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Three years ago, when Arsenal were an interesting football team, and I had the time, I used to go to see them at Highbury. An old acquaintance from University used to meet me there and he was often accompanied by this big tall geezer who didn't say much but who looked fairly familiar. Probably someone else from University I thought. After about two years of nodding I eventually asked him what he did for a living. 'I'm a musician,' he replied. 'Oh yeah, what sort exactly,' I reposted. 'I'm in a group called The Pink Floyd' he said, in much the same way that you might tell someone that you worked for J Walter Thompson. It was Roger Waters. Eventually I managed to screw up sufficient effrontery to ask for a few hours of his time to answer some questions. The only problem was that he had told Michael Wale in his book, 'Voxpop', that he couldn't stand people who asked where the group got their name from, and that seemed to me to be exactly the sort of question that I would want to ask, plus a few other not altogether trivial matters that hopefully he could clear up. We finally agreed to meet at his house, but when we arrived we were directed to a Mr Mason's residence about 50p's worth of taxi away. In conversation with Roger Waters (RW) and Nick Mason (NM) the following was gleaned.

ZZ: Where did you get your name from?
RW & NM (groans): Oh no.....you can make up something.

The great ZigZag competition—in less than 150 words provide the most improbable story behind the Floyd's name which mentions famous figures, drugs, spans the Atlantic, and you could win yourself the album of your choice. Entries by the end of July.

I Our Heroes Recall The Beginning

In what is quite possibly the best piece of rock music journalism that I have ever read, Pete chronicled the early days of The Pink Floyd in ZZ 25. The story was told from the point of view of Peter Jenner, a half of Blackhill Enterprises who discovered The Floyd and managed them for a few years. In this bit of the conversation we verify that story, and examine the parallel development of our band with those happening in America at the same time.

ZZ: Was the story that we had in ZZ 25 about the meeting with Peter Jenner the way you saw it?

RW: Yes as far as I can remember. He must have come to a gig. Maybe it was one of those funny things at the Marquee. But he and Andrew King approached us and said, 'You lads could be bigger than the Beatles and we sort of looked at him and replied in a dubious tone, 'Yes, well, we'll see you when we get back from our hols,' because we were all shooting off for some sun on the continent.

ZZ: You were all students at Regent Street Poly, right?

RW: No, just me and Nick. Rick had started at the Poly at the same year but after about a year he got a heavy elbow.

ZZ: You had a group called the Abdabs at college during this time.

RW: We had one before that called Sigma 6.

NM: That's right. Manager Ken Chapman. I've still got a printed card somewhere which says Sigma 6 available for clubs and parties or something.

RW: We used to learn this bloke Ken Chapman's songs.....what did he study at the Poly.....maybe he'd left by then. Well he knew Gerry Bron, and we used to learn his songs and then play them for Gerry Bron.....

NM:and hope to be discovered at the same time.

RW: They were fantastic songs. [Sings] 'Have you seen a morning rose' to the tune of a Tchaikovsky prelude or something, it was all ripped off from Tchaikovsky.

NM: There was another one, the 'Up-tempo' one, what was that? Oh Christ the memory has seized up. But that article you had was very good.

RW: We like to think that we would have made it anyway, later on maybe. We definitely don't believe in the myth of managers making bands.

ZZ: Were you influenced by American bands, apart from the R'n B stuff. For example, 'Interstellar Overdrive' seems to me to have a very Velvet Underground feel to it?

NM: We never heard much of that.

RW: That was nicked from Love wasn't it? It was a cross between Steptoe and Son and that Love track on their first album which I can't remember.

NM: I'd never heard any of those bands. Someone in the band had your original R'n B album and that was Authentic R'n B Volumes I to III, lots of Bo Diddley, but we never heard any of the other American stuff.

NM: It was a complete amazement to us when we did hear them in the States.

RW: We heard the names, that's all.

NM: There was such a confusion. People would come over and talk about those far out West Coast bands like Jefferson Airplane and Sopwith Camel, a whole string of names, half of which were bubble gum groups.

RW: And the other half were country blues bands.

ZZ: But if you were listening to Love, they were pretty unknown at that time.

NM: We weren't listening to Love, Peter Jenner was. We were listening to Cream and The Who, Hendrix, that sort of stuff. That was what turned me onto being in a band again.

ZZ: Was it true, as Jenner was quoted as saying at the time, that he got you to drop the R'n B stuff?

RW: No, that's absolute rubbish—complete crap. He had little influence over what we played at all.

NM: Nick Jones wrote that in the first review that we got in Melody Maker. It was a lie.

RW: The idea that Peter Jenner steered us away from 'Roadrunner' into new realms of psychedelia is crap.

NM: And we've got a great battery of solicitors to prove it.

ZZ: What did steer you away?

RW: I dunno, I suppose we just got bored with it.

NM: Syd wrote more songs. That was one reason.

RW: That's true. As Syd wrote more songs, we dropped others from the repertoire. But we went on doing 'Roadrunner' and 'Gimme A Break' and all that stuff for years.

NM: But particularly when Bob Close was in the band. When he left, that was another reason to get rid of old material.

RW: Because we couldn't play it any longer.

II The Underground

ZZ: What was UFO like for you. Was it as magical as legend now has it?

NM: It's got rosier with age, but there is a germ of truth in it, because for a brief moment it looked as though there might actually be some combining of activities. People would go down to this place, and a number of people would do a number of things, rather than simply one band performing. There would be some mad actors, a couple of light shows, perhaps the recitation of some poetry or verse, and a lot of wandering about and a lot of cheerful chatter going on.

RW: Mind you there were still freaks standing at the side of the stage screaming out that we'd sold out.

NM: Actually Roger, that was usually the other band. One night we played with a band called The Brothers Grimm and that night at least, it was either the band or their lady friends. I remember that well—because it hit hard.

ZZ: What about that other legend, The Great Technicolour Dream?

NM: Oh that was a joke.

NM: That was the night we did East Deerham as well.

RW: I'll never forget that night. We did a double header that night. First of all we played to a roomful of about 500 gypsies, hurling abuse and fighting, and then we did Ally Pally.

NM: We certainly weren't legendary there. Arthur Brown was the one. That was his great launching.

RW: There was so much dope and acid around in those days that I don't think anyone can remember anything about anything.

III The Trials Of Being A Hit Parade Group

Like many bands of that era, the marketing demands that The Floyd's music made on their record company were never really appreciated. Their music was treated in the same fashion that the company had hitherto employed for everyone else from Frank Sinatra to The Beatles. Nowhere was this fundamental ignorance of what 'progressive' music required, more evident than in the pressure to have successful singles, and related problems such as Juke Box Jury.

ZZ: What's the story behind Arnold Layne?

RW: Both my mother and Syd's mother had students as lodgers, because there was a girls' college up the road. So there was constantly great lines of bras and knickers on our washing lines, and Arnold, or whoever he was, had bits and pieces off our washing lines. They never caught him. He stopped doing it

after a bit—when things got too hot for him. Maybe he's moved to Cherry Lynton or Newnham possibly.

NM: Maybe he decided to give up and get into bank raids or something.

ZZ: What did you think of Pete Murray saying on Juke Box Jury that you were just a cult?

RW: Now he didn't say that. This is where the memory doesn't play tricks, because it will always remain crystal clear. [Menacingly] He said we were a con. He thought it was just contrived rubbish to meet some kind of unhealthy demand.

NM: We thought what we think now.

ZZ: Which is what?

RW: Well.....the man's an idiot. A fifth rate idiot, and always has been.

ZZ: I remember David Jacobs or maybe it was Pete Murray saying, about Little Stevie Wonder, that it was a disgrace the way that the record company was exploiting his blindness as a gimmick, and another time when he said in the tones of a magistrate, 'I understand that there is a lot of this psychedelic stuff in America, but I very much hope that it doesn't catch on here.'

NM: That's fantastic. That programme obviously had a great impact on people.

The nice thing is that we can all remember it after all these years, and see that they've all been made to look very stupid

RW: But both our singles were so bloody innocuous, there was nothing difficult about either of them.

NM: But people still say that. You know, 'I have to listen very carefully, and I can just about understand the music.'

ZZ: You got hassled by the BBC a couple of times didn't you?

RW: We had to change all the lyrics in one song because it was about rolling joints. It was called 'Let's Roll Another One' and we had to change the title to 'Candy In A Currant Bun' and it had lines in it like.....

NOTES TOWARDS THE ILLUMINATION OF THE FLOYD



NM: A good promoter is great to work with, and he'll get a much better show.

RW: I'd like to think that they all worked, obviously, so I wouldn't like to try and

RW: We haven't done many tracks that had

There are definite things in it like trian-

NM: Yes sweetheart. Did you realise where you got that information from. From me.

thing that didn't come out in your Jenn article, to expand the group, get in two

ARCHITECTURAL ABDABS



met somewhere or other. One of them played the banjo and the other played the saxophone. We weren't into that at all, and it was obvious that the crunch had finally come. One evening we went to UFO to do a gig and Syd didn't turn up so we did it on our own and it was great. We went down well, and we enjoyed playing together, it was really nice.

NM: That's fantastic, because I don't think that's true.

RW: Don't you, didn't you think it was good?

NM: I think you're imagining a situation that never happened. Syd arrived, but his arms hung by his side, with the occasional strumming. That was the night of doing....

RW: Saturday Club.

NM: Right, which was the breakdown, but that wasn't the end of it all. That evening was something referred to four months later.

RW: Anyway, and Nick's almost certainly right, because my memory's a bit dodgy. It was more or less that we did a gig without Syd. He may have been on the stage but we really did it without him, he just stood there with it hanging round his neck, which was something he was prone to do, and after that we realised that we could manage.

NM: But we didn't do anything about it for some months. We had a long think at Christmas.

RW: So it must have been over that Christmas that we got in touch with Dave and said, 'Whoaaa Dave, wink wink!'

NM: So we were teaching Dave the numbers with the idea that we were going to be a five piece. But Syd came in with some new material. The song went 'Have You Got It Yet' and he kept changing it so that no one could learn it.

RW: It was a real act of mad genius. The interesting thing about it was that I didn't suss it out at all. I stood there for about an hour while he was singing 'Have you got it yet' trying to explain that he was changing it all the time so I couldn't follow it. He'd sing, 'Have you got it yet' and I'd sing 'No, no'. Terrific.

ZZ: Were you brought down by Blackhill's support of Syd?

RW: I just thought that they were wrong. We had a big and final meeting at Lad-

broke Road one day, which came down to me and Syd sitting in a room talking together, and I'd worked out what I thought was the only way that we could carry on together, which was for him to be still a member of the group, still earn his fair share of the money, but Syd not come to gigs at all, become a sort of Brian Wilson figure if you like, write songs and come to recording sessions and by the end of the afternoon I thought that I'd convinced him that it was a good idea and he'd agreed, but it didn't really mean very much because he was likely to change his mind about anything totally, in an hour. He then went home, and I went to see Peter and Andrew and said that this was the end—if this didn't work then we were off, and I asked them to leave it alone for a bit, for all kinds of reasons, the main one being that they didn't see things the same way that I saw it. But they went round to see him and laid various numbers on him, so that was it. We never saw them again except at meetings to dissolve the partnership. We had to sort out who owned what, but that was the end, that day. They were managing Syd for a bit, and Peter Jenner spent about a year trying to make an album, and they did about four tracks all of which were an elbow except for one, and Peter finally gave up, and Malcolm Jones who was the first label manager of Harvest, said that they weren't going to put any more money in and then Syd came and saw Dave and asked him to help, and then Peter and Andrew saw EMI and said that the boys were going to help, give us another chance. So EMI said alright and gave us two days, but we had a gig on the second day so we had three sessions, one afternoon and two evenings, and we went in and recorded seven tracks in three sessions. They were fantastic songs.

VIII The Pitfalls Of Success

Whenever a band become famous, literally hundreds of people approach them with schemes to harness their music to some other activity. Whether or not it's

because the aspirants genuinely believe that their particular music is important or relevant, or simply because they want to cash in on their success, I wouldn't like to say, but maybe the Floyd's experience will illuminate the problem. The four episodes were (i) a ballet—their participation in which was plastered all over The Melody Maker. (ii) A cartoon series called 'Rollo' done by Alan Aldridge. (iii) Writing the music for Zabriskie Point, which music was chopped by the director and that of The Grateful Dead substituted, and finally, (iv) the movie 'Pink Floyd At Pompeii', which the Rank Organisation got banned from showing at The Rainbow last year, amid some very suspicious and devious circumstances.

ZZ: What happened to the ballet? It was based on Proust wasn't it?

RW: It never happened. First of all it was Proust, then it was Aladdin, then it was something else. We had this great lunch one day, me, Nick and Steve [their manager]. We went to have lunch with Nureyev, Roman Polanski, Roland Petit, some film producer or other. What a laugh. It was to talk about the projected idea for us doing the music, and Roland choreographing it, and Rudy being the star, and Roman Polanski directing the film, and making this fantastic ballet film. It was all a complete joke because nobody had any idea what they wanted to do.

ZZ: Didn't you smell a rat?

RW: I smelt a few poofs. Nobody had any idea—it was incredible.

ZZ: But you said at the time that you'd just bought the entire works of Proust to study them.

RW: I did.

NM: But nobody read anything. David did worst, he only read the first eighteen pages.

RW: I read the second volume of Swann's Way, and when I got to the end of it I thought, 'Oh what, I'm not reading any more, I can't handle it.' It just went too slowly for me.

NM: It just went on for two years, this idea of doing a ballet, with no one coming up with any ideas, us not setting aside any time because there was nothing specific, until in a desperate moment, Roland devised a ballet to some existing music, which I think was a good idea. It's looked upon a bit sourly now.

RW: We all sat around this table until someone thumped the table and said, 'What's the idea then?' and everyone just sat there drinking this wine and getting more and more drunk, with more and more poverty going on around the table, until somebody suggested Frankenstein and Nureyev started getting a bit worried didn't he? They talked about Frankenstein for a bit—I was just sitting there enjoying the meat and the vibes, saying nothing, keeping well schtuck.

NM: Yes, with Roland's hand upon your knee.

RW: And when Polanski was drunk enough he started to suggest that we make the blue movie to end all blue movies, and then it all petered out into cognac and coffee and then we jumped into our cars and split. God knows what happened after we left Nick.

ZZ: And Rollo?

RW: They wouldn't pay for it. We stuck some old stuff on a pilot that they made but when they figured out the way that they were going to animate it they realised that the cost would be very high; now the only people with the money to back something like that is the Americans. But the Americans can sell Johnny Wonder going at ten frames a second or something, real rubbish, and people will sit and watch it and the sponsors will

buy it, so why should they pay for Rollo, because they can sell their cornflakes with Johnny Wonder. They don't give a shit about the quality of the thing. NM: It made us aware of what crap there is—what we'll accept as cartoons now. Compared to Felix the Cat, or Mickey Mouse even, it's all such crap.

RW: The same bit of background going by, terrible. Alan Aldridge did most of the initial work and a team of Dutch animators did the work on the pilot, which was very beautiful.

NM: The colouring was excellent and the animations were very complicated, with a lot of perspective in it.

RW: It was a great story; the basic idea was that this boy Rollo is lying in bed and he starts to dream (or maybe it really happens), and suddenly his bed wakes up and these two eyes pop out of the bedpost and start looking around, and the legs grow and the bed bounces Rollo round, who wakes up. And then the bed leaps out of the house and goes out down the street, all in beautiful movements, and the bed leaps into the sky, and goes flying off into the sky. And when he gets up there the moon is there and the moon is smoking a big cigar, which turns out to be an optical illusion—it's really a space ship. And then a little plane, like a bird comes out of this space ship and scoops the bed up with its mouth, and Rollo is taken by a robot dog in the space ship to Professor Creator, who owns and runs this space ship, who turns out to be a collector of animals for an intergalactic zoo. The series was about their adventures going on these journeys to collect the rare animals. And one of the preliminary examples was about these giants who lived underground in a complex series of tunnels and corridors; one of the weird things about this planet was that gravity was different for them than it was for Professor Creator and Rollo. They got into the planet using this machine called the Mole which bored through, and in this chase scene, where the giants are trying to get them, the giants are all running along the floor and the others are running along the wall. And things like that looked fantastic. Finally they get into the borer and they

come out to the surface of the planet, and as they come out it starts going down like a balloon. Then the ship goes into orbit around the planet, and the giants are crawling across the surface, taking great swipes at the rocket ship. It really could have been so good.

