open musically over there - you can play on a bill with all kinds of different music and the audience would listen to everyone on the bill, not just wait till the top band came on..... it was sort of like Friars Aylesbury but on a much larger scale.
Overend: And the local bands were amazing - at one festival there was this terrific band on, and I asked a bloke who they were. "Oh they're just some band from down the road" he said.... and they were brilliant.

ZZ: I suppose you've been out and ordered Cadillacs now?

Ian: You don't make bread on your first American tour - you're lucky if you even break even. People seem to think you make a fortune, but I'd say that definitely on the first two you don't make anything. As it was, Atlantic (US label) were helping with the airfares, Premier (agency) helped us percentage wise, and Chris Blackwell of Island helped us a lot too. Atlantic were really nice - they sent us a basket of fruit and a thankyou note at our last gig.

ZZ: Didn't you have any unpleasant experiences with anti-longhair rednecks?

Ian: The tension was in the air alright, but we just spoke loudly and our English accents made us into mysterious freaks rather than just freaks, and by the time they'd worked it out, we were gone.

They found the American press much more enthusiastic and knowlegable - unlike here, there was none of that inane Dylan comparison, where reviewers gave the album a superficial once over and then rejected them as copyists. The critics spent time and trouble delving into their music concluding that it was honest and valid.... "there was one guy in Fusion did an incredible write up - it was as if he'd read right through our minds. I mean, it's heads that review the records over there, not some idiot who listens to 60 albums in half an hour on a sunday morning over the kitchen sink. They really listen to records before they write about them". The review in Rolling Stone was thorough and favourable, but produced some amusement - he noted the group's eclecticism and certain detectable influences in Ian's singing, but reckoned, with suitable authority, that "Mick Ralphs singing 'Rock and roll queen' sounded like nobody as much as Mick Ralphs" - which is fairly amusing when you know that Ian has always sung the number. Ian: "Don't worry Rolling Stone, we love you really".

They saw literally dozens of American bands, but one particularly impressed them:
Overend: Felix Pappalardi was great.... his band, Mountain is just incredible - so much better than their records.

Ian: Yeah, they're terrific, but not as heavy as you think they'd be.

Mick: Not as heavy! They're 10 times as heavy!

Ian: You're joking!

Mick: What? They're the heaviest band I've ever heard!

Ian: I thought they were cute - they weren't loud or anything. You listen to Mississippi Queen on phones and then compare them live.

Mick: Take no notice, Pete...he's gone mad.
(The conversation becomes haywire, blows are struck, abuse is hurled, and Guy steps in to arbitrate).
Guy: (going into paroxysms of gurgling delight) Mountain are amazing.... Leslie West (their guitarist) is just unbelievable. He did this 8 minute guitar solo and after he'd done it he just couldn't believe it. He was simply looking at his guitar in amazement. (Guy then does a ten minute impersonation of Leslie West, his face frozen in gaping incredulity).
Ian: Yeah, he's really good. He looks at Felix all the time for praise and encouragement, and Felix nods his head at him, which spurs him on and keeps him going. It's a fantastic thing they've got between them. Someone'll have to bring them over.

Meanwhile, back in Basing St, Island were preparing to release Mott's second album to coincide with their brief return (they're going back next month). It took an age to complete the record to everyone's satisfaction.

Guy: We started it a year ago, and it just turned into a massive saga. It was mostly done live in the studio, but the actual recording sessions were so chaotic that it took a lot out of us. It was a mammoth LP to record - it was like the loneliness of the long distance runner.

Ian: It was done at a time when we had a lot of personal hangups in the group, and it was introspective.... and the two things combined. Looking back it was a sort of creative nightmare - I'm not trying to build it out of proportion, it's just Mott's second album, but it was really exhausting.

Guy: It was an heroic album... it was a miracle that it ever came out. It showed perseverence (stands on chair, adopts a patriotic tone, and waves union jack) and courage above and beyond the call of duty. The engineer went mad for 2 months after-

wards, I went mad for 3 months, and the group stayed sane - remarkably. That's why it's called Mad Shadows.

(Snippet: The title 'Thunderbuck Ram' has no meaning - they found it written on a toilet wall....which is interesting because a group called Thunderbuck Ram made a brief appearance in Spring 1969. Someone must have decided to immortalise them on the Pied Bull bogwall).

Ian: The next album will be nearer the surface.

In fact the next album was to have been recorded live at a recent concert in Croydon but the whole attempt descended into chaos as the audience seiged the stage, and any planning went haywire.

I've been to see Mott 4 times since they got back from the States - one of which was at rehearsal in the Pied Bull in Islington. (Since our talking went way beyond closing time, the landlord demanded a testimonial for his establishment, so if getting pissed is your scene folks, why not visit the Pied Bull?) Right, where were we? Yes, they weren't so much rehearsing as working out their next single, which was to have been the Melanie song 'Lay Down' - a big American hit which didn't even scratch the surface here.

We got there around 8 as they were listening to Melanie's version and working out chords, going through the words, re-arranging the construction of the song and so on. By 10.30 it was just incredible - they'd infused a smashing, stamping vitality into it and everyone was playing beautifully. Guy was beside himself - laughing and leaping, urging and coercing. A sure-fire, fast-moving, dynamic, action-packed, smash hit if ever I heard one.

Ian: Neither Mick nor I seem up to writing singles and this song really appealed to us. I mean, it's not economically essential for us to have a hit but it would be nice - bring us to a much wider audience. If it did become a hit, we'd probably get called sell-outs, but it doesn't make any difference to us at all. We've been called names before and Mott always manages to bundle through without too much thought about direction and things like that".

Next time I saw them, plans for releasing 'Lay Down' had been abandoned. Guy reckoned that in the studio they had failed to capture the same spirit they had at rehearsal and that it wasn't worth putting out a compromise which didn't really improve on Melanie's version. All a bit of a shame, because they really had it at the Pied Bull.

Musically, they seem to have improved since their return - Mick's guitar playing for instance is noticably stronger and a style of his own is emerging - nice note choices and tones. Come to think of it, they've all got much better both individually and as an integrated band. They're good. And they've come back with some new songs and kicked out the tired ones. Some of the oldies are still there, and despite the fact that they rip into them like mad and do them as well as ever, they seem to introduce them with almost apologetic humility, as if self conscious to be doing them after a year. I wondered how the songs remained fresh and how they hadn't turned into a juke box.

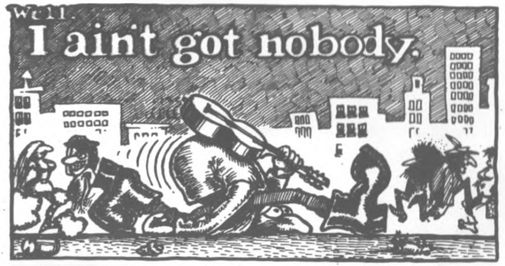
Mick: We just tear into them, and if we still enjoy playing them they come out OK.
Ian: Some have stagnated and we've dropped those, but it's difficult to know whether the audience want to hear our old stuff or something new. An audience can easily start thinking and feel cheated because they haven't heard such and such a song - so we aim at a balance. We still do 'You really got me' at the end, because it's all over the place and you can really go mad and finally exhaust yourself.... then if we follow that with 'Keep a knockin' it's usually pretty shitty because we're half dead".

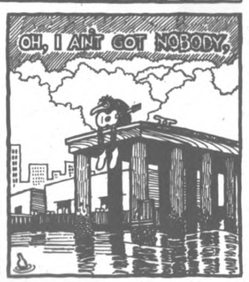
Guy: Where's it all going to end? We'll hoople ourselves to death.

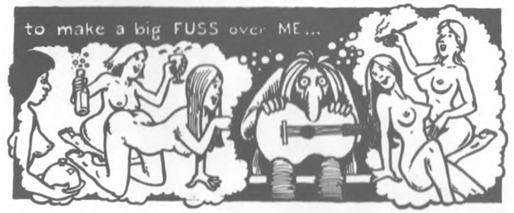
Pete

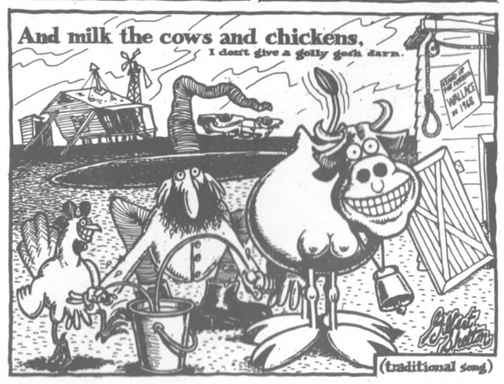
Photos by Pete Sanders

NB: Other stuff on Mott can be found in ZZ 5 (the world's first ever piece on them, & the only photo in existence showing Guy doing an amazing impersonation of Ian) and ZZ 8, which talks about their history.









RONN CAMPISI

The Velvet Underground

Until their return in July of this year when they played a 14 night gig at Max's Kansas City Restaurant, they hadn't worked in New York for three years. If you asked, they told you it was because there were no clubs left to play there, or that they just couldn't stand Bill Graham, or any number of other Official Reasons. But it's more than that, you know, much more. There was a scene there once, a collection of people, places and things...a meeting in time and space that happened at a single point and will probably never occur in that way again.

The Velvet Underground were a part of that scene, articulated it, musically defined and eventually pointed to where it would all lead. And as the process moved on, as it eventually had to, they went along with it, still a step or two ahead of the rest, watching, alert for the signs of Change.

When you sit back and look around now, you should always remember one thing. They were there first.

In the comics, superheroes always have to be given origin stories. Superman was deposited on Earth after home-planet Krypton blew itself to smithereens with him as the only survivor. Spiderman was just plain Peter Parker until he was bit by a you-know-what. The Fantastic Four got caught in a cosmic ray storm. The (old) Human Torch was created by a benevolent scientist.

For the Velvets, you could write the story in many different places. You might begin when Brooklyn-born Lou Reed, working as a kind of song-writing machine for Pickwick Records, first met John Cale, a Welsh musical drop-out from a massive Leonard Bernstein Composition and Theory Scholarship to Tanglewood. Reed had written a thing called "The Ostrich" and needed a group to take it around the local high schools and record hops. With Cale, he formed the Primitives, which lasted together for something like a week before falling apart.

