ZIGZAG

No. 17 Dec/Jan 2/6

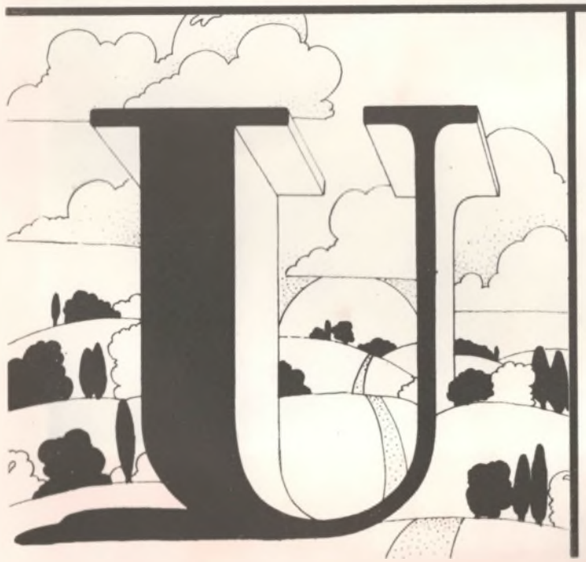
JOHN MAYALL

ELEMENTS OF ELEKTRA

ABSOLUTELY

ELEKTRA

ON THE WATERS



Doors
2665 002
double album
Absolutely Live

Bread
2469 005
On the Waters

Incredible String Band
2665 001
double album
U

Voices of East Harlem
2469 007
Right on Be Free

elektra

Distributed by Polydor Records Ltd.

Two noted Gentlemen have taken residence in the Village

VTS 3
'IAN A. ANDERSON'
(Royal York Crescent)

VTS 4
'THE LEGENDARY ME'
Wizz Jones

RELEASED NOV. 13; 1970
'The Village Thing' Records

SAMPLE OUR WARES;
VTS X 1000 'The Great White Dap'
Four tracks by Wizz Jones, Sun Also Rises, Ian A Anderson, and Pigsty Hill Light Orchestra
7inch 33⅓ rpm stereo maxi-single for 9/6

Since our last issue, numerous publications from Friends to Peace News have run articles on the sorry state of the underground press, pointing out the ones which have folded recently, those which are being savaged by Justice, and those (like us) which are "ailing"....the implication being that Zigzag's demise is close. Well, to all these draggers of grey clouds and impending doom....don't bother. And to the rumour-spreaders who insisted (to about a dozen record companies) that we had folded....*%=!*!?*. Don't bother to ring up to get the facts right, will you? The facts are....since we started back in April 1969, we've always been "ailing" financially; the accounts of the magazine have never been out of the red, and those people involved in Zigzag are all worse off than they were in their previous occupations. But so what...we've kept going. Admittedly we're going through a very rough patch at the moment, but this is a temporary state (we hope), which is partially being resolved by the kind aid of various good people who are helping us with two benefit concerts, and to these people we offer our warmest thanks.

The whole problem boils down to bad management. The magazine is run by people who know sod all about the business world except what they've picked up, and the blame for the insecure footing is entirely ours. But from what we can gather (from all the letters we get), our readership is loyal and appreciative, and don't mind irregularity as long as we keep going. We have had offers of sponsorship, where the magazine is financed and managed for x amount of shares and 'profit'....well, we don't really want our shabby integrity eroded by the whims of backers; we'd rather pack up than get into that kind of thing. So, having got that lot off my chest, let me say that as far as impetus and enthusiasm go,

ZIGZAG

YEOMAN COTTAGE
NORTH MARSTON BUCKS
029 667 257

PETE FRAME — IAN MANN
JOHN TOBLER — JEFF CLOVES
MAC GARRY — PIPPIN
MIKE SIMMONS — MARTYN GUY

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Zigzag is the soundest of all magazines and we'll muddle through OK.

One area where improvements could be made is distribution. Since we started, we've lost a fair amount of money through various distributors going broke, the latest being Ratners Ltd; they didn't owe us an enormous amount of bread but their liquidation demoralised us quite a bit. Anyway, what we're doing (as well as relying on Moore-Harness Ltd) is setting up a vast direct distribution network; so if anybody reckons he can flog Zigzag in colleges, schools, shops, clubs, anywhere in fact - please write saying how many you want...you'll get 25% commission, sale or return. We already have a small army of sellers, but we also lost the addresses of many would-be sellers in our recent upheaval; so if you wrote about distribution, please write again if you would be so kind.

All our self-centred breast beating has left us little room for disjointed snippets this month, but we would recommend albums by Pearls before swine, Love, Beefheart, McDonald & Giles, Santana, the Velvets, John Stewart, Syd Barrett, Dylan, Bronco, Pentangle, and the usual loads more. Pearls Before Swine should be listened to - anyone who knows anything about Tom Rapp, the instigator of the 4 Pearls albums, please write to us.

Addresses: Revelation, the news of Elektra thing is going again - send a sae to Diane & Karen at 37 Castellan Ave, Gidea Park, Romford, Essex.

Quarter to three Rock'n'Roll Soc, 53 Blacksmith's Way, Hartwell, Northants.

Dodo poetry magazine, 3/- from Manchester Univ Union, Manchester 3.

Together poetry magazine 2/6 from 4 Clinton Close, Coxheath, Maidstone, Kent.

Royalties from a record called 'This is man's World', about the disappearance of nature, are going to the World Wildlife Fund, so pester your local shop to get it in stock. Preserve what's left of Britain. (They're considering building London's 3rd airport about 3 miles from here, so we've all got our problems).

Charlie Gillett's Rock'n'Roll book The Sound of the City, mentioned last month, is now available in England, price 28/-. If your local bookshop hasn't got it, he can get it for you through Tabs, 28 Norfolk St, WC2.

Excuses: Due to various reasons we've had to cut down to 40 pages and a long article on Genesis, Stone the crows, Bronco, Stray and Quiver got the chop. Sorry to all concerned - it'll be in next month's issue which will appear towards the end of January.

Til then, Bye bye.

JOHN MAYALL

ZZ: To what do we owe the pleasure of this flying visit?

JM: I had to come over to renew my visa, one or two other business reasons, and I thought I'd include a token appearance to bridge the gap between the last time I was here and the tour next spring.

Z: You obviously prefer living in California.

J: Well, they don't have this rain over there....it was 85° the day I left, and it was about 30 here. You just live where you're most content and relaxed, and in the best position for taking care of business as well. I mean, a tour is a tour wherever it is, but I have a lot more time off now, and it's easier for recording and living - and it's certainly a better climate. It just suits me better than the surroundings here; like once I left Manchester for London, I had no desire to go back...and similarly I had no desire to live in London once I'd seen what Los Angeles was like.

Z: You've had this present band since the beginning of September, yes?

J: Yeah, but it doesn't seem that long - we were on the road for two months, made an LP, and now I don't have it anymore..... once the tour was over, everybody went off home and that was that. But they knew there was a Japanese tour set, and a European one in Spring, and they feel that they want to do that. But now, I only have a band together for the period that I work.

Z: What do the individual constituents of your band intend to do now?

J: Well, you do something in your career and it may or may not lead to something else....one thing leads to another, and people's time with me could or could not make them more aware; it's just a step, and you can't forecast the opportunities that come in. But as of now, they're all independently contracted to other record companies and are making their own albums or at least planning them.

Z: Can we start digging back? Why did you change your record label a while back?

J: The contract that I initially signed with Decca was negotiated when I was completely unknown, and my early albums just didn't sell. It was only Mike Vernon's persuasion that made Decca renew the contract for me to make the Bluesbreakers album with Eric - so the contract was drawn up accordingly ....just an average contract which ran its course. When any contract expires, the artiste wants to make sure that he gets the best deal, distribution, and so on; and that is where my manager comes in. He gave everybody a chance at the deal, did all the negotiating, and Polydor came up with the offer we thought most useful. I think that it turned out to be a very wise choice - I certainly have no complaints.

Z: How long has Rik Gunnell been your manager - since the days when you used to play intervals at the Marquee with Manfred?

J: Yes, all the time....since 1963.

Z: I have a vague recollection of seeing Jimmy Page with you on stage in those days?

J: We never played together, but he used to play with a pianist called Andy Renn, and we were both interval groups for Manfred Mann.....£15 a nighters.

Z: What was Jimmy Page's role on those tracks of yours which came out on Immediate?

J: Well, he was hardly ever out of the studios in those days - never worked live except for those Marquee sessions, which was nothing to speak of. Basically, all his work was in studios, and he was in a sort of producer's capacity for Immediate when those tracks were done. But producers on my sessions have never been people who said things like "You must do this and you must do that".....they've just been go-betweens, liaising between the recording engineer and the band. If an artiste knows what he's doing, the producer won't interfere, but if a group has no idea what it's doing, he should make suggestions to get them on the move a bit.

Z: Do you ever have a hankering to play things like 'Crawling up a hill'?

J: No...never hankered at all, not since the days of that band. Only sold about 500 copies, that single.

Z: Was it an autobiographical comment on that period of your life?

J: Yes, an attempt at it....clumsy, half witted attempt. It has lines in it about making it in the big city.

Z: I still play that first album, the live at Klooks Kleek one.

J: Ha! Lots of 'Yeahs' and 'alrights' on that.....terrible!

Z: You had a very cultured voice too....

J: Yes - no connection at all with the music. Ha!

Z: I only just noticed that Johnny Almond played on a lot of your albums since the second one....and then he actually joined

John Mayall formed his first 'BLUESBREAKERS' in March 1962, but who was in this band remains unclear, though guitarists were Davy Graham, Sammy Prosser & John Gilbey, drummers were Sam Strone, Keith Robertson and Brian Mayall, and bassplayers were John McVie, Ricky Brown & Pete Burford. The first professional Bluesbreakers were formed in FEB 1963 and below are the various personnel changes.

	GUITAR	BASS	DRUMS	BRASS
1964	BERNIE WATSON until 4·64	JOHN McVIE played from the inception of the Bluesbreakers until 3·9·67 when he left for Fleetwood Mac	PETER WARD succeeded by MARTIN HART until 4·66	No brass
	ROGER DEAN April 1964 to April 65 joined Ronnie Jones & the Blue Jays.			
1965	ERIC CLAPTON JEFF KRIBBETT & OTHERS 8·65 to 11·65 joined from Yardbirds on 6·4·65, and left to form Cream on 6·7·66	JACK BRUCE from 10·65 until 12·65; left to join Manfred Mann	HUGHIE FLINT joined in April 1964 Stayed until Sept 1966 Went on to play in Savoy Brown.	
1966	PETER GREEN joined from the Shotgun Express 17·7·66 & left to form Fleetwood Mac on 15·6·67	still JOHN McVIE	AYNSLEY DUNBAR joined 9.66 and left in 4·67 to join The Jeff Beck Group. Formed own band later.	
1967	MICK TAYLOR joined from the Gods in 6·6·67 and left to join Rolling Stones 23·5·69	PAUL WILLIAMS 4·9·67 – 29·10·67	MICK FLEETWOOD 4·67 — 5·67	RIP KANT 6·67 – 9·67
		KEITH TILLMAN from Aynsley Dunbar's Retaliation; joined 31·10·67 & left on 25·2·68 to write books & enter business.	KEEF HARTLEY joined from Artwoods in May 1967. Left to form his own band in 4·68.	CHRIS MERCER 6·67 to 13·7·68
		ANDY FRASER from Lawless Blues 25·2·68, to Free 21·4·68		HENRY LOWTHER 2·68 – 13·7·68
1968		TONY REEVES ex New Jazz Orch/various bands joined 23·4·68, left 13·7·68 for Colosseum	JON HISEMAN ex Georgie Fame/Graham Bond joined 25·4·68; left 25·8·68	DICK HECKSTALL SMITH 25·8·67 to 13·7·68
		STEPHEN THOMPSON joined 9·8·68 (no previous professional experience) & left Spring 1970 due to injury. Replaced by ALEX DMOCHOWSKI who left on 24/6	COLIN ALLEN joined from Georgie Fame 26·8·68; left on 28·5·69	No brass
1969	JON MARK ex session musician, joined 2·6·69 & left on dissolution of band on 2·6·70 & DUSTER BENNETT	No Mayall band from June 70 – Sept 70, though an ad hoc band of Peter Green, Aynsley Dunbar & Rod Mayall did the Bath Festival on 27th June 1970	NOTES. Mayall dispensed with drums after 6/69. Whilst Eric Clapton went to Greece in late 1965, Mayall tried several lead guitarists (see interview). As well as Jack Bruce, various other bass players organised for John McVie for short periods, Ricky Brown, Pete Burford & John Bradley. Mickey Waller played drums on a few gigs in Spring 1967. Terry Edwards played rhythm guitar for a few gigs in 6/67	JOHNNY ALMOND joined from Alan Price/Bud Williams Set on 2·6·69, & left on 2·6·70
1970	HARVEY MANDEL ex Canned Heat 11·9·70 —	LARRY TAYLOR ex Canned Heat, 11·9·70 —		No band DON HARRIS (violin) 11·9·70 —

RECORDS

CRAWLING UP A HILL / Mr. JAMES Decca F11900 Watson / McVie / Hart Also re-issued on 'R&B' LP.... Decca LK4616

CROCODILE WALK / BLUES CITY SHAKEDOWN Decca F 12120 Dean/McVie/Flint

JOHN MAYALL PLAYS JOHN MAYALL LP Decca LK 4680 Dean/McVie/Flint/ 'I need your love' re-issued on 'Blues Now' LP Decca LK 4681 Nigel Stranger (Sasses).

IM YOUR WITCHDOCTOR / TELEPHONE BLUES Immediate IM 012 (deleted) Clapton/McVie/Flint Reissued on 'An Anthology of British Blues' (Immediate double LP).

LONELY YEARS / BERNARD JENKINS Fordan (deleted) Clapton. Latter re-issued on 'Raw Blues' LP

NEW ORLEANS TO CHICAGO LP Decca LK4747 various tracks with Mayall / Clapton / Hartley

BLUESBREAKERS LP Decca LK4804 Clapton/McVie/Flint/Alan Skidmore (tenor)/John Almond (baritone)/ Derek Healey (trumpet)

RAW BLUES LP Ace of Clubs ACL 1220 Various tracks by Mayall / Clapton/Green/Hartley

LOOKING BACK / SO MANY ROADS Decca F12580 Green/McVie/Flint/John Almond (bari)/Alan Mayall (tenor)

SITTING IN THE RAIN / OUT OF REACH Decca F 12585 Green / McVie / Dunbar

JOHN MAYALL'S BLUESBREAKERS WITH PAUL BUTTERFIELD EP Decca DFE 8473 as above + Butterfield

A HARD ROAD LP Decca LK4853 Green/McVie/Dunbar/John Almond (baritone)/Alan Skidmore (tenor)/ CURLY / RUBBER DUCK Decca F12588 Bluesbreakers only, instrumental Green/McVie/Dunbar Peppercorn (Alto)

DOUBLE TROUBLE / IT HURTS ME TOO Decca F12621 Green/McVie/Fleetwood

EDDIE BOYD & HIS BLUES BAND LP Decca LK4872 Mayall/Green/McVie/Dunbar

CRUSADE LP Decca LK4890 Taylor/McVie/Hartley/Mercer/Kwan

SUSPICIONS PS 102 Decca F12684 Taylor/Williams/Hartley/Mercer/Heckstall Smith/Jackson mem.

THE BLUES ALONE LP Ace of Clubs ACL 1243 Solo Mayall / Hartley on some tracks

JENNY / PICTURE ON THE WALL Decca F 12792 (first track also produced by Mayall) / Hartley/ Green (on session mem)

DIARY OF A BAND Vol 1 & 2 Decca LK 4918 / 4919 Taylor / Tillman / Hartley / Mercer / Heckstall Smith / Williams on one track only

ON TOP OF THE WORLD Clapton/Bond/Flint on 'Blues Anytime Vol 2' (deleted). Reissued on 'An Anthology of British Blues' Immediate

BARE WIRES LP Decca LK 4945 Taylor/Reeves/Hiseman/Mercer/Heckstall-Smith/Lowther

Guest appearance on Canned Heat's 'LIVING THE BLUES' (2 tracks) Liberty LDS 84001

BLUES FROM LAUREL CANYON LP Decca LK4972 Taylor/Thompson/Allen

SO MANY ROADS Dutch import anthology of most singles.

THE TURNING POINT LP Polydor 583 571 Mark/Almond/Thompson

EMPTY ROOMS LP Polydor 583 580 Mark/Almond/Thompson/Larry Taylor on 1 track

LOOKING BACK LP Decca SKL 5010 Good historical anthology of Bluesbreakers

THE WORLD OF JOHN MAYALL Decca SPA 47 Budget LP of old singles.

USA UNION LP Polydor 2425 020 Mandel/Taylor/Harris

Chart: John/Pete
Records & Eric Richard
Special thanks to Darren Palmer
John Mayall Fan Club

your band three years or so later.

J: Yeah, it's curious. You see, at that time I wasn't really associated too much with horn players - certainly not in my environment - but for the Clapton album we thought a few tracks would be better with horns. Well, working as we did down the Flamingo pit, we only knew horn players who worked with people like Zoot Money and Georgie Fame - and that's how we came to choose him. Same with the other session men we used - they were usually acquaintances of one or other of us.

Z: How do you think 'Dairy of a band' came off as an idea?

J: Well, I just did the best I could, and it's a true account of a period of touring ....a lot of memories captured on record. I think the whole thing is an in-group type thing - it would only hold real nostalgic value if you were in the band at the time. I mean, those days were really humerous, but I tried to convey to the public what it was like to be in a band....whether it came off or not, I don't know. I tried to pick things which showed everybody playing something for the first time - a little different from the usual....it was based around the unexpected really. They may not have been the best tracks musically, but they were the most interesting ones. It was an awkward selection to make anyway.

Z: By that time, you'd fully integrated horns into the band....

J: Yes - on 'Bluesbreakers' and 'Hard Road' they were on some tracks, but on 'Crusade' they were permanent.

Z: Are you able to listen to any of the pre-'Bare Wires' stuff....or does it make you wince a little?

J: I wince at them all from time to time, for one reason and another - depends on the circumstances of hearing it. All of them remind me of what I was doing at the time they were being done, what I was thinking about, what my life was like. The only one that really makes me wince is that first one you mentioned earlier, that Klooks Kleek thing; I can't bear it - don't even like to hear about anybody else listening to it.

Z: When did Mike Vernon disappear?