ZZ: Zabriskie Point?

RW: We went to Rome and stayed in this posh hotel. Every day we would get up at about 4.30 in the afternoon, we'd pop into the bar, and sit there till about 7, then we'd stagger into the restaurant, where we'd eat for about two hours, and drink. By about halfway through the two weeks, the bloke there was beginning to suss out what we wanted; we kept asking for these ridiculous wines, so by the end he was coming up with these really insane wines. Anyway we'd finish eating—the Crepes Suzettes would finally slide down by about a quarter to nine.

NM: The Peach Melba was good too. I used to start with Sole Bonne Femme, followed by the Roast Leg of Lamb, cooked with rosemary, and then a Peach Melba or a Crepes Suzettes, or perhaps both.

RW: We'd start work at about nine; the studio was a few minutes walk down the road, so we'd stagger down the road. We could have finished the whole thing in about five days because there wasn't too much to do. Antonioni was there and we did some great stuff, but he'd listen and go, and I remember he had this terrible twitch, he'd go, 'Eet's very beauteeful, but eet's too sad' or 'Eet's too stroong'. It was always wrong consistently. There was always something that stopped it being perfect. You'd change whatever was wrong and he'd still be unhappy. It was hell, sheer hell. He'd sit there and fall asleep every so often, and we'd go on working till about seven or eight in the morning, go back and have breakfast, go to bed, get up and then back into the bar.

ZZ: And the Pompeii film?

NM: That's had a history nearly as long as the ballet. Whenever it's about to be premiered, Adrian Markham the director rings up and says, 'Listen I must just have

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a bit more film.' We've been adding little bits to it for ages.

RW: It's not a bad film. I saw the final version in New York.

ZZ: What did you think of that business at the Rainbow?

RW: Rank. That is my answer. I think it's quite witty.

NM: I like Peter Bowyer's comment. He was waiting for the wounds in his back to heal before he undertook any more such assignments.

RW: What it is, is just us playing a load of tunes in the amphitheatre at Pompeii interspersed with rather Top Of The Pops shots of us walking around the top of Vesuvius and things like that and it was a bit of an elbow. Since then he came to London and shot us in the studio for a couple of days which has made it much more lively and it's quite an entertaining film. I think Pink Floyd freaks would enjoy it. I don't know if anyone else would. I liked it because it's just like a big home movie.

IX Our Heroes Tell Rolling Stone To Get Stuffed ... And Their Record Company

With the success of 'Dark Side Of The Moon' in America, the band were asked by Rolling Stone to do the Rolling Stone interview. On several previous occasions, when appointments had been arranged with that same paper, the interviewer had not turned up, and the band had been offered no word of apology or explanation. Naturally enough, on this occasion Rolling Stone were told to get lost. In their next issue they carried a vitriolic attack on the Floyd's gig in New York, full of snide remarks and cheap rhetoric. Maybe there was a connection between these two events.....who knows?

ZZ: What was your reaction to the put down review in Rolling Stone recently?

RW: Well you know the story. He never got into the band room, everybody else did, but we do draw the line at people from Rolling Stone.

ZZ: You think that Leon Russell was

right?

RW: Definitely. I love that song. It's hard to generalise about them all, because I don't know all of them but from my experience of meeting people from there, they're all a bunch of power-mad maniacs. There are completely carried away with the idea that the media surrounding rock and roll, or at least their corner of it, is more important than the actual thing. Though they did print a letter in the most recent issue from someone saying 'Dear Ed, if you didn't like it then you were in a minority of one,' which is something the Melody Maker wouldn't do in similar circumstances, I can assure you.

If there is something that characterises the career of The Pink Floyd, then maybe it's their wholesome 'no-bullshit' attitude to the tawdry world of 'da bizz', perfectly illustrated by the story of the recent reception to launch their latest album.

ZZ: Why didn't you come to the press reception at the Planetarium?

RW: Nicky and Dave and I thought that it was so daft that we tried to get it stopped, and when they refused to stop it, we refused to go to it. I think it was pathetic.

NM: The intention was to have the planetarium with a quadrophonic mix which I would have been into, because I thought it was a good idea, but there wasn't a quadrophonic mix, there was only a stereo mix, and they'd got the most terrible speakers. I mean no offence to Charlie Watkins but it was WEM, which is not what it would be about. You'd use JBLs and it would all sound pretty fantastic. I heard that it was stereo, not very well done, cold chicken and rice on paper plates.

RW: The only point of it was to make a really first class presentation of a quadrophonic mix of the album, so that it was something special. We didn't have time to do a quadrophonic mix so we said, 'You can't do it'. But EMI wanted to do something so they went ahead. It was just stupid, the whole thing was pathetic. They spent a lot of hot air trying to get us to go to it, but we just said 'We think it's a bad idea, we don't want to do it, we don't want to know'. Obviously we couldn't stop them doing it, but I thought it was daft.

ZZ: Final question: What would you say is the meaning of your music.....No, I'm just kidding; let's go and have a beer.

Connor





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Some Harvest Corn!




JOHN CALE:

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BUT

ODDLY NORMAL

Kodachrome
TRANSPARENCY



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Last year, in an agreeably absurd exchange with Lisa Robinson (*Interview*, August issue), John Cale, the possessor of the arresting angular face which stares menacingly from the cover of the first Velvet Underground album, affirmed that he enjoyed, in no particular order, getting up and going to work, cars and sports, with a particular predilection for tennis.

In fact, tennis he relished so much that he expressed a wish to be married in his court ensemble, complete with visor and balls and two tennis rackets across the front. Not content with such revelations, he continued: "This church we're getting married in, when it comes to the part where you ask your partner to be your wife or husband, you can either read what's on the card or make something up yourself. So Cindy said she wanted to make something up but I said, I don't like that, I like the rigid style they've got . . . But the other day she was imitating a dog, so I said that that's what we should do in the church—in the incantations—she could do that and I'd be a polar bear."

The aspiring young polar bear—unrecognisable from the saturnine, long-haired viola player of old—is now safely married and still works in the A&R Department at Warner Brothers in Los Angeles, the company for which he also records. For a man who was failed at the celebrated Eastman Conservatory for composing music that was too destructive to be played, it is appropriately paradoxical, and indicative of his wayward spirit, that Cale should now be reclining in his corporation armchair dressed in a fetchingly tailored suit and reading Graham Greene and Eric Ambler in between attending to official duties.

It was from his desk at HQ that Cale's blunt Welsh accent came over on the proverbial Transatlantic Hotline, in vivid contrast to the icy Americanese which effected the connection. Assuming, erroneously as it turned out, that a mere mention of the Velvet Underground would be greeted by the sound of a telephone being replaced on the receiver, I began by asking about 'Vintage Violence', the album which provided the first substantial evidence of his songwriting abilities. It's a genuine oddity, a record of melodic pop songs with sinister overtones and bizarre allusions (some cryptically listed on the cover), resulting in something approaching the musical equivalent of a black comedy. Cale, as ever, was brief and emphatic: "I'm masked in it. You don't see the personality, just like on the cover. I mean I didn't realise it until I had put the thing out, but the cover was really more about the album than I thought."

Soon after 'Vintage Violence' came a collaboration with Terry Riley on the gothic 'Church Of Anthrax', for which Cale was largely responsible, having supervised the production in Riley's absence. Of this he is equally critical: "I still like the title cut which we had a ball mixing. It has such density, so many layers, that I still keep hearing new things in it. I only wish the rest had been as absorbing as that. Instead, it was just a bit too . . ." . . . selects his epithet . . . "Severe".

Kodachrome
TRANSPARENCY



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Kodak

While the curious few ruminated over those two, Cale arrived in England in the Spring of 1971 to attend to the arrangement and production of Nico's 'Desert Shore', having already performed the same service on the apocalyptic 'Marble Index' three years before. He also made a commendable contribution to Mike Heron's 'Smiling Men With Bad Reputations' LP, and, in the company of both Heron and Nico, appeared at the Roundhouse in one of only two public appearances since his regular performing days—the other being in a Paris television studio a year later, with Nico and Lou Reed.

In view of his classical training, it was almost mandatory that one day Cale should attempt to write a symphony. Following his move to Warner Brothers, he embarked on such a project naming it, with characteristic impertinence, 'The Academy In Peril'. The idea, he says, was to make a classical album. Symphony Number One.

However, on arriving at the Manor Studios, the first tune he recorded was a jocular piece in the Caribbean vein called 'King Harry', then spent the remainder of his week there in the company of Ron Wood and Legs Harry Smith, neither especially noted for their symphonic proclivities. Whilst awaiting the availability of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, he composed the music mentally, then transcribed and arranged it. He eventually recorded those orchestral tracks at St Giles Church in Cripplegate, but afterwards decided that they did not collate in a sufficiently interesting manner to become the basis of a symphony. The album was subsequently released as a collection of odds-and-ends, a gesture which some regarded as a brilliant Dadaist joke but most chose to dismiss completely. Not even Andy Warhol's splendid cover, featuring Cale's eyes in a variety of Kodachrome transparency close-ups, could rescue it from oblivion.

Was he intending to try again? Would Symphony Number One ever see the light of day. "Not for the time being . . . much later on possibly. It's something I still want to do, but any feelings of affection I have for that album are governed by the fact that it fell on stony ground. It would appear that there aren't many people who like that kind of thing."

It is evident in speaking to Cale that—perhaps understandably in his position—he attaches considerable importance to record sales. When I inquired about the extent to which being on Warners staff facilitated experimentation on his part, he replied: "Not much. Like everybody else, I have a recording contract, so I'm expected to produce good records that sell fairly well." And on mentioning the eulogistic review accorded to his new album 'Paris 1919' by Rolling Stone, he was equally reticent: "It was nice, but those things have very little bearing on selling records. And selling records is very important, because if you're selling them it means you've giving a lot of people pleasure."

The smokescreen of mystery which enshrouds the content of 'Paris 1919' may prevent it from reaching as many as it might, but it's by far his most inviting record to date, full of graceful tunes, compelling lyrics and superlative accompaniment (Cale, Little Feat and, on two tracks, the UCLA Orchestra). "'Paris' is certainly much more immediate in its appeal than 'Academy'," says Cale. "The effect that that had was so attenuating that when this one went out

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to radio stations, programme directors were throwing up their arms and saying 'Oh no, not another John Cale album'. Some of the songs are old, some new—we cut more than were necessary and tried to pick the strongest. The only overall feeling I was attempting was a really good representation of the songs, unlike on 'Vintage Violence' where they were obscured and messed up with a lot of gimmicks. The album deals with civilisation in one form or another, the strongest statement being 'Half Past France'. But the subject matter being what it is, I'm just scratching the surface of how to express it. Now that I know more about it, I want to make a much stronger statement in more direct terms. The general effect of 'Paris' is just a little too . . . cultural."

For the first time, Cale called in a producer to provide an outsider's view and, presumably, to keep a tight hold on his excesses. Chris Thomas, who curiously enough has recently done the same for Roxy Music and Pink Floyd when they found themselves in need of expert objectivity, was the man who supervised: "Where I've been given free rein, things haven't worked out too well. Chris was important because he was calm, cautious and encouraging while I ran around the studio like a chicken with its head cut off."

Surprisingly enough, Cale was rehearsing musicians with the intention of going on the road to promote the record but, by the time they were nearing departure, he realised the move was too belated to be effective. "For the next album," he says, "There will be a cohesive plan. Quite honestly, I'm frightened by the idea of performing because it's five years since I did that properly. A lot has happened since then."

On the subject of Nico (Cale is still her producer and she is allegedly signed to some company of his), he was planning to record her with the English Chamber Orchestra, but that particular project is still in limbo. "It's a question of finding a record company that'll entertain the idea," he explains. "She's been talking with Deutsch Grammophon, but it's difficult because she's in Paris and I'm in LA."

Meanwhile, on the company production front, Cale is responsible for the signing of the Modern Lovers, a Boston-based group, purportedly the object of some competition within the industry and featuring Jonathan Richmond, a man who, it is said, used to write poetry and show it to Lou Reed and the other Velvetens. He is also nursing an outfit called Rebecca, comprising one man, who plays base, and two girls—one on piano and vocals, the other on viola. They improvise around their own material, he says, and have strong classical leanings.

Much of Cale's own work at present is in connection with films, an area in which his contributions to 'La Cicatrice Interieure' and 'Heat' have already given him some measure of prominence. He is currently writing the scores for "two bloody, violent movies"

and continues to regard himself as a novice—"I don't have the patience to spend the time it needs, so it's still very much a sideline."

Finally, as the gremlins of trans-oceanic cabledom close in to render us inaudible, time to ask about plans and pipedreams.

It is ironic that, at a time when his own career is flourishing in so many directions, he should reveal a wish for the future which effectively takes him back to the beginning: "Louis and I should put the Velvet Underground back together again, but only if we play in the same vein and with the same ideals . . . although everybody is much older and wiser. In the old days we were really immature, and as the group became more successful, we rehearsed less, played less, just didn't work. Now I think we'd all work harder and not fight so much."

But wouldn't such a firm arrangement necessarily preclude the diversity of approach which is one of Cale's primary assets?

"No, I don't think so."

Just the kind of answer one might expect from a man who would like to assemble a thousand guitar players for a concert. For him, possibilities are boundless.

Al Clark

DISCOGRAPHY

Velvet Underground & Nico

(MGM 2315 056) 1967

White Light/White Heat

(MGM 2353 024) 1968

Vintage Violence

(CBS 64256) 1971

Church of Anthrax

(CBS 64259) 1971

The Academy In Peril

(Reprise MS 2079) 1972

Paris 1919

(Reprise K 44239) 1973

Arrangement & Production:

Nico: 'The Marble Index' (Elektra EKS 74029—deleted but still circulating) 1968

The Stooges: (Elektra K 42032—deleted but still circulating, or American no. EKS 74051) 1969

Nico: 'Desert Shore' (Reprise K 44102) 1971

Jennifer: (obscure Reprise album by former leading lady of Los Angeles version of 'Hair'—never released in Britain)

Also:

Cale plays various instruments on two tracks on Nick Drake's 'Bryter Layter' album (Island ILPS 9134) 1971 and four tracks on Mike Heron's 'Smiling Men With Bad Reputations' (Island ILPS 9146) 1971, one of which, 'Feast Of Stephen', he helped to arrange and produce. Joe Boyd produced both records.

Nico's first LP 'Chelsea Girl' (MGM 2353 025) 1967 reissued 1971, includes otherwise unknown Cale songs:

'Winter Song' (Cale)

'Wrap Up Your Troubles In Dreams' (Cale)

'Little Sister' (Cale/Reed)

'It Was A Pleasure Then' (Nico/Cale/Reed)

JOHN CALE 'PARIS 1919'

HIS LATEST ALBUM ON REPRISE



ALSO AVAILABLE: 'THE ACADEMY IN PERIL'

STEVE ELLIS



Steve Ellis probably isn't an obvious candidate for a ZigZag article, mostly because he was in the Love Affair, that smear on the escutcheon of 'eavy music as far as many were concerned at the time, but in retrospect, maybe not so bad, particularly with reference to Steve Ellis himself, who is a fine singer with a great voice. Now he has his own group, called Ellis, who are into rather more meaningful things musically, and here he talks about his past, present and hopes for the future, among other things.

The Group

I was living in a cottage on Roger Daltrey's country estate, and he said "What about producing an album?" I'd already decided that I was going to do an album, and I was just writing songs down there, and I dragged all the others down too. I suppose it was my idea to make a group of it, but it started off just as a solo album on a solo contract. I got them all down there, Andy (Gee) from Germany, and it just emerged as a group. They were the people I wanted to back me on the album, but then we decided to take it on the road after we'd finished the LP. Then there was the name, which is what it is because the record company wanted my name. It sort of emerged as a group, and we've been on the road for about nine months now, and just finished this second album.