Or you might begin in the depths of the lower *lower* East Side, a cold-water wood-burning flat on Ludlow Street where Reed, Cale, Sterling Morrison, a drummer named Angus MacLise and various others spent a long winter in late 1965. As usual, they had been puttering around with forming a band, calling themselves such things as the Falling Spikes and the Warlocks, ultimately lighting on the paperback title of *Velvet Underground.* Nothing was very organized at the time; there were few amplifiers, only a couple of songs Lou had written a while back ("Heroin," "I'm Waitin' For My Man"). And of course, there were no jobs.

Origins. Lots of places. There's Summit, New Jersey, for instance, where Al Aronowitz got the group its first honest-to-god gig in the high school gym. "The Black Angel's Death Song" for the princely sum of seventy five dollars. Fantastic. Or maybe when they opened at the Cafe Bizarre, no drummer (Angus had split for India), and they got friend Maureen to bring down her set and Reed was still trying to find a drummer up 'til showtime but no luck so finally he turned to Mo and asked if she could play those things and she said yes and another piece dropped neatly into place.

But if you want to write the story of the Velvet Underground, you have to begin far beyond any of the physical things that actually happened. You first have to look at New York City, the mother which spawned them, which gave them its inner fire, creating an umbilical attachment of emotion to a monstrous hulk of urban sprawl. You have to walk its streets, ride its subways, see it bustling and alive in the day, cold and haunted at night. And you have to love it, embrace and recognize its strange power, for there, if anywhere, can you find the roots.

Even as late as 1966, the Velvet Underground at the Cafe Bizarre must have been quite a sight to behold. While other groups around the McDougall St. area were dabbling in variations of Byrds folk-rock and thinking how nice it was that the Lovin' Spoonful had *really* made it, the Velvets set out to cover a whole new territory. The thing was to be real, not merely superficial, and so years before Altamont, before the love-peace-death trip, before dope had become acceptable on a mass scale, the Velvets had moved into violence, drugs, an entire area of human consciousness that few, if any, had ever put to the rock 'n roll form before.

And believe it or not, that was what it was. Rock 'n Roll. Plain and simple. Oh, they worked on it, adding things on top and bottom, releasing it from certain standards that had previously been held inviolable. Cale, for instance, had just come from working with LaMonte Young and his "Dream Symphonies," where they would experiment with holding sets of chords and notes for long periods of time. Sterling had studied classical trumpet; Lou had been working at the piano since the age of five.

But in the end, it was all rock 'n roll. Maureen sat heavily in the back, smashing out a set of Bo Diddley-derived rhythms that seldom if ever varied. Cale and Morrison fell easily into the form, viola and guitar nailed on top. And Reed: he was never anything more than an old time rock 'n roller, except that his lyrics slowly changed from little fantasies about the girl next door to heavily-charged things like "Venus In Furs," which was also about the girl next door. If you lived in the right place, that is.

It was at the Bizarre that the Velvets as a group first came into contact with Andy Warhol, and by extension, the entire New York avant-garde scene. Film-maker Barbara Rubin had brought Warhol down there one night and he immediately latched on to the atmosphere of perverse urban sexuality that was the Velvets' stock in trade. The timing was incredible. Warhol had just been offered a large sum of money to put on a show at Murray the K's burgeoning World out on the Island, and had been looking for a rock band to help him do it. With the Velvets, it was a perfect match.

In retrospect, the group's relationship with Warhol has never been made clear, probably because the sheer strength of the Warhol name has always made the pairing seem greater than it actually was. Though listed as producer on their first album, he never actually took a hand in the making of their music. Most of the early material had been written long before his arrival, and the basic sound was formulated and set down by the time of the job at the Bizarre. Essentially, his role seems to have been as a semi-manager, who guided the group only in terms of giving them an environment in which to expand. "Andy sort of had a good way of picking out situations for us to appear in," remembers John Cale. "He would almost invent places for us to play." After the group was fired from the Bizarre, Warhol brought them to the early Film-makers Cinematheque, gave them rehearsal space in the magic world of the Factory, and helped to find them jobs and equipment.

It was at the Cinematheque that much of what was later put into the Exploding Plastic Inevitable first began to form. Andy would take a series of movies, then project them for the Velvets to accompany in a kind of live soundtrack. In addition, Warhol would experiment with light projections, the group playing freeform in back of the movie screen, trying to combine visual and auditory images into a searing whole. It was Mixed-Media even before such a word existed, an attempt at something New which only a breed of highly-tuned figures like Marshall McLuhan had been able to pick up and recognize.

The Cinematheque also brought Nico to the Velvets. She had been in Europe, dabbling on the fringes of the jet set, making a spot appearance in *La Dolce Vita*, and was now in a New York hotel telling people she was a singer. Somewhere along the line, she had made a little 45 record and was continually dragging people up to her room to listen to it. The story (and it's truth, of course, is irrelevant) is that she came to the Cinematheque one night with Brian Jones, saying she wanted to sing. Her first performance was Dylan's "I'll Keep It With Mine" (which she did while Velvets backed her up) and after that, more or less officially joined the group.

With the obvious success of the Cinematheque behind them, Warhol moved his show to still-dormant St. Mark's Place, where they set up shop in an old Polish community hall called the Dom. There, they constructed a massive multi-media show known as the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, featuring lights, music, even a kind of dance and theatre. Warhol would run the projections—fine, geometrically perfect patterns encircling the walls—the Velvets would play, old records blared out during the breaks. Gerard Malanga, dressed in leather and brandishing a whip, would dance with Mary Mite in front of the group, each pretending to beat the other. Even the audience couldn't escape; they too were part of the Inevitable.

Reviewers who came drew parallels to Berlin in the depths of the thirties, but they missed the mark. It was New York in the sixties, the essence distilled and brought out, a city splitting apart and loving every minute of it.

In its own way, the group's debut album captured the Exploding Plastic Inevitable Scene perfectly. *The Velvet Underground and Nico* was the first of the concept albums, first with cuts to break the three-minute barrier, drawing a picture that was at once sinister and beautiful ranging from delicately-crafted melodic pieces to piercing shrieks of electronic energy. In some sense, it was a schizophrenic album, moving from one side of the coin to the other, always juxtaposing, asking a question in one song and then answering it in a totally different way with the next. Nico was the one who sang its dominant theme:

I'll be your mirror
Reflect what you are
In case you don't know . . .

Lou Reed refers to each of the group's albums as "chapters," and looking at how they fall into a line, one neatly after another, you can easily see that he's right. As a group, the Velvets' progression has never been the common move of good to bad, or even simple to complex, but rather from one total level to the next, each one explored, set down, and left to be built upon by the next. The albums stack on top of each other, and to pull one out and take it from its neighbors is to risk toppling the entire construct.

Almost prophetically, the first album set out a lot of the ways the Velvets would deal with their music in the future. Lyrically, the group would create little characters, tell stories about them, interlock each so that what was being spoken of would not be so much a set individual as an entire group. And regardless of how they came off to those who listened, these were not idealized portraits. *The Velvet Underground and Nico* contains a lot of ugliness, a lot of the down side of life that is so much an inescapable part of city living. "The real thing," says Reed, "Is not something you'd want to idolize": once again, this passion to create something *real*. Yet the group's very fascination with the dark sides of the human nature automatically removed anyone (or anything) they were talking about from moral grounds. It existed, was something they particularly knew about, and in the end, that was all that was necessary. There was no good or bad; only shades of each.

The key to that first album is not "Heroin," though it clearly was the most popular song, receiving a rather large amount of airplay for something so taboo-ridden and straightforward. Rather, the key lies throughout the entire record, culminating in the broken glass and shattered images of "European Son." Where many of the earlier cuts relied on their lyrics to create a mood, the entire second half of "European Son" stood on its music, a coda to the framework the rest of the album had attempted to set up. Everything that was a part of the Velvets' world—pain, angular passions, an underlying flow of violence, existence on the very edge of reality—took shape in the short minutes of that cut.

At first glance, *White Light/White Heat* seems a logical successor to the first album, taking everything worked out there and moving it another step further, a bit more hellish, a lot less romantic. Even musically, it builds on the same components: using the rhythmically hypnotic as a creative force, taking repetition as a guiding energy, purposefully throwing away accepted musical guide-lines in order to achieve a grander vision than mere instrumental proficiency.

But over that there was more happening within the album than just a standard growth. In essence, a drastic restatement had taken place; events had thrown the Velvets into a whole new stage of development. In the intervening time, the group had gone to California (doing the Trip, the early Fillmore) and had come back to find they had lost the Dom, their lease torn-up, a future Electric Circus on the way. For a while, they tried to recreate the Inevitable in a little place called the Gymnasium, but it never quite turned out the way everyone had wanted. The spontaneity that had spurred the Inevitable in its finest moments was gone now, and to force things seemed somehow not right.

And increasingly, there were tensions within

(Continued on page 36)

David Gates, the breadhead

The fact that 'Make it with you' is a Top of the Pops chartbuster doesn't detract from Bread's class as a group. Their first album, released almost a year ago, is still one of my favourites and their new one is insinuating its way into my mind in the same way as its predecessor. David Gates, probably Bread's leader, was recently in the country for a promotional visit and I had a chance to ask about the group.

THE PAST

"Despite what you may have read, I was never with Dot Records. I was approached by them to produce twelve records a year on a subsidiary label they wanted to start, called Planetary. Due to their position it was impossible to get a hit - I mean, who have Dot got except Pat Boone (for whom I produced a single) and Lawrence Welk... Lawrence Welk! Oh yes, I produced a record for Randy Wood.

My first band was at school.... I was on guitar, our drummer was Don Kimmel, who you probably won't have heard of, and Leon Russell was on piano. In Tulsa, I was part of the local band which backed up all the big stars that came through. I was just a high school kid and it was really something to play with people like Chuck Berry, Clarence 'Frogman' Henry, Carl Perkins and Johnny Burnette. When Chuck Berry came into town, he wanted to hear us - so we played a few of our own songs.... I was on piano at the time. But he said he wanted to hear us play his things, so I sang 'Maybelline', 'Roll over Beethoven' and 'Too much monkey business'. On the third one he joined in, and afterwards he reckoned that we'd sung a verse to 'Roll Over Beethoven' that he'd forgotten. We also backed Gene Vincent and Luther Perkins, who was Carl's brother and more famous as part of the Tennessee Two.... Johnny Cash didn't bring Carl in until Luther died.