J: When we found out that I had really been doing all the producing and he was just a token gesture. When you first go into recording you don't know anyone.... you're in a frightening studio and you need an interpreter really - someone who can explain things to the engineer. It's not like that in America, because the engineers usually have an ear for the music. But in those early days, it was pretty hard to talk about a certain bass sound to an engineer who had just come off a Mantovani session. Like I say, a producer is a useful go-between, or is ideal for a group which has no direction or ideas of how to channel their talent ....but if the musicians know what they want, how they should sound, and where they're going, then they don't need that sort of guidance.

Z: The decision to have no drummer - how did that come about?

J: Well, I had no grudge against drummers - I just thought (from some odd bits and pieces I'd done without them) that in certain areas they weren't really necessary. It made me realise that there was no law against failing to include a drummer in a group....you know, I personally like bass players, but somebody else could dispense with a bass.

Z: Jon Mark seemed to play his guitar as a rhythm instrument in your last band.... sort of as a drum replacement. Was that a conscious transition?

J: Not really, no. That line-up was creat-ed to produce a certain sound. It was just that Jon began to think of himself as a drummer and practically ceased to be an acoustic guitarist....he used to play the most melodic things in the dressing room, but we never heard them on stage.

Z: Stories tend to fly around depicting you as the callous firer of musicians... would you like to say anything about that?

J: Well, that sometimes happened. There seems to be a nasty stigma attached to the phrase 'being fired' in this country - it implies losing grace or something...that the person being fired is an incompetent or inadequate, you know the conotations. In music it's different - there's usually a reason for it, and I don't think that it's ever been because the guys couldn't handle their instruments, which is the only area they should feel disgrace about really. It's always been a question of my having played with a particular set of musicians so long that I want a change, and I usually know what I want to do next. Obviously it's a painful thing on everybody's part to be told that what they've been going along with isn't there any longer.

J: Maybe these stories came about as a result of Steve Thompson's departure?

J: Well, what happened with Steve was that we'd had a period of time off, and although he'd practised, it's not the same as playing on stage. If bassplayers leave off playing live for any length of time, the tops of their fingers become soft, and in Steve's case he got blisters on the first night. The damage was worsened on the succeeding nights until he got an infection in one of the ghastly messes, and he just couldn't have played if he'd wanted to.... and he did want to. Well that put him out of action for a while and gave him time to re-examine his role in the band; and he concluded that it had gone far enough and he decided to play elsewhere rather than continue playing the same stuff that he'd already put his best into. He had no choice in going in that sense, but he had the option of continuing or not.

Z: Going back again, Clapton left the band temporarily at one juncture to go to Greece or something didn't he?

J: Yes - Eric was always a restless musician, and having been dissatisfied with the Yardbirds, he joined me and played an endless succession of one-nighters;I guess he got bored with it. He wanted to just go away and abandon it, and he got some friends of his and went off to the continent. So for me it was panic stations, because we'd come to rely on him so much and there were so few people to choose from as a replacement. We got countless replies from an MM advert, and in the week after he left I probably got through a guitarist a night, none of whom were 'it'. I had Jeff Kribbett (from Dr K's Blues Band) for a while, and during the weeks he was with me, this other guy kept coming up saying "Here, why don't you use me....I'm much better than he is" and that was Peter Green. In the end, he got quite vicious about it, and so I got him in - and he was better....but three days later, Eric came back and Peter was out again, which didn't make him very happy. Then, when Eric left for good, it was the old 'Come back Peter, I really need you now', and he came back after a bit of persuasion.

Z: Did you ever have a cat called Speedy Keen playing drums with you?

J: He didn't play drums, he was my road manager. He was a great character, and whereas in a band you usually hang out with the other musicians, I used to hang around with him. We used to do the road managing bit together - he'd do the driving, we'd both do the humping. I even got a tape of him because he used to tell these amazing stories of his barrow boy days - the journeys to gigs used to be just crazy, pumping him to keep reeling out these old stories, and so I recorded this journeyful of anecdotes on a gig up north somewhere - it's really funny. And now he's into music himself.

Z: Do you ever go to see bands formed by your ex-musicians?

J: Yes. I always hope that they feel they didn't waste their time with me, because it's very difficult to leave a steady thing where you're guaranteed of a big audience and a good reception - you really get into that - and it's a bit of a struggle to start again under your own name. But each person, I think, has learnt a lot from me, and I think they'd tell you that.

Z: Jon Mark reckoned that Keef Hartley could never have led a band had he not learned everything from you.

J: No - I don't think anybody can teach you that....only talk about it. Keef used to come over and chat about various problems with me, but we'd just talk about them. It wasn't me saying 'Do this and you'll be alright'; we just talked and that may have helped him to work his difficulties out. But in every case, if you lead a band, you can't lean on anybody, you've got to do it all yourself - and if it's a success, then it's because of your own efforts.

Z: I recall Jon Hiseman saying something to the effect that he never liked the music he played with you.

J: Well Jon is a woderful character for quoting because he's so coherent and his way of phrasing things is so good, but the thing with him was that he was very taken aback when I asked him to join. He told me he knew nothing about blues and couldn't care less about the music - but I told him I wasn't worried about that, I just admired his playing. And that was the basis on which we worked. It fitted very well, but his ambition was to play with every kind of band - he believes he can learn something from every musical environment he plays in.

Z: Why do you think Aynsley Dunbar's band failed?

J: He got fed up with it - he just had a lot of hard work and I guess that when he had a good offer from Zappa he reckoned he'd take it. I've seen him quite recently, and he's certainly very happy....maybe he's not cut out to be a bandleader.

Z: So you're coming back for a tour in February or March, and it's likely to be with the band you have now.

J: Yes, all being well. It's a definite yes as far as I'm concerned - the only indecisive factor is anything careerwise developing for any of the others. The fact that they're not committed to any one thing is in everybody's favour I think, but it could mean that the band would have to alter.

Z: And you're going to continue touring?

J: Sure. I've got no plans for stopping ....on the basis I do it now, it's perfect.

John

Photographs courtesy of Polydor Records and Doreen Pettifer.

RAMBLIN JACK AT THE ROUND HOUSE

I must have first heard Jack Elliott on record around 1956, and in person around 1957 - singing in Alexis Korner's and Cyril Davis's old club'The Roundhouse' in Old Compton Street - just a strip club or two away from 'The 2 I's' coffee bar. At that time I was playing a home made four string guitar in various skiffle groups and tea-chest bass and banjo in a trad band - I was still uncertain whether I wanted to be the English Elvis Presley or a second Johnny St Cyr. My problem was soon solved - once I'd seen Jack Elliott I just wanted to be Jack Elliott, and so did all those Compton Street Cowboys who aped his drawl, his clothes, his jokes, his songs and his guitar style and founded a whole second hand folk style which dominated the folk club scene for nearly a decade. Though I don't go much for having heros now, I did then, and I suppose in a way old Ramblin' Jack remains my first and last hero and, unless he starts voting for Nixon, will always be so.

"The Round House", was an amazing club which lasted (I think) from 1957 until 1962 and in that time had a considerable impact on the direction of British Rock, out of all proportion to it's membership. On an average night I shouldn't think there were ever more than 50 people in that upper room but it had a remarkable open house policy in respect of musical style and was a Mecca for visiting musicians - you could never be sure who would be playing there, other than the resident musicians. Most nights it was Alexis and his guitar, Cyril's new legendary harmonica and Geoff Bradford, a fine blues guitar player who was a sixth former at my school, when I was in the first year, and now seems to have disappeared without trace. There was also a good Jimmy Yancey type boogie pianist, whose name escapes me and two young blues guitarists who often used to fill-in between the names. One night they were both on together and, I guess, couldn't have been more than seventeen/eighteen at the time - they were Davy Graham and Long John Baldry. Long John used to sit, head thrown back and legs, like a pair of M.I.'s stretched out in front of him, singing very accurate impersonations of Bill Broonzy and playing strong country blues guitar - a far cry (literally) from 'Let the Heartaches Begin' which was a great waste of a good player. Davy Graham, I remember, was wearing an incredible pair of fur trousers and delighting everybody with his original blues playing, which was always very personal, and his shy but engaging manner. He, like many musicians, has suffered by being a little ahead of his time, so that his work has influenced more fashionable musicians who have taken the credit - he was into fusions of Indian and English music early in the sixties but I noticed that in the great sitar/maharishi/brown rice pud and joss sticks craze of 66/7 his work passed unremarked.

Well, it was in this club, which nurtured among other things, the seeds of British R & B which flowered into The Stones, Yardbirds, Pretty Things and Baldry's own band, The Hoochie Coochie Men, that on one memorable evening I heard Jack Elliott and Derroll Adams. In those days it was always "Ramblin' Jack Elliott and Derroll Adams" but Derroll is another one who has seemingly vanished - last time I heard him was in an awful flowery/poetic "documentary" (?) about Donovan shown on ITV in about 1966. Imagine the impact that these two urban cowboys must have had on me in 1958 - in those days Levis were virtually unobtainable here and the Liverpool groups who really started the whole boots thing were still at school - they both wore Levis, high heeled, tooled cowboy boots and stetsons. Derroll wore a full beard and a big woollen check coat which went with his big frame and Jack who was smaller and leaner - he really did look the perfect cowboy, wore dude shirts with four buttons up the sleeves and a battered old tarpaulin jacket. Immediately, the prevailing folk club style of long black jerseys and tapered K.D. trousers (born out of American Beat and French Existentialism) gave way to this Western influence and apart from the brief lunacies of 1967 this seems to have continued till now. (I remember an LP recorded in France in the early sixties by Alex Cambell - and there's a whole article on him somewhere - called, I think, "The Scottish Cowboy" and there's an old Alex, faded levis and levi jacket, Gibson Kalamazoo guitar and stetson, on the cover - I'm not sure if they didn't throw in a saddle for good measure).

As I remember, Jack played a Martin Dreadnought in those days, although his beautiful 10" Topic LP called "Jack Takes the Floor" shows him playing a curious beat old guitar with a triangular sound hole - whatever it was it had a good sound - by 1960 Mike Bartholomew and I both had pre-war Gibsons and to our great delight when we met Jack at the end of The Aldermaston march in 1960 he played Mike's guitar and I seem to remember he said that he had a Gibson as well. As an example of the circular nature of life, this was the closing of the circle - since I actually met Mike by comparing versions of "San Francisco Bay Blues" (which we had both learned off the Elliott LP) while kipping in a school during the Aldermaston march of 1959. And then when I first saw Donovan on "Ready Steady Go", years later, there he was - levi jeans, levi jacket, and a note-for-note version of "San Francisco Bay Blues".

Derroll Adams was a banjo picker and sang in a gruff baritone - Jack sang like I always imagined a cowboy would sing - sometimes in a slow drawl, sometimes in a high nasal whine - head thrown back - for all the world like an ornery old cowpoke out on the range baying at the moon. Together they were great, using each other as butts for their gentle kidding humour and supplementing each other's auto-biographical and often marvellously irrelevant introductions to their songs. Later I often saw Jack on his own and his act was professional in that deceptive and bumbling manner which suggested that everything was about to fall apart and that he hadn't a clue what he was going to sing next. I think the truth was that he'd knocked about so much, in so many clubs in so many countries that he was really good at his job in that almost offhand manner that characterised say, Jimmy Greaves and Jacques Anquetil.

Typically he would start a little tune and then decide that it would be better if he played with a pick - with much mumbling and cussing he would fish around in his jeans for a little leather wallet in which he kept his picks and then a great pantomime would ensue while he found the right one - as all this was going on he would start to tell a story about his early days with Woody Guthrie or some incident in a bar in Paris and retune his guitar and just as you began to laugh at the often pointless or surreal end to his tale he would be away on his song and the whole thing was all of a piece and you realised that someone very special was at work. Of course, there are many artists working in folk clubs who work in the same manner but when I first saw him his casualness, so much at variance with the earnestness of many of the local performers, was a delight. He is, quite simply, the greatest club entertainer I have ever seen - able, without any strain, to involve his audience and to draw them into his world. Alex Camp

CYRIL DAVIES ALL STARS

photograph by David Gahr

left to right: Bernie Watson, Carlo Little, Cyril Davies, Long John Baldry, Ricky Fensen. In the front are the Velvets.

bell, I'm sure would admit to Jack's influence, but has in his own right a similar charisma – the only difference is that his own singing and playing is adequate while Jack's is superlative.

Again, Jack was the first musician I'd ever seen who could play a harmonica and guitar at the same time and I rushed off to make a harmonica harness out of wire, meccano and bike pump clips. His beautiful half sung/half spoken introduction to San Francisco Bay Blues on 'Jack Takes the Floor' is a classic example of how a story leads into a song and I'm sure led to enough interest in the work of the composer, Jesse Fuller, to enable him to be signed for a tour in England. When Jesse appeared playing his amazing pedal-operated bass, bass drum and cymbal, kazoo, harmonica and guitar, I fully realised the mastery of Jack's affectionate description of Jesse in the introduction to his song. A continuing part of Jack's act has been his impersonations and parodies of other performers – it was often difficult anyway to tell if he was singing Jack Elliott or Woody Guthrie but he also sang Elvis Presley, Hank Williams and Leadbelly. His impersonations were not only close in intonation but also got right into the feel of the song – I'm sure that the work of Blind Gary Davis was really unknown to many people before Jack sang 'Cocaine' in the London clubs and when I first heard Davis on record I felt I already knew him because of Jack's versions of his songs. His skill as a player enabled him to imitate guitar styles as well – I've always thought there's a lot of Leadbelly in his playing and this comes out every time he plays the blues. But I suppose that his chief contribution, as far as popularising other people's work, was to open our ears to Woody Guthrie – a man I knew of vaguely through the work of Pete Seeger's old group, The Weavers. Among the most popular songs Jack sang in those days were Woody's kids songs like 'I wanna ride in your car' and 'Howdido' and his talking blues from the Grapes of Wrath/dustbowl depression era and the New Deal Hydro Electric Schemes.

Jack's life style and characteristic vagueness make it difficult to pin down the chronology of events in his life, but he often used to refer to the times when he was a "road-buddy" of Woody and his tales were graced by many beautiful stories about him. As far as I can make out Jack joined Woody in about 1950 and was on the road with him for a year and then on and off the road with him for the next four – in 1955 Jack lit out for England and Europe and was away for 6 years. In 1954 Woody was committed to hospital suffering from a progressive and incurable disease from which he died in 1967 – in those 13 years, while Woody was unable to play or sing and was finally unable to talk, the influence of his work spread beyond America and I like to think that this was in no small part due to Jack's love of his songs. In interpreting Woody's songs Jack was able to draw on his own love and knowledge of Woody and his style of singing those songs was uncannily close to Woody's – in fact, I think I prefer Jack's versions to Woody's own singing of his songs simply because Jack is a better singer and incomparable flatpicker of the guitar. Before Jack, Woody travelled America with Cisco Houston, who also popularised Woody's songs but sadly, Cisco too is dead now.

A typical evening with Jack Elliott, in The Roundhouse of those days, would have included a couple of talking blues, a kid's song with harmonica, a Gary Davis number like 'Candyman', an impersonation of Leadbelly, a classic Country and Western song like his beautiful version of 'Tennessee Stud', something like 'All Shook Up' in Presley manner and maybe one of Woody's long ballads such as 'Pretty Boy Floyd' or 'Tom Joad' – all this interspersed with long rambling tales of his past life, impersonations of animals, machines, friends, drunks, cowboys, taxi-drivers, airplanes and trucks. Once Jack took the floor and was under way, no-one really wanted him to stop and he seemed more than happy to oblige. I'm no great shakes as a discographer and since he could be heard quite frequently in London and I didn't have a record player anyway, I never bought his records at the time but I do seem to remember that, apart from 'Jack Takes the Floor', he also had a 10 incher out with Derroll called 'Ramblin Boys' which really captured the flavour of the times. Later he made a couple of 12" LPs in London using backing musicians – usually second guitar, violin, bass and drums. I remember feeling rather disappointed with these records – feeling, in the puritanical manner of folkies in those days, that this was somehow a bit of a sell-out. Now, of course, that sort of music is ultra-fashionable and I would have thought it a good time to re-release those records.

Funny to think back to those times and find that many memories are hazy, but I do seem to remember that whether or not he was billed to appear he would often drift in towards the end of the evening and heckle the other musicians until, with a great show of reluctance, he would take the floor. But the Roundhouse was a great club and Jack wasn't the only draw – most nights would have a strange cross section of musicians and styles, although, because of the house musicians, the blues were always the mainstream style. Alexis and Cyril were influencial in turning people on to Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, John Lee Hooker and Lightning Hopkins, as well as the older country bluesmen. I first heard Champion Jack Dupree there, as well as Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, and folk scene stalwarts like Rory and Alex McCuen, Dominic Behan and Bob Davenport. Alexis Korner seems to have been a presence through my whole music experience – I first became aware of him when he played mandolin in Ken Colyer's skiffle group, he was there at the Roundhouse – Zapata moustache and black cheroots, years ahead of anyone else – I went to the club he and Cyril had in Ealing, where Cyril Davis's Allstars made their first appearance, later I haunted the Marquee when the band had evolved into Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated, and Mick Jagger (when the Stones were just pebbles) used to get on the stand to bawl a chorus or two of the blues. On reflection, the band may still have been the Cyril Davis Allstars and Blues Incorporated formed after his premature death I dunno – most of this is put down just as I remember it and it's probably well distorted by time and nostalgia – please don't bother to write in if I've got it wrong – I don't care, as far as I'm concerned the spirit's right, so Hup to the lot of ya!

Jack (half of him anyway) and Woody in Washington Square, New York in 1954. Photo by Arthur Dubinsky/from Sing Out.

Jack as he is today. Photo by David Gahr/ from Sing Out

Cyril was a strange contrast to Alexis. Alexis was a sort of exquisite in those days; a flash dresser and a natural charm which was seen at its best in the very informal atmosphere of the Roundhouse – he seemed to know everybody in the audience and years later, when I went to see his band at Regent Street Poly, on the night Henry fought Cassius Clay and put him down, we met in the pub over the road while listening to the commentary and he remembered me instantly. Cyril was an amazing contrast. Rather stout and balding, he always looked as though his braces were about to burst and his collar was too tight – he played his harmonica with a style and grace that was an odd contrast with his rednecked farm labourer's appearance. But he knew the blues and was an excellent player whose skill and knowledge influenced a whole generation of British blues players – he played with great fire and it is one of my great memories of those days to picture him puff-cheeked, sweating like a navvy, his eyebrows disappearing off the top of his head as he blasted away on something like 'Smokestack Lightning'.