During the period between Love Affair and Ellis, I'd been basically doing sessions, working with Zoot (Money) and Andy on things like Peter Bardens' LP "The Answer", on which Peter Green also played, but he remained nameless for some reason or other. Then Keith Mansfield and Mike Smith asked me if I wanted to do the soundtrack for the film "Loot" which was written by Joe Orton, and I said I would, because I hadn't done a soundtrack before or any jazzy things like those songs. Unfortunately, the single caught pneumonia, but there is a soundtrack album, which apparently did quite well in the States, which is a bit of a sore point, because I got ripped off there. All it was really was three days up at Elstree or wherever it was, and I had a good thing going with Keith Mansfield from the Love Affair days, so it seemed like a good idea. Actually, it was a good film, anti-catholic, but really very funny, particularly Richard Attenborough and Hywel Bennett, although I wasn't there when they made it. I met them all afterwards, blah, blah, bunny, bunny, socialising.

I'd first met Roger Daltrey at Heathrow Airport about five years ago, going out to Beat Club in Hamburg, and we had a great laugh, and just got really matey then. Actually, he phoned me yesterday to tell me about his solo album, and you'll gather that he hasn't produced our

new one, mainly because he's got a studio down there, and he wanted to use it, but we didn't particularly want to. I think the proof is there in that he did his own album at Apple! His studio has got teething problems, it's a track playing studio. It's good—I mean, Pete Townshend is a track playing studio, and they did a lot of "Tommy" in it—but Roger's is a new one, and it takes a couple of years before any studio is broken in. We could have done it at CBS, Whitfield Street, with a million pound complex, but it's so bloody new, and it's got no feeling at all, like something out of "Star Trek". So we decided we wanted to do it at Olympic, which is where we did the first one, but in the end we settled for Morgan, which is all right and is where Rod Stewart makes his albums.

Mike Vernon's actually producing this one, and he also produced the first record I ever made, which was a Stones number off one of their LPs. That wasn't as the Love Affair, it was something else, really a long time ago, done for Decca at West Hampstead Studios, with Gus Dudgeon and Mike, the Mayall team, the Klook's Kleek mob. Naturally, I'm more satisfied with this album than I was with the first one, which is inevitable, because the first album slumped. What I liked about it was that there were so many people involved with that album, and it was just like a big happy family.

It wasn't silly like the Mad Dogs thing, it was nice and happy, but the second one was more cut and dried, because we were on the road, and we decided what numbers we were doing, and boomph!—ten days straight in and we'd done it. The final mix is tomorrow. Again, it's mostly our own compositions, mine and Zoot's and mine and Andy's. Colin Allen didn't write any of the songs as he did on the first one, although he did play some percussion on it. It's all completely new and original stuff, and we haven't been augmented at all, except by Colin on a few tracks. This one is more live than the first one, because "Riding On The Crest Of A Slump" was a very studio sort of album, despite all the people dropping in. I mean, if Mike Vernon can't mix or produce the blues, he can't do anything, so we left him to it. There are a lot of twelve bars. Funnily enough, he hasn't worked with Zoot before, although I think they vaguely knew each other. I knew him much better, as I made that record with him eight years ago, when I was fourteen.

There are a couple of numbers from the LP that we're working on as singles, which is the same number that we took from the first album. In fact, we'd rather have done a new one for the second single, but actually, "El Doomo", which is the current single, has only just missed out. It was a breaker for three weeks, which is a joke, but there you go. It should have been the first single, actually, but "Good To Be Alive" was the first one because it was the summer, and there were about 84 different people saying this and that, and eventually, by the time it came out, it was a bloody disaster. The tapes got lost, all sorts of things. But I thought that "El Doomo" was stronger, and the only thing was that it might have been an LP track rather than a single. The first album has now sold over ten thousand, which is pretty good for a first album, and it's still selling.

I got to know Andy Gee both from playing on the Peter Bardens LP, and because we had the same manager four years ago, Sid Bacon. At that time, Andy was doing a lot of recording, musical stuff, scores for Lionel Bart, but he is an incredible guitar player, in the classical style as well. He was actually taught in that field, but I suppose he plays flamenco rock now. Davey Lutton, the drummer, I'd bumped into many times, but whether he was actually in the Grease Band, I'm not completely sure, but he's been associated with them and he and Henry McCullough have been mates for donkey's years. Then there's Nick South on bass. Fingers Norton, the motorcycle king. From Vinegar Joe until about six months ago. He's the only non-original member of the group, because we

started off with Jim Leverton on bass, from Fat Mattress. He's now with Miller Anderson. Jim's funny, really, a really nice bloke and a really good bass player, but he won't tie himself down. He hasn't got the faith to tie himself down at anything really, and I don't know why. Maybe it's a throwback to Noel Redding. Jimmy wanted to go to America, and I told him that if he went over there, he wouldn't make any money. But he went, anyway, and in the meantime, we had three bass players, the last of which ended up in a mental hospital. He was the brother of one of those two new people in the Beach Boys. He had a bit of a name for it, but we didn't know, and it was a bit sad really. Then we got Nick. Before this band, Zoot had been a solo artist, and had an album out on Polydor called "Welcome To My Head", and after that there was another one, the one with his face inserted on a portrait on the sleeve, which I thought was quite funny actually. I met him just after he got back from the States, having been there with Eric Burdon, which must have been about 1968.

With this band, we're not going to go to the States yet, and we've been slogging about for nine months, tightening the band up in England. Everybody has eaten humble pie, if you like, and we've done round the clubs at thirty quid a night, and built our way up. We've had offers from agents, telegrams and all sorts of things from the States, and the album got incredible reviews in Cashbox and so on, but we don't think the time is right to go. I think we should get some roots here first, instead of disappearing, and being another of those bands who go over to the States, and rarely play here, and get forgotten, maybe a bit like Savoy Brown. I've got my own opinions about that band actually, and I was offered a gig with them. In fact, I got offered a lot of gigs between leaving the Love Affair and getting this band together. I wouldn't want to say who they were with or anything, but they were good offers and good bread, but there were contracts involved and I was already tied up with CBS. I think CBS is a good record company—there's a few pratts up there, but there are also a lot of very good people.

Love Affair

We were very much manipulated as a group, to say the least. We were given songs, and the group was built up and that was it—we weren't really given any chance to express our own individuality very much, and we only made one album which was a conglomeration of hits, or whatever. The group was put together by Sid Bacon, who was the drummer's father, and I didn't know the drummer at all then, it was just an audition. I didn't even want to be a singer, it was

just a joke really. I don't really know what I wanted to do at that point, I just went for a laugh. I was just 14, and still at school in Finchley. The only one I knew was the bass player who was sacked about three months later, because of me saying he was no good. There was one bloke who went back to school, and then rejoined later. Then there was Morgan Fisher, who is now leading Morgan, who are making records for Italian RCA which are a bit of a nause. He used to be a very good organ player, but he has got into this synthesiser stuff and all that rubbish, and sits there like Dr Who. You couldn't say I was in Love Affair for the money, because there wasn't any money. Really it was like that. We were on a wage, if you like, but it got so bad that we used to hold the road manager down and go to the boot and help ourselves to the cash. All except Mo Bacon, because his dad was the one who was supposed to get it, in fact his dad got most of it and put it in his wife's name and declared himself bankrupt. You can print that if you like. Eventually we nobbled two of our songs from Robert Knight. John Cokell heard them—he now manages Hookfoot and Phillip Goodhand-Tait, whose songs we also recorded. We had 5 hits and then I left. It wasn't even that I wasn't getting any money, number one on the list, I wasn't getting on with the people, number two, we were doing some days 14 gigs a week, at cabaret clubs and that sort of thing. We were just being completely conned and every time I said I didn't like it, I got sent to a psychiatrist or something, and that's true, it was such a con it is not believable. 'I'm being conned' 'No you're not, your going to see a psycho'. Also they spoilt the image we had, because there wasn't an image, we were just natural. All they did was put us in the Carnaby street gear and frilly shirts when we were a bunch of louts,—well, three of us were. We used to wear Dr Martins and they used to say things like, 'You can't go on television dressed like that,' and the mod thing only came through because that was what I was like. I made a point of putting it over, because people used to say 'those little pouffs in the Love Affair'. What little pouffs in the Love Affair? We used to wreck places, you know, just to prove it, and not get booked back. When I left they got that bloke in from the Elastic Band, Gus Eadon, and tried to become a heavy group, but they never had the potential and the talent to be anything but a commercial group. The only one who had the talent was the drummer and he was completely overpowered by his father which isn't his fault. He's still like it, I saw him about two months ago, and he is like a paranoid kid. From what I can gather they are just working in Italy as part of the group Morgan. Morgan

is very good, I think he went to university and came back to the group and he thought that he was the intellectual of the band and he was just a pratt. OK, so he had a degree and this that and the other, but he spoilt it all. They were trying to get some sort of underground image together, but it didn't work.

The funny thing about the Elastic Band, from which Gus Eadon came, was that their bass player, who was good, ended up as the Sweet's bass player, although I don't know what happened to the rest of them, with the exception of Gus Eadon, who, from the latest reports, is doing cabaret as the Love Affair, and from what I can gather, there are two other bands called Love Affair, with nobody who was ever in the band at all. What has annoyed me more than anything lately is that I read a review of a single by one of the Love Affairs, which said that they were doing another Phillip Goodhand-Tait song, when the group may never have heard of Phil.

The Love Affair was never big in the States, because Robert Knight had the big hit there with "Everlasting Love", but we were big in Europe, where we were definitely a rock band. In Switzerland, we were voted the second best group in the world for two years running. We didn't play much of our own material, but mostly soul and Tamla, and I suppose it was like a poor version of Rod Stewart and the Faces in that we were a rocking and boogie band. If you were to bring it up to date, the Love Affair were the 1967 equivalent of the Faces, but without the musical talent.

I couldn't say that the band didn't play on the hit singles, but they didn't, although they did play on the LP tracks. As far as I can remember, my old mate Clem Cattini was always on drums, about half of Blue Mink, and the rubber string section that play on all the records. I think Jimmy Page was on guitar on a couple of the sessions, but he probably wouldn't remember or admit it. I was on the records, of course.

The Press, Public Relations and Reminiscences

In the past, I believe that I have been slagged off by the press unnecessarily, particularly with Love Affair, even despite the things said about who played on the records. If you want to bring it up to date now, you have got your Marc Bolans, your David Cassidy, all those people, they are all cleaning up on that scene—a person like myself could sit down and churn out hit records 10 to the dozen now, if I could look at myself in the mirror, and say, "I'm happy at this, because I'm making a lot of money, I've got a big fat bank account, really happy doing this," but I'm not. I now have a very good band who are having a

hard time, only because the people involved in it have got a reputation. Zoot Money is said to be the all time loser, which is crap, because he's not. They say that, a lot of the press, especially the comics, I call them, the trades, who get on this big ego trip, you know, so and so introduces David Bowie, reviews Marc Bolan in depth, and there is no depth. What depth? It gets right up my nose because you read things like, Slade "in depth", and they're just basic working class lads and they've got a manager who managed me at one time, Chas.

The way that public relations people work was different when we were the Love Affair, because then we were pop stars. At that time, there were people hustling you, like "do you want to get out of bed at 6am and go to a photo-session on a farm in Berkshire?" It's



different second time around, and with this band, first time round, people think they are doing you a big favour, and you get people who have these attitudes that really get up my nose. There was a bloke from a trade paper who came to interview me and Zoot, and we were mucking about, having a good laugh, and this bloke came in and he thought he was like God's gift to the trades, new job, promoted. He came in, and we were quite jolly and mucking about, and he said, "Right I want to be serious now, and I want some straight answers." And we said, "OK, what questions do you want answered?" and looked him right in the eyes, mucking about, and the bloke just was so paranoid that he

got up, said "I'm sorry, I can't do this interview" and dropped all his papers over the floor and walked out. We just sat there and looked at each other and said "Is it us?" This bloke just walked out like a wreck, after five minutes, and we've had that happen a few times. They get this idea that they're doing you a favour if they say you are good in the papers. There are some nice fellows who write for the trades, no doubt about it. If you were bad, and you know you were bad, they write a bad review, which is alright, but someone else would turn up, and you would be good and you'd know you were good, and they will say, "but, but, but, but, but . . ." and I say "Wait till I get my hands on him" you know, and then he doesn't show for the interview. They get wrapped up in this big ego thing. "When I entered his mansion and 10 dogs came out, and the ducks were on the pond and his wife was making tea constantly, he's my best mate, you know . . ." I know all that scene. I always feel that it's possible for writers to write about other things than silly stories about groups, and they detract from the music, they talk about other things, which aren't even relevant. When I pick up the music papers sometimes, I throw them across the room, because they just make me really angry.

Management (or the lack of it)

Once I was approached to do the Andy Williams suit number. I did one gig at the Empire Pool Wembley, big suit, orchestra . . . Hookfoot on guitar, Clem drums, Keith Mansfield. Cost me a fortune. Everyone said great, patted me on the back, and I turned round and said "I don't want to do it again, because it's bullshit". It was just a pain, it wasn't real. To explain what it was like, you have this power over the audience which isn't real, it isn't earthy enough, and you're bullshitting. and you know you're bullshitting these people, and it doesn't feel real, and I didn't want to do it. I just did it one time, presentation, everything, and it went down a storm. I came off and said "I don't want to do it," and that's when I went with Chas, who I know and I get on all right with. He knows what I'm like and I know what he's like, but we're always arguing. He managed me not long after I left Love Affair, and Chas wasn't groping, because he has got a good business head. Jimi had just died, and he went through Dada and then I came along, and we tried this and that, and a couple of good singles that never got off, which were released on CBS under my own name, backed by Zoot. That was in 1970, and they never got any exposure. Chas produced them, and it was quite happy, and if things had gone better, I would probably have been with him now,

but we disagreed about so many things, that we just said "Let's knock it on the head," and we did, and then about a year later, Slade took off. He's put a lot of work into them, but we were more mates than anything. It wasn't like a manager/artist, more of a friendly thing, and although Chas was the business brain behind everything, I didn't agree with a lot of the things he was doing, so we parted. Now, we don't have a manager. John Sherry are our agents, and they just ring up and tell us what they've got for us, but we've only really gone with them about the last two weeks, so we haven't really had much time to do anything. There is a lapse at the moment, which is a bit of a pain in the arse, because we have been working solidly. The band decide which gig we do because there are five people who have been through all the rubbish, and we say four to one, off we go, or whatever. We're able to take decisions within the band, because everybody's pretty level headed.

We have done a circle really, in the 9 months gigs, and we ended up last night, playing the same place that we played the first gig. We seem to be going down well—out of every 10 gigs we have had, we have done 8 great ones, one duff one and one alright. You might wonder why Zoot is content to sit back and just play keyboards, not do any vocals, but if you

saw the group now, you would probably understand. There are five separate characters developing, and all this band needs now is a hit single and a good tour, and I reckon it can front anybody, I don't care who, because there is a lot of experience, and we could pull it off.

Tastes

I have always liked Stevie Wonder, and I have always liked Tamla, particularly with Holland Dozier and Holland, but after that, well it just went zzzuuuuupppp, except for Smokey Robinson, who strikes me as being a nice bloke, although I have never met him. Very much unlike the normal Motown image. I like lots of Tamla and soul records. I was a bit too young for rock and roll. The only rock and roll records I can recall are "Something Else" by Eddie Cochran and a few Little Richard things. The first person I ever saw in my life live was James Brown, somewhere near Tottenham, in about 1964, when I was 14. They had the two drummers, and the cape business where they drag him off stage, and I couldn't believe it. However, now I think he is a pain in the ass. It's like "Funky Monkey" on and on and on Part 1,2,3,7,8. I'm also fed up with this Black Moses crap. I always liked the Who, but that's a throwback from the mod days when the Who were the mod band, not just because of Roger. I also liked the Small Faces at the time and I like Humble

Pie, but not after the other night's performance on the Whistle Test. Steve Marriott's a good singer, but he gets a bit carried away with himself. I like Humble Pie, but that second number pissed me right off, I couldn't see it, it didn't mean anything. I have always liked Jeff Beck, and "Truth" was the first album that I ever bought in my life. I don't like much of what is going on in the charts at the moment. Singles stuff. A load of crap. I did like Slade, but now, they strike me as a commercial entity, as much as the Love Affair was, if you know what I mean, whereas in the beginning, I thought they would be a good little band. Now they are a bit too typecast, predictable, but still better than most. They don't bother me, but sometimes if I sit and watch Top of the Pops I feel like puking.