I also did sessions with Glen Campbell and Jerry Lee's sister, Linda Gail Lewis.

I suppose I'm into a sort of sophisticated thing now, but my roots are down home... I really dig Delaney & Bonnie, but I can't sing like that so I do the things that I can do best.

There was an Elvis film that I did a lot of song arranging for, but it may never be released here.

JAMES GRIFFIN

"Jimmy was with Reprise, and then a label called Vita, distributed by Dot. He was also with Snuff Garrett for some time.... he was a producer for Liberty - Johnny Burnette, the Crickets and people like that.

ROBB ROYER

"He was with a group called Pleasure Fair on Uni records. James Griffen was one of their songwriters and I produced the album, but once again, there was no future. Uni were a big deal a while ago, with Neil Diamond and the Strawberry Alarm Clock but the record label is really only a very small, unimportant part of the Universal Pictures set-up.

MIKE BOTTES

"After the first album, we knew we had to get a new drummer. Mike was the one... he'd been with a folk group called Travellers Three, and had gradually moved into rock, experimenting with other groups along the way.

ELEKTRA

"We made demos of 'Dismal Day' 'The last time' and 'You can't measure the cost' which we took around. Elektra liked them and we were subsequently signed to the label by Larry Harris with Jac Holzman's approval. I don't think that there's a better company. Obviously it's not great for everybody - Delaney & Bonnie left for instance - but we have freedom over everything and nothing but extreme co-operation. I don't think they refuse any reasonable request .... you could say it's a nice romance.

RISQUÉ LYRIC CRITICISM

"Well, 'Make it with you' worried me for a bit. It fitted so perfectly. I'm not a puritan, but I found myself thinking 'is it decent?'. I concluded by thinking that any reasonable person would realise that it meant 'we can make it through life', which I was pleased about because the song would lose everything without that line. In 'Family Doctor' there is reference to 'he gave me an artificial you'... that's not intended to conjure up visions of life-size plastic females - it's just a take-off of 20th century life. Robb, who wrote it, thought it was funny - he certainly had no intention to be offensive, and as a group we make no attempts to be risqué. The sort of song that does offend me is the 'Eve of Destruction' type thing.... that more than embarrassed me, it made me puke.

INSTRUMENTATION

"We all play guitar and bass. 60% of the time I play bass and Jimmy and Robb interchange on rhythm and lead. We don't take a moog on stage for obvious reasons, but I play electric piano, harpsichord and organ. We're primarily a guitar group, but on the other hand we haven't done a great many gigs - not because we don't want to, but because the opportunity wasn't really there. When we weren't a hit act, we couldn't make it pay - after fares, shipment and hotels there isn't much left, but we went on the road for three weeks for the experience. The States is a very big place to travel around for little money and we couldn't raise our price without a hit, so we did some outside work.... James did background vocals, Robb did lyrics for some movie tunes, Mike did session work, and I did a bit of producing.

JAMES BURTON

"James is the best guitar player I ever saw... he's a guitar player's guitar player - for rock or country, call James. His first record was 'Suzie Q' by Dale Hawkins - both he and Dale came from Shreveport. He was also in Ricky Nelson's band of course, with Richie Frost & Joe Osborne. James used to jam with Glen Campbell, had a band with Jimmie Holliday, and was arranging demos for Metric Music when Randy Newman came in with his first song. Now he lives in the San Fernando Valley and often does two or three sessions a day - he still plays the same as he always did. There are three comparable guitarists soundwise; James, Dave Mason and the guy from Blues Image who's on 'Ride Captain Ride'. The sound is typified by a Telecaster with the treble switch well up.

John.

David Gates James Griffin Mike Bottes Robb Royer

Maybe you saw bluesman Son House on his recent National Blues Federation tour, or heard him on Top Gear? This is the story of his rediscovery in 1964 by Phil Spiro.

About the last place anyone would think of looking for a bluesman is Rochester in New York. Don't think we were any different - we went to Memphis.....

Back in April 1964, Booker (often mis-spelt Bukka) White was in Boston for his only East Coast engagement, and while he was here he stayed with the late Al Wilson and me. Now Booker, as a 'rediscovered' bluesman, has gone through the names-dates-places routine so many times that I've often felt he should run off a data sheet and simply hand it out at appropriate intervals. Al, however, was more interested in how Booker felt about the music he was playing and singing rather than in memories of recording sessions twenty years ago.

They discussed how Booker goes about writing a song, why he prefers certain techniques on the guitar to others, the qualities he admires in other bluesmen, and so on. Naturally the conversations moved to musicians Booker knows and had known in the old days.

Booker didn't care too much for Robert Johnson or anyone with a high voice as I recall; but he enjoyed listening to the records of one of his boyhood idols, which was Charlie Patton. Eventually, Al played some of Son House's old records. Booker really took an interest; he didn't recognize Son's music at first, but when Al identified it as Son House, Booker went into deep thought. After awhile he recalled that a friend of his in Memphis had casually mentioned seeing Son House last year.

Both Al and I were astonished to hear this, for blues collectors had been looking for Son House for over ten years. The only information known about him was that his first name was Eugene, he had lived in Robinsonville Mississippi, was a part time preacher, and sometimes wore a white cowboy hat. He had recorded commercially for Paramount in 1930, and again for The Library of Congress in the early forties; no one had seen him since.

Through Booker we got in touch with the woman who had seen Son in Memphis - Ma Rainey. No, not THE Ma Rainey, but a woman who is such a fine blues singer that her friends call her that out of respect for her abilities.

I called Ma (whose real name is Lillian Glover) in Memphis, and yes, she had seen Son House last year. No, she didn't find out where he was living, but she would be glad to help look for him.

Off to Memphis! I had two weeks vacation beginning in the second week of June, so I was ready. Al was playing at the Club 47 during that period and couldn't go, so I contacted Nick Perls (a blues collector from New York) and Dick Waterman (a Cambridge journalist and photographer).

We crammed three people, three suitcases, two tape recorders, a camera bag, three sleeping bags, two mike stands and booms, and random books, maps and other trivia into (and on) one very small, very red Volkswagen. After 1200 miles of steady driving, we were feeling more than a little cramped.

When we arrived in Memphis, we found Ma Rainey was not in, so we went with Booker to visit some friends of his and do some taping. It was two or three days before we found Ma at home. She'd found that Son had been in Memphis to visit relatives (names unknown) and had left the town (destination unknown).

Rather than stop after coming so far, we decided to check out another lead, though it sounded pretty weak. Bernard Klatzko and Gayle Wardlow, while searching for information about Charlie Patton found that Son House had lived in Lake Commorant, Mississippi. We enlisted the aid of Rev Robert Wilkins, another rediscovered bluesman who was an old friend of Son's, and we went to look around Lake Commorant.

Lake Commorant is a virtually non-existant town about twenty miles south of Memphis, off Highway 61. We pulled off 61 and spoke to a group of women who were chopping cotton. Rev. Wilkins had been born and raised in the area and had no trouble at all finding out that Son had relatives of some sort living there. We were referred to an old woman, whose relationship to Son remains unclear. She told us that Son's brother-in-law or cousin lived on a plantation a few miles down the road. The people there knew of Son House, but no-one knew of any relatives of his. Son had gone back to New York quite a while ago but he had been back a few times to visit. Why didn't we go and see Fiddling Joe Martin, who lived nearby? He used to play with Son.

We found Fiddling Joe's place with no trouble, but Joe had just left to go fishing. He had been picked up by an unknown friend, but they had been using a car belonging to Woodrow Adams, who may be able to tell us where Joe was.

Off we went to look for Woodrow, who worked as a tractor driver on an immense plantation. For the next three hours, the four of us bounced, rattled and ground our way through the maze of fields that made up the plantation. Woodrow's wife turned up (chopping cotton), Woodrow's car turned up (but no Joe), and finally the elusive Woodrow turned up (chug), driving (as advertised) a John Deere tractor.

No, he didn't know where Joe was. No, Joe had not been using his car that day.

Woodrow agreed to contact Joe that night and to arrange a session on the following night in Memphis. Woodrow and Joe played guitar and drums in a three piece group - the piano player, John Williams (Piano Red) lived in Memphis.

Things were starting to fall into place. Klatzko and Wardlow had reached a dead end at Lake Commorant, but thanks to Rev. Wilkins, doors that had been shut to other collectors were opened to us. Joe as it turned out, was the key to finding Son House.

How we found Son House

We met Joe the next night at the house of Piano Red. He was a thin, energetic man of about fifty; he had burned his hand a while back and had taken up drums, as he now felt uncomfortable on guitar. Did he know Son? Hell, yes, he knew Son! Son had been living in New York for some time now, but he didn't have the address. He knew that Son's stepdaughter had been married to Benny Brown Jr. a while back and that Benny Brown Sr., who was in Memphis hospital, might have Son's address. It was decided that we would visit Brown, Sr., and Joe would check Brown, Jr., who lived in Robinsonville.

Brown, Sr. was in the hospital with only a minor liver ailment, so we were allowed to visit him. Rev. Wilkins again went with us to pave the way. Brown didn't know Son's address, but he was quite certain that Son was living in Rochester.

That narrowed it down quite a bit, but we still needed an address as badly as ever. Back to see Joe in Mississippi.

Joe took us to see Brown, Jr., who had been out when Joe tried to reach him earlier. Brown had not heard from his ex-wife (Son's stepdaughter) in years; she had remarried and was now living in Detroit. Another dead end.

Wait a minute - she married Grace Strong's boy; the Strongs might know something. And off we went to see the Strongs.

Yes, her boy was married to Son's stepdaughter, Mrs. Strong told us. We could probably reach him by phone at about four thirty, when he finishes work.

J. W. Smith, Detroit - Just a minute. I have the address here somewhere ... Saw him last year ... Oh, yes, he still plays the old music ... here's the address...

Western Union, Memphis: "If you are the Son House who recorded for Paramount in the thirties and the Library of Congress in the forties, please call person to person collect in Memphis ..."

Climax? Fini? Not quite. Smith had made a small mistake in the address, and the telegram could not be delivered. We spent two more frustrating days calling Rochester and Detroit before we finally reached Son on the phone on Father's Day.