It says a great deal for the broad mindedness of Alexis and Cyril, in those days of bitter feuding between rival musical camps, that they operated such a wide open club. Looking back, it's hard to see why the club wasn't packed out, but maybe its very openness was too much for the hard core folkies. I think that my own musical awareness was greatly enlarged by their outlook, and though I'm still not a hardcore blues fan, it was their influence which caused me to go out and hear Muddy Waters, Otis Spann and Sonny Boy Williamson when they appeared with the rest of that superb package tour and played the Marquee, showing us that you don't have to be loud and frenetic to play really exciting blues. And people were really tight then about purity of style, and suspicion of commercialism was easily raised when anyone attempted to move out. I remember being at the Roundhouse when Alexis and Cyril first went electric – the sight of an electric guitar and amplified mouth harp was just too much for some of the purists and they left – never to return.

Another musician who used to play a lot around the London clubs in those days was Diz Disley – and I'm sure I heard him at The Roundhouse too. Diz is obviously a great admirer of Django Rheinhardt and this influence can be heard in his jazz work – in the 50s he had worked with the excellent Sandy Brown Jazzband, but in the heyday of the Round house I think he had broken away. In the early 60s I seem to remember him playing with Long John Baldry, and then he seemed to pop up all over the place, gigging in folk clubs. The Sandy Brown Band was one of the few bands in the country that had started out playing 'English Trad' and had moved out into a free mid-period style with Sandy Brown's harsh and raggy clarinet providing one of the most individual sounds of the time. Diz then, was another link with the jazz scene of the time, and added another sound to the strange medley that came out of Soho at the time. Diz's demonic presence was a sure fire crowd rouser at most clubs, since he seemed able to play in any style and was happy to jam along with any musicians who didn't actively keep him off the stand – he played everything with huge enjoyment, reeling off fingerbusting solos whenever he got the chance. One treasured memory was when he spent a much publicised Christmas in prison for debt or blasphemy or such. He was due to broadcast over the holiday period, and I remember the BBC having to invent excuses – anyway, he sent a christmas card to The Melody Maker (for whom he was an excellent cartoonist and illustrator) and emerged none the worse for his trip apparently – it just seemed to be one of those things that happened to Diz, and Diz stories were legion.

I never got to see Diz play with Jack Elliott, but it's quite possible that he did; but what Jack made of this scene and how it compared with the American club scene I guess we'll never know for sure. I think it must have had its moments for Jack to stay here so long, and for so many musicians of every style to play there – one thing is certain, none of them could have made much money from those gigs. As far as I'm able to work it out, Jack must have returned to America in 1961 or 1962, and I suppose he must have returned at times during the six years he spent in Europe – in any case I think that the first Dylan LP must have been out or imminent when he returned for good. According to an interview with Jack in Sing Out (March 1970)..."in 62 I was just back from Europe...Bobby Dylan was living with me then – No 1 Sheridan Square". Dylan's trip to visit Woody Guthrie in hospital is part of the Dylan folklore now, but I had no idea, until I read that interview with Jack, that the Guthrie/Elliott/Dylan/Arlo Guthrie link was so direct. As soon as I heard Dylan, my own feelings were how much he sounded like Jack, particularly when he sang 'Song for Woody'. The tune is Woody's '1913 Massacre', which is sung by Jack on the first record I ever bought of his, and I feel that Dylan's style at that time was learnt via Jack rather than via Woody's own recordings. In 1963, Dylan made a barely publicised trip to England to appear briefly in a TV play starring Ben Carruthers (the trumpeter in the film 'Shadows') who sang a Dylan song 'Jack of diamonds' in the play. I happened to be at The Singer's Club one night when Peggy Seeger suddenly introduced Dylan from the floor, and he borrowed a guitar and came up to sing four songs before his manager shut him up. He sang a talking

blues, Hollis Brown, and I can't recall the others - Hattie Carroll possibly. He was wearing the corduroy cap and suede jacket that he wears on the cover of his first LP and seemed shy and nervous - continually pulling at his cap and shuffling around like Charlie Chaplin - he was really great and I remember thinking that was how Jack must have sounded at his age; although he made minimal announcements, his whole style seemed irresistably reminiscent of Jack.

In 'Song to Woody', Dylan sings:
"Here's to Cisco an' Sonny an' Leadbelly too,
An to all the good people who travelled with you.
Here's to the hearts and the hands of the men
That come with the dust and are gone with the wind".

Later, in the sleeve poem on 'The Times They Are a-Changing' Dylan says:
"Woody never made me fear
and he didn't trample any hopes,
for he just carried a book of Man
and gave it t me t read awhile
and from it I learned my greatest lesson.
You ask 'How does it feel to be an idol?'
It'd be silly of me to answer wouldn't it?".

Well, Jack was among those "good people" who travelled with Woody and maybe his most important contribution to American music will turn out to be in those years he kept Woody's songs alive, until the new singer/composers came along to rework and continue the tradition - for Jack is essentially an interpreter of songs rather than a writer. But Jack has raised the interpretation of other people's songs to a level of excellence creative in itself, and maybe he feels little need to write. The only original song of his I know is on 'Young Brigham', released in 1968 and reviewed by Pete in Zigzag 1. On the slender evidence of this, maybe Jack has another talent hidden away and he should write more often - I think it's a truly beautiful song and can only quote Pete... "912 Greens' is a talking blues which isn't - hence greens... it's full of personal nostalgia, but it's an interesting, albeit minute, chunk of autobiography and with its soft humour and gently fingerpicked accompaniment, it's a gem...."

"Did you ever stand and shiver
just because
you were lookin at a river?"

I agree entirely that this is a beautiful LP and it shows Jack for what he really is at heart, I believe, and that's a country musician who's really happy playing and singing in the company of a good fiddle man, steel guitarist, bass and drums. He has some excellent songs on it, including a Richard/Jagger song 'Connection', and a marvellous performance of 'Tennessee Stud' complete with magnificent violin. The tune of 'Tennessee Stud' crops up on the 'Self Portrait' album and again on 'New Morning', and if there is no special significance in this, the fact remains that it's a song Jack has continually sung and recorded it once before on one of his "C&W" albums. When 'Self Portrait' was released, Jack had a new album out called 'Bull Durham Sacks And Railroad Tracks', and I think in the mass of attention the Dylan LP received, his was somewhat overlooked. I did read one review, in the Melody Maker, which put him down mightily, and nearly drove me to commit an outrage on the MM's doorstep. It seems to me that the reviewer has no idea of how Jack works and why, and missed the very point of the record. Believe it or not, this piece was originally conceived as an answer to that review, and I seem to have written 4000 words getting to the point - I hope you're still with me.

The last track on 'Young Brigham' is a Woody Guthrie song called 'Goodnight little Arlo' and is a charming lullaby that Woody must have written round about the time he first met Jack. Jack introduces the song in Woody's voice and everyone in the studio joins in the chorus, and it's really a nice way to finish the record. Arlo must've been about 5 when it was written, and Jack must have appeared as some lovely uncle full of jokes and songs and funny noises - an incredible bonus, like having two dads. It's clear that Arlo has a great affection for Jack and he turns up writing the sleeve notes on'Bull Durham Sacks & Railroad Tracks' (Bull Durham sacks are the little cloth bags that you buy Bull Durham tobacco in - all western folklore I tell you).

The last time I saw Jack live was at a big concert at the Festival Hall and he was awful - more than a little drunk and self indulgent in the extreme. His stories were as pointless as ever, but this time neither witty nor wise, and even his playing seemed to have lost its sparkle. He told one ponderously long tale which he quite clearly lost halfway through and groped about desperately trying to pick up the threads before he finally started to sing a song in the wrong key and nearly strangled himself. In retrospect I spose it was quite funny in a peculiarly Jack Elliott fashion. As Arlo says on the cover: "Ramblin Jack has never been captured before on an album and most likely never will be. I've heard most of his 30 albums or so, and there are none (including this one) that mean anything real until you have heard him live, not once but many times. I believe I've heard Jack at his most worst and his unbelievable best. His rambling legends are historic in importance, and the handed down versions of his strange ways have not changed much from the actual doing. Jack as a historian himself is probably the most unlikely and outrageous link between what went down and what's going down. He is one of the last professional ramblers".

Well, I can only say "Amen" to that. I think maybe my own favourite Jack Elliott record is 'Dust Bowl Ballads', the first I ever bought - but I think his latest comes closer to capturing the feel of his performances because it includes old Jack rapping away and joking just as he used to in the old days at the Roundhouse. There are impersonations of Johnny Cash, Arlo Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Hitler - sometimes he sounds like Jack Teagarden and he always did sound like James Stewart anyway. It's the first LP I've ever heard by him without a Woody song, and this time he sings Bob Dylan; apart from songs by Tim Hardin, Kris Kristofferson, Johnny Cash, Clarence Williams, and some traditional material, he sings 'Don't think twice', 'Lay Lady Lay', 'I'll be your baby tonight' and 'With God on our side'. As on his previous LP, he is backed by a tight little 'cuntree bayand' and it's a shame that the musicians who are unnamed on the sleeve are not given more credit....perhaps they are the same as on the previous LP, but in any case, I strongly suspect that Arlo Guthrie plays on this one.

Jack is in excellent form and voice on this LP, and most of the songs are linked with his tales of highway trucks, past sprees and gigs, fragments of half-remembered tunes, a spoof on Alice's Restaurant and a studio freakout in which he makes an astounding speech in cod German, which is very funny but evolves into a chilling pastiche of a Nurenburg Rally complete with martial music. This sounds as though it came about simultaneously in the studio and, realising what they had in the can, they orchestrated, added echo and maniacal laughter, and produced a very original track. At the close Jack says "Martha I love you" and affirms the survival of love despite earthly madness. About the music, there is little for me to say, I am a partial witness anyway and I just like every track so much there is little point in analysis. Just one or two things - the MM was incensed by his 'copying' Dylan on 'Lay lady lay', but to me they miss the point. I hear it as the closing of the circle - the copied turned copyist - the returned compliment dating back to Dylan's first LP. And anyway, it's such a felt, affectionate performance that it tells you something about Elliott, something about Dylan, and brings it all together in that beautiful song. The second side closes with a Dylan song that the groovers of today have already committed to oblivion - 'With God on our side'. It's sad that those powerful songs of his early years are so unfashionable now, but cheering to know that Jack is still with them. He sings a very gospel style version here and he slightly alters the tune to bring the record to a moving close before making a final dedication to his wife.

All the time I write, I realise I must inevitably fail to do justice to Jack for he is that increasingly rare phenomenon - a performer; a man who is more at home with an audience, a jug of wine, his own guitar, harmonica and a few friends, than with a pair of headphones and machine coffee in a cardboard cup. Arlo is quite right - you have to hear him live - not once but many times. I did hear him many times, thanks to the Roundhouse and remember those times with great pleasure - I doubt that we'll see Jack over here again as I sense that he's really put down roots in America now. So I'll just play his old records, look forward to his new ones, and bend the ears of anyone who cares to listen.

Records (some of 'em):

Jack takes the floor	both 10" Topics re-
Rambling Boys	issued on 12"; dunno if still available.
Jack Elliott in London	both on EMI,
Jack Elliott Country Style	but both deleted.

Dustbowl Ballads....Jack sings Woody's great songs of the depression and New Deal. On Prestige along with several other fine middle period Elliotts.

Jack Elliott...a Fontana LP of typical Jack, with a revealing fragment of biography as a sleeve note.

Young Brigham....Reprise.

Bull Durham Sacks & Railroad Tracks... Reprise; post Dylan and Jack as he is now.

Arlo Guthrie mentions "30 or so" albums; I couldn't attempt a complete discography, so I've just listed my favourites of those I have heard. I've tried to write about Jack from first hand experience, ie from my own memory, from people who knew him, from recordings, and from sleeve notes. Sing Out Magazine has published various articles, including some biography of his early life in the March/April 1970 issue.

'Bound for glory' is Woody Guthrie's autobiography of the first 30 years of his life - it is simply magnificent and almost unique - a moving testament of an extraordinary man and his committment to 'the common people'. It's published by Dent, and at 45/- is very dear, but there's always the public library.

'Owning Up' is George Melly's autobiography of his times in Mick Mulligan's Jazz Band and elsewhere, from the early 50s to the early 60s. It's a staggeringly frank own up and very very funny. A while now since I read it, but as I remember, it will provide a wider background to the times I've been writing about. Just out in Penguin.

Mind how you go.

JEFF CLOVES

DESPITE IT ALL

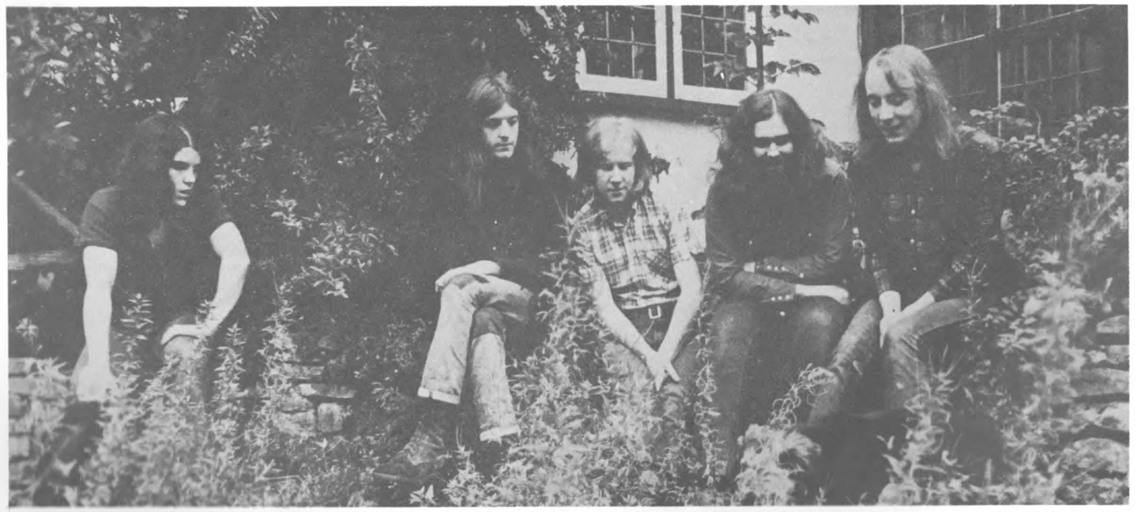
THE BRINSLEY SCHWARZ AFTERMATH

Last April, the Famepushers-Fillmore hype thrust Brinsley Schwarz to the frontiers of legend, and the edge of destruction; the pop world got to hear of them alright, but the stunt was too outrageously conceived and mounted for journalists who were usually content for their pens to be bought by companies getting them quietly bloated on whiskey and salmon at the plastic, unreal, common-or-garden group-launch reception, and they practically finished the band with a flood of derisive 'you-can't-buy-success-in-today's-world-of-integrity-lads' articles.

It seemed like every periodical from Angling Weekly to the Scunthorpe Gazette was represented on the journey... certainly most of them couldn't have told the difference between Quicksilver Messenger Service and Nose & the Paramounts, and only about 5% of them had anything to say about the MUSIC at all. I was as bad as any of them; I participated gratefully - more a means of setting foot on the golden sidewalks of New York (which weren't gold at all - just dirty) than acting as a Famepusher pawn - came home, dipped my quill in vitriol and took the piss for three pages ....any serious criticisms I had were well wrapped in cotton wool, and I tended to think the whole thing was an expensive amusement, perpetrated by a bunch of jokers with more bread than brains. The only bit of the joke which hit the nerve was the group itself; a lot of writers (including me) had been steeped in such gross vats of delirious publicity that we seemed to regard them as zombies who had long given up being real people....a bit like the Monkees, who's bodies were bought and who's minds were manipulated.

Last month seven survivors of that horrendous debacle arrived at our front door; not to beat me up and dump my pulped remains into the Marston phlegm vats as a reprisal for my remarks, but to lie on what's left of our dogslash oozing carpet and talk into a tape recorder about the miseries of the future and the splendour of the future. They were the group - Nick, Bob, Bill, Brinsley himself, and the recent Ian (a gtr/voc exponent who learned his art in the nationally renowned Tony Dee Band); their manager Dave Robinson; and another ex-Famepusher-facet, John Eichner, who manages the other ex-Famepusher-group, Help Yourself.

Sitting comfortably? Then let us briefly recap the painful history: Despair over progress and bread led Kippington Lodge, a Tunbridge Wells group with a string of devastated village hall audiences and 5 smash-miss singles trailing behind them, to answer an MM small ad. They, out of 74 applicants, were chosen by the 'young progressive management', Famepushers, as the group they wanted to manage, and basically it was as simple as that ...there were no plans to storm the Fillmore at that juncture. The idea was for Dave Robinson, ex manager of Eire Apparent, to get a group, sort it out, get it gigs, perform other routine manager's tasks, and so on; he would run the company and two gentlemen called Eddie Molton and Steve Warwick would invest in it. That



all took place in October 1969, when Kippington Lodge also decided to forsake all the fame and acclaim they had gathered under that name and call themselves Brinsley Schwarz.

Dave: "Before that American trip last April, Famepushers had about £100 in the bank; then Eddie and Steve heard the tapes we'd made and got terribly impressed .... they thought they were the biggest thing to hit the Klondyke, and everybody got carried away. Anyway, it was very difficult to get the band off the ground, to get a good record deal, the album publicised and so on - I mean, I remember offering people (who have since paid us quite regal amounts for performances) the band for nothing...I even offered to pay them money, but they'd just say "Brinsley Schwarz?!? Bollocks!" So it was useless trying to get anywhere. Then we had this idea to play the Royal Festival Hall, but concluded that even if we badgered the arse off the press only a few would come, and anyway the band may have an off day and fall to pieces. Then we hit on this con, this hype - because that is what it was".

I suppose most people know how they nearly didn't get to the Fillmore at all, how they got stranded in Toronto with no visas, how they made a last minute plane dash piloted by a mad Jap Kamikaze-type pilot, and got to the gig with literally minutes to spare. After that kind of climactic, chaotic mania they'd forgotten about the ordeal - the dependence of n people's bank balances and futures on their performance - and besides, when they got to their dressing room it was just as grotty as any other dressing room, and the majestic elevation of the place was only restored by the PA, the lightshow, and the super-efficient man with the bulldog-clipped board who ran the shows with the precision of a trapeze act.

You know what happened from there on. But how had Brinsley Schwarz, virtually unknown outside Tunbridge, pulled off a prestige gig like that in the first place. "I phoned Bill Graham one friday evening and told him about the scheme" explained Dave, "but he said he never booked bands he hadn't heard, was booked up and stuff like that, and asked me to send him a tape. Well, when he got to his office on the monday morning, I was waiting for him...and it just blew his mind. I don't think that anybody could have resisted me at that moment, speeding out of my skull, firmly in possession of the fact that if we didn't get this gig we were out. He wasn't convinced by me; he listened to the tape I took him and really dug it....that's what convinced him. He booked us at union fees, and offered pre-show rehearsal time at 77 dollars an hour".