As I read this back, I can see that it's possible to misinterpret Steve Ellis's words. Suffice it to say that this interview is in no way intended as any sort of put down, but sometimes confidence is a difficult thing to transfer to paper. I'm waiting to hear the new Ellis album with a good deal of anticipation, and it's my feeling that Ellis have the talent and potential to be among the year's most important discoveries, with which you may agree should you go and see them play live, which is an experience I enjoyed.

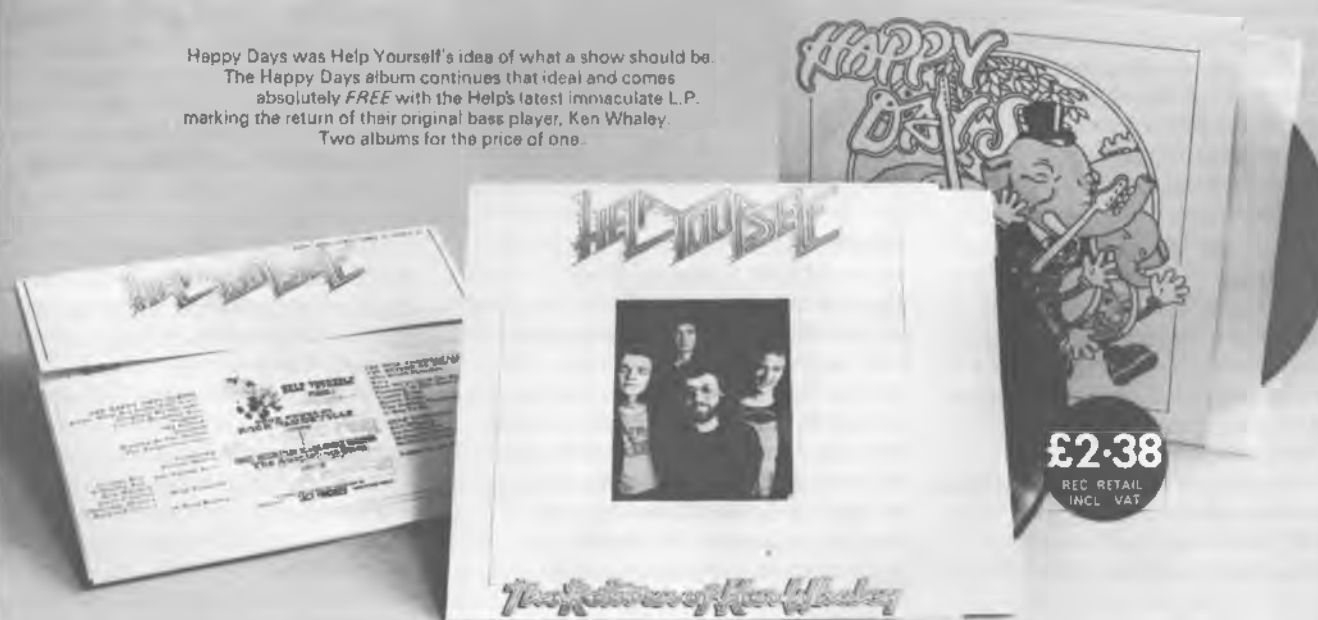
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The recent visit of a run down trio purporting to be Spirit nailed the lid on what was once a magnificent band. Drummer Ed Cassidy recounts the whole story, blow by blow.



Red Roosters and Spirits Rebellious....

The roots of Spirit are buried in the San Fernando Valley in California; Randy Craig Wolfe (later Randy California), then only 14, Jay Ferguson, Mark Andes and one Mike Fondalier (all around 17) had a little high school group going.... this was almost 9 years ago, back in 1964. They were just messing around in the usual way - a few ideas, a few heroes and a lot of ambition, but very limited ability, no experience and no gigs.

At this time, Ed Cassidy, a disenchant-ed jazzier looking for a good rock gig, happened to be rather friendly with Randy's mother, Bernice, who he subsequently married and - just to keep the record straight - subsequently divorced....so, inevitably step-father and step son were interested in each other's music.

Cassidy had had a varied career in the jazz world, including a spell in the New Jazz Trio with Gary Marker (bass) and Martin Siegal (piano), playing the New York clubs in the early sixties, but for reasons he expresses later, he'd been trying to get into rock music. This he'd done with only moderate success, ending up playing some strange country/surfing music, and he was all set to pack his bags for Europe when Gary Marker got on the phone to see if he wanted a gig in the Rising Sons.

The Sons were a Butterfield inspired blues band led by Taj Mahal, a folkie/vet (no less) who'd moved to the Coast from the Boston area clubs.

"We played very hard" says Cassidy, who adopted the name Cass Strange-drums

THE RISE AND FALL OF

SPIRIT



during his stay with the Sons, "and I had only been used to playing lighter, more exotic rhythms and somehow I managed to mess up my arm with all the exertion. I had to have it in a cast for 6 weeks and so I had to leave the band; I'd been with them about six months I suppose.... and they got this English drummer in, but he didn't work out, so they brought in Kevin Kelley (later a Byrd). Whilst I was with them, we recorded a couple of things for Columbia, 'Candy Man' and something else, but they never came out.... I think they went in and re-recorded them for the single which did come out. They went from real Delta blues into a rock thing; I mean, Taj was a bluesman, but he got into this Jagger trip - you wouldn't believe it. He was strictly a sex symbol... used to freak the chicks completely.... and the band, at its best, was something else. It was a real pity when that band came to an end.... they had it all there".

It was during his post-Rising Sons period that Cassidy got together with Randy, and they seriously set about trying to get his band together. Cassidy (or Cass as everybody seems to call him) was the only professional, so he took the incentive and beat the others (Randy, Mark and Jay) into shape.

"I rehearsed them every day, 6 days a week, which was difficult because they didn't know beans for rehearsing - so I had to be like the Gestapo with them.... crack the whip. They hated me, but they did it and they got it together pretty good".

They started gigging at the Ash Grove, an LA club owned by Randy's uncle (and Cass's brother in law), doing the Monday free audition evenings and soon they were becoming pretty popular; by the end of 6 weeks they were filling the place and were able to secure dates in other parts of California. The Red Roosters, as they were called, met a sudden death in early 1966, however, only eight months after they'd started, when Jay and Mark were lured away by the kind of seductive (but usually flimsy) offers which proliferate in the world of show biz. As Cass says, "they fell into one of the pit falls and didn't have the experience to resist it.... you know how wide-eyed young kids can be". They went through a group called Western Union, another called the Yellow Balloon, and Mark played bass for a prototype Canned Heat for a while.

"So the band broke up and Randy, his mother and I moved to New York, where we stayed for about a year. Randy was

about 15½ and spent a lot of the time going round the clubs in the Village, and that's where he met Jimi Hendrix. I think that they actually met in a pawn shop; Randy was trying to buy a guitar and Jimi was



RANDY

selling one. Jimi had a group going and invited Randy to come along to a gig and have a blow, and when they hit it off ok, he stayed in the group, playing at the Cafe Wha? for a while and then at the Cafe Au GoGo".

"Jimi was just starting to get into that thing of playing with his teeth and that whole trip, and he would play a more modern sort of blues line while Randy played a Delta slide style - he was playing a lot of bottleneck then - and that band, Jimmy James & the Blue Flames, would've been really great had it not been for a lousy rhythm section. I played with them once or twice, just sitting in, but I couldn't actually join because Jimi had brought these two friends from Texas and he felt obliged to keep them on - and I respected him for that - even though they were holding the band's progress back. Anyway, they were still doing really well, working 6 nights a week.... and that's when Jimi Hendrix was spotted by Chas Chandler. Next thing Randy knew, Jimi was gone".

Cassidy himself was playing in another jazz group - a sort of filler until the right niche came up; him, a black organist, a black guitarist and a chick singer, playing gigs in the New York/Philadelphia area.

"It was such a lame scene most of the time, that same old jazz circuit. I've been into jazz all my life, even though I started out playing Country & Western and poker music because I grew up in what is Buck Owens country now - Bakersfield, California. I'd been playing jazz for many years, but I just got fed up with the attitude of the jazz musicians and the way they presented their music. There was no friendliness.... and it's still the same today; I could go into any jazz club and I bet you ten dollars, even here in London, that the attitude of the musicians will be you! Not everyone is like that of course, but the general feeling is that the audience is nothing and they are everything.... superior intellectually, superior period. 'You don't appreciate me, so to hell with you' - that's always been their attitude.... that and to make people feel sorry for them - that's their big dream. What a big jive trip! I found this out after years of playing with them, though I loved playing jazz. I was fortunately able to play with a lot of black cats and I liked that better simply because they approached the music in a much happier way.... but anyway, I just got really fed up with the whole thing and decided to get into rock".

"After this New York visit, Randy and

I decided to form another band, trying to find young guys who weren't prejudiced and could absorb music and ideas from scratch. So we moved back to the West Coast, to a place just outside Los Angeles".

This was early 1967 - "a real renaissance period" as Cassidy says - and it was at one of the early hippie gatherings at Griffith Park that they bumped into Jay Ferguson again and, to cut a long story short, they decided to get back together again. This they did, a band called Spirits Rebellious, an idea inspired by Khalil Gibran's book. "We thought that'd be a nice name, but then we decided to shorten it to Spirit, because we weren't particularly trying to be rebellious".

In effect, Spirit was originally no more than the re-formed Red Roosters - Cass, Randy, Jay and Mark Andes, who also returned - but as things were coming together, Cass bumped into an old friend, John Locke, at the Topanga Corral, which always presented live music from bands like Canned Heat. On Sundays they had jazz, and Locke was playing in one of the visiting bands, the New World Jazz Company.

"So John joined us too, and we had this black conga player for a while too, but he got busted and we eventually sorted ourselves out as a quintet, playing a weird mixture of jazz and rock and all sorts".

"...maybe just a little bit too advanced"

They started the Monday-night-at-the-Ash Grove-for-hamburgers trip once more, playing things like 'Hey Joe', 'Foxy Lady', 'I can't Stand It' and a couple of Coltrane things too. "Rock was still very young as far as technique was concerned and we were doing some very out-front stuff, during our solos especially.... and the audiences were really beginning to pick up on us".

Enter Lou Adler, highly successful as producer of fad records (live-in-club stuff, surf, protest, flower-power, etc), who was on the look out for "an underground band" to be his next success. On hearing about Spirit, he sent his cousin, a young cat called Marshall Bronstein, to

check them out. The verdict: "instrumentally they're insane, but vocally, forget it".

"We were never a vocal thing" Cass agrees, "we were lousy, just bad; we never were and still aren't strong on the vocal side. Even at the peak of our so called fame we were not a vocal group. Jay could never sing in tune; Randy has a better ear but was always very busy on guitar.... but we tried to get everything figured out. We'd go into the studio and go over the same thing time after time until we got it right. What else could we do? Either you're a vocalist or you're not".

I must admit, the vocals on the records (especially 'Dr Sardonius') had never struck me as being poor.... quite the reverse, I thought they were unusually excellent.

"About 200 takes apiece! No, not quite that many; they weren't terrible or anything, it was just that we had a problem in as much as the people who did the singing were not really good vocalists. I think they should have taken lessons - at least to give them more breath control and some of the basic requirements of a singer".

Adler took them into the studio and they recorded their first album ('Spirit'), using material they'd been playing for about 8 months - so they had the music side pretty well sewn up. Unfortunately, the production didn't seem to match up; Adler had been used to the soft melodious works of the Mamas & Papas and though his work with them was nothing short of magnificent, he hadn't really had any experience of producing hard driving rock. Consequently, orchestrations were devised to soften the hard edges and the album lost a lot of its potential dynamism.

"It's sad, because it could have been really hot. It's paradoxical in a way; in one sense it helped us but in another it hurt us. In terms of people coming along to a concert having played the record, they expected a mellow sound and instead they got practically knocked over by the sheer force of the music.... they'd go home from the concert, play the album again, and say 'I just don't understand'. I think that as far as becoming a top million selling band immediately, the soft production killed us.... though I suppose that if we'd played the same way as he recorded it, we'd have gotten well known as a really great mellow band. As it was, we fell between two stools.... we didn't get well known at all".

I wondered about the extent of Lou Adler's participation - what did he do? Check sound levels, offer constructive criticism, or just sit back and watch it happen and then work on the tapes after they'd gone?

"Oh no, he was the man. In control of that studio all the time, and definitely giving one hundred and one per cent of his energy. Lou is a genius, there is no doubt about that in my mind, but it happens to everybody - he came up against something which he just didn't know how to handle... plus the personalities of the band really got to him too. I was older than he was, and Randy was really young, so it was a wide spread age trip with personalities who were not always easy to handle. On top of that, he'd just been through a lot of hassle over the break up of the Mamas & Papas".

That first album, despite all this criticism, was in fact an example of the more fascinating and adventurous late 60's American rock, and the subsequent re-release ('The Family Which Plays Together') was equally fine, containing their biggest selling single, 'I got a line on you'.

'Clear', the third album, was "a sort of no-man's land... a twilight zone, as you might say, though it was good music". The undoubted reason for the lack of punch and dependence on mood and atmosphere was that most of it had originally been conceived and written as the incidental music for a film.

"It could have been a very fine film but it turned out to be absolutely terrible. It was called 'The Model Shop' and was directed by Jacques Dumet, who'd done 'I a Woman' and 'The Umbrellas of Cherbourg', so we were really looking forward to it. We did the whole soundtrack apart from a couple of classical pieces, and 'Ice' was the title music, when they had the credits, you know. I think that Gary Lockwood and Anouk Aimee were the stars, but we had a couple of scenes too - playing in a club down in Venice, California where I live. It was all about some young architect who was going to get drafted but didn't want to go and was really torn up about it, and the model shop itself was one of those places where you go in and for twenty bucks or so you can take photographs of a chick who poses in a bra and pants or whatever... then you take the photographs home and get into whatever you do with them. Oh dear, it was an awful movie".

Needless to say, the film wasn't nominated for an Oscar, and 'Clear' sold

considerably less than either of its predecessors (which is a great pity because there's some excellent stuff on it - John Locke's piano playing particularly).

"Looking back on those first 3 albums" says Cass, "I feel that the first should've been a great smash, a big beginning. If only it had been recorded properly and if they'd only picked and pushed the right track as a single... but it seemed that they compounded their errors by putting out 'Mechanical World', which was in no way single material. 'Fresh Garbage' was the one they should have pushed; that song really took off in a lot of people's imaginations though it was maybe a little too advanced for 67/68 when people were still basically into good old slam rock'n' roll. This was fresh and inventive, and people's heads weren't quite there yet... but 3 years later, they were going nuts over 'Fresh Garbage'. 'How come it's not a single, man - make it a single!' they used to say. So, unfortunately we rather missed the boat at the outset and it tended to hold us back throughout our career... maybe we were a little too advanced with our ideas".



"We just got so bummed out by it all"

After 'Clear' came the big split with Lou Adler and his Ode Records label.

"Lou went through a big legal trip with CBS: he owed them records, and so, when he broke away from them to go with A&M, he had to make some sort of deal... and that deal included Spirit being used as part of the negotiating, part of the bartering. We were pretty naive about the whole business but I feel that in a sense we got ripped off there; we were being used to represent money, very little of which we'd seen. Anyway, from then on we were able to produce our own records".

'The 12 Dreams of Dr Sardonicus' was produced by committee really, the whole of Spirit, though David Briggs was nominally in charge of the proceedings. He'd

had a hand in some fine albums, including some of Neil Young's masterpieces, but for some reason his services weren't in demand.

"It was rather strange really, but he simply didn't have a reputation. We got to know him because he was a friend of John's, and we all lived in the Canyon and he would come over and visit and we'd smoke dope together and so on, and we thought he'd be the man for the job - plus the fact that he'd work cheap! He gave the sessions some kind of a balance but was only really a co-producer... it didn't cost us anything to put his name on the sleeve and we thought it might give him a break, though it doesn't seem to have worked out that way. Grin was his big group and there's not much happening there".

Now, in my opinion, 'Dr Sardonicus' is a masterpiece; one of the amazing classics of rock. Cassidy, however, had reservations.