Now I realize that this sort of thing, bluesman rediscovered after 20 years, is supposed to be dramatic and all that but to tell the truth, nothing very dramatic happened.

Son seemed to be a bit puzzled as to why we had been looking for him and how we knew of his music; nobody else had showed any interest in the last twenty odd years. He said he could still play, although he hadn't played regularly in about four years. We told him we would be in Rochester to see him in a few days.

After I hung up, I turned to Dick, who was grinning from ear to ear, and started to say something. Whatever it was I started to say, it ended up as "WE DID IT!"

We went back to the room, where Nick was in the process of taping Solomon Henderson, one of the many fine bluesmen we recorded during the trip. After a short backslapping session, we made plans for the trip to Rochester.

We sent Son a telegram, and he was expecting us when we arrived. Son was supposed to be a short, fat man; there was a thin man of average height sitting on the apartment house stoop. I asked him if he knew which apartment Son House lived in.

"This is him", said Son House.

Phil Spiro.

(Reprinted from the Cambridge Broadside)

HARDIN & YORK
THE WORLD'S SMALLEST BIG BAND

Hardin and York probably create some of today's best 'new' sounds. Eddie Hardin, although still in his early twenties, has already known good fortune and fame for over five years. "It's all been quite lucky really - I mean when I left school I went straight into the Spencer Davis Group; no inbetween jobs, just straight into a band with a world-wide reputation already established. Spencer had just moved down to London to live when we met - we became quite good friends and frequently played together. Steve was still with the band at that time, but it was getting more and more obvious to anyone that a change was in the air. When the 'Big Break', as the press called it, happened, I was able to step in to Steve's shoes almost immediately".

"To be quite honest, I think the group improved when Steve left and I took over, but that won't look very good in print and anyway what I played was obviously more to my own tastes than the stuff played by anyone else".

Since the duo's conception, in February '69, the major part of their popularity has come from the continent; countries like Germany and Holland. It was in Germany in fact that their bootleg album was made. I asked Pete about this. "It's all an example of what you can get away with if you go about it in the right way - we were due to play in this German Youth Centre one night, when the Manager came up and asked if we would mind if some of the members of his club - a glorified Youth Club really - filmed us whilst we did our act. They did it right enough, there were two guys with cameras, lights and things leaping all over the stage during the act, but as well as that, there were these microphones set up all over the place and a guy sitting in a corner in front of an elaborate mixing desk ... well we naturally assumed he was doing some sort of magnificient sound track for the film".

"When the album started to crop up everywhere, we realised what had been going on. The recording quality, as could be expected from their professional approach, was really good for a pirate - much better than the usual bootleg standard. The people that made it were so proud that they sent us each a copy, but I had to give mine to CBS (who release our records in Germany) so that they could let their legal boys go to work on getting us some money for it, but they never did get any. But from that one copy I'd given them, their experts worked out exactly where, how and by whom it had been recorded and in which factory it had been pressed. Apparently at night, when all the workers had gone home, a bunch of guys would creep in and press off the odd thousand. Altogether I believe that about 25000 have been sold, which isn't bad **really when you consider that they only** had a plain black sleeve with our names written on it".

In addition to the pirate LP - which is still available in a number of record shops in London - the duo have released two other albums; 'Tomorrow Today' and 'The World's Smallest Big Band'. Eddie has his doubts about the production quality on 'Big Band' and intends to do his own producing in future. "It's OK if the producer actually does something creative, but when we go in the studio we play exactly as we want to anyway, so it's bloody ridiculous to pay producers fees."

Peter's history is rather more complex than Eddie's, so the obvious thing was to talk about it himself. "I guess every kid bangs on tin lids when he's little, the only difference between them and me was that I was still doing it when I was fourteen. My mother eventually conceded by buying me a snare drum, which again I banged, or should I say played, enthusiastically. The school I went to had one of these Cadet Force Bands, so I played drum. It used to be a proper little rave-up actually. One day just after I'd seen 'The Glen Miller Story' I got the band in the practice shed and talked about the film ... you know, the bit in the film where the band is on parade and Glen Miller suddenly whips them up into a jazzy piece. Well that's what we wanted to do - on a given day during a parade one of us was to give a signal and we would all break into this big beat number ... we never had the courage to do it".

"After school I went to work as a Management Trainee with G.K.N. in Birmingham, and at nights I played with a jazz band in the upstairs room of a pub. Most of the customers were from the University - in fact so were most of the band now that I think of it. Well anyway, Spencer Davis used to play a spot during our interval; in those days he played his own brand of blues on harp and twelve string - in a way I'm glad to see that he's gone back to doing that sort of stuff, it was always more his scene than the commercial numbers we ended up playing. Back to the story - in '63 Spencer, Muff, Steve and me went on the road. It was a good time really, but thanks to the critics, Steve took all our reputation with him when he left. It wasn't so much his absence - Eddie filled his place perfectly - it was just all the press talk about 'Davis without Winwood is nothing', that ruined our morale, you know what I mean".

It was early '68 when Steve left and by the middle of the year I had got a bit up-tight about the way our music, or to be more precise my career, was going. I mean I didn't want to spend the rest of my life as a bleeding backup man to a pop group, so I left ... there was a little bit of friction but not much. Spencer and I are still reasonably good friends".

"It's surprising how quickly the bubble bursts when you are out of work. There was I, fresh from a top band but with no offers of work. By the end of several months, I was getting a bit desperate; I still couldn't understand why nobody came chasing after me with wonderful offers of thousands of pounds to join their band. During this time I travelled up to Nottingham once a week to play in a modern jazz band - but that cost me money so eventually I had to give that up as well".

"Towards the end of the year, Roy Burns was over in this country for a few weeks doing some work for a drum company, and fortunately I managed to spend a few days with him; a few days which taught me more about drumming than I had learnt during the rest of my life. Shortly after that I joined up with Clem Clempson and Bakerloo for a while, but then Eddie came along and asked if I fancied making up a duo with him ... here we are".

Thatch

DAVE MASON

continued from p 15.

come up with gimmicks to keep going.

Z: This thing with concerts ... a lot of people complain that it's such an impersonal thing ... The group is up there on this lofty stage, overlooking all the people ... the people in the back probably cannot see or hear very well. Like Clapton specifically doesn't want to play big concert halls ... he wants to do clubs.

DM: It's really a matter of how you project and who you're playing for ... yourself or the club audiences. We have a sort of presentation ... a personal touch ... aside from the music, in mind. Cause that all helps; helping give a good feeling to the music.

Like when I saw The Band. Although I dug the Band and respect them, the idea of watching them play their music and hearing it could just as easily have been taken up by putting their album on the stereo. Cause that's all it was. They didn't give you anything more. Which is fine, but when I go and see an artiste, I appreciate that personal touch. And that's what we want to do. To have a good time and make good music.

Z: Do you think you might alienate some of the so-called underground or heavy people by having someone like Cass in the group ...?

DM: I don't give a shit about alienating the heavy underground people. They're people just like anybody else, though some of them think that just because it doesn't have a blues riff in it or a funky drum part in it, then it's bullshit. I just don't go for that anymore. Good music is good music and that's it. I don't care if there's 8 to 80 year-olds in the audience. As long as they like it, that's all that matters. It's going to be essentially the same thing; I'll still be singing the same way and playing my guitar the same way ... it's just a little more now, with Cass joining in.

And I've got plenty of material. A lot of it will be done by the group, some will be done by me on the solo things ... there's all kinds of possibilities. Like I might do the original version, then turn it over to the rest of the group and we'll be like doing a cover version of it.

But basically I'm just into writing songs ... not particularly writing for a group, but for a song. Like in Traffic, they all wrote for the group ... that's why it split.

Pete Senoff

BACK TO THE GARDEN OR DOWN TO THE ISLE OF WOODSTOCK?

Of the three Ziggers who zagged to the Isle of Wight, only John returned bursting with praise for the event and the organisation. His only major reservation was expressing a desire to choose all the performers in next year's festival (if there is one) and his comments and suggestions will appear in our next issue. Ian and Jeff Cloves were not so enthusiastic and their reports follow. Firstly Ian's:

"Everybody, sit down, just for a few moments. Will you please just sit down and listen for a moment ..." Rikki Farr appealed to the crowd. He'd spent a lot of time talking to the crowd, half the time appealing to them: to sit down, to stand up and stretch, to raise their hands, to hold hands with their neighbours, to do almost everything except bash each other. He appealed to them not to do that. Maybe the rumour going around about him losing a pint of blood from his throat was true, he did a lot of talking.

On Sunday afternoon there was a free bonus along with the appeal. "Open the gates! Let everybody who wants to come in come in, and everybody who wants to go out go out! Open up the gates!" There was a rumble of applause and of surprise. The audience had seen Woodstock as well. So it wasn't a big hype after all. They'd all read their Freek Press news-sheets which contained as much news as a pig's bum in summer, just a load of vituperative wailing about where you couldn't get a pee, and about all the idiots who'd been dozy enough to parade around with dope hanging out of every pocket and get busted. Appeals from the news-sheets too - for money to bail out the dopeheads. And Donovan came on that afternoon and sang "There was an old lady who swallowed a fly" and that just about summed up the mood of the day.

So they opened up the gates, and the audience cheered and clapped. And a lot of them wet their Levis with laughter. The gate opening ritual took place in the middle of Sunday afternoon! That morning everybody had woken up, unwound themselves from each others' arms and legs, defecated, eaten and cleaned their teeth. Those who were coming into the enclosure had come in long ago to secure a place within three hundred yards of the stage. So they opened up the gates only to reveal a three hour queue of people waiting to go home. They opened the gates while the horse was bolting. "There was an old lady who swallowed a horse", crooned Donovan, "She's dead of course".

"We've lost more money than you ever dreamed of" or words to that effect were croaked by Farr. That same evening, backstage, I had to sidestep rapidly to avoid having my buttocks trimmed by a MarkX Jag - at the wheel Rikki Farr. En route to the pawn shop, I suppose.