Anyway - what, when pared down to basics, was just an expensive way to ensure that a lot of journalists would at least hear Brinsley's music, turned out to be a giant mistake. Half of them fell asleep, and most of them, as I say, wrote about the trip, the hype, the people, the place, everything in fact except the music. (It's all there in black and white in Zigzag 12).

A few articles, snippets of publicity, the odd advertised appearance at various gigs....they seemed to have slump-ed into obscurity as fast as they'd been shot into headline. Their first LP arrived, but by then the impetus had burnt out and I'd become a Brinsley bigot, so I slotted it into the rack between Bread and Broughton without so much as a cusory listen. A sense of smug satisfaction settled over those who had prophesied their doom, as Brinsley Schwarz zoomed in the general direction of nowhere.

And now folks, we take you behind the scenes...to the aftermath of that momentous weekend in the new world. Warwick and Molton, according to the Sunday Times Insight column, have so far paid 'no major bill' arising from the trip, which cost £13000. The group, from advances, royalties, gigs, publishing, etc, paid almost £25000 to Famepushers, but that has apparently disappeared along with £5000 borrowed to make a film of the event (which was never in fact made). Well, for one reason and another, dissatisfaction set in and Dave decided to cart himself, the band, and various other facets of Famepushers away from the dynamic duo. Their relationship with the company remains unclear at present but they maintain that the situation is "cool", at the same time reminding me to excercise discretion when discussing them in print...."they're really nice guys". Having paid all this money over and subsequently finding that none was used to diminish the debts, Brinsley are now in the process of settling the bills which weren't specifically accumulated in the names of Molton and Warwick, so it's evident, once the financial complexities have been unraveled, that if anyone has made a lot of bread out of Brinsley so far, it certainly isn't the band.

Well, despite it all, as their sleeve remarks, they carried on....and now, 8 months later, they find themselves the subject of a spate of Brinsley compassion and re-evaluation, which is examining the group in terms of its music rather than the manipulations of their ex management. "It was nice to find out I was wrong" said John Peel, on whose sunday show they played - and even Tony Blackburn chose their 'Country Girl' single as his 'pick to click'. Gigs are now much healthier, audiences are bigger and receptions more enthusiastic; the bigots who tossed aside their first album are digging it out and saying things like "if that was put out under the name of CSN&Y it would sell a million"; the new album is beautiful and looks like a good 'un; and altogether the Brinsley scene looks bright. It seems as if they're all set to reach the stratum into which they were prematurely poked, but this time under their own steam and talent.

So the hype backfired, picked them up, shook them half to death, and dumped them down in a knotted heap. But it did them good because whilst they were down they had time to think before making their independent decision to get back to the garden; casting off assumptions and attitudes that had been planted on them. They discarded the flashy boutique gear and got back into their old Levis, moved out of their Barnes hotel to a big dog infested house in the peaceful fields of Middlesex, and refused to grot up their new integrity with further offered appearances on Top of the Pops. These changes may sound trivial and superficial, but they're part of a whole re-thinking which has tended to mellow their music which, they insist, couldn't flow out the way it does if they weren't living in the country - it's country music as opposed to city music...scenes of rural life really.

Initially it was a major step for them to change from the voluminous blast rock which manifested all the paranola of their previous no-money, hung-up, urban existence. Nick: "The public seem too fickle to rush out and accept our music while the clubs are still dominated by the heavy/loud stuff, which is what we used to play, even though whenever we got together at each other's flats in Tunbridge we used to play soft acoustic things. We used to work on the basis that if all else failed you could still move an audience by sheer power and volume". Confident in their ideas, they trimmed their equipment to a minimum, turned down (and on), and underplayed....listening to each other and playing as a group.

Meanwhile, Dave had been quietly sewing up record contracts; they knew what they wanted and refused compromises, remembering what had happened to them in their green youth when, as Kippington Lodge, they signed the dotted line. Brinsley explains: "It seems that EMI signed us at a time when they were signing up lots of small groups, but we weren't bothered - we were with EMI....a big company had shown interest in us. It seemed incredible to us at the beginning, but as time went by, we felt ourselves getting more and more of a brush off. We made 5 singles, and ended up with about £14 in royalties. They put us with Mark Wirtz, who had his own ideas about record production; he gave us a demo of a song called 'Shy Boy', which we learnt up to our satisfaction and we subsequently got a call from his secretary to arrive at the studios at such and such a time. So we rolled up, set the gear up, and waited for Wirtz who eventually turned up with the engineers and said "OK, would you like to go and put the voice on now". He'd had the backing done already by his session man, and he even got the Ivy League in to put on the vocal harmonies. So all that went on the record was my voice".

Not only that, but their artiste's royalties on the records was ½%. Can you believe that? One quarter of one per cent! Well, they weren't about to go through that kind of scene again, and Dave wasn't about to let them - he'd seen too many groups getting conned, having contracts explained to them by the bloke who was just about to take their livelihood away: "The vast majority of English bands are poor...everything's on HP, they owe bread and they're struggling. But they get some gigs, get a bit of a name and get to the point when they can interest a record company. But at this stage they're still poor...you've got to rise alarmingly in the strata of groups to make any money from gigs - the Family makes a bit, Fleetwood Mac, a handful of others, but it's records which bring in the bread. The gigs just keep you going, pay expenses and things. Anyway, this cat from the record company comes up - he's usually pompous and fast talking - and says "OK, here's your contract". At that point, the first thing you should do is get a solicitor and he should go over everything, but few bands do. The band may quibble over the low percentage, but the record man talks his way out of all that with promises and big words, and they end up signing for a small advance, minute percentages, for the world, for 4 or 5 years, no control over anything, and so on. They give you a producer - usually one with a nice orange shirt, a cravat, and longish hair, who's been producing since Cliff Richard - a fixed amount of studio time, and that's it. If it doesn't sell, they give you a list of songs they think will help the next one to, and put in a couple of session men to strengthen weaknesses".

So what kind of deals did Brinsley get? Well, for England and Europe they got £22 000 advance and 11% royalties, and for America they secured a 30 000 dollar advance for each album (2 a year for 3 years) and 10% royalties.

Well, good luck to Brinsley Schwarz. Next month they're off to tour America where their first LP is set to 'sweep the charts', and their second one, 'Despite It All', released here last month, should be selling well by the time they return. Let's hope so....then they can come back to a bit of acclaim rather than the recurring thrust of the past. Pete.

ROY HARPER

An (attempted) auscultatory interview

THE AUDIENCE
"You see, it all happens out there - it's all a matter of sitting there as a portrait, as a moving portrait of what you actually are. Which, I suppose, is what the old saga tellers were... they were the active embodiment of a whole mental process going on in the same room. I mean, I'm picking up vibrations from the whole of that audience, an audience which is either turning me on or turning me off. I have a very violent character - I doubt whether I would have got this far without it. It's taken a lot of sword and shield to get through four different managers and about ten different agents and still be standing on two feet. I've fought everybody off successfully and still managed to get out there to that audience".

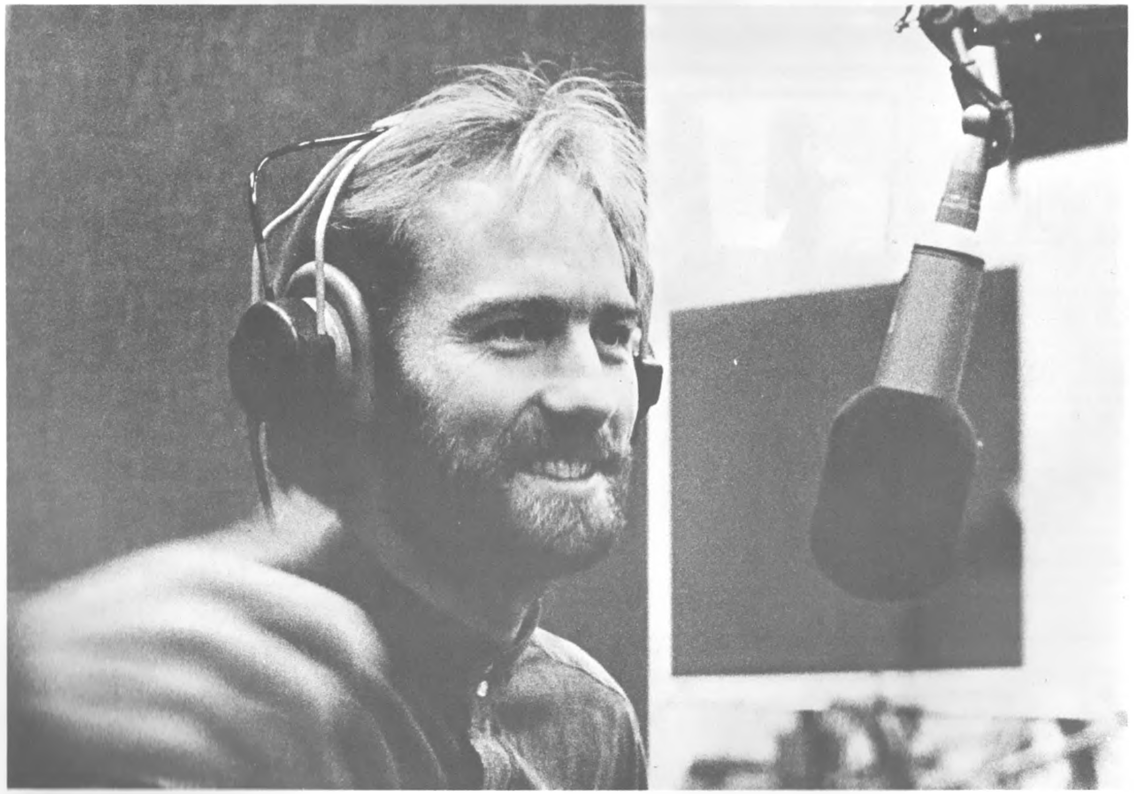
OTHER PEOPLE
"There are a lot of genuine characters around who are really being what they are without any sort of pretension. They may have pretension elsewhere, offstage or out of the public view, but they're honest with their public. There are a lot of characters on the scene that I really like, a lot of tragic artistes who produce what they produce without any pretension being involved. Look at Jimmy Page; he's really true to what he is - when he gets up there and gets going there's nobody I prefer to watch. He's like an incredible dancer... dancing for the whole crowd, with an instrument. I really do dig that band.

You'd be surprised at some of the people I do like - there are odd moments when I can like anyone. I like bands and people that are close to the feel of things - I like Steve Stills and Neil Young ....in fact I dig the whole of that band; they've got a few things sussed out, and they're true people as far as I can make out - you know, it's not into plastic show biz. I'm into a different thing than they are - I know the same things, but I am a man alone".

PLACES TO GO
"I've got very heavy with doing trips into my own head for a long time now, because I think that it's really a very genuine area in which to make discoveries. We can't sail around the world any more and there isn't any arable land on the surface of this earth anymore that we can go to in the hope of getting back to the stone age, or just getting back to live with nature.

So the area of discovery that I've got going is inside my own head, and there are a lot of places I've not been yet, in that head. I'm into it as a conscious trip, a conscious route that I've taken as opposed to other routes. For one reason and another I've got very inward, and it's probably got to stop soon - I've come to the realisation of that.... I've really got to give my head a chance, not only to do something else, but to have a rest from that trip, because it's a very heavy one. First person singular is a heavy one.

After I've written the long song I'm working on now, I'll probably have had enough of it. I could go on for ever along the same sort of track that I'm on at the present, but I don't really want to. I would like to get into a light and more simplified form. There are lots of songs on my first LP that show where I'm still at; the others, Gengis Smith onwards, have tended to get into a really solo trip of one man and his head, which has been a grand experiment for 3 or 4 years. But it must stop now. I mean, 3 or 4 years isn't the be all and end all; I've probably got another forty or fifty years in front of me in which to carry out a number of experiments, and go in a num-



Richard Imrie

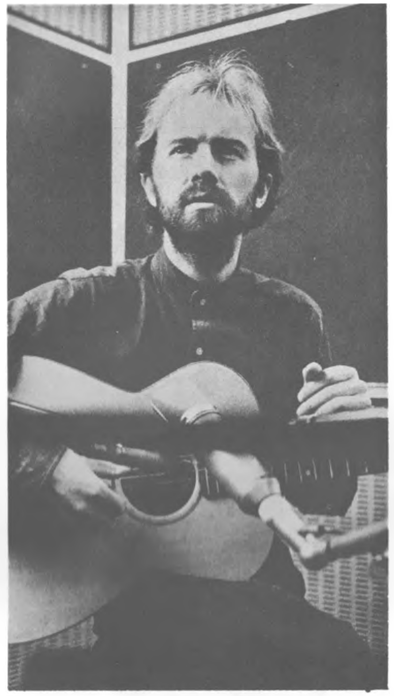
ber of directions....and that I will do".

WHY COMMUNICATE?

"I wasn't going to do any more interviews, for obvious reasons. Like someone asks you to say something about someone, and you know very well you can say a thousand things, but there's a million things in your head all at the same time. You can only really get what you want to get across, if you actually face someone - so the whole of your personality is brought to bear on the whole of their personality - any other way is a complete compromise.

I can't come out with a list of ten commandments because we all know where that's at...that's just fucking useless; but being a person in front of real people helps everyone, and I really have found that out. I don't think that there are many of us lot, performing in front of people, who are actually aware of that consciously, but I do believe that there are quite a few who are aware of it unconsciously. So in fact, they are doing it without knowing it, which I suppose is a better state to be in. I've got myself into a state where some of the time I know I'm doing it, and unfortunately when those times occur I'm being questioned by the musical press, and my spontaneity is taken away from me. But everybody knows where questions and answers are at and all that shit.

I've had the musical press ring up and ask for interviews many times. The thing is that half of them have never seen you perform, they only know your name and want to fill a paper with you, or something written about you. They've never seen you doing what you got your name for, and they come along to ask a load of questions that they think are relevant to them, and not relevant to what you and your audience are into. Just relevant to what THEY are. None of their questions are true to what's going on in the present tense, at the time of the interview. You have the present tense, the past tense, the future tense and THE SUPER TENSE. The super tense is when it is ACTUALLY going on, and it's not going on in front of those guys who are writing those articles; they can only get a brief idea of what they thought you might have been like, and if they didn't get the words down on tape, it's even more of a guess.



I've really come up against a lot of misinterpretation and misunderstandings, so much so that I've lost a lot of faith in the written word....and I suppose really that the spoken word is in the same dustbin.

To report on me and anything I did would mean that you would have to live with me for a week at least; anything else must be a compromise, a gross compromise - and that affects me more than the reader, because the reader has no idea what he is reading. I can't really give interviews, because I'm keeping back from telling some of the things that I should really have to tell you if I was to go as deep as I have been trying to go....and if I was to get all of those out of my consciousness, I would destroy them, I would have ordered them into some pattern that I probably did not want them in, so that in actual fact, I would be taking away from my own creativity.

Where I want it to happen is out there....in front of them....with them in front of me".

Talking to and edited by Adrian Boot of the Blackhill Bullshit.

Shambhu/Raja Ram/Allan/Mahadev/Shiva/Jake

Z: Do you see your act and records initiating your audience into spiritual realms, as a goad for them to do further exploration themselves?

RR: Well, I think we are all aware that a gigantic spiritual revolution is going on at the moment - people are realising that whatever truth they are searching for, they've got to find within themselves. Everybody is everybody else's guru...it just happens that a lot of people have been turned on to a spiritual life by us, and we're very happy about that; but we're not evangelists in any sense....we're not preaching. Everybody is striving to achieve higher consciousness and it's very gratifying to find people coming to see us and getting high with us.

Z: Do you find then, that for some people, Quintessence is a first step towards higher consciousness?

RR: Yes, a lot of people write to us. For instance, I got a letter this morning from a guy in Essex who was getting into it by means of Yoga; others get into it through the mantra aspect and they'll want to get their own mantras and be initiated into that. People do filter backstage and talk to us about it, but on a wide scale it's difficult to know.

Z: On the other hand, some people are turned on because your act is bizarre....it's not just the usual faded jeans/heavy riffs/drum solo thing.

RR: I think everybody's bizarre....this is God's dream and the dream is absolutely outrageous. Everybody is playing his part, and this is our role - and I suppose it is bizarre as much as anything....like when I see a rainbow in the sky, that to me is bizarre.

Z: The spiritualism and the music are firmly intertwined though.

RR: Yes - we could get up on stage and do nothing but chant, and do a gig entirely unaccompanied by instruments, but that's not what Quintessence is about. Both are inter related; the medium is music. But it evolved naturally anyway - we didn't seize upon a formula - and it's changing all the time.

Z: But the essence will remain the same.

RR: The music will keep improving on a craftsmanship level, on a technical level, and a feeling level, but the divinity of the band will also increase as the divinity of the individuals increases....you've got to have the authority to play what you play, or to talk about what you talk about.

Z: You mentioned earlier that the band wasn't founded on a formula, but how did this common bind of spiritualism come into group to begin with?

RR: Well, I'd been playing with Shambhu for a long time, in Paris, London and New York, but the rest of the band was formed when I interviewed hundreds of auditioning musicians, mainly in this pad. But I didn't form the band on a musical premise, it was done on a vibrational thing where when a person walked into the room I could look into their eyes, get a buzz off them and realise that it could work. So everybody in the band is a very spiritual person....we don't all follow the same guru, but our goals are the same, though our paths are different.

Z: It always struck me that Jake was the odd man out in the group - not musically but in his failure to adopt a spiritual name, his appearance...you know what I mean?

RR: I think Jake is a very spiritual person, but his route is slightly different from mine.

Z: Then his association with the group is not just musical?

RR: Oh no, the band see each other every day - we spend hours and hours together. We don't live in the same house, but we all spend a lot of time together.

Z: You all live within the same locality - Notting Hill/Ladbroke Grove....now everybody who lives there says that it's a highly creative environment, everything happens there and so on. Can you clarify that at all, because though I know of several extremely gifted people in the area, to me, an outsider, it seems that any creativity is depressingly absent and everybody just walks around with long faces.

RR: Well if you live here, you meet so many people - poets, painters, all sorts - and I'd say it's the most creative part of England....in fact one of the most creative parts of the world. I've lived in many of the world's principal cities from Greenwich Village to Melbourne, but I'd say that this place has really got the most zap going. Everybody goes round to everyone else's pad to jam and talk and so on.

Z: But it's all private - it doesn't get out to the world, to the public.

RR: Oh absolutely - a lot of great things are happening in the pads; that's where the paintings are, not in the galleries. But there are an amazing number of groups in the Grove, or who got their start in the Grove: Procol Harum, Steamhammer, T Rex, Quiver, Skin Alley, Mighty Baby....I mean,

you go down Portobello Road on a saturday afternoon and it takes you about 5 hours to say 'hello' and 1 hour to do the shopping.