"I think it's a fine album... but it could have been better; it's a little thin in places. But its worst defect is that it's not hot".

Hot? What is this technological jargon? What does he mean exactly?

"It's the difference between one-ten as opposed to two-twenty... that's what I mean".

"I'm still in the dark... feeling a trifle uneasy now. Am I thick, or what? I invited further clarification."

"It's a hot album in comparison with some, but next to, say, Led Zeppelin, it's cold. I'm not talking about the quality of the music, but how it's presented - if it really hits you hard. Ideally, it should hit you when it's turned up to 3 on the volume control; you shouldn't have to turn it up to 7 before it knocks you down. It must have impact. I mean, take the Beatles for instance - you turn them on at 2 and it still hits you... that's the advantage. If you turn them up louder, it has the same presence but sounds a bit better. With 'Dr Sardonicus', you have to crank the volume right up before it sounds any good at all. I don't really know the answer, but in England they seem to have the problem sorted out... maybe they tape up the studio dials so that the engineer can't see the needle jumping around in the red. In the States, the engineers go crazy if the needle gets anywhere near the red part - they turn it down immediately... maybe that's where our trouble lies. There must be some distinction over here - maybe the

Recreated by Mac Garry, Drawn by Pete Frame June 1973 Not to any time scale

RISING SONS #1 April 1965 to Summer 1965
Paul Butterfield inspired blues band, played all the LA clubs and seemed set for big things. Cass allegedly damaged his right arm whilst they were playing 'Statesboro Blues' and had to leave

TAJ MAHAL vocals
RY COODER guitar
JESSE LEE KINCAID guitar
GARY MARKER bass
CASS STRANGE drums
Left Summer 65

RED ROOSTERS #1 1964
High School group, played a mixture of pop and R&B - only played local gigs

RANDY CRAIG WOLFE guitar
MARK ANDRES bass
JAY FERGUSON vocals
MIKE FONDALIER drums

RISING SONS #2 Summer 1965 - early 1966
Says Ry Cooder: "It was like a juke-joint band... real raw and chaotic." Were only popular around Los Angeles

KEVIN KELLEY drums
TAJ MAHAL vocals
RY COODER guitar
JESSE LEE KINCAID guitar
GARY MARKER bass
Left his own group Fusion (album on Atco - import only)

RED ROOSTERS #2 Summer 1965
Until early 1966. Struggled to survive, e.g. played 5 sets a night, for a week, at Bido Litos, for \$10 total

ED CASSIDY drums
RANDY CALIFORNIA guitar/vocals
MARK ANDRES bass/vocals
JAY FERGUSON vocals

THE FAMILY THAT PLAYS TOGETHER...

Ry Cooder: "The Rising Sons, playing the same circuit, tended to become identified with the Byrds and attracted the same kind of audience - and all of a sudden we were making a lot of money. So, naturally things took their course and we signed with an agency... I went through all that mess with these shyster guys; 'make you a star, give you a chair with your name on it, give you a 59 Cadillac' - it was a comic book situation; suddenly we were the classic thing, and there was no reason for it, because we weren't that good... nobody could ever agree what key to play a tune in. Finally dissonance and general lack of musical quality broke everything up... we'd recorded lots, but it wasn't good enough to release. Anyway, from recording with this dog-ass group, I got to be a studio musician." (From Sing Out magazine)

...FALLS APART

KAPTAIN KOPTER & HIS FABULOUS TWIRLY BIRDS #1

Randy California, having left Spirit, set about forming a new group. His first project, with Noel Redding, fell apart but he got an album together: 'KAPTAIN KOPTER & HIS (FABULOUS) TWIRLY BIRDS' (Sept 72) Epic 65381.

LARRY WEISBERG aka known as FUZZY KNIGHT bass
RANDY CALIFORNIA guitar/vocals
TIM MCGOVERN drums
CHARLIE BUNDY bass
HENRY MANCHOVITZ drums
CASS STRANGE drums (Ed Cassidy)
These characters (plus Noel Redding - under the pseudonym of Clik McToriou) played on the album but not in the road band.

KAPTAIN KOPTER #2 (also masqueraded as **SPIRIT** for March/April 1973 British tour). August 1972 to now. Album 'JOURNEY THROUGH POTATOLAND' due soon.

FUZZY KNIGHT bass/vocals
RANDY CALIFORNIA guitar/vocals
ED CASSIDY drums

Bedlam developed out of the Ace Kefford Stand, Big Bertha, Birmingham scene - the subject of a forthcoming family tree. Dave Ball had been with Procol Harum and Dennis had been with Long John Baldry.

SPIRIT #3 May 1971 to August 1972
Album: 'FEEDBACK' (April 1972) Epic 64507
Started as a trio but later admitted J. Christian.

ED CASSIDY drums
JOHN LOCKE piano
AL STAEHEL bass/vocals
J. CHRISTIAN STAEHEL lead guitar
Left in August 1972

SPIRIT #4 September 1972 to October 1972
Lasted only one month - Cozy joined and left almost immediately. No records during this time.

COZY POWELL drums
JOHN LOCKE piano
AL STAEHEL bass/vocals
J. CHRISTIAN STAEHEL lead guitar

BEAST LATER BEDLAM Formed in late 1972. An album, produced by Felix Pappalardi, is due for release on Chrysalis.

FRANK AIELLO vocals
DAVE BALL guitar/vocals
DENNIS BALL bass/vocals
COZY POWELL drums

SPIRIT #5 October 1972 - still going, though their future seems somewhat in the balance. Album: 'STA-HA-LEY' recorded some time ago, released in USA June 1973.

AL STAEHEL bass/vocals
J. CHRISTIAN STAEHEL guitar
STU PERRY drums
JOHN LOCKE piano

Spirit #1 recorded 4 albums during their career: 'SPIRIT' (February 1968) CBS 63278, 'THE FAMILY THAT PLAYS TOGETHER' (Jan 1969) CBS 63523, 'CLEAR SPIRIT' (October 1969) CBS 63729, 'TWELVE DREAMS OF DOCTOR SARDONICUS' (February 1971) Epic 64191. Also a single '1984', unreleased in the United Kingdom but included on 'BEST OF SPIRIT' (released Jun 73 in USA).

JO JO GUNNE #1 January 1971 to November 1972
Album: 'JO JO GUNNE' (September 1971) Asylum SYLA 8752
Mark and Jay rehearsed until their new band for several months before actually leaving the second of Spirit.

MARK ANDRES bass/vocals
JAY FERGUSON keyboards/vocals
MATT ANDRES lead guitar
CURLY SMITH drums
Pumpkin: from Austin, Texas; played Top 40 material at fraternity parties & sorority dances.

JO JO GUNNE #2 November 1972 and still going strong. Album: 'BITE DOWN HARD' SYL 9005 (March 1973) New album in the works.

Says Jay Ferguson: "1970 was a really bad year for Spirit; we just couldn't work, lost a tour of Japan because of disagreement, took too long in the studio, and all the momentum just disappeared... we weren't getting along, but just kept going. Mark and I decided it was no way to try and make music... so we left."

Left in Feb 1973 to go solo.

red part starts further round the dial! Anyway, yes, I'll agree with you; 'Dr Sardonicus' is our best album - it's good musically, and it's all there as a complete package".

Of course, just as the band was reaching some kind of a pinnacle in perfection, ego problems were bound to set in. Petty arguments developed over how tracks should be mixed, over who should be louder, and Briggs had his work cut out as a mediator and arbitrator rather than a producer....but even he didn't have the final say in some cases. It usually blew up into a full scale squabble between, say, the writer of the song and a musician who thought his arrangement was superior to the original concept; ego assertion ran amok.

Cassidy: "I tried to stay back as much as possible because I knew it was going to be bad news; I just wanted to play my part. But Randy was continually hassling with Jay, who was acting pretty churlish as usual - that's the way he operates; he always wants to be on top of the scene, but in my opinion hasn't the talent to merit that sort of position. Randy wants to be on top of a scene and he has the talent - all he has to do now is learn how to channel it properly....get the most out of it. Jay is a good arranger, but not a good songwriter - that's just my opinion, of course - but the band was at its best when Jay would come up with arrangements for Randy's basic ideas. When things were going smoothly like that, Spirit was a unit, and a very good one, with the rest of us throwing in ideas too. So, credit where credit's due, Jay was a very integral part of the band - but that was before the boat started to rock".

"I think the underlying reason for all this infighting was disappointment; we were knocking our brains out to produce good music and just got more and more disenfranchised when it wasn't accepted on a big scale. We saw groups, ridiculously inferior in every way, zooming up into the charts and selling out concerts, and what made it worse was people continually coming up and saying 'you guys are incredible, you should be up there in the top 5'. We just got so bummed out by it all. What do you do? Which way do you turn? I think we were all looking for some thing or some one to blame and eventually we were blaming each other - our sense and logic just went totally out of perspective due to frustration and disappointment. On top of all this, we had the most terrible manage-

ment problems, and to finally drive us completely round the bend, Randy had his accident - he was thrown by a horse and got a 4 inch fracture across his skull".

This incident came right near the end of the sessions for 'Dr Sardonicus' and work obviously had to come to an abrupt halt. Randy was lucky to be alive and should have taken a long time to recuperate, but the importance of finishing the album had assumed ridiculous proportions.

"The other guys in the band didn't really have the feelings I'd have expected; they were more concerned about getting another guy in to finish the record - and it was a very distressing period, I'm telling you. Out of it all, Jay and Mark got up one day, quite out of the blue, and announced that they were leaving, and in my opinion they left on very shitty terms; they'd been rehearsing their new band behind our backs for about 8 months".

So off they went, and Jo Jo Gunne was born - an overnight success with their first single, which really rubbed salt into the wounded Spirit, though a great percentage of this success must lie with David Geffin and Asylum; a new label, loads of publicity, the right time/right place/right image, etc etc.

"They used Spirit as a platform too, in a lot of illegal ways, and we finally had to put the lid on that. But the damage was already done; any advantage they'd been out to gain was already theirs, so it was little use bolting the stable door after the horse was out. I don't really care too much about that, however, because the proof is in the pudding, and the music just wasn't there; they had one good song which they released as a single ('Run Run Run'), and that was it. There was nothing else at all remarkable on the first album, nothing was happening musically, and their second album is a pretty one dimensional thing too....which doesn't mean to say it won't sell a million".

"Anyway, back to Spirit. It was down to Randy, John and me....and we got in a bassplayer called John Arliss, who was more a good friend of Randy's than a good bass player, but he played alright. So we went back on the road as a quartet - but Randy was more hurt than he realised; he just didn't seem to be himself anymore, and he decided to pack it in and go off on his own....get away from it all for awhile. Then John Arliss went too, and that left John Locke and me....so either we threw the towel in and forgot about Spirit altogether, or else we'd have to find some new

guys and start again".

The family that plays together, falls apart

"For various reasons, financial and otherwise, we decided to go on; we'd sort of built up a way of life and felt that we couldn't just cancel it. We never made that much money as Spirit - or, to put that a little more accurately, we didn't take home that much money as Spirit, even though we made a lot of money....I'm not saying that we were swindled particularly, but the expenses of keeping that group on the road were pretty high. Anyway, at that point we met Al Staehely, who'd been a friend of Mark Andes; he'd been in a band down in Texas but came out to join us and off we went again".

"This time, we revised our stage act and presentation; John got a grand piano which he miked up through the pa to give a good concert tone, and he'd be on one side of the stage, I'd be on the other with my extra large set of drums, and Al was in the centre on bass and vocals....just a trio, but visually very effective, and the audiences seemed to accept us alright. We were doing 'I got a line on you' and 'Natures child', but apart from those two, we were doing none of the old repertoire at all; we had a whole new act, most of which was subsequently recorded on 'Feedback' (the fifth Spirit album)".

This trio, which Cass reckons was the best thing that ever happened to the group, went on for several months, feeling no need for further supplementation until they came to cut the album, when the use of a second melody instrument was felt to be necessary to round out the recorded work.

"John had been playing much more piano than ever before, I was going crazy filling in all the spaces, and that situation forced Al to sing and play his ass off; we were really dependent on each other....but we decided to get a guitarist all the same - and that's when Al introduced us to his brother, J Christian Staehely, and Spirit became 50% Texan. John (J Christian) had been with a band called Cracker Jack and came out in time to dub guitar

parts on the album; we'd already recorded it completely, apart from having left room for him....so he came in and did his best to embellish what we'd laid down. Everything considered, it worked out very well except that it's pretty thin and also pretty short, but from that point on, Spirit just started to go downhill. If we'd had a good guitarist it might have been different, but J Christian wasn't that hot...."

Spirit staggered on once more, but Cass was "getting depressed behind it" and during the recording of a sixth album (still unreleased), he left to join Randy who by this time had his own group called Kaptain Kopter and his Fabulous Twirly Birds, who's debut album had just been released. Cassidy in fact had drummed on a couple of tracks under his old Cass Strangedrums pseudonym.

The Staehely brothers and John Locke pressed on regardless, employing, very briefly, Cozy Powell on drums but this line-up collapsed when first Cozy and then John Locke left. At this point, Al and J Christian took on another drummer, Stu Perry, and as far as can be determined, this Spirit line-up persists today, though recorded evidence of their work has yet to be issued (and apparently there is some contention as to whether this should appear under the name 'Spirit' or 'The Staehely Brothers').

In the light of this knowledge, one can see that the group which recently toured England was in fact Kaptain Kopter, masquerading as Spirit....a weird situation indeed.

"Legally" says Cass, "we're Kapt Kopter, because the rights to the name Spirit lie with managers and so on. We didn't want to use the name Spirit at all, but the promoters insisted on it to attract the audiences, so we apparently face lawsuits when we return to LA....all they were waiting for was to see the word 'Spirit' in the papers. As it was, we almost didn't make it over here; the legal boys were rushing about all over the place and there was even talk of charging us X dollars to use the name....can you imagine that? It was ridiculous, and up until an hour before the flight, nobody was sure which group was going to do the tour - us or the Staehely Brothers".

So that's it, the Spirit saga more or less up to date; whether or not further chapters will be added is up to Epic and the Staehelys. As for Kaptain Kopter... well, that's another story.

Mac
(Is back!)

Clifford T. Ward had an interesting first press reception. The invitation was somewhat unique to say the least - see the picture - and Mike Hales, who should one day become a full-time compere, introduced him as follows: - 'You will probably have seen all the fly posters around London with Clifford T. Ward on them. Well, we don't know who he is, but we thought we would get hold of somebody and call him Clifford T. Ward and take advantage of all the free publicity.' Patently untrue of course, but worth repetition if only because it was just part of the push Dandelion gave Clifford, recognising him as the most commercial act they had ever signed, and the one most likely to succeed. As fellow Dandelion people will know, that once healthy flower is now a pruned stalk due to the fact that insufficient followers could be found, prepared to believe that not everything connected with John Peel was in the heavy Germanic, Indian or Acid San Franciscan style, and not every group that he befriended were no-hope musicians. Now Clifford T. Ward has made an album which is receiving acclaim from all quarters and it is one of my favourites of the year. At that rate an interview was just what was needed so we did one.

The Beginning
I get a little bit tired talking about all this side of it, because I have seen it all so often on Dandelion press releases but briefly, I started off at school by playing dances, Christmas concerts and things in Stourport near Kidderminster. After that I went on to play youth clubs and then I was in a semi-pro band doing three or four gigs a week. Finally we turned professional and made a record for EMI - having no success, we worked up and down the country, going abroad and working in France and Germany. The first record we had out was on Columbia and was called 'Candy To Me' and was written by Holland-Dozier-Holland, that brilliant songwriting team. It must have been the worst song they ever wrote because it was dreadful and awful. The group that I was in, at that time, was called The Secrets. Absolutely nothing happened, then the contract expired, but meanwhile I had signed a writing contract with Immediate and Andrew Oldham. I didn't make any records with Immediate, because at that time I was just a writer, but one or two of my songs were published by his Company. A band recorded one of them, I can't remember the name now, it was out on the Spark Label and it was a song called 'The Glory Broom Show'. I remember receiving this cheque from Andrew Oldham for £15 and it was just before the time when the company liquidated. I was in two minds whether to cash this cheque or to keep it, because it had this big Andrew Oldham signature scrawled all over the cheque. I was short of money and I cashed it.