So who was right, the news-sheets saying that the whole thing should be free, or the organisers? Was there a loss? Who knows? there were so many unforeseen problems and hassles. But Lewis Chester of the Sunday Times put forward a fairly convincing estimate that with 140,000 paying audience, the organisers would break even. The following Sunday in the Observer, Tony Palmer said that British Rail reckoned they'd shipped 600,000 across the water to the Island. If you estimate that 200,000 camped on Devastation Hill (and there weren't that many) and another hundred thousand died of smoking curry powder pushed to them as dope, that still leaves more than double the audience numbers needed to break even (by Chester's estimates). When the gates were opened (to reveal the Trojan horse dragging along in the opposite direction) spokesman Farr declared that the most important thing about the festival had been to get all the people together and give them some good music. Well, it would be consonant with the mood of love, peace and participation that the organisers tried to create - orders from the stage for everybody to make the sign of peace and hold each other's hands - if Fiery Creations would treat the people who paid as participant-shareholders and published a balance sheet for their perusal. (It is also interesting to see that since the 'financial disaster'/'never again' stories, Fiery Creations have intimated that a Festival next year is a distinct possibility).

And similarly it would be most enlightening to hear exactly how the publishers of the hysterical news-sheets would run the thing as a free event. Maybe they'll put out another news-sheet on the subject.

The most impressive thing about the press enclosure was the contrast of the people there with the audience out at the front. The audience was out there in the arena, lions and christians all together, uncomfortable and close, often cold, patient, waiting for long periods for the artistes' to appear, quietly accepting changes in the advertised programme. Cramped like that they had to have idealism and optimism.

Backstage there was a feeling of complete unreality. It wasn't just the leather-seated snakeskin and suede trousers that kept paining the vision. Nor even the unharnessed breasts that struggled to free themselves from flimsy garments as their wearers trotted around like poodles off the leash, or the fact that a lot of the women attracted by money and accepted by men with money do have something special about them. The contrast was in the tired Henry IV type expressions of boredom - nobody seemed over interested in the music and there was absolutely no feeling of awareness that half a million people sat expectantly a few yards away, and no feeling that anybody present would change anything in this world except the fatness of their bank balances. One group of journalists from the dailies in particular only got slightly chuffed with life when they heard a rumour that Algerian types were going to get violent on Sunday night. They would no doubt have been overjoyed if Hendrix had obligingly flaked out a few weeks earlier and created a bit of real and tangible news.

The people behind and on the stage were so much older than those out at the front - in a my-mind's-as-wrinkled-as-my-face sort of way. It seemed a gigantic excercise in dramatic irony. Perhaps a majority of the audience saw a majority of the people who appeared onstage as some kind of leaders who could participate in leading the world towards an optimistic future. But all the performers were offering was something for there and then, for the time they stood there on stage. The nearest thing to an offering to the audience was Joni Mitchell's set. She needed the audience, not only that they should be there but also that they should be attentive and share what she was offering. In complete contrast to this, the Doors might have been playing to an empty field. Morrison didn't even bother to look at the audience; none of the numbers were introduced and there were no encores in spite of the surprisingly warm applause.

However, unreality or not, there were some figures that gave solidity. I arrived on Saturday just as John Sebastian was finishing his set in which he'd been accompanied by former Spoonful stalwart Zal Yanovsky. In fact, Yanovsky was ubiquitous, he became a symbol of permanence. He was there on his feet to applaud Joni singing 'Woodstock', he was there outside the refreshment tent with a bottle of Teacher's on the table talking to anybody and everybody. He was there all the time, and you felt that if he was there, somewhere, the festival would go on, and that if he went away, it would collapse. Even the fact that a news-sheet referred to him as "Zolly Minovsky" could not diminish the effect of his presence. (and to get his name wrong is as unforgivable as

to refer to "John Lemon of the Beatles" - the era of which the Spoonful was such a big part was the basis for festivals such as the Isle of Wight ones).

It was a strange event. For some, it must have been the greatest reality of their lives, for others, the greatest unreality. For some it was even a non-event. The fact remains that a very large number of people, regarded by their less itinerant fellow citizens as a danger, showed that an overcrowded world can still be a world without disasters.

The final words to Melanie:

"Tell all the people to tear down the wall that keeps them from being part of it all ..." and:

"Your cause is oh so beautiful
you're ready to begin
you're gonna play the good guys by singing
the good guys' hymn,
ah, you're building the halls with the outer
walls
but you haven't got a thing within ...

but if we keep on trying,
though our purpose isn't clear
we may just move the universe
we'll learn to really care
eventually the whole facade
becomes more than a whim
by starting to build on the outside
we're gonna fill up the walls within ..."

The Isle of Wight Festival proved something. I don't know what. But Melanie appears to have known, even before it took place.

Watch the parking meters.

Ian

Driving up from the Fishbourne ferry at dusk - long lines of special buses, not too many cars but motor bikes and bikers everywhere ... I can see the festival glow on the skyline and then, round the bend, there it is - this is what I've chased back from Copenhagen for, and it's just too much. Even above the stamping engine note of the BSA I can hear Chicago beating out the news,but it's the enormity of the congregation which hits me ... is this the sermon on the mount again, or is that too fanciful a notion, brought on by fatigue and hunger? There are lights as far as I can see and each one represents a small group of people round a fire or a tent - rock and roll gypsies of the night come to hear the high priests of electricity scream out their messages of sex, violence and hope. And up above the blaze of light from the stage there is this amazing hill covered in tents right up to the yellow skyline. I can see it clearly because the whole slope is bathed in a soft Rembrandt golden glow from cigarette and pipe, joss-stick, candle, torch and campfire and I know that there must be thousands of people up on that hill and I'm suddenly moved in that sentimental, gulping, tearful way I used to be moved by the end of the Aldermaston march and the way I still am by cup-final crowds and I know that whatever else happens this was worth coming back for and I know that I want to be up on that hill with those people.

And so on that Friday night I put up my tent and headed on up that golden mountain to taste the wine and stumbled, instead, into a monstrous and tawdry slum, peopled with sad faced wanderers, hamburger stands, cheapskate "craft" stalls and just about every novelty/souvenir/gimmick designed to spring anybody's silver out of fringed Indian leather pouch and into the night-safe of some honest petty capitalist. I experienced one of the sharpest come-downs of my life, and forgetting my euphoria of an hour or so ago I just felt like flashing straight back to Copenhagen where the sun was shining, the sea was warm, the chicks were a knockout and my friends had a great sound system, beautiful records and a green garden with apple trees. But I stayed and maybe this piece is a confused attempt to somehow relate those two initial impressions.

Originally I hadn't intended going to the Island as I was on a long awaited trip camping and biking up through Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland but two events changed my mind. Firstly, I was fast running out of money and secondly, an American biker, Bill D'Olier, whom I met on the road, told me that Miles Davis was appearing and that settled it - Miles Davis at a rock festival was just too much to miss and I decided to get back, get back. I mention this because it affects the state of mind with which I arrived on the Island - I hadn't seen an English newspaper for five weeks or so, knew nothing of the press build up for the festival, the hassles with local interests and M.P.'s or, more importantly, the "free" festival movement, the "battle for Devastation Hill" as the press called it, the attack on the fences and the attempt by Rikki Farr to visit the sins of the Festival organisers on the mountain dwellers. In fact the first I heard of Devastation Hill was from a traffic policeman at the entrance to the site and it struck me as a phoney straight away. When John Sebastian, on Saturday, called for the sound to be turned up "so the folks on the mountain can hear", well that had the right sound, and from there on in we lived on "the mountain". Not that I wasn't interested in going to the Festival (even without Miles), it was just that I would have preferred to spend another couple of weeks in Finland if possible. However, maybe it all worked for the best, because I think that the Festival was a significant event, in many ways, and because the music was so good that finally it over came everything else and made me glad to be there ... and for that - all other objections and criticisms apart - I suppose I must thank Fiery Creations.

So you see I came to the Festival like a virgin to the bedchamber - a rough idea of what it was about but no actual previous experience. I guess most Zigzaggers have seen Woodstock by now and having seen it, couldn't fail to be aware of a certain feeling of oneness about the event that sings through the film from the moment you see them erecting the stage. Well having seen the film in Amsterdam (in the middle of an ecstatic American audience) and in Helsinki (in the middle of a stolid Finnish audience) I suppose that was what I expected (well hoped then) would happen on the Island. In the event I think that Woodstock proved to be a terrible blight which almost destroyed what ever spirit the Festival was capable of producing. I think I was aware of this before leaving England - a ridiculous competitive feeling that this would be our answer to Woodstock - bigger, better and by God, British... so take that - Dam' Yankees! And basing the Festival on a core of artists who were at Woodstock almost invited comparison - though why, if that's what they wanted, they didn't go the whole hog and get Joe Cocker too, we can only guess. So maybe there was a basic fault running through the bedrock of the Festival from the beginning - a notion that all the Promoters had to do was to recreate Woodstock as accurately as possible on the Wight Island and everyone would go home happy. And this seems to me to have seriously under-rated the intelligence of audience because it seemed to me that what we wanted was not so much the same artists but the same spirit, the same community feeling which shined out of Woodstock.

Of course I realise that Woodstock is a hot commercial property for Warner and for that reason many people have put it down but I think Michael Wadleigh, who directed it, is right when he says that doesn't invalidate the event. I also realise that skillful editing can create an atmosphere that was never there in reality. But I have no reason to doubt Wadleigh's honesty and I met so many Americans in Europe during the summer who were there and assured me that "that's how it was" that I absolutely believe some whiff of how it can be was in the air at Woodstock. After the events of May '68 in Paris Cohn-Bendit answered critics who jeered at the "failure of the revolution" by saying, in effect, "well we had it for three days and that's more than most of you are going to taste in a life time" and I think that happened at Woodstock. And I think, too, that is why it was fundamentally impossible to recreate Woodstock in England - because finally Woodstock was a political event and the Isle of Wight was a game. I met and talked to so many young Americans while I was away who were, in every sense, political refugees from America - that I began to understand that American attitudes to long hair/rock are entirely different from ours. They still see long hair as a signal - a code message which says "yeah I'm with you brother! I'm sick of the war, terrified of being drafted, pissed off with the property grab and I'm not being put on any more". And when all those hairy people turned up at Woodstock, they found each other and that was a POLITICAL act. I met people who were at Woodstock who believed that their lives were permanently changed by that event - it's difficult to believe that The Isle of Wight caused people to change their socks let alone their lives. When I saw 'Let It Be' in St. Albans the audience appeared to be wearing lead boots and straight-jackets but the Americans in Amsterdam turned that showing of Woodstock into a party, or rather, into a festival. They treated the film as an event that was taking place there and then, they clapped every artist on and off the screen, shouted encouragement, joined in the songs and went clean off their heads when Joe Cocker came on. They were with the performers, emotionally, spiritually and physically. I think that what happened at Woodstock was a show of strength by the alternative society and they drew that strength from the music and from each other.