Z: To get back to the audiences a moment, do you notice any geographical differences - for instance, are there areas where the audiences are less inclined to lose their inhibitions and join in with you, or less open to your ideas?

RR: I honestly have to say that we hardly ever meet any opposition. The further out (from London) we go, the fresher the audiences are.... like we played in Gloucester the other day and it was only the 3rd pop concert they'd had there, and they literally would not go home at the end. Once they'd heard Krishna's name and got into the music they didn't want to go home to reality, or what they called reality.

Z: How would you say the music had affect -ed them?

RR: Well people hear music all the time, they're bombarded with it; if they get intoxicated with it and get high - that's the proof. I mean, if someone gives you something saying it gets you high and it doesn't, you say 'Well, look man, nothing happened' ...but if you get an incredible buzz off it straight away, you think 'Where can I get some more of this'. And that's how it is on a good gig, you can feel it rising. Some times it's the first note, sometimes it takes 4 or 5 numbers. To get back to your point, there are some areas that I call lower conscious areas - I won't mention their names - but we've gone back to them and usually found ways of breaking through - it's technique.... you've just got to let people realise that they're free.

Z: Have you been able to put your finger on why these areas exist?

RR: Well, exposure.... cosmopolitanness; people who live in big cities are usually looser in some ways than people who live in the country. But I'd say that generally, English audiences are just fantastic, and the same with Europe. The language barrier doesn't make any difference - we can still get into mantras and they understand what it's about.

Z: Your whole lifestyle is such that you must come up against a fair bit of scepticism and cynicism....

RR: Not much.

Z: I remember reading an account of some concert you did and the 'respected critic' called your music "Eastern gobbledygook".

RR: Well you have to expect that sort of thing from the straight press - they can't relate to it. That remark was made after our appearance with Creedence at the Albert Hall and the press just wanted to hear 12 bar rock'n'roll.... when you come out and sing mantras in different time signatures, well, someone has to tell them that it's good before they'll like it. But those cats don't get high at all - there's no way they can get high until they're born again. No.... a few people say that we're full of crap and that this religion thing is just a hype, but they probably say that to their local rabbi too.

Z: Let's get onto other matters.... what happened to your plans to tour America?

RR: Well, they kept getting put back, but there's now a chance that we'll be playing Carnegie Hall in January. So far we have had no records released over there, but we've got quite a reputation through import sales and radio plays. We had some outrageous offers moneywise, but now we've signed with Island Records for the States too - they're just starting up over there, and we're one of the first releases.

Z: Having lived in America, you'll have some idea how they'll accept you.

RR: Well I think people's reactions are the same the world over, but Americans tend to get loose very quickly anyway... even if it's not good music. I'm all ready for it - I'd really love to do the Fillmore tonight, but we're not going to burn ourselves out like so many other groups - we intend to tread carefully, because I think America is going to be our big scene.

Z: You're obviously brimming with confidence now - what was it like in the early days?

RR: I was always confident that the band would succeed - after the first three weeks we had about 8 record offers. Island took us from Warner Brothers at the last minute - doubled their offer at 2 in the morning, and we went with them. Chris Blackwell makes fast decisions and he's never lost money on a group yet - he's got 35 of them too. We're working on our third album at the moment.

Z: You've got a very good deal with Island haven't you?

RR: Yes, they don't restrict us at all; we control artwork, advertising, recording, producing - we just hand in the tapes and they press them. They're working for us, inasmuch as they finance us.

Z: Your sleeves are more intricate than most - do they mind the expense?

RR: The second one nearly blew their minds - it cost £1200 in artwork alone, and the first one cost £800.

Z: What about production... I see that on your next album you're doing it yourself. Why's this?

RR: Well, I think a producer is an intermediary step that takes away a little of the essence of what any band is about - a producer mellows it, spruces it up and tidies it up. You need one in the early stages to get you over technical hang-ups, but once you get to know about that, it's better to do it yourself. And the sound on this new album is just.... whew! So much fuller and more exciting. Pete.

The rooftop photograph of Quintessence, manager Stanley, Buddah-clad roadie & all was taken by Dick Polack.

THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF IGGY AND the stooges

There's a sad possibility that people are on the verge of discovering, exploiting and generally going on about the Detroit Sound (like they did with San Francisco successfully, and Boston abysmally). Detroit dwellers are proud of their bands and loyal to them, and the last thing they want is for some outsider with ulterior motives to pull a big sack over them and rush forth proclaiming nonsenses about indigenous styles and stuff like that. Here Dave Marsh of Detroit's Creem magazine talks about The Stooges, whos outrageous audience repelling or magnetising behaviour and 'magnificent pimply rubbish rock' have made them into some kind of a local legend in Michigan. The band's line-up has slightly altered since the article was written and is now: Iggy Pop (nee Stooge)/vocals. Zeke Zettner/bass. Ron Asheton/guitar. Scott Asheton/drums. Billy Cheatham/guitar. Steve Mackay/saxaphones....

I
PAUL BUTTERFIELD HIMSELF

This is a story about the Stooges. I've taken some time to check it out and it seems that there's really only one way to start it:

O*N*C*E U*P*O*N *A* T*I*M*E

in the big bad city of Detroit, occasionally oozing over into Ann Arbor and other places familiar only to the transplanted hillbillies, college kids and transient factory workers who live there, there was a Blues Band called the Prime Movers.

Now the Prime Movers were not your ordinary, run-of-the-mill Rock and Roll Band; no, no, they were far above and beyond that, they would only play the real, true, Blackaspossible Chicago Blues. And they were pretty good at it, too. They had all the Muddy Waters albums and all the Paul Butterfield records and all the Howlin' Wolf and Siegel-Schwall records and between this and that and a whole lot of beer, the band got on quite fine, thank you.

At the time that our story begins, the Movers (as they were known to the in-group blues crew who were their fans, groupies and general admirers) needed a drummer.

At roughly the same time, in Ann Arbor, which is where most of this story takes place, lived young Jim Osterberg, a nineteen year-old drummer who lived with his convenient, economical parents in a convenient, economical house trailer.

Now, Jim had played in a high school rock and roll band called the Iguanas, which did not play the True Black Blues but instead played scurrilous, degradee rock and roll. But, since the Movers needed a drummer and Jim (as he was known then and sometimes still is) happened to be the best one available. Since Jim was also captivated by the sound of the Real Black Blues, it was both necessary (for our story and history) and logical that he should join the band.

****H*E**D*I*D****

So Iggy joined the Prime Movers and they played the True Black Blues together and sat around at night and discussed such topics (seriously, even though they were dead drunk) as "Can Livonia Produce A True Practitioner of the True Black Blues" (and Billy C., who later ended up with Commander Cody, would always say yes, yes they can.) and "How the Fuck Does Paul Butterfield Sound So Good When He's White?" (All across the land in 1965 and '66, thousands upon thousands of young men discussed these same questions; then they heard *In My Own*

Dream and they knew).

You can imagine their surprise and super-feelings of anticipation and excitement when one day, Boot Hill or someone called them up on the phone and said that the legendary

P*A*U*L*B*U*T*T*E*R*F*I*E*L*DH*I*M*S*E*L*F**

was coming to Detroit along with his storied first band which included such luminaries as:

Mich el Bloomfield! and
Sammy Lay!

(who was not only a True Practioner of the True Black Blues, he also had Roots and was a Spade) to play at a club called "The Living End" on the Lodge in Detroit.

Little did they then suspect that this was to be the beginning of the end for the now-legendary Prime Movers (anymore than they suspected that they were legendary, or ever would be) for Sam Lay was to make "Iggy" (as Jim was known then and still is, to this very day) his protege. (Iggy was called Iggy because of his previous association with that ghastly, skonko rock and (ugh!) roll band, the Iguanas. Or "that band", as the fellow Movers probably referred to it.)

At any rate the culmination of all this was that Iggy moved to Chicago where he lived in famous Bob Koester's basement (Famous Bob is Famous because he owns a record label called Delmark, which records only True Black Blues and also, sometimes, some jazz.)

In Chicago, Iggy was to play with such famous masters of the blues as, of course, Sammy Lay, whose protege he was, and J.B. Hutto, who had Roots and were Spades. And he also Found Something Out.

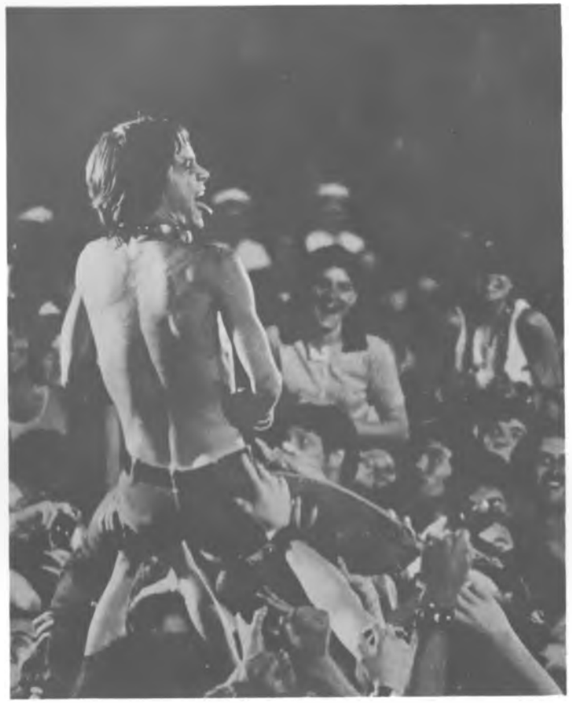
He found out that the True Black Blues were only True for people who had Roots and were Spades. "When those Black dudes play the blues, man, it's psychedelic," Iggy told me once. I wouldn't say that that should go unchallenged, either for veracity or descriptiveness, but it's a good quote. Iggy Stooge is always good copy – when he wants to be.

"Well," Iggy continued, "when I found that out, I knew I had to come home and make my own music." And he knew what kind of music it was, and by now you probably do too (or, if not, you can guess) but, just in case you don't it was

R*O*C*KA*N*D**R*O*L*L**

Now, in order to play True Rock and Roll (and, believe me, as it later turned out no one has ever played True Rock and Roll) you have to have a band. Which entails hooking up with other people. Iggy had one True Friend back home in Ann Arbor, whose name was Ron Asheton (he is still Iggy's True Friend, which you can see if you will look at the back of the Stooges' album cover). But let's have Iggy tell us about how he and Ron Got It Together.

"I knew Ron see from when I joined



the Movers. Ron was just learning to play bass then. We just met and became Real Good Friends. We were just these kids who were so flipped out that we had, really, just gone ahead and quit school and stuff cause we wanted to play. There was nobody doin' that then except for

(SNEER)

musicians, you know? We were just loose in the town, going up to this practice room every day. Goin' Up and Playin'. I played drums and he played bass.

"I got him a job with the Movers and he was really leanin' to play Good. He played for like two weeks. They let him do it for a couple of weeks but he was always too Rock and Rolly, too much like *me*, and they wanted to keep the band like Them. So, as soon as they had a better chance to get somebody that was really Experienced, they

G*A*V*ER*O*N**
T*H*EB*O*O*T**

Iggy rectified the situation as best he could by getting Ron a job with the Chosen Few, who play mostly Rolling Stones, Pretty Things, Yardbirds and Who rip-offs. They needed a bass-player for the summer and Scott Richardson, their lead singer, being Iggy's old friend, they ended up with Ron. "And then Ron started getting Real Good," as Iggy puts it.

"I went to Chicago, and as soon as I came back I went to Ron and Scott's house. They were my only Real Friends in Ann Arbor, that I Cared For, and that night when I got back, the Chosen Few broke up.

"So then originally, we thought we would have Scott for a singer and me for a drummer and just make a regular band. Then Ron and I decided we wanted (long pause) . . . . . A Real Band. With Real Soul. Literally, Fame and Fortune. While we went on to Oblivion. Every month that went by, he was doin' better and we was doin' worse. Because we were so

NAIVE

that we thought we could do somthing that was practically impossible."

Sure enough, the Scott Richardson SRC Case did indeed become locally famous. And somehow, the Stooges, naivete or no, made it to where-ever you or I or all the rest of them, think they are now. Which is probably several different places at once.

But we've left Iggy a drummer; once we get him a True Band, once we make him the Apocalyptic Vocalist that he is, we can go on to the things implied in that last paragraph.

"Ron said to me one night, 'You really need the freedom, don't you Jim?' And I said, 'Yeah, I do.' He said, 'Yeah I think you should sing.'" To hear Iggy tell it, the whole band got together like that. Scott got in to be the drummer because he was Ron's brother and Iggy's True Friend. Dave used to live around the corner from the Ashetons, moved into the Stooge Manor when they got it and they just sort of said,

OK, YOU CAN BE IN THE BAND TOO.

And so they fucked around for a year, jamming/practicing occasionally, managed by a dude to whom Iggy refers today as "The Mad Professor", living in a house with their crazy, literally insane (from the sound of it) manager. More Iggy apochrypha? "I used to just scream stuff like 'Fuck you, the Mad Professor' when we'd practice, those were my lyrics," he's telling you and you can't make up your mind, because he's charismatic enough to make you *want* to believe him. But this is while there were only three of them, with Iggy on organ and Scott just learning to drum and Ron still on bass. Then, a little bit later, when they were really broke and **that was all they could afford to rent, Iggy played Hawaiian guitar for awhile.**

Finally, Halloween of '67, after the trio had lived together for the entire year, they got a job, at a private Halloween party. Their private party Halloween premiere.

"It was just an instrumental group," Iggy remembers. **"I just sat on the floor and played Lead Hawaiian Guitar. If you can picture that."**

"And then my Hawaiian guitar broke, so that was that." In the meantime they'd dumped the Mad Professor for a guy they'd met at the premiere party, Jimmy Silver. Jimmy is an exquisite macrobiotic buisnessman and All Around Good Guy, from Ann Arbor by way of Ohio and New York (which he sounds like), long-haired, astrological. Of whom many people have said:

HE'S THE ONLY PERSON I KNOW WHO COULD MANAGE THE STOOGES.

And no doubt they're right.

He's rumored to have driven the boys to macrobiotics, though at this point it's hard to say who is macro and who isn't (in the band, not to mention elsewhere). Iggy says, though, that while he doesn't consume flesh, he's not macrobiotic at the moment; he says he'd prefer to give things his own labels.

At any rate, the boys got signed by Elektra, which is one of the stories, kept plugging away and got their album out and generally have prospered enough to make the ending of this part "and they lived happily ever after" if I wanted. But it is only the ending of this part, the second part can be some stories and stuff, things that fit in but without any real transition between them. Stuff you need to see to understand the last half.

II – SOME STRANGE STORIES AND TALES ABOUT IGGY AND THE GUYS

A. The most famous Iggy Epic is that he's been in jail about half his career. Which Iggy may or may not have denied in the past depending on whether or not he felt like it was beneficial.

Anyway, he told me he'd only been busted once, to the point of going to jail, in Romeo, Michigan. "Indecent exposure," he explained. "I took off my pants and went back on stage and started to do a striptease. I just sorta got Crazed, I got out of hand. It was a little two bit thing not a big show. I often get inspired by the Oddest Things at the Littlest Shows, sometimes.

B. Snappy, dapper Dan Carlisle, big-time motown d.j. tells the story of walking into a very early Stooges gigtastrophe and being amazed, dumbfounded and thoroughly repulsed. Summoning all his courage, Carlisle approached John **Sinclair and asked him rather belligerently, "Who the fuck is that obnoxious band up there?" To which** John replied, **"Man, that's the Stooges, the world's only psychedelic band."**

Carlisle even told that one over the air one night, in roughly those words, which may or may not verify it.

C. When the Stooges went to Elektra to record, Iggy said,

WE HAD NEVER WRITTEN OR PERFORMED OR SUNG A COMPLETE SONG BY OURSELVES OR ANYBODY ELSE"

So, in order to have something to work with in the studio, they worked up a few tunes, causing Iggy to learn to play guitar a bit. And took the result over to Jac Holzman at Elektra who said "No." And wasn't going to release it.

So the boys told him, "Aw hell Jac that's only the beginning. We've got lotsa other stuff. Give us another chance, man." And he agreed, figuring that they actually had the other songs ready. And two days later they did.

Ron and Iggy wrote 'em all in two days and the band recorded them in two days. And that became the first Stooges album. Heh, heh.

D. IGGY TELLS ONE ––– "I'm Sick" b/w "Asthma Attack"

"We used to have this jam called "I'm Sick" and we did a song at the same time called "Asthma Attack". What that was, right about the time we recorded I got this big disease and practically died. Lost about twenty pounds. I was just up here in this room for about three weeks, just on my back. I literally couldn't move. Couldn't do nothin'. But I didn't want to go to a doctor because I don't like to do those things at all, because they're very . . . they sap one's strength.

"So we had to do a show, right in the middle of the biggest part of my sickness . . . (here he paused and played his guitar for awhile) . . . I was completely . . . (a similar pause, slightly shorter) . . . just in total . . . (third pause, shorter yet) . . . I can't describe what kind of sickness it was, except that it was everything at once.

"The funniest thing was that when I was really sick, I had to literally by the will come up on stage and when I got *on* stage, I was white as a sheet. It was this way, we did about three jobs. While I was sick, 'cause we could never afford to turn down Even One Job. 'Cause our backs were always against the wall. This is right when we got signed by Elektra,

September and October of '68.

"The night Jac Holzman was here from Elektra, we did "I'm Sick", "Asthma Attack" and one other song about being sick. And nobody believed us; everybody thought it was this way of saying "I'm Sick of All This." I was **singing songs about what I was really into – during "Asthma Attack" I would wheeze you know, for real. On those jobs I couldn't even dance on stage. I just barely had to get up and sing and I would fall down there and lay by the mike in *pain*, you know, I was in Real Pain. People were booing because they thought it was a put on and they're going, "What's This?" You know? That was**

O*N*E*O*F*T*H*E*O*D*D*E*S*TL*I*T*T*L*E**T*H*I*N*G*S**

We did those songs for about three jobs. "Asthma Attack" was a good song too."

And what did Holzman think? "Well, he didn't talk to me directly about it. I think he just said it put him REAL UPTIGHT."

E. THE BEST TIME I EVER SAW THE STOOGES

An infamous job, in front of something like 1500 people at a junior college (Henry Ford) in Dearborn (Ford's hometown), which is the roughly Midwestern equivalent of Orange County.

The set featured two of the best known Stooge tunes of that era (when you had to be a true Stooge afficionado to know that they *had* titles for the things they did; best titles in the world, actually.), called "Goodbye Bozos" and "The Dance of Romance". ("Dance of Romance" was to become "the bizarre but lovely" (ugh!) "Anne" on the album.)