I have no idea what happened to the other people in the Secrets, except of course, Ken Wright, who is now in my band. The bass player certainly isn't a musician anymore, but I don't know about the guitarist. However, when Immediate collapsed, at the same time things began to be pretty bad within the group. We started to get into some rather tricky situations with small time agents who seemed to be bleeding us. They seemed to be making money out of us, and we didn't seem to be getting any. This reached a climax where we just packed up. I then went around to the Labour Exchange and started signing on, receiving my weekly pittance and wondering what the hell I was going to do. Finally, someone suggested school teaching. So, as I had 'A' levels, I applied to Teachers Training College and got in. I spent three years at College and all the time I continued writing and signed a new publishing contract with Blue Mountain Music, which is part of the Island Records organisation. The rest speaks for itself, as I sent tapes to John Peel and he passed them on to Clive Selwood with a note saying, 'What do you think of this? Clive sent the tape back with a note saying something like, 'It's all right if you like million sellers'. Unfortunately, we haven't realised that yet.

Then, as you know, Clive Selwood and John Peel decided to terminate the Dandelion thing as a company, and Clive telephoned Tony Stratton-Smith and said, 'Are you interested in any of my artists?' Tony said that he was and Clive

Clifford T. Ward: The Kidderminster Killer



sent along a large pile of Dandelion albums. Tony has subsequently told me how he went home for the weekend, and had a great pile of albums to listen to, and he telephoned Clive on the following Monday and said that he wanted me. He said that he thought that when he telephoned Clive, Clive would tell him that Polydon had got me - they hadn't, so I signed with Charisma. I have also suggested to Tony that perhaps he made the wrong decision, that perhaps he should have signed Medicine Head, as they are in the charts.

The Albums
There was no conscious attempt to equate the content of the current album with the previous one. Although I shouldn't really say this, I suppose it is part of my style, though that sounds a bit conceited to say that, but what I mean is that the connection is only a sort of metaphorical one. You mention that you see a similarity between 'Coathanger' from the first album, and 'Where's It Going To End?' from the second album, and I suppose you are right. There is a definite similarity, but it is just that I love the idea of metaphor and I don't know whether it is obvious, but I try to give a great deal of importance to the lyrics. The motorcar metaphor in 'Where's It Going To End?' for example, was conceived when I was caught up myself in a traffic jam and I had to be at a certain place by a certain time and it was important that I was there. I could see that I wasn't going to make

it, because of the traffic situation. I didn't sit there and start to write a song, but later I thought back on it and the idea occurred to me of someone being caught up in a traffic jam, who has to meet his girl at a particular time, and their love situation isn't as good as it should be anyway. He is not going to be there at the right time, he is unsure whether she is going to be there and wait for him. In fact, he thinks she is not going to be there. This sort of develops to his thinking what their love has become. I see it as a symbol of what our society is now, with the motorcar being very much a part of the 20th century and this particular stage in the development of our society, our technological sort of advance, and I think that the motor car is important. I am not decrying the motorcar, and I am not speaking in its favour—I am simply saying that it is a symbol of our society and, therefore, it is relevant to use it. So I would argue that it isn't contrived. People have said that to me about that particular song. My wife for instance, said 'How the hell can you talk about love and a motorcar?' but love is important and the motorcar is important, so why shouldn't I talk about them. Also, you have mentioned the obvious similarity between 'Carrie', 'Gaye' and 'Rayne', because they are all girls' names; however, there is nothing more in that, I suppose, than that it is part of my conditioning in pop music. I was brought up on pop music where you get an occasional song with a girl's name, and I suppose I have always liked the idea of writing a song which uses a girl's name as a title. You also mentioned my apparent fascination with circuses. 'The Dubious Circus Company' on the new album relates to a circus company with a difference. It stems from a short story which I wrote which is based on a band of crooks who wander around the countryside fronting as a circus, but in fact they are not really a circus, but a bunch of con-men. They con people into coming back for a special show late at night, whereupon they have this system similar to the sailors who used to shanghai people into the navy—the press-gang system. They entice people back late at night and they get them in an enclosed situation and they do them over. 'Circus Girl' from the first album, on the other hand, was about a girl who had various devious qualities which we won't talk about, but which were there for the customer to look into if he wanted. I wanted to try and sort of inject something into the circus which people would normally not associate with a circus.

A lot of the time there are personal reasons for writing songs. For example, Sam, on the second album, is one of my children. He is just 6—he is the one in the front in the yellow t-shirt in the picture, keeping the dog under control. Inevitably, several of the songs are about my wife Pat. On the current album, 'Home Thoughts' is really about her, because it is about the way I felt at a particular time when I was away from home for a considerable amount of time, working in France in a band. I was working in a place called Fontainebleau, which you may

know. It is about 20 miles south of Paris and it is famous for its forests among other things, and I was there in mid-summer a few years ago. We were playing at this club six nights a week, from 6pm to well into the morning, so my days were pretty free, and I would go off wandering in the forests and take my poetry book with me and sit and read and listen to the yellowhammers singing, and I used to think about home. Obviously, it is not unique, most people who are away from home miss their family and I just tried to recapture some of that sentiment in the song.

'Time The Magician' is about growing older. It is a sort of lament of youth really, the passing of youth, remembering what it was like to fall in love, when one first fell in love. I met my wife at school, and that was the big thing. We both went to the same school, met there—it was a marvellous experience, something which you never forget, and it is something which is just a sort of reflection really. On the other hand, 'Crisis' is nothing to do with my personal life. When I wrote that one, up until the time the album was finished, I never worried about it, because I had never associated it with me. It was just a fictitious thing, you know, semi-humorous about the sort of situation that could occur, but for some reason, there was one point when I was listening to it when it suddenly occurred to me, 'Gosh! people might think that is a sort of personal song, and that is the way that I carry on.' It worried me for a time, because I hoped people wouldn't think that, but I suppose it is inevitable. I am not trying to slam anybody. The way people live is their own business, I just had this humorous idea of a fellow turning up at this party, and he sees a girl, thinks she is very nice, and then he realises that it is his wife, and the whole thing gets a bit complicated. With 'Open University' I wanted to say something about the educational system. If you listen to that song on a superficial level, it just appears as a humorous song, but really I was trying to say something on a more satirical level, because there is a lot in the educational system that I don't like, and I wanted to try and put it into a song, but it is a difficult thing to try and do without upsetting a lot of people, and I didn't want to be openly downing. Also, I didn't want to be too intellectual so that people wouldn't know what I was talking about, so I tried to create a situation there, but in a way it has a sort of undertone to it of disapproval of our educational system. How it moulds people into places in pigeon holes. I am surprised that you don't like 'The Traveller' because you are the first person to say that. The whole concept of the song was my idea, and I sort of had it in my head from the beginning. You see, I must confess, right up until the album was released, that that was the only album track that I wasn't happy with. Not because of the song which I still think is good, and I mean what I say in it. I think lyrically it is very sound, and I am saying

something, and to me what I am saying is very honest and important and relevant. Even up to the children singing at the end, it's all very much part of it. I didn't just say, 'Oh I know, I'll just use some kids singing on it, because that is in, it's good to do that.' I had the idea of the song, and it seemed to be the natural climax of the song to have the children spelling out what the sophisticated adults were missing, taking The Bible at its face value and accepting Christ for what he was, which is what most of us are not able to do today for some reason or other. So lyrically, I think it succeeds and I really do think that, I am saying that humbly, you mustn't get me wrong, and I am not being conceited about it. Where it fails, I think, is in the performance. I think it should have been done a lot better, and I still hear the song being done much better than I did it on the album. I am still angry with myself and a bit disappointed for not giving it a much better treatment. However, I think it is possibly the best, or one of the best songs on the album.

Musicians

I changed the bass player from the first album to the second, because the first one, Bev Pegg, really couldn't afford the time. The nucleus of musicians that I use have all got jobs, but he was working for his father who has a factory near Stourbridge. Bev is a director of this company, and he has to put a lot of time in and music is just a hobby for him. He didn't feel he could put in the time that it needed. He is not really a bass player, he spends more time playing guitar and banjo than playing bass and I wanted to improve the bass sound, so I had to find myself a bass player, who is a local chap from just outside Kidderminster in a little village called Bayton; in fact, that is very near to where I am going to live. We have just bought a little bungalow with a nice little acre of land in a village called Pensax in Worcestershire and we are moving into this place in July. It is beautiful, and that's not far from where Terry Edwards, the bass player, lives. It is a gorgeous village, and there is a little village school where my kids are going, and there are only 30 kids at the school. Reverting to the musicians, John Sawyer, who was on the first album, is a friend of mine who plays vibes, but I didn't hear vibes on any of the current album. David Skinner I used on some tracks on the first album, mainly because I wasn't very confident about my own piano playing at that stage, but I obviously became more confident as it went along, so I didn't feel the need to use him, and I played piano myself on the second album. Will Roper, who is mentioned on the first album, only played accidentally. He was one of the tape operators at the Marquee Studios where I recorded the first album, and happened to mention that he played flute, so I just tried him playing flute on one track.

Apart from Terry Edwards, I have two regular backing musicians who I have had with me all the time. They are very talented, I think. Derek Thomas is a very

good guitarist, and Ken Wright is a very good drummer, and they are very loyal and they put up with a lot from me. It would be nice if you could print some of this because they have never had any mention or anything. They are both Kidderminster chaps—Ken, I have known for years because we used to play in the same band when we were both professional. Derek has only joined me in the last couple of years, but they are great, I can upset them without them getting upset if you know what I mean.

Sleeve Notes

(On each of Clifford T. Ward's albums, after a number of the songs, is a little quote written by Clifford himself. I asked him why this was so.)

Well, first of all, these sort of things always start off by accident. I had some sort of, I suppose, conceived idea of having the lyrics published, or put on the cover. We got so far with it, and I got them typed out and I started to look at them, and I just felt that I was pushing it a little bit, you know? Some of the lyrics stand up as poems, some of them, things like 'Cold Wind Blowing' and 'One More Chance' really don't, so I felt that it wasn't the time to publish my lyrics. I see many album covers where lyrics are printed, and for why I don't know, because they are not saying anything and they are dreadful. I think some of my lyrics would stand, or at least I hope they would, but some of them just don't. They are just songs. Sometimes I wonder whether people might pay a bit more attention to the songs if the lyrics were included as part of the record and kids have said the very same thing at school—kids in the fifth and sixth forms. They say, 'Why don't you print the lyrics, because we love to sit and listen to albums and read the lyrics.' It is a subjective thing again, and I just couldn't make my mind up—I just decided, rightly or wrongly, that it

wasn't a good time yet to print the lyrics, so I compromised and went back to putting comments. It is probably an indication of the fact that I don't think the songs are very strong lyrically, if there is nothing written against them on the sleeve. However, at the same time, I thought it would look visually bad to see too much writing on the cover, and I thought a comment on every song was a bit superfluous because some of the songs speak very clearly for themselves, and any comment that I could give would be unnecessary. 'Gaye', for instance, speaks for itself. Probably, 'One More Chance' does, and 'Cold Wind Blowing', so I just didn't want to take it to that extent. Some of the comments are very valid though, like comments against 'The Traveller' and 'Open University', and I think they aid in understanding the song, the next best thing to the lyric. One that I did write something against is 'Wherewithal', which is just a lovely word. It is a song, which, when I wrote it, I didn't think about it too much, but it has turned out quite well. I just like the sound of 'Wherewithal', and I just wanted to write a song with that word as the title, and 'Wherewithal' is the result. I don't know whether I succeeded, because I suppose it is a little bit contrived in that I wanted to be cheeky in a way, using words that I don't hear very often, words like nonpareil and so on. I just wanted to use them, because they are nice words. Reverting to those songs about which I have said nothing on the sleeve, I think that they are probably weak links. However, they are usually in between songs, which I consider to be good ones, and sometimes I feel it is a good idea not to tax people too heavily, but I would be dishonest if I didn't say that in future I would be able to avoid songs like those, because in a way they are slight contradictions to what I am trying to do. I

really do think that a song should say something, whether it has a profound message, whether it is about a simple everyday situation or whatever, it should say something. I don't think 'Cold Wind Blowing' or 'One More Chance' are really saying anything, but as sounds I like them both. I like the mood of both songs, but apart from that I don't think they have any lasting quality. Perhaps a name with whom not too many people are familiar is Theodore Dreiser who is mentioned next to the song 'Carrie'. He was an American author who was very under-rated. He wrote at the turn of the century, and exasperated the American public with his novels, because middle class American society was very respectable at that time and were opposed to anything vaguely immoral. Then he wrote 'Sister Carrie', which is a beautiful story, and if you don't know it, you really should try to read it, because it is one of the best novels I have ever read. Maybe that is going a bit too far, but it certainly is a beautiful novel. It traces the love life of a Chicago saloon manager who falls in love, and he is caught up in American middle class society, and he falls in love with this young girl who comes from one of the mid-west towns. Because of his love for her, he steals money from the saloon and elopes with her. I am not sure why she was called 'Sister' Carrie but perhaps he was trying to show the girl in her family context, and how she broke away from it. Then she went to live with her sister in Chicago, left there and made good. It is based on the American dream of success—rising from nothing, which she did, to become a very successful Broadway comedy actress, and at the same time tracing the decline of this central figure, the saloon manager, to his complete degradation and final suicide. It is a very tragic story. Even more interesting is Dreiser's own autobiography, which is an immense book which I ploughed through one summer. I was fascinated by his own beliefs and tremendous compassion, yet he had this tremendous desire to be successful instilled in him by this traditional American dream. There was a film called 'A Place In The Sun' which starred Elizabeth Taylor and Montgomery Clift and was shown recently on television. That was based on Dreiser's novel 'An American Tragedy'. It was again a very moving story, very poignant.

My main study in college was on Dreiser, and I had to get it checked out for about three weeks before I could start on it, because none of the lecturers in the college had heard of him. They didn't even know that he was worthy of a study, yet it's interesting that in the last couple of years one or two of the universities have resurrected him onto the syllabus.

Musical Tastes

You'd be wrong to think that I was impressed by The Shadows and their type of music—I hated them. In fact I was having a conversation the other day

*Piano white card
was printed
marks a funny dignified appearance*

CLIFFORD T. WARD

*invited you
to
luncheon and a
brief recital
at the
Institute of Contemporary Arts
on August 10th
at 12.30 p.m.*

*Speakeasy
Margaret St. W.I.*



and we were talking about The Shadows and the person to whom I was talking said how important The Shadows were to him, and his own sort of pop development. But I really hated them. At the time I was so bigoted about pop music that I hated everything British and loved everything American, even if it was bad. The sort of Phil Spector and Red Bird things, like The Shangri-Las, The Ad Libs, and The Jelly Beans. I used to despise people like The Shadows, because it was all so plastic and phoney to me. I probably started listening to records in the late fifties, because I can remember Buddy Holly in 1957 doing the London Palladium, which I saw on television and I almost fainted with admiration. I remember Robert Morley coming on and saying 'And now from America is a young gentleman called Holly Buddy, or is it Buddy Holly', and out came Buddy Holly and The Crickets, and you've never heard anything like it—it was an innovation. Another one I liked was Eddie Cochran and those obscure American bands—people like The Hollywood Argyles. I was very much into The Everly Brothers—I used to love their stuff. The same goes for early Elvis. During the early sixties I went overboard for the Beatles like most people, and obviously they're a big influence on me. There's no point in saying anything on the Beatles because everything has been said, and pretty accurately too. I really didn't like the rest of them from that era though; I could really see through Billy J Kramer, Gerry and the Pacemakers, The Fourmost and The Searchers. It was the writing potential that Lennon and McCartney had, that most impressed me. As regards The Stones, I've always liked their sound, but I've never been terribly impressed with them. That must sound awful, because I know that they're so popular. But I don't dislike them, they just passed me by, or I passed them by. Apart from that, I loved The Byrds and people like Moby Grape, heavier type bands from San Francisco. I didn't go very much for The Doors, I don't know why, but I thought Love were amazing. I did enjoy Bread's first album very much but feel that nothing that they have done since has quite come up to it. My major influences now, if they are influences, people that I really admire anyway, people that I have been listening to over the last few years are Jim Webb, Randy Newman, Paul Simon, and Nilsson up until his last couple of albums. I just felt that I wanted to find him and give him a good shaking, because I feel that he's just destroyed himself. He was such a talent, and then he came over here and started to make those stupid albums—I just wonder what has happened to him. I really had a tremendous admiration for him. Really, I just like music if it's good. I've got a lot of records in my collection that are just one-off things. The people that I keep buying are Randy Newman, Jim Webb and Joni Mitchell—tremendous talents.