Now obviously I can't speak up for everybody on the Island, and I've read letters from delighted festival-goers praising Fiery Creations for promoting something akin to The Second Coming but, from the evidence of my own eyes, many of the people for most of the time weren't happy; I just wasn't aware of that ecstatic, blissful, stoned-out oneness that radiated off the bluejean masses at Woodstock. And I don't think this was wholly the fault of the artists or the people, for they were the same musicians and we are the same people, finally. Even so, Wight could never be Woodstock - if Woodstock was a demonstration of The Alternative, Wight was doomed to be a mildly non-conformist eccentricity, like cricket or swan-upping, unless some magic was released by the collective power of those present. And what happened was that too many barriers, both physical and emotional, came between the musicians and their audience for that magic to work. What we got were a few conjuring tricks from some good illusionists, but few of us believed in the magic.

And the reasons aren't hard to find, so here is a boring list.

The blatant insincerity and hypocricy of those people who subtly put it about that the festival was being promoted out of love for their fellow men but that somehow the mountain dwellers were going to wreck it all. And so the threat of clearances, dogs and the use of the searchlight to blind us at night. Tactics more reminiscent of Gestapo than Woodstock.

The oafish security guards and their untrained (thus even more dangerous) dogs.

The insensitivity of the organisers in playing records the moment an artist had finished his act (presumably to prevent encores) thus often killing the emotional impact of the music which the musicians had worked hard to achieve.

The insistence on playing records all the time between acts ... personally I could have done with a little silence.

The helicopters and aircraft which were a allowed to buzz the arena continually and which drowned out complete sections of quiet songs to the abvious annoyance of audience and artist alike. This affected Joni Mitchell noticeably and I sometimes had the impression that the festival was staged for the benefit of the media rather than the people.

The total acceptance of, and therefore continuation of the star sytsem. Ironically, in the light of her song, 'Woodstock', who should pass me on the road to the Isle but Joni Mitchell. OK? But she was riding in a Rolls Royce driven by a liveried chauffer! Now I understand that the cars were provided by Fiery Creations, but it's all the same if it weren't - the cost still gets lumped onto the £3 ticket buyers who hitched down. Then again, the artists had a separate enclosure to camp in or were rumoured to stay at hotels or in yachts. Why couldn't they stay on the campsite with the people? Why couldn't I get up in the morning, have a brew up and offer a cup to Leonard Cohen who happened to be camping next to me? Surely Rolls Royces,VIP treatment, yachts and hotels belong to Hollywood of the 40s and 50s. I'm really getting sick and tired of musicians who come on about revolution, communion, getting it together, etc but are nevertheless playing along with star billings, inflated fees, publicity stunts and almost total lack of personal contact with their audience. How nice it would have been if all the performers had camped with the people, seen the show from the hill with the rest of us and just gone up on the stage to play and come back again. As it was we were told in hushed tones by the comperes, of who were the latest trendy and groovy people to be spotted backstage, while Joni Mitchell having arrived in the Rolls Royce, chided her audience for "behaving like tourists". The amazing thing was that the audience took this and even applauded her. In fact the people took so much crap without a single squeak of protest that they almost deserved to be conned. When a few people had taken just about all that they could and began to take action like liberating the PA system and taking down the fences, Fiery Creations even managed to make many of the audience believe that this would actually precipitate the end of the festival, and thus applaud their own gullibility and the organisers right to rook them for as much money as possible. Interesting too, how all who raised a squeak were branded as "foreign" troublemakers and anarchists - two very useful emotive terms which the press were quick to exploit. Personally I had every sympathy with the demolition team although, as a tactic, it was a tactic it was a pointless action, since the existence of the mountain had reduced the fence to an ineffective and token barrier. And with the exeption of John Sebastian and one or two barbed comments from Ian Anderson, the musicians too seemed prepared to take what they were given instead of showing a little solidarity with the audience. How is it, for example, that Richie Havens was made to close the festival with an act that finished at ten to six in the morning, to an audience flaked out with exhaustion and which had been asleep for the last couple of hours or so. Over and over again, acts which were eagerly anticipated came on so late that people were too tired to listen to them.

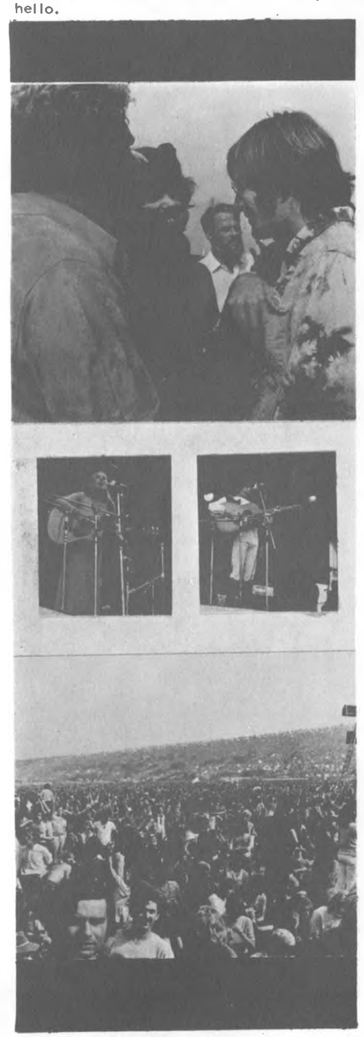
Above all, what a giveaway was that last rambling and tearful spiel from Rikki Farr about how the anarchists had wrecked everything, and how he was heartbroken and how they were never going to run another festival and how they were £20000 IN THE RED. What a giveaway! That's what hurt - as usual the business man justifies his profit by saying "well I take the risks", and when he fails he looks around for someone to blame. But what about the film and record rights? And what about the stories that there will, after all, be another one next year.....surely they can't afford it.

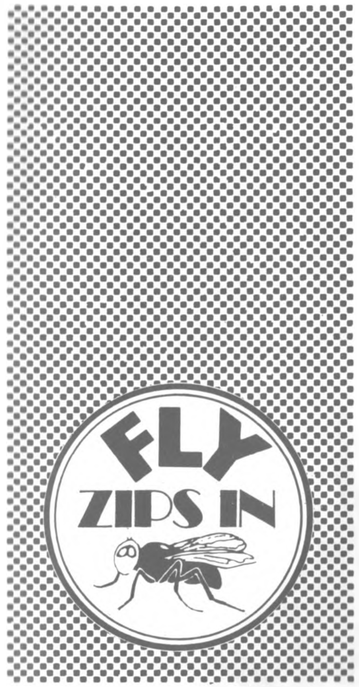
What it comes to is that there is a big gap between what promoters, musicians and the audience profess to believe and how they actually behave, and a start has to be made toward some sort of honest relationship. Now it is currently fashionable to write and sing songs about getting back to simple things, nature, conserving the landscape, making towns fit to live in, etc. Groups are calling themselves families, and extolling the virtues of living communally in the country - in fact "getting back to the garden". This is really part of a general reaction against the size of the organisations and agencies which control our lives, I think, and is related to the idea of discovering ourselves as indivíduals. So what more contradictory expression of this idea is there, than a mammoth pop festival which applauds itself for amassing more people than went to Woodstock? There were simply too many people at the festival for it to work properly - that is, to provide the basic and decent ammenities we needed and a good view and reception of the music we were offered. The festival was aiming at bigger, and I think we should be aiming at smaller. The festival was concerned with stars, and I think we should be concerned with friends. The festival was aiming at profit, and I think we should be aiming at sharing.

Small wonder that by saturday afternoon and sunday morning many of us escaped down to the beach and held our own festival of the skin away from the endless patter of the DJs and their trendy muzac; away from the performing dogs; away from the fences, helicopters (we hoped), coke profiteers, carpetbaggers, plain clothes policemen, away from the robbers and the robbed. If we didn't get back to the garden at least we got down to the sea, and there, flinging jeans, bras and tiedyed whats-its to the four winds, we held hands with total strangers and danced naked and sang in the sea, under the sun on that green Island and, at last, without any help from Fiery Creations, the festival really happened. The people got together spontaneously and did it for themselves, but even then the police buzzed around in helicopters and the press suggested that some kind of underground orgy was going on.

However, I seem to hear the anguished moans of crosseyed Zigzaggers groaning "dun he go on then, when's the end, bring back Ian Mann" and "Chris Welch liked it", so just in case you think I'm entirely soured up by the whole event I'll tell you what I did like about it. With one or two notable exceptions I thought the music was good - for me Miles Davis, Leonard Cohen, Richie Havens, Emerson Lake & Palmer, and Jethro Tull were all outstanding; John Sebastian worked hard and was so likeable that he won through; Tiny Tim was so professional and so persistent that he, of all people, was the first to really produce some spark from the audience; and Miles' first morse code notes layed out as dusk was coming in and the first campfires flickered on the side of the mountain was the most memorable single moment. I'm glad I went but I won't go again unless it's smaller, free (make the media pay for it), has fewer 'stars' and no guard dogs. I'm convinced it could be done and Blackhill have already done it several times at Hyde Park. But I think if there are to be any more festivals they should be run by the people for the people, and we'll have no-one to blame but ourselves if things go wrong. Jeff Cloves

PS If you read this Elspeth Pearson,well hello.





"There are so many record labels - every group wants its own label. Well, this is not going to be just another label.... it can't be"says David Ruffell, who will be handling the promotion of Fly Records, which promises to be one of the most interesting labels to appear for years.

In a nutshell, Fly is the old Regal Zonophone label in a new guise. But it's not as simple as that, and I feel it may be interesting to go a little deeper into the hows, whys, whens and what-have-yous.

"Basically it's the idea of David Platz of Essex Music and Straight Ahead Productions, who previously had a licencing deal with EMI to bring out all his stuff on Regal Zonophone" explained Malcolm Jones, former Harvest and now Fly label manager. "I was at EMI when it was going, and a lot of things were wrong with it. EMI is a pretty good company in many ways, but not so good in others.... for instance, they don't have a chance to promote their whole range of product really well - it's simply too vast. The three year contract came to an end, and the next step from a licencing deal is to start your own label".