It was during this particular performance of "Bozos" that I first became aware of how good the Stooges were at doing what they did. (Which was not at all what they do now.) As a pot-bellied jr. college specimen walked out of the auditorium with his acned mistress, Iggy called out the soul-frying insult,

"GOOD BYE . . . (long pause)
. . . YOU FAT MOTHUH"

sending half the audience to its feet in repulsion, half in response to what they knew had happened – a strong occurence of truth-telling from that platform for liars and sophists.

Later, Iggy was to hop atop a girl and become slightly too violent, lacerating her or something. Which wouldn't've been so bad if it hadn't been that she was The DEAN'S DAUGHTER!!! And, from what I've been told, the Stooges and Iggy haven't heard the last of *that* one yet.

F. A couple of issues ago, *Gay Power* ran an interview between Rita Redd and Jackie Curtis about Iggy, whose lithe bod was featured in a Jaggeresque (Stoogesque?) pose upon the cover. Iggy says it was the best thing he ever saw on himself and I'm hardly in a position to disagree, so here's a good little bit of it:

JACKIE: What did you want to say about Iggy Stooge?

RITA: He wasn't there for the audience's benefit; the audience was there for his benefit and he told them so . . . when the audience didn't come to Iggy, Iggy went to the audience, knocking plates down, glasses, standing on tables, and telling people to get up and if they didn't get up he pulled them up out of their seats, spilling drinks as well as girls' pocketbooks across the floor.

J: What else?

R: And then, when he'd taken complete command of the audience, he turned his back on them. He then proceeded to add insult to unjury by proceeding to stand there for fifteen minutes while the people in the club just stared, their eyes were glued to Iggy. They were enthralled by his torso, his silver lame gloves and his ripped jeans . . .

J: Well, what about other people in the audience, how do you think the male counterpart reacted?

R: Iggy was insulting their masculinity by throwing it in their faces, reminding them of the role they play. Of course, the world is full of masochists. I think Iggy's a great star.

J: Do you think Iggy's a masochist?

R: . . . He slaps himself in the face but I think he does that for audience reaction, you know, I think he really isn't slapping himself but really slapping them and don't forget he's wearing those silver lame gloves and that's quite a different slap . . . He hypnotized me, my dear, not only me but the entire audience . . . The whole mood of the audience was either antagonized by him or, like a lot of them, I noticed they were rooting for him, egging him on. So there was a noticeable controversy which instantly creates an interest in what happened at the moment . . . I felt that people in the audience that were singled out for abuse were the ones who really dug it the most.

J: What kind of personal vibration did you get from him, if any?

R: More than the vibes it was PURE ENERGY, RAW, (*emphasis added*) the audience was turning on from his sheer force and that was a definite up.

J: Do you think any of his advances were sexual?

R: THEY WERE PAST THE SEXUAL POINT THEY WERE INSULTING! . . . He had no way of knowing what this girl would do. He was taking a chance too. He was making an idiot out of himself too.

J: Iggy seems to have confused you.

R: I think Iggy is confused himself . . . It wasn't two males up there on stage, it was just SEX. A love-making movement, simple pure and beautiful, without gender or hostility.

There's as good or better descriptions elsewhere in that interview but one sequence in particular is especially enlightening:

J: Why did you say that Iggy has the

magic touch?
R: He's putting an old number in new light.
J: What do you mean?
R: He's taking what Elvis Presley did, giving you a taste of Mick Jagger . . .
J: None of Jim Morrison?
R: No, Jim Morrison is really gross.

The only thing Jim Morrison is into is displaying his cock so he can prove he still has one. WHEN IGGY IS ON STAGE THERE'S NEVER ANY DOUBT.

III
A DAY IN ANN ARBOR WITH IGGY STOOGE

Iggy met me at the door, black-shirted and booted, explained that he'd been combing his hair for the last hour and laughed. We ended up sitting on the living room couches, he on one, I at right angles on another. Jim took the place of Iggy, his stage presence, or rather personality, only occasionally booming through, like a bat in the daylight.

What I mean is that Iggy smoking hash at home or just rapping to you, still has the same charm and the same ideas that manifest themselves on stage but unlike so many with the same kind of charisma, without any sense of being 'on'. He still knows how to relax and one wonders, quite seriously if the futuristic pop star is ready for, or wants the adulation and acclaim I and a number of others find inevitably in store for him.

One suspects a kind of geiger counter dial, lit by his imagination, somewhere in his head where he's the only one to control it, that tells him when to turn off the stage presence and when to turn it on. And when it comes on, off-stage, it's got an intensity that's beyond literal belief. Makes you wonder if the hash you've inevitably consumed being around him is *really* what has you smashed or if it is merely the force of his presence.

There were moments that day when I was totally taken aback, moments of rare amnesia and thorough disorientation, several times when I had to let him continue to rap when I wanted to beg him to let me recover from the staggering blows he was delivering to my already worn psyche. And if that's sounding like bullshit, you try it. I dare you.

I've been seeing the Stooges as much as possible over the last few months, not only in preparation for this story, but also because I really feel like I need to; music or anything at its best is compelling and the Stooges fit that to perfection. As a consequence, I've gotten to know them reasonably well, as well, let us say, as either party tends to want to know anyone, misanthropes that we may be. And all the rapping and writing that ensues from that knowledge is out of belief, you dig? The force of their reality is such that it compels you in that direction.

At any rate, it turned out that Jim had taken the trouble to read what I was writing, listen to what I was saying; the result, for me was a completely uncomfortable as it can get when another person understands you *really* well. If all Iggy's personal perceptions are on that level, it's no wonder everything he does is so intense.

When I was first getting to know Iggy and the band, he was fond of remarking that you had to be like a child to understand the Stooges, or rock and roll in general. And thus, I had (and have) more than mixed emotions about writing this; I don't know that it's possible to capture what the Stooges *are* at this point. It's easy enough to capture what they were and to predict what they're going to become but what they *are* right now, it's impossible to say. It's a transient stage and none of us have any idea exactly *how* big they're going to make it. But a lot of us are sure that they will and that's all that really matters.

We taped for about forty five minutes, then Jim decided he wanted to go downtown. In the car, we continued to smoke hash and rap about everything from the Stones (whom Iggy digs) to the Doors (who he doesn't believe in anymore) to women and sex in general ("I don't hardly fuck anymore," he said straight-faced, "except out of habit.")

Then, into the Virginian, the little restaurant where, he told me later, he worked at the very beginning as a waiter to pay the rent on Stooge Manor. Then it was coffee and cokes for an hour and a half, talking about things, meeting Betsy who is Jim's latest and 14 year old flame.

Eric Ehrmann's story was just out in *Rolling Stone* and the whole thing had left Jim and the rest of the Stooges pretty much disgusted. After that, he said, he'd never worry about what was written about him again. It simply couldn't get any worse than the fabricated package that was printed there.

Things got pretty personal, swinging around to people and Ann Arbor generally. The city itself came up as a topic shortly after Stooge roadie, soon to be guitarist, Bill Cheatam, walked in and sat down across the aisle. "See," he said, "that's the thing about Ann Arbor. That's gotta be in the story. I can sit here and almost everyone I know might walk through."

Later, the prime example of what he meant occured. Steve McKay, the young horn player who used to do "Death City" comix in CREEM, drifted in to talk to Jim and ask when they could get together again to jam. After he split, Iggy commented, "He hasn't got it together yet, but he's good and he's gonna get Real Good."

A week later, I went to see the band's last gig before they split for the Coast to record the second record and McKay was playing with them on a couple of tunes, the combination ending up as a really stunning and visceral sound; a week after that, it turned out that Steve was put on a plane and sent to the Coast to be on the album and, it was hinted, maybe join the group as a full-time member. That's what the A-2 rock scene is like. Or, more accurately, that's what the A-2 scene is like; very ingrown and incestuous and small but very, very groovy if you know how to swing with it.

Then, it was back to the house. We drifted through, checking it out. Upstairs to check out Ron Asheton's Nazi paraphenalia collection. Asheton's got a three room apartment like thing on the second floor, with his collection of SS/Luftwaffe junk, flags and medals and coats, enough to drive any biker mad with envy.

Ron's guitar playing embodies the Stooges' music. Though his playing, and that of the band in general, has been heavily condescended towards in most analyses of the Stooges' on record and even live, or ignored altogether, it would seem to me that what he is doing is learning how to control the electric guitar. With emphasis on *electric*. There's no point in trying to learn how to do a bunch of fancy stuff that's already been done anyway when there's a whole wide open field of feedback left open to play about in. In other words, what may have sounded primitive in traditional terms is actually pointing in a progressive direction through the unrestrained assault on the barriers of guitar technology.

Ron was heavily influenced, in learning to play, by a trip to England that he and Dave made in 1965, watching the Who and the Move make their opening assays into rock as theatre smash-em-up.

Peter Townshend says that he started smashing guitars and using those reams and reams of feedback because, "I knew what I had to play it was in my head. I could hear the notes in my head but I couldn't get them out on the guitar." It must have been a lot like that for Ron. But, by now, he's improved; he's been competent on the chord, "play this note here",-technique for a little while now while continuing to advance in usage of technology. What it amounts to is that he's learned a little more of the etiquette of the instrument.

From Ron's room it was up to the attic to Jim's room, a sordid somewhat sloppy melange of hash-smoking remnants (empty matchbooks,• burnt matches, loads and loads of ashes), a dozen pairs of gold or silver lame plastic k-mart gloves strewn among the blue jeans, the bed, no sheets, a mattress. Guitar. Iggy. And talked about the Stooges music.

It's often seemed to me that the Stooges lyrics conveyed more realism, more about what it's like to be an adolescent in Amerika than anything Bob Dylan ever put down. Yet Iggy places only minor emphasis on that part of his vocalising, concentrating instead on other rudiments. He has no sense of being a songwriter or, more appropriately a lyricist. "I just stand up in front of the mike and I wanta make some words, they just start flyin'. I start pickin' the ones that sound beautiful," he explained. "Words that come out that seem to have some truth and some beauty, just anything I like, you know. And after I figure out what the words mean, I start puttin' 'em together, so they sound like *half*-coherent, anyway. But when they start out they might make totally no sense. I just scream whatever's on my mind. You can't really write lyrics . . . because then there's a separation between the lyrics and the music, you know?"

So how does he practice? Iggy is so totally involved in the band's progression as a musical unit that it seems obvious that he can't follow the path of most vocalists, only occasionally coming in until the song seems completed, then fitting the lyrics around the music. "When we practice, I jam on lyrics. Except that I sing a lot freer in practice. I sing a lot more, too. I shout and scream my lungs out.

Yet he takes a kind of perverse glee in the fact that his lyrics are often castigated as boring or simplistic. "Frankly," he says slowly, "a lot of people aren't far out enough to even understand 'em. You know what I mean, I mean that's really true. It's not something that's simple, 'Wow this is really obvious.' You gotta have a mind. Most people just don't understand where the songs are at all. I'M GLAD."

Which all goes back to who he wants to hear the Stooges and who he wants to be understood by. How Iggy (and, one must suppose, the Stooges who largely let Jim do their speaking for them) view the audience is not at all the way someone like say, Ten Years After views the audience. The Stooges had nothing to lose for far too long to worry about the reactions of the public now. Like any other pariahs, "When you ain't got nothin'/You got nothin' to lose." Or better, "You're invisible, you got no secrets to conceal." The Stooges don't care to have every fourteen year-old or even every twenty-five year-old, hippie or otherwise.

"Mass recognition is not what's important to me, what's important is individual recognition. In other words, it's not how many people recognize you, it's what the people who *do* recognize you, recognize you for," he said. For once I felt almost totally sure that he wasn't shucking. "To me the biggest band is the band that's biggest in the hearts of the people who listen to it. But on the other hand, large numbers of people can . . . that's attractive too. Fame and notoriety and money and all those things are attractive. But they're not really attractive to me as the musical forest in which I live. I'm not gonna come out of my musical forest for anybody. 'Cause I already know you're just fucked if you do. So I'm just in my musical forest you know."

Transatlantic has, in a decade, grown from small beginnings into Britain's largest independent label. Nat Joseph, the company's managing director, talks about the label's development.

"Originally, Transatlantic started in 1961, though not as a functioning record company until 1963. In 61, I came back from a year of bumming round the States, where I'd gone immediately after finishing university, and I was basically very keen on two things: records and folk music.

Whilst I was over there, I picked up a couple of agencies to import records into England - and that's how the company functioned for the first two years, until I had enough money to start doing my own recordings, because money was the major problem. I started with about £100, and walked around the record shops of southern England trying to sell imported records... Folkways, Conversaphone, and a number of other specialist labels which have long since gone - and it was very much a one man business. When I eventually managed to get wholesalers interested, I got enough money to do some recording myself, and in 1963 I signed The Ian Campbell Folk Group, our first real signing, because in the early days of the British folk revival they were one of, if not the, leading groups.

Shortly after that, Bill Leader, who I'd become friendly with when he was managing Collet's record shop, and I were in Edinburgh recording two LPs of the Edinburgh Folk Festival for Decca. At that time, there were a number of Irish musicians playing the pubs up there, and they later became the Dubliners....they followed the Campbells by a few months when I dashed over to Dublin to make them our second signing. Also during that period, we recorded with Sydney Carter, Cy Grant, a jazz record with Annie Ross, an R&B record with Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated, and one or two other things, and then Bert Jansch came in 1965.

I gathered that Bert had been to a lot of companies and publishers but nobody was interested; what he was doing at the time must have seemed strange, but the minute you heard the guitar and the song, the minute you saw Bert, you knew there was something special. His first LP sold phenomenally well over a period of time, but it didn't sell well at the beginning - I doubt if it did more than 1500 in the first year, but the two Dubliners records which we had out then were going really well. Getting acceptance for Bert was the real job - dealers hadn't heard of him, there was no comparison then....it sounded a bit weird, and it took a lot of pushing and time to get it moving, which it eventually started doing a year or so after it came out.

It was around that time that we slowly began to introduce full colour album sleeves, but the company was running on such a shoestring that the difference between them and the usual 2 colour ones meant quite a bit of difference, and I did not want to go to any outside source for finance.

John Renbourn was the next major signing and we went into a very productive period with Bert & John doing solo albums and an album together, and this was a very successful time for the company because they were selling very well, the Campbells were selling quite well, the Dubliners were selling a hell of a lot and there were a lot of other things besides....we were starting the Xtra label for instance.

We were also getting a bit of criticism from a narrow, small but vocal minority who seemed to think that having had a couple of years of fairly traditional and ethnic material (and since we were also importing Folkways -which was very ethnically orientated), that this gave them the right to demand that we pursue a line of 'purity' rather than introduce contemporary music and 'go pop' - but it was all pretty stupid and didn't worry me. Anyway, I believe that the music which grew out of the British folk revival was far more interesting than the revival itself... I mean the singers, songwriters, guitarists. The same thing happened later on, when we decided to move into progressive rock - there was an awful lot of uproar from people who thought that we should keep to our role of champions of acoustic music. The point is, we certainly didn't desert the traditional fields and we don't intend to suddenly chop off acoustic music ....John Renbourn's last album, 'The lady and the unicorn' is sensationally beautiful and quite the best album he's made. So we haven't deserted acoustic music, but we can't be expected to do the same thing all the time.

When Bert and John decided to form the Pentangle, it was with our help that the group was set up, and indeed for the 6 months of pre-formation and their first 6 months of existence, the Pentangle was handled from Transatlantic's offices by me....we looked after their bookings, their van, their concerts, and their general management. When it came to the point when they needed top flight management, we managed to get Jo Lustig, with whom we have a very good relationship. I think that good management is essential to any artiste; in fact the two major things that I look for in any new group is whether they're working, and whether they're being managed properly. I mean, some of these bands come to us with no track record, they want a huge advance, their manager probably hasn't seen the inside of a club, and they want the record company to provide equipment, get them gigs all over the world and so on. And because of the way that some of the American labels conduct their affairs, a lot of groups feel no responsibility to work. As far as management is concerned, I feel there is a tremendous shortage of good managers who are a) honest, and b) will actually do some work to get them gigs. Anyway, one of the reasons why I think the Pentangle has done so well is the combination of their musical brilliance, and the relationship between their manager and the company. And the same is true of any of our artistes who are making headway - the same combination is there.

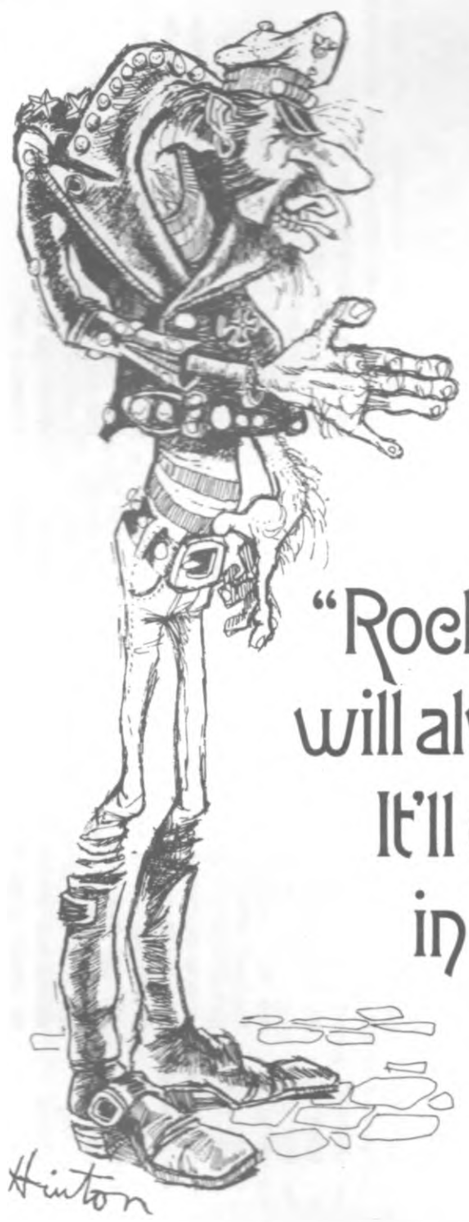
With new artistes particularly, we do a terrific amount of groundwork. We looked after the Johnstons for 6 months, before placing them with who we thought was a suitable manager, and we've done this with quite a few artistes because it is a sad fact that very few managers or agents will go out on a limb to get work. We worked out that we got over £20,000 of gig work for our artistes last year - ranging from dates we initiated for our major artistes, to small gigs for people who probably had not even been recorded. This is work that should be done by management and agency, and not only does it take a lot of time, but we don't take a penny in commission.