Teaching

I'm qualified to teach English and religious instruction, because I studied literature and divinity at college. You're quite right in thinking that I studied Keats and Wordsworth for a year, and the later poets, and I loved them. However, I like modern poets too. I have a great affection for Phillip Larkin and Thom Gunn, and I even like some of Roger McGough's poetry. I think it would be too presumptuous to say that Keats and Wordsworth influenced my writing, because their ability to write thoughts and poetry are far greater than I could attain, but I certainly have a great affection for their poems, particularly Keats, who I think is my favourite. I love reading his poetry. There is a line in 'Ode On A Grecian Urn' where he says (and I'm not just saying this, it has influenced me), 'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter'. What he is saying is that the melodies that you can imagine in your own head are far nicer than anything that can be put down on paper, and I often feel the same thing. I have ideas floating around in my mind, then when I come to put them down I seem to lose such a lot. There are religious overtones to some of my songs. 'The Traveller' and 'The Dream' both have religious themes and both are my own thoughts and observations. 'The Dream' is a statement of my own religious doubts, whereas 'The Traveller' is, if you like, more a damnation of what our sophisticated society has become, how we don't seem to be able to accept Christ as the evangelist presented to us; his life style and his beliefs. So I see a situation, and I think the idea has probably been tried before, whereby if Christ returned, although I don't specifically state that it is Christ who returns, but one of the prophets, or someone in his name, I feel that he would be received in the same way that he was received by his own people two thousand years ago. In fact I don't teach religious instruction, but sometimes I think it's a pity, because I was trained. I'd hate to come on like Cliff Richard, because I don't have any strong religious beliefs myself. I'm very much an agnostic. I don't think that kids are more opposed to being taught religion than English. However I think that that's because of the rigid way in which it's taught. The system insists on things like school assembly which I think is a waste of time.

Arrangements

Richard Hewson is responsible for most of the arrangements, and I have a lot of respect for him. I think he is a very sensitive person. I met him in a typically cold-blooded sort of way. I was in the recording studio, I think, at the end of the first album, and I'd got all of the tracks done, and I wanted to sort of extend the thing a bit more. I heard strings and brass and things, and I think I spoke to my publisher, and said that I wanted to use strings here and there, and I could hear brass there, and what should I do? And he said that I needed an arranger. I

was given a few names and I think that Richard was the first person that I telephoned. I didn't think that I'd get him, because I knew that he'd been associated with The Beatles—for instance he'd done arrangements on the 'Let It Be' album and earlier on the 'Sergeant Pepper' album, but he agreed to come along to the studio, and he came and listened to the material and said that he'd be willing to work with me. Since then, like on the current album, I take the basic song—with rhythm section and voice on—along to Richard's house and I spend a few hours with him and discuss what the number needs, and sometimes I have various ideas of my own, what I want on in the way of an arrangement. And he is pretty good, inasmuch as I'd sing these things to him and he could copy them down and use them. I'm not trying to steal any of his limelight, because most of the things are his work. I'm not quite sure why the Dandelion single, 'Carrie' was a different take from the track on the album. I put it down to my musical frustration at the time, or my lack of experience. There was the situation where I was in the studio for the first time, being able to direct the whole thing, and with no experience of sixteen track, and with not quite knowing what to do, I finished up with two alternative mixes and the result was that we used one as the single and one as the album take.

Working Live

I am trying to avoid working live for as long as possible, not on the basis of the stability of having a job, and not wanting to upset the status quo, because that's not the most important thing in my life. While I recognise that I've a responsibility to my family, I've had enough of living out of a suitcase, living away from home for a long time, and making very little money. When you're in that situation, you have to send what little bits of money you're making home via Post Offices and your family live from day to day, and I would hate to see a situation like that occur. So in that sense I agree with stability, because I don't want to jeopardise lives any more. I would love to do stage work again, but only at such a time as I had achieved some sort of recognition as a recording artist.

Having listened to Clifford's records to distraction in the last couple of weeks, I'm very anxious that he does go on the road. Just to make it a little bit easier, here's a discography. Bear in mind that the Dandelion records, particularly the album, are probably available cheaply somewhere, and they're very much worth having, just as much as the Charisma ones.

ALBUMS

Singer Songwriter (Dandelion 2310216)
Home Thoughts (Charisma CAS1066)

SINGLES

Carrie b/w Sidetrack (Dandelion 2001327)
Coathanger b/w Rain (Dandelion 2001382)
Gaye b/w Home Thoughts From Abroad (Charisma CB205)

John

Back in November, 1972, the Scottish Daily Express music correspondent concluded his Stealers Wheel album review with the following item:

"Much more entertaining, and far from original, is a reissue (on Columbia) of 'The Laughing Policeman,' the immortal epic that was a mainstay of 'Uncle Mac's Children's Favourites' in the days when Radio Two was known as the Light Programme."

Luckily - for Stealers Wheel - music-lovers in America didn't get to hear "The Laughing Policeman." They did, however, get a chance to hear "Stealers Wheel". Their album rocketed up to Number 29 in the U.S. charts and their single "Stuck In the Middle With You" landed them at the Number 3 position. This was all done on the strength of their music. No tours. No television spots.

Below is a sampling of what a few other reviewers have to say about this album.

For over two months now I've been playing Stealers Wheel constantly, and I can tell you from that prolonged experience that it's a great little record, with songs, singing and production more inventive and better matched than practically anything else on the current shelves.

Although the focus is on Egan and Rafferty, an equal share of credit must go to Leiber-Stoller for their brilliant production work. They manage to avoid the obvious at every turn without ever upstaging the band. The production is so attuned to the skills of Stealers Wheel that the ideas must have come from an extended and in-depth collaboration between Leiber-Stoller, their engineers and the musicians.

Stealers Wheel is one of the first Seventies albums to try to do more than just display its Sixties inspirations.

Rolling Stone, May 10, 1973.

I have been collecting records for about 12 years now and I can honestly say this LP is the best I have ever encountered. There have been

better tracks from different albums but for production, songs, the originality and consistency this record tops the lot. It is a joy to play the LP all the way through and then repeat the enjoyable performance. I am not going to say anymore, just that it is a superb record and please save up your new pennies to buy it.

Reading Chronicle, December 8, 1972.

Must be in the album-of-the-year stakes and is considered by many the best debut album by anyone this year.

Production is imaginative and effective and overall this is one of those rare occurrences - an instant classic.

Music Week, December 2, 1972.

The Stealers Wheel album has several virtues and few vices. Good songs carefully written and arranged, a production by Leiber and Stoller which bears the marks of care, thought and imagination and, above all, the considerable talents of Joe Egan and Gerry Rafferty.

Record Mirror, December 23, 1972.

Lieber and Stoller had fine musicians to work with for a start. This album is a must for any collection.

Melody Maker, December 2, 1972.

The songs are melodic, the harmonies startling and the production immaculate.

Disc, November 25, 1972.



ROY BUCHANAN GUITAR AGE



ZZ: Tell me about "Messiah Will Come Again". I felt that was very sad.
 RB: Well, I wrote the words when I was nine years old. I lived out in this small desert town, and the people out there were real depressed, farm workers, and they held on by the skin of their teeth, and the only thing they really have is religion. So I started picturing the whole world as that little town, and I wanted to have hope for them. So I wrote down the words to it, then I forgot all about it till I did a TV show, and they asked me if I had any songs—anything that would represent how I felt back then. So I did "Messiah" and they said "You've got to do that song on the TV show." I was really embarrassed, I thought it was really corny. But I did it, and I had to work out a melody for it. I never managed to find the right melody, so I just talked at the beginning and just played the rest of it. Instead of a song, I made it an instrumental ental.
 ZZ: You actually have to persuade yourself to sing.
 RB: Yeah, I never was a singer. I don't have no voice. But no matter where I go anymore, they ask me to sing. It's awful hard to be just a guitar player. They always want to hear something that you verbally do—talk or something. I can't talk either, so I just try to sing, but I can't really.
 ZZ: I heard that on this tour, the sound

people were always telling you to shout up a bit.
 RB: Yeah, I'm kind of embarrassed about my voice. I keep back away from the mike, and the sound men keep turning me up. Pretty soon it starts feeding back and squeaking.
 ZZ: And you have a lead singer travel with you, which I thought rather odd when I saw the band. Not being personal to the lead singer!
 RB: Yeah, Rodney, he was the second voice with Roy Orbison, and this isn't really his type of music, what we're doing. It's awfully hard for a singer to come and just fit in with an instrumental group. But he does okay, I think he does a good job considering it's not really his bag.
 ZZ: In future, do you think you can get away with an instrumental group—with yourself singing one or two songs?
 RB: I'll probably always have somebody else to sing. I might get into singing a little more, I don't know. Right now I'm trying to hire this girl singer that works with Johnny Otis. If I get her there won't be no worry about the singing, because she is outasight.
 ZZ: What did you feel about this English tour?
 RB: The first few shows that I played, I was so scared that you wouldn't believe it! I didn't know how they'd accept me over here. I was really pleased though, because I knew the English people were

the first ones to appreciate the blues—besides me, the first whites. The Americans either overlooked it or they were ashamed of it. They didn't see the beauty of it, they looked at it as a degrading music.
 ZZ: Going back to session days and things like that, where did you work out of first of all as a session-man?
 RB: Let's think . . . I can't remember where I started. I guess it was Chicago.
 ZZ: And that would be about when, roughly?
 RB: Fifty-seven, fifty-six, something like that, with Dale Hawkins. The first record we did was a thing called 'My Babe'.
 ZZ: With the Hawks?
 RB: That was later, that was about '58 or '59.
 ZZ: Did you make a lot of records with him?
 RB: Not that many. I did three or four things with him.
 ZZ: That period, the end of the fifties, was a very good period for writing, because it's now come back. You use in fact 'Sweet Dreams', which must have been written then.
 RB: Don Gibson I think was the first one that did it. I'll be honest with you, the two versions I liked best were the guy that had the hit back about '65 on it—I can't remember his name. I play

it more like he sings it than I do anybody else—I put my own things into it but I kind of hear his voice in my head when I do it. His version, and Faron Young—the hillbilly singer. I just kind of cross-bred both of them.
 ZZ: Anyway, we can get back to that. At that time, when you were with Dale Hawkins, what sort of music were you playing?
 RB: Well, it depended really on what kind of shows we were doing. Like, when we played night-clubs we used to play whatever we'd feel like playing. When we'd do stage shows we'd do his hits—'Suzie Q', 'My Babe'.
 ZZ: And you'd go all round America at that time.
 RB: Yeah, we went all over the country. We did six months of one-nighters, six nights a week. I think there was about six in the band, and we had to sleep sitting up, from one town to the next.
 ZZ: You had one of those band buses, did you?
 RB: No, it was just a station wagon. It was terrible. That broke me of travelling for a while. That was one of the hardest things I ever did. I never could sleep in a car, but let me tell you something, if you get tired enough you can! After about three or four nights, I was sleeping just sitting there!
 ZZ: Do you think that's good for a musician?
 RB: It gets to be a bore, it gets to be a drag. It's hard, it turns out to be work, and all the fun leaves it when you play too much. You really get to cheating the people, because you can't perform your best when you're just so beat you can't feel anything.
 ZZ: So what happened after that six months on the road, besides sleeping for a week?
 RB: Where'd I go then . . . on to LA, I think it was. Starved for about a month, because the things I was trying to sell was the blues and jazz and nobody understood it back there. I was tired of playing commercial things, and Hawkins got so he didn't work that many night-clubs, so we didn't have any freedom. Anyway, James Burton called me up, and he said Bob Luman was looking for a guitar player in Las Vegas. Bob came down and we played together for about thirty minutes, and he said "Get packed up and come to Vegas, you got your job". So I went there and stayed for about a year.
 ZZ: What did you do, back singers?
 RB: I backed up Bob Luman, yeah. Matter of fact, we went to Japan. After a while, he got rid of the rest of the group. He played guitar himself, he played rhythm, and it was just me and him.
 ZZ: A year in Vegas must be . . .
 RB: Oh man, I had a good time! Didn't make any money, 'cause at one time I was drawing my pay up to two and a half months in advance!
 ZZ: On the machines or the tables?
 RB: A little bit of both. I never was lucky at gambling.
 ZZ: I don't really think Vegas is a good

place for a musician to go!
 RB: No. All musicians are gamblers, every one I know is. Crazy. After that I went to Chicago. I went to Calumet City, which was like a freak place. I'd be backing up striptease artists, and they had like sadist shows, you know.
 ZZ: Where is it?
 RB: I'd never be able to tell you how to get to it! It's in Illinois, sort of in the suburbs of Chicago. It was really a hell-hole of a town. Had more guns pointed at me in that town than I ever thought about. You get in trouble without even trying, you know.
 ZZ: Did you ever get guns pointed at you when you were playing?
 RB: I've had people try and drag me off stage. But they usually wait till you get outside, you know. Terrible things, man.
 ZZ: Did you write anything in those days?
 RB: I wrote a few things. I'd mark them down and keep them for a few months, then throw them away. Never tried doing anything with them. I'd make up instrumentals and things like that. Instrumentals, I used to write one of those every night. When I get to feeling good, I wanna play something different, so I'd tell the guys I had an idea and we'd work it out. I really don't like to repeat myself when I play, which I do a lot now because people expect me to. I mean, how many ways can you play 'Sweet Dreams'? And if I played it some other way they'd say "He don't play it like he does on the record". So I keep it pretty straight. I used to do quite a bit of improvising. I'd pick the things I thought I did best and I'd put them into a song, so every night I'd come up with a different song really.
 ZZ: Then what happened after that?
 RB: I called Dale up, and he was playing in Philadelphia. I heard he needed a guitar player so I went up there and worked with him again. Then we went to Canada, that's where I met Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks.
 ZZ: Tell me a bit about the Hawks in those days. What stuff were they into?
 RB: Top forty. They were doing the same thing that I was doing really. You had to eat.
 ZZ: Who was in the Hawks then?
 RB: Levon and Robbie. They're the only two out of the Band that I know. They had a guy named Rebel back them on bass, and they changed drummers, rhythm guitars and piano players about every other week.
 ZZ: So how long were you together with Robbie and Levon?
 RB: Not really that long, I worked with them for a couple of weeks, then I left. Then I came back later, I was gonna start work with them permanently but I decided I was gonna get my own thing.
 ZZ: Was there any inkling that the Band was coming along then?
 RB: Oh, they were always good players, but what they were playing was necessary to eat.
 ZZ: Had Robbie written any of his stuff then?