This is what David Platz, together with Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp of Track Records, decided to do and Fly will be a distinct entity, seperate from EMI administratively, though they will handle distribution. Essex, the country's biggest independent publishers, will do all administration - the paperwork and money work, and David Ruffell, who is also with Track Records, will look after promotion.

In this way, the ex-Regal artistes will receive more specific and sympathetic treatment in future: "It used to be the same old story - bring out 50 albums at once, and hope that some will sell. The product is better than that, but EMI's distribution set up is comparatively good and so we're going to use that in addition to our own salesmen who will sort of give a personal touch, if you like":David. Malcolm:"EMI have just got too much product to devote specific attention to each record - there are vast catalogues of material available to them that they just can't do anything with. They deleted BBKing's best album before he became big and then failed to re-issue it. I was badgering them to do certain things for years - like a Johnny Kidd's greatest hits for instance, and a Yardbirds Greatest Hits. With the latter, I put together 16 of their best tracks including two that had never been released, but they never followed it through - the organisation is too large, and no-one has the time to work on special projects like that".

The first two releases (already out) are new singles from the Move and T Rex (the name has evidently been abbreviated for the benefit of those who find Tyrannosaurus too much of a tongue-twister) and these are followed next month by an album series called Flyback. All the old Regal Zonophone material is now the property of Fly, and the Flyback albums will be similar to the Backtracks in as much as old material will be re-packaged and re-released at budget prices...."things like a Move Hits, and maybe the second Cocker album, which never had its run here. The first will be called 'Mixed Bag' and will be a sort of sampler. Another will be 'Do You Remember' - a T Rex anthology which may possibly include unreleased tracks. Marc is currently re-doing the stereo mixes of 'Debora' and 'One Inch Rock' - he's really one of the most enthusiastic and co-operative people I've ever met. The sleeves for the series are being worked on now, as is the label logo" (which will feature a different fly from the one in our heading which is a rejected prototype).

The records will all be stereo, which may cause some problems. The first Procol Harum album for instance was only released in mono. Will they re-process the tracks in the popular fashion? Malcolm:"Well, re-enhanced stereo is usually diabolical - they filter all the tinny stuff on the left and all the bass on the left. And if you switch it back to mono when they've done that, it sounds terrible - so you lose some thing anyway. Chess do quite a good fake stereo by using phasing - they did a very good Muddy Waters which actually sounded good....not just tin on the left and muffle on the right. But with 'Marjorine' by Joe Cocker, Denny Cordell had the tapes to do a stereo mix but somehow couldn't seem to get it to his satisfaction, so it went out on the 'With a little help' album in re-processed stereo. I don't quite know what we're going to do about that problem yet".

And what about the early Straight Ahead stuff that went out on Deram - will these tracks be included in the Flybacks? "Well, we're trying to include them - there's only 'Whiter Shade of Pale' and the Move's two first hits. If Decca co-operate, yes they will go on. We're negotiating now".

And what about these loose rumours about some of the artistes involved going off to different labels? "They're all still under varying lengths of contract to us. The Move have signed with Harvest, but that's for so far ahead it's not worth talking about. Anyway, who's to say that they all won't re-sign once they see what we're doing?"

David: "Don't worry. It'll all come together because the enthusiasm is here....you won't catch anyone leaving here at five o' clock. And that's what counts".

the doors

continued from page 8

J: I know, but which guy?

Z: Geoffrey Cannon - he's a writer for 'The Guardian' - and he said that they were trying to put over the immediacy of rock, rather than the Doors, and I said well, I think you should have been trying to put over the Doors, because the sound recording was really shitty, you know.

J: However, I thought the film was very exciting. To get it on national television, I think that's incredible. The thing is, the guys that made the film had a thesis of what their film was going to be, before we even came over. We were going to be the political rock group, and it gave them the chance to whip out some of their anti-American sentiments, which they thought we were going to give them, and so they had their whole film before we came over. But I still think they made a very exciting film.

Z: You know, when you were at the Roundhouse, there was something ... It was amazing, all those people sitting there. It was so crowded it was much worse than this, because it was an enclosed space, and there was a queue of two thousand people waiting to get in at two o'clock in the morning. A ridiculous scene. Why haven't you been here since then?

J: I guess we've been too busy, and actually, there didn't seem to be that much demand. I mean, we couldn't go back to the Roundhouse; it would have to be a step forward, and there didn't seem to be any real, uh ...

Z: No. Well, the Roundhouse is no longer an auditorium in the same way.

J: Oh Calcutta's on there, right?

Z: Right.

J: That seems strange.

Z: They've put sort of terraced seating in not long after you came.

J: Well, that was a beautiful scene two years ago, at the Roundhouse where it's kind of a penny theatre, you know.

Z: Right ... it's the kind of thing one remembers for years and years, which is why I'd have expected an earlier return.

J: That's the reason. We were busy, and also there just didn't seem to be any real demand for it. What's the name of the magazine you guys put out?

Z: Zigzag.

J: I've seen it. I'd like to start a magazine, newspaper thing in LA sometime. The trouble is, if you try and do it to sell copies, and get the advertising and all that, then you can't, uh ...

Z: Well, you certainly lose a lot of your enthusiasm when you start getting involved in business hustles. Anyway, wouldn't LA be rather a difficult market, with so many publications?

J: Well, that's it. I'd only do it if I could finance it myself, so I wouldn't have to advertise. You know those little magazines, one issue things, the Surrealists and Dadas used to put out? Manifestos, and all that?

Z: Yeah, right.

J: Hey look. An actual movie. (As Jimi Hendrix is filmed going up the backstage ramp followed by a man struggling with an enormous camera). Hey that's beautiful. Looks like a priest.

Z: Do you think in view of what you've done that you will do a tour now?

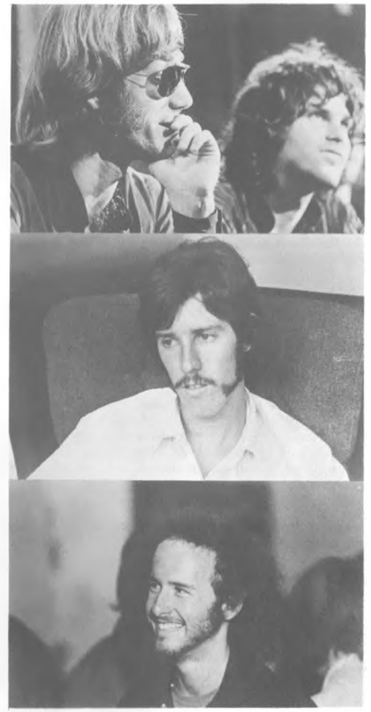
J: Well, we had planned one ... we had planned to do one after this, eight or nine places in Europe, including Italy and Switzerland and Paris, places like that, but I have to go back to this trial in Miami. I'm in the middle of that so it blew the whole trip.

Z: That is such a drag as far as we here are concerned.

J: I thought it was going to be, but it's actually a very fascinating thing to go through. A thing you can observe.

Z: I talked to Jac Holzman (of Elektra), and he said that it was going on so long now that perhaps nothing would ever be done about it, because it would go to appeals and appeals and appeals, but the trouble is if it keeps you in a position where you can't get out of the country for too long, it's a drag for us here.

J: I think maybe we'll come back next spring, March, April. That's a good time of year.



Z: That would be good. Are you happy with the live album?

J: Yeah, I like it.

Z: We haven't heard it yet.

J: It's just about to be released here. I think it's a true document of one of our good concerts. It's not insanely good, but it's a true portrait of what we usually do on a good night. I think you'll like it.

Z: Well, I've really dug all the others. I heard that your favourite album was 'The Soft Parade'. Is that right?

J: Oh, I don't know. I guess I don't have a favourite. Well, let's see, I think my favourite, beside the live one, is 'Morrison Hotel'.

Z: That's very good. That was getting back to the first two, perhaps, it seemed to me. Was that ...

J: Just in the respect that we didn't use any other musicians on it, except the bass player.

Z: Lonnie Mack -

J: But it wasn't a conscious attempt to get back to anything.

Z: No, but it was publicised a bit like that here, which is perhaps unfair, because the first album is an epic. I'm literally on my third copy of it, I wore out two.

J: Yeah? You know, that's terrible, that's like a novellist's first novel, and no-one ever lets him forget it. Why don't you write 'em like "Look Homeward Angel" anymore?

Z: No, you're certainly progressing, aren't you? I mean, I thought 'Morrison Hotel' was a knock out, whereas 'The Soft Parade' disappointed me in places.

J: It kinda got out of control, and it took too long in making, spread over about nine months, and just got out of hand. There was no, uh ... an album should be like a book of stories strung together, some kind of unified feeling and style about it, and that's what that one lacks.

Z: Are you happy with Elektra?

J: Yeah, it's been a great relationship.

Z: I'm an Elektra freak. I've got about seventy Elektra albums ...

J: Well, now that it's become part of a large corporation, it'll be interesting to see if the label gets better, or if they kinda get ... or if it gets assimilated. Hopefully, it might give them the chance not to worry about the tedium of the popular field, and do the thing that they do best, which is classical, experimental electronic things, giving a chance to people that haven't had really a chance to be commercially successful in their own times. Maybe this will give them a chance to get back to that.

Z: Which is what they first became known for.

J: I think with us it was just really a freak. They've never repeated that.

Z: Jac Holzman saw you when he went ot see Love playing somewhere, didn't he? That was the story.

J: Right. They had Love, and someone associated with them brought someone in to see us, and that's ... yeah, that's actually it. Because Love was the popular underground group in LA at that time, and we figured, well, if they went on Elektra, it must be a good label.

Z: And then you got famous, and Love didn't.

J: Yeah. In a way that's true. I think it was sad about Love, they were incredible ... well, it's really Arthur Lee, I suppose, because ... although the first Love group was a very, very great group. But I don't think they were willing to travel, and to go through all the games and numbers that you have to do to get it out to a large number of people. If they'd done that, I think they could have been as big as anyone. And someday they will.

Z: Right. Thanks very much for your time.