Our move into progressive rock was natural expansion really - you can't stand still and draw a line and say "from here on is music I won't touch". There were people within the company who knew and understood the music - Steve Mann, who was then our press officer, and John Whitehead, our A&R manager, for instance - and when John had settled down in the company (he came from CBS) I gave him the job of developing that side of things at his discretion. I have to admit that, where as I have a fair knowledge about folk music and contemporary folk, and so on, I'm not knowledgable about rock, but I don't think a thorough knowledge is necessary as long as there are people who are into it. So John, as A&R man, has total control over that side; who we sign, when and how they record, and I think he's done very well considering the competition that exists and our obvious budgetry limitations. We've had a couple of minor disasters, but of the groups he's signed, I think that Stray are going to be a major act - they're young and developing very well; Jody Grind are developing fast and very interestingly....I think they'll be around for a long time;and Peter Bardens is a really top musician who realises very fully the context in which he is working, and he'll take pains to make sure a record is programmed to get across to his audience - I think he's going to be a massive star. I think that all the electric groups, or any other artistes that we're signing, will be around in 5 years time, and are people who will build up an audience, keep developing, and produce better and better albums. I'm interested in the long term promotion of quality artistes, not people who are going to disappear after five minutes.

Getting back to my point about work and management, let me illustrate that by talking about two of our groups, Marsupilami and Stray. Marsupilami's first album sold only moderately well here but sales in Holland and Germany were very pleasing, because the group play far more gigs over there than they do here ....and where a group plays, it sells the records. I'm sure we'd have sold many more here if they'd been playing in England, but it's a management thing - at the moment they haven't got a manager, and if a group's not playing, it can't sell any records. Now the absolute opposite of that is Stray; their album is certainly the best selling of our rock releases, because they play 5 or 6 gigs a week.

I think the main criteria for signing up a rock group are whether they are musically interesting, visually good, and capable of development. Secondary criteria are good management, do they have internal problems and look like splitting up, are they well equipped, are they working. Occasionally, we've had to compromise, but in future we've decided we're not going to compromise - we can't afford to make too many mistakes. It's not a question of 'Can we afford to be so choosy?'... we can't afford not to be.

As it is, John spends an enormous amount of time bleary-eyed in clubs, spends the rest of his time keeping his ears and eyes open, listens to recommendations, and we also get about 30 tapes a week - but it's rare that any of them are really interesting....I'd say that 99% is total rubbish, but we listen to them all because we might just find something worthwhile. I mean, if the big companies want to rush out and sign everything in sight, let them get on with it; We'll go on until we find one we have confidence in".



Well, I don't know really. I can't say that I go overboard about the Wild Angels.... I'd go and see them if they appeared around here I suppose, but their records don't send me into paroxisms of orgasmic delight, and often don't even hold my attention. But what I do like about them is their consistency of style, their honesty, and their lack of affectation. In these stale days of 'progressive rock', where most groups are about as progressive as Tuf shoe design, it's good to find a bunch of, on the surface, ordinary old rockers, pimples and all, who aren't ruining themselves in pursuit of nebulous ideas they can't ever hope to grasp. They're just bashing away at the kind of stuff they've known and loved for over a decade, and if their techniques and abilities fail to match those of their idols, I think they'd be the first to admit it.

I'm not saying that the effect of their music is cutting through the plastic pretensions of arty-farty rock or anything like that, but I should imagine that their audience (which is getting younger and larger all the time) is glad of a change at least, from mind massages (or what have you) to primitive animal body music (or what have you), and the band is aware of how to entertain and of how to play rock'n'roll. I mean, an ace high standard of musical proficiency was never a pre-requisite for rock'n'roll; you've only got to listen to a few epic revived 45s to appreciate that.

Anyway, the Angels formed in the first place as 'a giggle' (that was in mid 1967), and more or less had to turn professional when things started to snowball. They've had their ups and downs, but seem to be the sole survivors of the dreaded rock'n'roll boom of 1968. (What? You don't remember it? Well, you may have missed it - it only lasted about 3 weeks, from the moment good old chubby Bill Haley, receding kiss curl still firmly plastered onto his gleaming forehead, set foot on English soil, to the day he left again. It was all over). Mal Gray is 24, comes from the South London rocker belt somewhere, and sings with the band: "The boom was cooked up by an agency and some of the musical press; they wanted a giggle and to make some money out of it too". Well anyway, the other rock'n'roll revival bands either went under or never even surfaced and left the Angels as the vanguard of the rockers (or something like that).

As for the rockers themselves, the Angels seem to split them down the middle (or so it would seem from my discussions with the specie); there are the hardcore purists who scoff and scorn at what they consider to be watered down copies of the original greats, and seal themselves up in Richie Valens photo-studded shrines playing Charlie Feathers deletions; then there are the ton-up boys and aging teds who love the band and all it stands for, and welcome their appearance locally as an excuse to drag out all their regalia... and believe me, wherever the Angels go you see people in drape suits, fat crepe, bootlace ties and all the rest of the period finery, not to mention Brylcreem by the fluid ton.... all the old teds, out to relive their adolescence as the band revives memories of cinema seat slashing expeditions to the Elephant & Castle Trocadero and cop intimidating on street corners. But the majority of people who go to see them are the same types of person who go to see any popular group.

I didn't think much of their first LP - I hear so many bloody LPs these days that anything remotely resembling mediocrity gets shoved into the rack very fast - but a lot of people did; it's one of B&C's best selling albums. "A lot of our audience is illiterate of any rock'n'roll" says Mal. "The music to them is all new, and we even get people writing to us asking if I wrote 'Summertime Blues', and if not, who did. We seem to get a lot of people interested in rock'n'roll, and our first LP was all good old standards. But what happened was, the record company told us we were going to do a live LP, and I said 'That's good'. Then they told us it was going to be done at the Revolution Club, and I said 'Goodnight'. Well, we fought them all the way because we didn't think it was good enough, but it got to No 4 in the mid price charts and No 31 in the Record Retailer, so who are we to argue? But blimey, it was done in 35 minutes flat on a 2 track machine - only cost 60 quid to make".

"D'you suppose B&C will make a profit from it then?" I taunted.

"You're joking....made thousands, that album. But wait till you hear the new one - we're really pleased with that one".

Well, I have heard it and yes, I agree that it's a million times better than the first, but I can't help from thinking that recordings are not their most suitable medium - they're certainly not the medium which shows them to their best advantage - and being an old rocker myself, I can't help comparing the songs with the originals, all of which I have. You see, the people who buy Wild Angels records, as Mal says, are usually people who never saw or listened to the greats of the rock'n'roll era. But ancient old me, why I was a juvenile delinquent in the first half of the sixties and used to rip around on a fat 1000cc Vincent, clad in studded leather and grease....coming in on the tail of that era, I saw Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Gene Vincent, Jerry Lee Lewis, etc, etc, and I collected all their records. In those days I was down at Beechwood youth club watching Dickie Demon & the Barron Knights, I was wasting my evenings in the Spanish Doll coffee bar listening to tales of bravado and sexual virtuosity, I was failing plenty of exams, and I was spending what little bread I made from weekend petrol pumping on having bits and pieces of my bike chromed (oh yes, I've been through every phase in the book, mate). So the Angels' LPs just make me smile - not in mockery but in memory.... what I was doing around the time I bought the original. But I like their choice of material - some old Ronnie Hawkins stuff, some Elvis, a Bobby Darin B-side, a Fats Domino one, and more.

Another thing I like about them is their publicity. Now every morning, bundles of purple prose extolling the virtues of nowhere groups fall through the letterbox, and we've learnt how to interpret and tone down the bombastic ravings which drench nearly every press handout. But when an LP sized package is delivered and you see 'SMASH OPEN WITH A SHOVEL' boldly lettered across it, you know it's from Waxie Maxie, their press officer, who not only sleeps, eats, drinks, walks, talks, and everything else, rock'n'roll, but he also turns out some of the most diverting and stylishly written press releases I know. Listen to this:"The ton-up ted audience - wearing drape suits with genuine horsehair interlining (such detail) - loved Mal Grey and his lusty larynx that emits big, dear range piping on all cylinders. The WAs put today's bearded, mangy-maned, ohm-burning artillery units - guitar clanking clods - in the shade when it comes to giving out with a thunderous rock'n'roll blast that'll rip at you like a tidal wave of steel balls hurled from a thousand catapults". Tremendous stuff, and what makes it even better is the fact that he means it. If you saw the recent Sunday Times article on Max, or if you read his works in Music Now, you'll know that he's a true rocker. And the Angels are glad to have him around.

They aren't so happy with what various other people have written about them - one respected (by me) writer "knows about as much on rock'n'roll as that light bulb does" Mal reckons, but there is more amusement than malice on his face as he sits there in the star's dressing room at Dunstable's California Ballroom (which looks more like The Alamo than a ballroom). The rest of the band is just ligging about - John Hawkins is fiddling around trying to get a picture on what looks like the original Marconiphone telly; Rod Cotter is just lazing about, calling me an old git now and then, but mainly

WILD ANGELS

Mal Gray/vocals


Bill Kingston/piano


Rod Cotter/bass


Bob O'Connor/drums


John Hawkins/guitar

just lazing around; Bob the drummer is chatting up a genuine rocker bird; and Bill Kingston speaks a few quiet words which hint at a very comprehensive knowledge of rock'n'roll records. Mal's clothes (the inevitable fashion note for groovers) include fluorescent sox with the colour boiled out of them, and Denson Hi-poynter shoes such as used to be advertised in the Disc a few hundred years ago. Where he gets them, god knows ....I've never seen any in Dolcis.

The conversation wheeled around to progressive groups, but Mal seemed neither to know nor to care about them. Had he heard 'Summertime Blues' by T Rex? "No and I don't want to; I've never heard them, never seen them, and I certainly wouldn't bother". I pestered him to voice an opinion on various groups, but he wasn't about to get involved in any mud slinging by getting too specific. "Far be it for me to knock them, but most are a load of crap.....not all of them, but most". Aha, here he goes. "99.999% are crap I'd say....Colosseum are a good band, but that's about it". About the groups bringing a drop of rock'n'roll into their flagging acts; "If they're doing it just for commercial reasons or to make fun, I don't like it, but if they're doing it because they like it, that's good".

"I'll tell you something about the Soft Machine ....at one gig they were playing 'By the light of the silvery moon' backwards - I went backstage and looked at their sheet music....and they admitted it to us -we asked them where they got their music and they told us they just took old numbers and played them backwards. But these progressive groups, they've got as far as they're ever going to go; they may get further musically but not acceptancewise. We did a gig with the Soft Machine at the Top Rank in Swansea and when they came on there were 2½ thousand people in there, but when they came off there were only 140....I counted them. That's how popular they are - it's just a hype...a vast hype".

Well, that's the progressives....what did he think about the way all the English rockers of the late 50s had softened up and gone croony, wispy or straight? "Well most of them never meant it seriously anyway - look at Tommy Steele....say rock'n'roll to him and he'd just laugh at you. He was probably in it seriously for about the first 6 weeks - the rest was just a laugh. Johnny Kidd was by far and away the best - and he had a good band....I've just bought a memorial album of his greatest hits, imported it from France".

What about Bert Weedon?

"Bert Weedon's an OK guy - I'll tell you a story about him. Our guitarist used to break strings, like one every night, which used to upset him - not being a very good guitarist anyway, it doesn't help matters. But we were in the dressing room at the Roundhouse with Bert Weedon, and he hadn't done a concert of that kind for about 10 years - he was done up immaculately, his stuff must've been worth 150 quid at least - and John went up to him and asked how often he changed his strings. He said 'Oh about every six months or so' and he taught John all these little tricks. He was a really nice bloke....and don't forget, he was the studio guitarist on most of the old English rock'n' roll records. He's better than most of today's guitarists too".

Well there you are - the Wild Angels, carrying on as though the fifties had never gone, working plenty and romping through a selection of rock classics from their repertoire of 80 odd. The gig scene has become good enough for them to be a bit choosy, and the idea is to work for two months and have 1 off to rehearse, record, and sort things like repertoire changes out. "We've been going for 2½ years now, and for the first two it was always going round saying 'lend us a nicker' - and now we're paying a few of those debts back". Pete

Jon Mark talks about Mark-Almond

BEGINNINGS

When they talked about my 'life of luxury' in the John Mayall programme, what they really meant was that the life I was living was one step up from being a bum. You see, when I started my musical career I was a folk club guitarist, doing gigs with a friend of mine called Alun Davies (now with Cat Stevens), and we stayed together right up until now, when we've parted to get on with our own ideas. We used to go off to the South of France, get ourselves a good job on the yachts, sing in the cafes and make plenty of money, lie in the sunshine, drink plenty of wine, go to the film festivals, and generally do nothing.

In those days I was playing with all sorts of people....for example Alexis Korner, who I'd known from the early days of blues here, and I did some gigs together. Davy Graham and I used to play in a Bayswater restaurant, we did some radio shows and generally messed around - we used to experiment with Indian tunings before the sitar had become popular. I hung around with Alex Campbell and the rest of the early sixties buskers....in fact I started playing way back in the skiffle era, when Donegan and the Vipers were in the charts, and then I progressed to folk music. There was a coffee bar in the Charing Cross Road where I used to play, and all the folkies used to go there - Gerry Lockran, Colin Wilkie when he was a weetabix rep in a suit, John Baldry, and so on, and so I got to know more and more people in folk, and ended up with some sort of reputation as a folk guitarist. I did a few things with Martin Carthy, odds and ends, here and there, and then I got offered a job as Marianne Faithfull's accompanist - I stayed with her for three years, during which time I backed Carolyn Hester on her concerts over here and did a few dates with Julie Felix. Spencer Davis wanted to start a group with me around that time - he had an incredible name for it, Mark's and Spencer's, but his and my musical directions didn't lie anywhere near the same path.

As regards my influences, I started off with commercial folk (Kingston Trio-ish things), graduated to Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie, and I suppose at the end of my folk career I'd changed to traditional ....unaccompanied street ballads and so on. I still believe that despite my various excursions into other elements of music, from an emotional point of view there is nothing like singing a song and getting the whole club audience joining in - so the whole place is ringing with natural folk harmonies, with everybody singing at the top of their voices. I really love traditional music.

SESSION WORK

I joined Marianne Faithfull at the time she had a hit with 'As tears go by'; she'd been auditioning a number of guitarists without success and somebody told her manager, Tony Calder, about me. She seemed very pleased with my work, and I was certainly very pleased to be earning the kind of money that was being offered, so it worked out alright. We did clubs, concerts, theatres, all sorts of places - just her singing, and me on guitar....I think the simplicity of it was where the success lay, but we got to the point where she'd made some mistakes in her career, and wanted to go into films and the stage anyway. So she went on her way, and I went into session work.

I've been on just about everybody's records from Dusty Springfield to the Stones, doing backing tracks, arranging, and so on.... pop, blues, jazz....and it was all good and valuable musical experience. It was very lucrative too - in fact since I started with Marianne, which was about 6 years ago, I've always earned very good money...and then with Mayall the wages were totally outrageous really. But because of this, and various other business ventures, I've been able to save a bit of money so that Johnny Almond and I, together with our American management, can afford to pay Mark-Almond in these early stages. But I'm paying myself something like a sixth of what Mayall paid me, which is a big drop in actual financial income....but the money is no longer a consideration because all the things I've done before have been

leading up to this.

JOINING JOHN MAYALL

I'd known John for years - I'd met him at receptions and things, and my wife and I used to go down to dinner with him and his wife, and vice versa - but he didn't understand my music and I didn't understand his .... we just respected each other as musicians. At that time, John was having a hard time on the road; he enjoyed playing the clubs, but he wasn't having too good a time as far as a living was concerned. Then I didn't see him for years, though I watched how he was getting on and read about him in the trade papers, until I got a telephone call from him out of the blue asking if I'd like to go down to his place at Fulham, have a blow, chat about old times, cup of coffee, and all that. So I went down there and found that Johnny Almond and Steve Thompson were already there. Well, we played a bit, just sort of messing around, and he suddenly asked me if I wanted to join his band. Naturally I was a bit shaken.... he explained all his ideas and did his best to persuade me, but there I was earning well over £100 a week in the studios and had all sorts of commitments. I asked if there was much work involved and he said "We've got 3 days off, then we finish a two week European tour and go to America for 4 months". Well, Christ... what do you do? As we discussed it further and he explained how he was after less volume and more music, I got more interested and decided that I'd accept the gig, despite having to sever several projects. For instance, I was involved in a band called Sweet Thursday (which was Alun Davies and me on guitars, Harvey Burns on drums and Brian Rogers on bass (now both with Georgie Fame), and Nicky Hopkins on piano), which was a very good group. We had an album out on the Tetragrammaton label in the States, but the label went broke before it could get off and then it never got released here. The reviews we got were incredibly good, and we had offers of tours and so on.... it was a sort of CSN&Y sound, but was done long before they'd got together. If they hadn't gone bust, I think Sweet Thursday would have become a gigantic band today - but everything hinged on the money from that label. So, though I was extremely proud of Sweet Thursday, I had to wind them up.... and that album will never be released here.

MAYALL DAYS

Mayall has a reputation of being a very hard man to work for, but that's not really true.... he's not a hard man, but his demands are hard - he demands that you play at your best and most creative all the time. He won't have any slacking or hiding in the background, and if he thought you were playing badly, he'll yell at you on stage. If you felt nervous or a little off colour one night and didn't feel like soloing, he'd stop the band and say 'Solo' and you were forced to the front. You always had to be at your best.

His apparent reputation as a hirer and firer of sidesmen has grown out of all proportion - he never fires them in the sense of firing them. He gets to the point when he realises he's exhausted the possibilities of the band, and they simultaneously conclude that they have exhausted the potential of their combination with Mayall. Like when you tour with him, you know that every single day is going to be working - you get up, get on the plane, book into a hotel, do the gig, go to bed, get up, onto a plane, and so on - and the work pressure together with Mayall's demands exhaust the band. And just at the time that John says he's thinking of examining the possibilities of a new band, the band is thinking that they've just about had enough for a while too. It becomes a sort of mutual, instinctive thing, and you need time to reconsider your position and music, or else you'd fall into cliches and routine - and Mayall won't have that.