J: Good luck. John

The Velvet Underground

(continued from page 24)

the group itself. The nervous energy that had once brought three independent sources of power together had begun to dissipate, and the resultant tensions were beginning to rumble and twitch beneath the surface. The first to slip away was Nico, already appearing as a solo act at The Dom with Jackson Browne, while the rift had begun to open between Reed and Cale.

"We were very distraught at the time" says Cale. "There was pressure building up - God knows from where - and we were all getting very frustrated". It was also about this time that they made moves to establish their independence from Warhol, who was getting more and more involved with his film making and less concerned with the group.

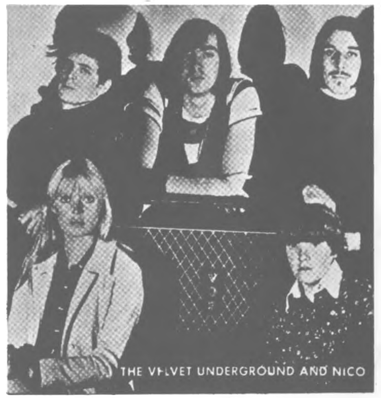
It was in this atmosphere of strain, with formerly known and relied-upon landmarks crumbling around them, that the Velvets put out White Light/White Heat. You can hear it all reflected in the music. There is a feeling of hurriedness, an urgency which moves each cut up to a slightly greater level of intensity. The production is muddy (the group insisted on playing at full volume in the studio), which only served to heighten the quickened pulse of the album.

When you put the first and second albums side by side, there is a literal difference that you can almost reach out and touch. The Velvet Underground And Nico seems brighter, with more colours. White Light stands in stark black and white, graced with an invisible death's head on its cover.

More, there is a very real element of paranoia to the album. "I heard her call my name" begins abruptly, almost as if it was afraid that the side would start without it. "The Gift" is an almost classic study in paranoia, possibly taking place all in the mind of Waldo, recited in a cool, emotionless tone by Cale, that serves to bring it home even further. And on "Lady Godiva's Operation", a subliminal voice hisses out "you're a boy - you're a girl", tense, accusing.

The climax of the album, "Sister Ray" gathers together the five previous cuts much the same as "European Son" did on the first. It is a story, first of all, with narration switched from person to person: the sailor, someone named Rosie, Sister Ray herself, among others. And there are events that take place: a killing, people wanting jobs to "try and earn a dollar", a variety of comings and goings. A little world, in other words, covered over by that strange desire for salvation that continually creeps up in Velvet lyrics. "I'm searching for my mainline" sings Reed over and over and over, until the words separate into syllables and finally to individual letters.

Musically, the group behind Reed



The Velvets with Nico 1967

solidly backs up the effect of the lyrics. Everything is based around one chord, cemented by a stolid, endlessly patient beat by Maureen. Guitars mingle and clash over the bottom, pieces of viola, organ, and vague electronicsfly around, but nothing can really rise too far over the drone on the floor. It encompasses everything. After ten minutes or so, as if to drive the point home, the Velvets abruptly cut the flow for just the briefest of moments, like a sudden light after a dark tunnel. Just to let you know.

At least here, if in no other place, we can use a Velvet's composition to compare their approach with that of another group. About a year before 'Sister Ray', the Seeds put together a song on their second album (Web of Sound) called 'Up in her room', where they repeated the phrase over the course of 15 minutes plus, building the music with it in a kind of logical intensity. At least on a physical level both the songs work in the same way. After x amount of time, they tend to create an environment of their own: listening to them is like humming in a room where about a dozen other people are humming too, in a constant pitch, never varying, unchanging.

But the Seeds are a California group, and just in terms of the different life style, they operate in an entirely opposing fashion to the Velvets. Where Lou Reed spits out his words, knows their power, chooses them and realizes what he is aiming for in the way of effect, the Seeds have come about their sound in a much more elementary way. Most likely, they thought of it at a practice once, liked it, and decided to build a song around it. And from the appearance, they never thought of basing their music around a dominant aesthetic, never dawdled with such matters as theme, never cared much about things like context and meaning.

The difference is important. In terms of Art, the Seeds approach is hit or miss, a product of spontaneous thinking that can only go as far as the initial creative impulse will take it. But the Velvets - a product in many ways of the New York avant garde, who read, go to movies, obviously do a lot of heavy thinking - are used to intellectualizing what they do. They function in the realm of Art, first and foremost, not only intrigued with matters of Style (as are the Seeds - and there is much to be said for that), but also with matters of Content. The Velvets have always moved in terms of carefully thought out theories, knowing what they want to accomplish and how best to go about it.

Art-rock has become a much scorned term of late. In large part I'd tend to go along with that: most of the stuff that has passed under the title has been little more than a combination of pretentious garbage and two-bit eclecticism, part of a seeming campaign to make rock 'acceptable' to people who never much cared for it in the first place. But then there comes a group like The Velvet Underground, who take the hidden powers in art-rock and slowly bring them to the light, giving the phrase some much-needed relevance once more.

And so today.

They've been on the road since the beginning of last October, are tired, a little sick, and were hurting to get back to New York. John Cale is no longer there; Doug Yule has come in on bass and organ to replace him. Maureen still stands when she plays drums, batting away, never missing a beat. Reed and Morrison are working immeasurably closer on guitars, seemingly more in control of their instruments than previously. They still do some of the old stuff on stage, but the present material is about half new.

In many ways the Velvets are a changed band. The frantic pushing that was so much a part of White Light is gone now, replaced by an ethereal calm that seems to signify that the mainline has indeed been found, the next level ascended to and attained. Their third album was simply called The Velvet Underground (June 1969) attesting to the fact that the separate pieces are gone now, that the group had become a cohesive single unit.

The music changed also: the melodic lyricism that only crept up in part on the first albums had by the third become dominant. It was probably their most commercial album, yet like the others, it probably left them in as large an obscurity as they now find themselves. When the people do know about them, they remember 'Heroin' or they think it's all a put on, or they somehow lump them in with other New York underground groups like the Fugs. It's sad of course. The Velvets are probably the most creative band in America today, dealing in an area which most other groups avoid studiously: Life.

To be real, you see. Because if you can't do that, say the Velvets, you may as well not be doing anything at all.

Lenny Kaye.

Reprinted from NY New Times (UPS)

The Velvets in 1968

Albums:
The Velvet Underground & Nico SVLP 9184
White Light/White Heat SVLP 9201
The Velvet Underground CS 8108
New one out soon on Atlantic Records.
Solo John Cale (Vintage Violence) out soon on CBS.

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 16 OCTOBER.....1970 HOME EDITION

I can tell you now that Zigzag Wanderings will be pretty short this month. You see, during the month I jot down all sorts of irrelevant trivia that I can shove into this column to pad it out a bit. Well I appear to have lost my notes somewhere, so I'm a bit flummoxed.

Anyway, due to the angry demands of loyal readers all over the globe, we've changed our cover logo again. (Who says we don't concede to reasonable requests?). Well, is this one to your liking? Can you read it ok? You can please some of the people some of the time etc....

It seems to me that all the music weeklies have at least one good writer who knows what he's talking about and is interested in his subject. (It's a pity they don't all get together and put out a sort of authoratative weekly, which would save us having to lash out huge amounts of bread on the lot). Well, no doubt most/some/a few readers also read the Record Mirror, in which case they will be aware of Charlie Gillet's diamonds in the mud. The aforementioned Charlie has just had a book on rock published in America - The Sound Of The City - which has received veritable accolades in no less revered organs than Time Magazine. I haven't had time to read mine yet, but for an old rocker like me, there's a thrill on every page. It seems premature to review it at the moment, but as soon as it's published over here we'll let our 'literary critic' loose on it.

The heading on this page was pinched from the adverts for the new album by Cat Mother and the All Night Newsboys called 'Albion Doo-Wah' which is really nice. Haven't heard a lot of this past few week's releases yet, but I can recommend (with a degree of reservation in many cases....as John keeps telling me, we'll have to expand and clarify our recommendation section) the following goodies: Peter Bardens, Steve Miller, Donovan, Little Richard (plus an oldie album soon from Sonet), Livingston Taylor, The Everly Brothers (2 double albums), the Band, the Doors, Mott, Fleetwood Mac, Poco, the Pigsty Hill Light Orch (!), Thunderclap Newman, Creedence, Canned Heat, the Spoonful (oldie-but-oh-so-goodie)....oh so many more that I must have forgotten or that various people have carted off to their respective abodes for closer investigation.

"That's a bloody ancient picture of Morrison on the cover". We know it is. So what. We like it. And the picture of Joe Cocker on page 3 is put there because it's nice and fits our need, but if you want a better reason it's because his records will be put out here on a new label called Fly from now on - so look out for budget re-issues of his classics.

I spent several hours lounging around in Transatlantic's new prestige offices this month, during the course of which time I listened to several million records including the new Humblebums album. I don't know why (prejudice against the name? never owned their previous works? never heard them on the radio except their live Top Gear stuff through a bummy transistor?), but I've never listened to them before....and I was knocked out (bonk). One track especially - 'I can't stop now' - is really magnificent! Maximum points to the Humblebums.

Let us now plug a couple of magazines: Moul Express is 2/6 inc post from 19 New Brown St Manchester 4, and is a sort of local/national/international/alternative thing. Well done and interesting. (Lots of good things coming out of Manchester).

White Paper is 1/- from 311 Yarm Rd Darlington Co Durham and is revolution/macrobiotica/poetry and nice things.

If you live within a 1000 mile radius of Reading, you'll be interested to learn about a new club which has just started up there. It's called the Windrush and is at 112 London Road every Thursday. Lots of goodies including Mott, Mighty Baby, Mississippi Fred McDowell, etc. Check up in MM.

And now to the sad part. There will be no November Zigzag (pause as tears flow across the nation), but we'll be back in early December - bigger and better and all that old balls. The thing is that we've come to a bit of a crossroads - we're having a big re-shuffle and we need some time to sort ourselves, answer a backlog of about 17 tons of mail (don't worry), get our offices out of their present chaos.....but most of all to sort out our nauseous financial disorders. We owe a colossal amount of bread, and we are owed a semi-colossal amount which we intend to leap out and get. So... don't worry - just bear with us while we work it out, and look out for our action-packed, dynamic, fast-moving, fabulous-groovy, Xmas bumper issue.

Fare thee well until December.

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