I think he's always had the knack of picking guys when they're at the most formative stage of their musical expression, and that's when he's grabbed them.... a year or so before the flowering of their talent. He may have exploited them while they were with him but he's been the catalyst which eventually enabled them to get it together for when they left the band to pursue their own careers - they finally know about being on the road, how the business works, how John is completely anti super-star, how there's no bullshit involved, how you just get on the stage and play your music. Total honesty is what you learn from him; "You're here to play the blues".... I've heard John say that time and time again; people have paniced, gear has broken down, promoters want dramatic curtain opening intros, and John just says "we're here to play the blues and that's what we're going to do". But whoever he picks, he gives them the experience to get on with their own music when they leave - I mean, there's no way Keef Hartley could have been a bandleader till he learnt everything from Mayall. You could say that Mayall is a breaking ground for talent - he gives you the courage to do for yourself what you always wanted to do, and to hell with anyone who stands in your way. With Johnny Almond and me it's had exactly that effect - Johnny was always a sidesman, a good flute and sax player, but John brought him out as a soloist with an identity, and gave him the confidence.... now he knows just what he wants to do, and that's the essence. And me too; I had all sorts of ideas of what I wanted to do but didn't have the courage. Now I know what I want, and I'm not budging whether it makes money or not - I'm here to play the music I want to play and that's all.... and I've got the courage to push it through and I'm not going to sell out, sell up, sell down or anything.

THE REST OF THE TURNING POINT BAND

Alex Dmochowski is at present involved with a company called Africadabra, but Alex, bless his heart, much as I love him, is the most together-untogether person I have ever met. He's full of brilliant ideas and tremendous enthusiasm, but when it comes to organising himself he has some trouble. When he does get a band together it'll be quite sensational - on the lines of Santana I should imagine, based on percussion. Steve Thompson developed some strange blisters under the skin on his fingers which made it impossible for him to play, and he had to take a two or three month break to let them heal up. He went to Heavy Jelly, but I think he's studying music at the moment.

MARK-ALMOND

It's wrong to say that Mark-Almond's main influences are folk and blues. I've been studying in the Miles Davis and Tony Williams fields, and I think I bring a compatibility between folk and jazz, both of which I dig playing. But really I'm more of a French chanson and jazz influence than a folk thing, which only comes out in my fingerstyle guitar technique and my approach to the instrument. Johnny Almond is a jazz influence. Roger Sutton is a rock/soul/raga/Indian influence.... he was bass player in Jody Grind, Heavy Jelly and all sorts. Tommy Eyre brings a jazz-classical influence - he had very good training and can sight-read Bartok and Ligeti pieces, and he can write for strings, orchestras, everything. He can play piano, guitar, flute, bass, cello, all sorts of things - he's had a tremendous background.... was even in Joe Cocker's Grease Band. He'll normally be on keyboards, but during the course of a set, he'll switch from piano to electric piano to organ, and do at least a couple of guitar numbers, and maybe a flute number. Roger will be mainly on bass, but will play a bit of cello, and Johnny will play vibes, the four saxophones and the three flutes. So, because of all the instruments, there's a lot to get together, and during the course of one number there may be several instrument changes. It gets very complicated, but different instruments are used as colours to change the feel and mood of a piece.

The people in the band came together in a strange way - Johnny and I knew what we wanted, but hadn't found the others. Then one day Roger Sutton came down for a drink - we'd met him in Lyons where Jody Grind was supporting Mayall - and he just happened to bring along a pianist friend called Tommy Eyre, who lived down the hall from him. We started talking about what we were all doing and everything just fell into place like a perfect jigsaw. The reason we have no drummer is nothing to do with the style of our numbers or anything, but we just couldn't find one who would compliment the band or fit in.

We're having a PA built for America, but we're thinking about using a Swedish one for all European work. The only amps we use are the built in amp on the electric piano and Roger's bass amp, but their levels are turned down. We use a total of 15 microphones for vocals and instruments, and everything is mixed through a mixing unit - every instrument is balanced individually using headphones, and then all that has to be done is increase or decrease the master volume control on the console depending on the size of the hall. What we're looking for is maximum balance and minimum distortion, so everyone in the audience can hear everything.... like why should the audience be unable to hear properly if they've paid to see you? It's only a question of time, trouble and a bit of expense - or else you destroy the whole point of playing.

RECORDS

As far as records go, we're aiming at a January release in England and a little later in the States. Choosing the company was very difficult - we just about went through everybody and ended up signing with Harvest, which is a genuine attempt in my opinion to try to put out good product which isn't immediately commercially viable as such.... they are trying. As well as that, they're prepared to go along with our ideas on advertising, sleeves and so on; they've offered us the least bullshit, they've just accepted our honesty and we'll accept theirs. We were approached by other companies who promised to do big things, but wouldn't give us the advances or percentages we wanted - I asked for a particular sum, which after all is only an advance against royalties, and Harvest, after negotiation, came to terms with us. The basis of negotiation was what we thought was a fair deal all round, and we looked for the one which would give us the most co-operation as far as music is concerned. At the moment, we're still negotiating with several labels for America, and until the right one comes along, I'm not bothered.... we'll just wait until we find the one with the least bullshit and the most hard work and co-operation.

Jon Mark talking to John.

MORE BUDGET ALBUMS

More goodies, and the usual baddies, to recommend or otherwise, in our effort to make you spend your bread wisely (and to be read in conjunction with my first article on budget albums a while back). Inevitably, Track must take the cake, biscuit or other edible trophy for their eight Track Ton albums. Those of us lucky enough to see the Who on their recent tour will no doubt be thinking of picking up some of their earlier material, and there's quite a bit here with the reissue of 'A Quick One', the title track of which has been described as "Tommy's parents" by Pete Townshend, being what he termed a mini-opera. The high spots on this for me are the fabulous rock track 'Run Run Run' and John Entwhistle's 'Boris the Spider', and the whole album is one of the most under-rated things the Who ever did. Definitely recommended - as is 'The Who Sell Out', featuring Big L jingles, 'I can see for miles' and Speedy Keen's debut as a composer (see ZZ15) 'Armenia City in the sky'.

Then there's the first two Hendrix albums for a quid each (and I know these were scheduled before his demise, so let all disrespectful stories cease herewith). Maybe in all these cases, you'll be renewing worn out favourites (and if they are like mine you'll need to). Also from Track, the Arthur Brown album and the first Murray Roman (with the amazing Baja Marimba band story and enough 4 letter words to sink a bucketful of three toed sloths), a compilation album featuring various intact and extinct bands, and a John Entwhistle solo called 'The Ox'. Track never cease to amaze me with their marketing techniques, like the Hendrix single for six bob, and I can only urge you to support them now and wait for the release of 'Tommy' and 'Electric Ladyland' at £2 each.... a very nice thought, and probably quite likely within the next year. Whilst on the subject, a little monster told me that there will be a Flyback series from Track's newly acquired stablemate, featuring at the same amazing low price, albums by Joe Cocker, The Move, T Rex and Procol Harum. But more of these when they appear.

Now to Polydor. Track have seemingly dropped out of the 99 series but there's still some great stuff out, headed by what is in my opinion the Captain's greatest feat (so far), the 'Safe as milk' LP, unhappily re-titled 'Drop Out Boogie'. A very sad move (destroying Beefheart's title concept - see ZZ8), but an ace record and for the first time in England, in the necessary stereo. Another Buddah beauty is 'Incense & Oldies', a great compilation of the Shangri-las, the Dixie Cups, the Tradewinds (first psychedelic song?), Tommy James (don't sneer, listen), the Ad Libs, and the Sopwith Camel... also a beautiful base colour for the sleeve, and a bargain. More obvious Buddah product is the Lemon Pipers with several nice tracks.

Then there's 'Fresh Cream' retitled 'Full Cream', which you should have, and a very nice Nina Simone thing. Finally a James Brown, which is very fine if that's your music, and a good Atlantic sampler with 'Comin Home' by the Bramletts and Clapton, 'Broken Arrow' by the Springfield, and bits by Yes, the Allman Brothers, Dr John and the vastly improved MC5. Another bunch of good value material, which has seemingly spurred some of the other companies into re-issuing some fairly recent stuff at an advantageous price.

Heading the list is the beautiful series of 6 Sun/Phillips International LPs released by Phillips. Six masterpieces, crammed with the best, the very best in rock'n'roll. Jerry Lee, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison, Charlie Rich, all with individual albums, plus a sampler with extra stuff like 'Mona Lisa' by Carl Mann. The Jerry Lee is an absolute must, and the Johnny Cash close behind. If you think that those lame TV shows are what Cash is all about, forget it, and listen to him with the Tennessee Two - totally different and much better to my aged ears. Also, the records bear the original Sun label. Need I say more?

Sunset have also removed the plug from their bathful of golden oldies, and there are several gems worth capturing, including the first Eddie Cochran budget album, a splendid Jan & Dean epic including good stereo versions of 'Ride the Wild Surf' and 'Surf City', Jackie de Shannon with the right version of 'What the world needs now is love', a re-issue of 'Gorilla' with 'The intro and the outro', and faintly interesting items from P J Proby and Johnny Rivers (entering the Whiskey a go-go for the millionth time). Promising, as my school reports used to say, but the rumours for the next lot including Ricky Nelson's greatest hits and the first Canned Heat album look better.

On to Decca, whos World Of ... series meanders on. I believe that we're up to Volume 4 of the Bachelors, but a small amount of relevant material is still coming, so I suppose we can't complain. Included in the latest lot are albums made up of old hits and misses by Cat Stevens, Them and the Zombies, the latter just about impossible to get hold of for some reason. The Stevens one is a masterpiece to my mind, and I admit that I prefer those old backings he's always talking about, to the less confident Island stuff. I'm sure there is no need to emphasise that Them and the Zombies are important bands, and that an understanding of their work is vital to a knowledge of English rock. Perhaps next we may get an album of the Moody Blues when Denny Laine was with them, for me their best days. 'World of Hits Vol 3' is OK, with 'Caroline' by the Fortunes, which ought to remind you of an old radio station somewhere, but Volume 4 is full of Brotherhoods of Men and other tripe. Oh yes, and there's a fair enough Alan Price in this series too.

Regal Starline continue to put out material that generally just sounds dated. There's an old Isley Brothers greatest hits thing with some reasonable soul stuff, but with the most repulsive sleeve it has been my misfortune to see for many a day. I also discovered an old Beach Boys effort on MFP, including 'Louie Louie' and 'Summertime Blues', which I quite like.

Valiant are mostly in the same category as Regal, I'm afraid, but I quite enjoyed a Peter Paul & Mary nostalgia thing with 'Puff the magic ferret'. The Mugwumps album is regrettably poor and is an obvious before-they-got-it-together thing. As you no doubt know, the Mugwumps were Cass and Denny of the Mamas & Papas, Zal of the Spoonful and Jim of James Hendrix, but listening to this takes the romanticism out of Creeque Alley a bit. Valiant could do worse than re-issue old Everly albums - a lot of good stuff there.

A cautionary word; Look carefully through the budget racks in your local store, because often there is little or no advertising attached to this type of record. Nevertheless, the idea seems to be catching on more and more and this can only be a good thing. Keep budgeting.

John

A groovy movie (ugh!)

He thought it was the film of the Monterey Jazz Festival. I thought it was the film of the Monterey Pop Festival. Anyway, we went and were both wrong. We headed hopefully for Rayners Lane, though after careful research in the A to Z we'd concluded that the place was just off square C2 on page 23 and probably didn't exist at all. Wrong again.

Rayners Lane is one of the twilight zones of London, but at this Saurday late show it became a focal point for aging teds, over-grown rockers, some hairies and some straights. 'Gather No Moss' was the common denominator.

The whole thing had a saturday-morningattheflix feel about it. For a kick off, the audience were united against the management when they shoved us all in the circle, and an apologetic little man in a dinner suit and brylcreem was hissed and heckled, and greeted with cries of "get your knickers off" as he announced the evening's programme, and with some relief, that tonight's would be the final late show at the cinema.

After a sadistic little cartoon starring Calamity Jane, we were treated to what must qualify for my kick-up-the-buttocks award for the world's worst film. The name escapes me, but it was one of those self-conscious Hollywood realism dramas of the late 50s.... full of silences and eye-twitching inner conflict, and a strange lady called Scarlett O'Gawd, I shouldn't wonder, with boobs like wigwams, and an incredible dockside shoot-up (what else?) at the end.

Everyone in the audience seemed a bit cheesed off, so there were a lot of off-stage happenings, cracklings, firework throwings, and a lady behind me giving a running commentary on her misfortunes: "Oh hells bells where's my bag. I've lost one of my shoes. Ere, what you done with me .... I know I had two when I came out" and so on.

But of course, all this was just a fiendish plot to get us into a receptive mood for the Big Picture. 'Gather No Moss' got off to an inauspicious start with Jan & Dean roaring around LA on 50cc Hondas, singing about the goodies in store. Nauseating frames of Gerry & the fatboy Pacemakers' embarassing buffoonery on a train, Lesley Gore twinkling and the Supremes wriggling their bottoms.

The credits dispensed with, we were led into a fairly large cinema type auditorium with a big stage, where the concert took place. Lots of cameras onstage, and the general atmosphere suggested it could have originally been made as a TV 'spectacular'. Dunno. Anyway, I should think it was one of the first pop events to be filmed live, and things like 'Woodstock'

prove how much we have to be grateful for.

Considering all, it's amazing how much power the film managed to generate, although a sympathetic audience did help, of course. Right from the start there was audience participation up our end.... claps and cheers for each performer, and the odd burst of singing too.

Predictably wrapped up as The Man who Started It Way Back In Nineteen Umpty Thrive, Chuck Berry came on first, singing 'Maybelline'. He roamed about the stage, rolling his eyes wickedly, and smirking over his own lyrics. Both sets of audiences lapped it up and felt let down when he was suddenly cut out (happily to appear twice later), especially since Gerry & the PMs followed him, including in their weedy act, ironically, a Berry song, barely recognisable. One wonders why we got so very steamed up about the Liverpool sound if Gerry and his bleeting ilk were the main exponents of it. They sounded so thin, bored and boring. Still, perhumps it was just the gig, and though lots of our audience gave them the bird, they joyfully sang along with 'I like it' and 'How do you do it'. Anyway, they weren't a patch on Berry. Incidentally, it's interesting to see that almost every group included Berry material in their act. (The film was made in 1964, or possibly late 1963).

After Gerry, clutching his guitar up under his chin, and his leering Pace-Makers in their shiny suits with short trousers and little jackets, and fey gestures to raise an extra scream from the teenaged audience, came a succession of British and American entertainers.

Billy J Kramer, shown for the first time in the history of the world in profile, which rather exploded the pretty boy myth, did his stuff. Lesley Gore, suspender buttons visible through her skirt, sang 'It's my party', and one of its numerous sequels, which seem donkeys years ago now. Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson & the Miracles minced around the stage and sang in a fashion not notably different from the way they do now, except there was none of this 'orrible sock-it-to-me-social-conscience bit. Altogether more healthy. Diana Ross and the also-ran Supremes did a great version of 'Where did our love go' and wriggled. Jan and Dean, acting as comperes, fooled around a bit and sang surfing hymns, and while all this was going on, a troupe of early go-go dancers would occasionally thrust themselves on stage too.

During this part of the film, the appeal for me lay in the atmosphere and memories it evoked, as little of the music is valid today. But it was great to get back to the heady days of the early 60s when I was a walking pop encyclopaedia and could have told you how many hairs Eric Burdon had on his chest, or the height weight and inside leg measurement of each of the Beatles.

Too few shots of the audience, I'm afraid. But when we did see them it was almost frightening to see how they were reacting. If we had only just been able to respond like that to something that stirred us, what on earth could kids have done before when a polite clap at the end of a song was all they could do to express themselves. O I know their frenetic shouts and wavings, awesomely loud and moving, were far more than appreciation of the music, and were just early signs of a revolution in behaviour. Going to a pop show like that was a fix, a relief, anything you wanted it to be, especially if you could truly identify with the music, as with the Stones, I spose...but enough of this.

Gradually building up to the stars of the film! The Beach Boys (fatboys all) in striped shirts, except the pretty boy drummer who was Ringo MkII, and a remarkably hairy American group called The Barbarians, who actually wore beads, and many others, did short sets. They all seemed to be enjoying it too, which was nice.

James Brown was quite incredible. Looking a bit like Diana Ross in drag, he did a long rich set which was an absolute gas. His famous flames backing him musically and metaphorically, acting as minor characters in a fantastic drama he presented, and being stooges for his antics. What a showman! He appeared in his little waistcoat, tapered trousers (which he kept hitching up round his fat little bum), harshened beautiful face, and wrapping everything up in his shrieking deep voice. Firstly he sang two or three unidentifiable black anthems, and then the pantomime began.

Feigning exhaustion, he collapsed round his mike. An anxious looking flame, in a cloak, would arrive and try to hustle the poor darling off the stage, but like a punch drunk boxer, great trouper that he is, James stumbled back to the centre of the stage - the only place he is at home. Wiping the sweat off his face, he starts to sing again hoarsely and humourlessly. (Sorry if my tenses bit the dust just then, but have compassion - it was all too much). Again he nearly flakes out, again resists attempts to get him off stage, and finally ends his act in a frenzy of arm-waving, funny walking and gesticulation. The angle of the camera heightened the comic aspect of his piece by giving him a huge head and tiny shiny feet...but it wasn't really that funny. After a well calculated pause, he returned for an encore, eying his audience with unspeakable contempt and congratulating himself, no doubt, for achieving yet another huge con.

And then, the Stones. I must admit I'm partisan. For me the Stones will always be the greatest rock group and the ugly/angel face of Mick Jagger, raddled though it may be now, will always be beautiful. O how achingly young they seemed, how simple and yet how wicked. Like Brown, Jagger was perfectly aware of his power, but he brought the audience into the scene and gave them something to take away. O great ones. A lot comes down to the Stones. They didn't need to dictate and associate themselves with trends. People just recognised an affinity with them and went with it. The difference between them and most other groups of the time was staggering; the others disappeared without trace because they flattened themselves against society or stood next to it. But the Stones were a mountain on top of society and started a crushing machine against people who might not otherwise have noticed anything.

Mick leapt around, shook his maraccas, hunched his shoulders and clapped his hands, smiled and grimaced, spat out the lyrics of rock songs (back to Berry) and things like 'The last time'. He knew where he was. The inscrutable Bill Wyman in that old aloof black pose; poor Brian looking half dead already with great shadows cut into his child's face; Keith shadowing Mick, and Charlie banging away behind it all. O yes, the Stones were definitely the film, because most of the film was Then while the Stones were Then. Technically they gave an exciting and groovy performance even if their material was, and always has been, unambitious.

At the end, the entire cast of the film, including the dancers who had certainly popped up at some unlikely places, joined on stage for a big send-off and yet, as a whole, seemed very much apart from the kids, still yelling their disatisfaction out there in the stalls.

Well, there endeth the teddyboys' picnic, rockers' convention and general whoopee. I enjoyed it terrifically and wish to goodness that the film could have been put on general release, even as a B picture. O...one sad note; as we left the cinema, the police were in force in the foyer and outside. Won't they ever learn?

Susan Hill

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