RB: Robbie was just learning to play guitar then. I remember he tried to write a blues now and then, that's about all I can remember him writing. And he had trouble even finding blues changes, you know, three chords! But he always had the talent to be good, I knew he'd be a good guitar player.
 ZZ: What do you think of guitar players today? Do you think rock guitarists get away with a lot through amplification?
 RB: I like the leaders, like Clapton, Hendrix, Beck, Jimmy Page. I respect them, because they had the guts to go out and play whatever they wanted to play. And they did it at a time when it would be accepted. There was a lot of imitators of all these people, but they're the ones I really like, because if you've got to wait for somebody else to do something before you do it, it don't mean as much.
 ZZ: So you left the Hawks after two weeks, and went back.
 RB: Yeah, I went back to Philadelphia. Let's see . . . I went to Washington D.C. then, got married (biggest mistake I ever made!), then I went to Canada. We flew to New York and did a session. We used the band—I think Levon did some singing—King Curtis played horn, and I got the idea I was gonna go again, so I went back to Philadelphia and I started doing a lot of studio work there.
 ZZ: Who with?
 RB: Freddie Cannon, Bobby Gregg . . . whoever marched into the studio, you know, I just sat there, waiting for work.
 ZZ: What was it like playing behind Freddie Cannon, because all these people are different to work with?
 RB: Well, that was one requirement to survive in the old days, you had to know how to play a little bit of everything. You really did, or you just wouldn't last, you starved. His music was real simple. Really a drag, to put it quite bluntly. I like Freddie as a person, you know, but his music is a little too commercial for me.
 ZZ: But all that time, you'd been playing commercial music really.
 RB: Yeah, but I kept trying to escape it, that's the reason I was jumping around so many times. But I'd always wind up doing it, anyway.
 ZZ: So what was your escape route in the end?
 RB: I got fed up with the whole thing, so I figured out another way of playing what I wanted would be playing small clubs for not much money, and mix it up—play half what I wanted to play and half what the customers wanted, you know. So I did that.
 ZZ: Was that with the Monkey Men?
 RB: Monkey Men! Oh Lord! You know about the Monkey Men??? Alice Cooper stole everything from the Monkey Men. Did you ever see him?
 ZZ: Yes, three weeks ago in Detroit.
 RB: Are they still doing the freak-out thing, the hanging?
 ZZ: Well, he doesn't do the hanging, he's got a guillotine now.
 RB: Actually, the Monkey Men were the

originators of that freaky bit, like cutting heads off and the baby-stabbing bit. I remember they had all the lights and the whole works, and they used to put meat in this mannequin's head, raw meat, and this light would come on and you'd see Sam Allan dressed in a Nazi uniform, with this machete, all these sirens and smoke and everything, and it looked so real, he'd cut the head off, the blood squirted out—disgusting really. And James, he looked like a rabbi, and he had this pulpit, and he sang out of the Bible, he'd just turn the pages, and if he felt like joining in with the group, that was part of the thing, he'd just start singing out of the Bible. Their ambition in life was to be on the Ed Sullivan show and commit suicide. That was their ultimate goal.

ZZ: And what was your role? [amid much laughter]

RB: Well, as soon as I found out about the suicide bit, I said it's time to move again!

ZZ: How long were you with them?

RB: About a month, I guess. They were really great people, they were good guys. I liked every one of them, you know, but some of those freaky things they do—it was even too much for me.

ZZ: Did they dress you up?

RB: I could do anything I wanted to do. I usually just sat there in amazement, wondering what was going to happen next. I just wore what I wanted to. I got them into the gospel thing, I said "If you're gonna sing out of the Bible, let's do it right!" So we started doing all religious songs, then we started losing jobs, you know, but people really talked about the act. This town Sam was at, he was gonna get one of these big tents and have like a revival meeting. It was really too much.

ZZ: What sort of area did you play, while you were with them?

RB: Up around Philadelphia mostly.

ZZ: Is it funny to see it all revived now?

RB: I've seen it happen a lot of times in a lot of different situations. The wrong people get credit for it, you know. I knew that freaky shit would come in, but I really felt that it should have been the Monkey Men that got the credit for it, because they were doing it years ago—'61, '62, I don't know exactly when.

ZZ: So after the Monkey Men you went into little clubs?

RB: Yeah, I went back to D.C. and worked with this guy named Danny Denver until recently. We got a little job right outside of D.C. in a little night-club called 'Crossroads'. One night two guys with long hair came in—this was a rednecks' place—and the next night it was packed with them. Matter of fact, one of the two guys that came in is my manager. About a week later I got a write-up, you know. This was about 1970. And a week or so later some people came from New York. They sat and watched me for a while, and when I took a break they came back and asked me if I'd do my life-story on television. I really thought they were putting me on, but I said I'd

do it. The reason I did it really was I hadn't been home in thirteen years, you know, to see my folks, and they said you'll get to go home and all that, so I said I'll do it. I was scared to death, I didn't have the nerve. I'm not a good talker or anything. I really didn't think I could do it, but I struggled through it.

ZZ: Which network was that?

RB: It was National Educational Television. It was a ninety minute thing.

ZZ: And this was where the famous bootleg album was made?

RB: It was made in the 'Crossroads', which is kind of a strange place. It's built over a cemetery, and it's called Peace Cross. There's a cross in front of it about twenty or thirty feet high. It's black people that are buried there. It's like a historical place. When the slaves died they'd just drag them out there and bury them. They've remodelled it now, but when I was there the whole place was painted grey. It was really weird. Patsy Cline (who had 1961's biggest US hit 'I Fall To Pieces') started from there, Roy Clark, Jimmy Dean (who made 'Big Bad John'—a No.1 in 1961), it was basically like I said, a redneck place, a hillbilly joint. I was the first rock guy to go in there.

ZZ: What was the reaction the first night you played there?

RB: It was kind of a mixed reception, you know. I didn't play exactly what I wanted to play when I first went there, because this place was known as strictly a hillbilly place. But now and then I started sneaking in some of my stuff, and they were buying it. They'd stop dancing and sit down and watch and applaud, you know. So pretty soon it was my whole thing, the singer would come up like the last fifteen minutes.

ZZ: So the bootleg was made there. But you wanted it made, so it was a sort of bootleg in reverse!

RB: Well, it's against the law to bootleg, especially when you're signed up with a company. So I say it was a demonstration record for Polydor, and was copped off me, you know. I had nothing to do with it really.

ZZ: But I gather you'd like it released by Polydor.

RB: Well, it wasn't in stereo or anything, so they wouldn't be able to do that.

ZZ: What was on it?

RB: It was about fifty minutes long. We had blues, a little country—the best version of "Messiah" that I ever did. I wish it had been the one that we could have used and released. It was definitely the best I could have done it. I'll send you a copy of it, because people over here would understand me more. In the States, when they were selling it in the night-clubs, the people there were mad because it wasn't in stereo.

ZZ: Your 1953 Telecaster. I'm amazed at the number of notes you can get out of it.

RB: To me, I think it's about the most versatile instrument. I've tried the other guitars, I've had Gibson, Gretsch, Guild, the whole works, but my sound really is

in a Telecaster. It's close to a woman's voice, closer than a regular guitar, and when I play I hear a woman singing, which usually is my mother. I got more of that quality out of a Telecaster than I can get out of any other guitar.

ZZ: And there's a touch of country there which seems to be influencing rock more now. It was very unrespectable wasn't it, country music.

RB: Yeah. I think it was influenced a lot by rock too, you know, like it's got more sophisticated through the years. Even like the chicken-picking thing, you know. I played that even before James Burton, even though he won't give me credit for it. Even back then, you had trouble with different groups, they'd say "What are you doing?" They wanted it straight—I'm talking about before the pedals had got real fashionable, and you'd play Don Helms type steel, (Hank Williams' player), and that type of stuff. But after rock came out, through the years you can see it's integrated, you know, it's got together a lot. I think they both influenced each other, the types of music.

ZZ: I was interested that you did a Neil Young song, 'Down By The River'.

RB: Yeah, that's on the bootleg album too.

ZZ: So you did that two or three years ago

RB: Yeah, we just started doing it one night. We didn't practise it or anything.

The singer that we had, Chuck Tilley, said "Do you know 'Down By The River'?"

I said "What's the chords to it?" and he called them off. We talked it over for two or three minutes and just did it. I like Neil Young anyway, I like that style.

ZZ: I seem to think that you use your group as a sounding-board. Do they play fixed things all the time?

RB: Well, they're supposed to on certain songs. I don't really have much freedom or concerts, like I could have in a night-club. It should be played the same way every time, because like I said, if I played 'Sweet Dreams' another way they'd say I'd made a mistake, you know, didn't play it right. Yeah, I guess they play a straight pattern.

ZZ: When you get back, what are you going to do then?

RB: We've got some concerts lined up. I think we're going to Las Vegas again. Carnegie Hall too, and the Newport Jazz Festival. And we're supposed to play the Hollywood Bowl.

ZZ: Do you draw jazz audiences a lot in America?

RB: Yeah, I think I draw the jazz guitar players, because a lot of them come up to me.

ZZ: Yet jazz musicians always feel that people in rock have sold out, don't they?

RB: A lot of them do, yes. But the way I play, I don't really use that many gimmicks. The only thing I use is the volume, if you want to call that a gimmick. Because what I play, I do play it—I don't get it through distortion or anything. And that's one thing that the jazz cats do like, they like to hear it played, you know.

Michael Wale

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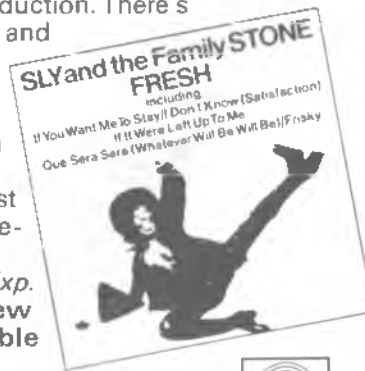
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Let's be traditionally British and say that the weather's pretty amazing at the moment, innit? Sometimes, I feel that rain is the only thing which might make me stay inside and listen to new sounds. I'm writing this under a bit of cloud because the ZigZag animal family was augmented and then within a week depleted. We've acquired another mad dog, named Tiny Dancer, but who'll probably turn into Gargantuan Stomper after a few months. Just a few days after the new pooch began to piss on the carpets, Wink Dinkerson, youngest pussy, was run over, causing a black cloud to hang over the Tobler household. Still, maybe the cat will meet Jim Morrison and Buddy Holly.....

Reverting to more normal subjects, the big thing for me this month was seeing Johnny Rivers and his quite staggering band at a press reception. I could write a whole column about just how excellent was the music produced, but suffice it to say that if you were lucky enough to see this band once in a lifetime, you'd die with a smile. The only recorded reminder so far is a pretty fine album by J Rivers called 'L.A. Reggae', on which appears 'Brown Eyed Girl' which has been my most played track of the month. It often seems to me that Richard Williams has tastes which are in part equivalent to those of the ZigZag staff, and you may have read his report of the evening in his paper. I'm sure he'd agree with me that a full tour by the Rivers group we saw that evening could do nothing to improve the standard of music purveyed in this country. Anyway, you'll soon be seeing the result of little chats I had with Jim Horn and Herb Pederson, who were two stars in an all star band.

News next of a couple of books being written about ZigZag heroes. Nigel Trevena, who did that illustration to 'I'm Waiting For The Man' a few issues ago, is doing a book on Lou Reed and the Velvet. He's asked me not to print his address yet, but we will when it's all finished, and you can order your copies from him. Ralph McHendrey has borrowed my file on the Doors to add to his already vast collections of info on Jim Morrison, and he's writing a book too. If there's anyone else who requires a plug on his or her intended masterwork, let me know.

Now to the records. Top of the list must be 'Christmas at the Patti' featuring ZigZag's number one British band, the supersoft bio-degradable Help Yourself, who'll help you kill unseen germs, restore bounce to your fabrics, prevent hardpad, and give you more miles to the gallon. They're joined by Man, Deke Leonard, Dave Edmunds, Martin Ace, and Ducks Do Luxe. It's a double ten inch album for

under thirty bob, but run because they're going to be in great demand, and it's a limited edition.

Then in no particular order, a heap of records which amused me a bit. Let's start with Kenny Young, whose record I only got a couple of days ago, but who does a version of his own song 'Under the Boardwalk', which you just must hear. On Vanguard, a label which always demands respect, there's Al Anderson, late of the underrated NRBQ. Al was previously in another Vanguard group, the Wildweeds, and his current country rock stuff is much to my taste, as are the two NRBQ albums, on CBS and Kama Sutra. A trio of re-issues which I enjoyed were a compilation Ike and Tina Turner LP of Kent/Modern tracks, which also boasts the Ikettes 'I'm So Thankful', a Tobler favourite for some years, a Fats Domino album in mono called 'Play It Again, Fats' which is so much better than the remixed versions, and a 'Best Of' featuring The Friends of Distinction, who unhappily seem to have disappeared of late.

More records now, and a team mark for trying for the excellent Siegel-Schwall band, who attempted to record with a symphony orchestra, with predictably uneven results. Even so, it got them on to the most prestigious record label of all, Deutsche Gramophon, and that's something to tell their grandchildren. Also, Corky Siegel plays a mean harp. Other bluesmen to reappear are Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, who are joined on their latest album by such luminaries as John Mayall, Arlo Guthrie and Sugar Cane Harris, so it deserves checking out. As you've probably read, the Hendrix albums previously on Track have now been re-issued, except for the first two. So watcha gonna do 'bout it, Polydor? Well, done to them anyway for completing the Mother re-issues with 'Ruben and the Jets'.

Other acts I've seen this month include Casey Kelly, who was excellent at a lunch time pub show, doing very amusing things with Beach Boys songs. It's a shame that such moments can't be recorded, for I'm sure the man has great presence, but that's not a thing that records can ever demonstrate. I also caught Sha Na Na at the Rainbow, my first visit to Finsbury Park for a while, and it's a shame, but there's less magic the second time you see them. Finally, Carolanne Pegg, a lady who appears to be doing amazing things with just two props—her left breast and a wicked looking violin—seems to be singing nice songs, and I'm going to do a piece on her soon.

A few more records, starting with McKendree Spring, who are touring, and who recorded one of the most staggering tracks I've heard in ages, have got a new album out. Listen and try and see them because they're somewhat unique. Chris Darrow, of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band chart in ZZ 29, has a solo album out soon, so watch out, and also keep your ears open for Nektar, four British lads just like us, but who record and live in Germany. Listening to their double album 'Sounds Like This', my greatest impression

was that this was a band who hadn't lost direction after psychedelia, and instead of getting into that tedious jamming for hours thing enjoyed by all your Grateful Deads, apparently designed for people who are permanently stoned out of their heads, they've progressed into playing thoughtful, original and most important, enjoyable music. Please have a try at this one—I think that something could come of it. Pete's hero (mine too), John Stewart will shortly have his new album 'Cannons In The Rain' out on RCA, so go and get it. Such talent as this man has is very, very rare. We may give away fivers one day to anyone with complete sets of John Stewart and Kevin Coyne albums.

Now, singles, which as has been said before, are an important part of a real ZigZagger's collection. The new Neil Sedaka single is called 'Standing On The Inside'. It's number is MGM 2006-267, and it's a classic. By the way, RCA have just brought out a budget line in cartridges, so if any of you are lucky enough to possess an 8-track, you can get Sedaka's 'Oh Carol' album for less than £2, and cause accidents trying to emulate the astonishing vocal backing.

Other nice singles which you might like are by Bridget St John (Dandelion lives!) on MCA, Ian Matthews, produced by Mike Nesmith, on Elektra, and by some near neighbours of our man France, John Otway and Willie Barrett on Track. This last one was produced by Pete Townshend, and is called 'Murder Man'. It will also become a classic miss that should have been a hit if people don't buy it soon. This section will now close with mentions of Jaki Whitren (lovely voice) and Libido, which is Mike Liber, once guitarist with Python Lee Jackson, and another ex-Dandelion man.

Wot a lot I've writ, as Slade might say. Still, there are two other important things to note. First, Don Agravati has made an impeccable album for Elektra, who seem to be moving with some good new talent, if Curt Boetcher and Don are anything to go by. Even allowing for my well known prejudices, I can recommend those two without hesitation. Finally, that well known and much respected friend of ZigZag, Andrew Lauder, played me a single by a group called Memphis Bend, called 'The Right String But The Wrong Yo-Yo'. The group consists of Mickey Gee on guitar, Tom Riley on drums, and the amazingly named Lincoln Carr on bass. Consult the Man family tree and you'll see where they came from. The record is just the best recreation of the Sun sound that I've ever heard, and maybe Carl Perkins should give up right now, because this group sound more like him than he does, and they're much better too. Please listen for this when it comes out on UA, because it's so very very good. Micky Gee just may be the British equivalent of Roy Buchanan.

Till the next one, keep rocking and don't get sunstroke. Now I'm off to try and train the new dog to fetch my slippers and change the records.

John

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ROBIN MACKIE/SOUNDS

"Reach Out really is excellent and the band's forthcoming album should be worthy of your attention."

JOHN PEEL

"Average magic!"

RAY TELFORD/SOUNDS

"The celtic soul warriors have scored another triumph for James McBrown, Aretha McFranklin, Otis McRedding and all the others."

PAUL WEIR/NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

PAPERBACK PERUSALS

LENNON REMEMBERS. Penguin 40p
THE PENGUIN JOHN LENNON. Penguin (reissue) 60p
TARANTULA. Bob Dylan Panther 35p
THE COLOSSUS. Poems by Sylvia Plath Faber 50p
DAY DREAMS AND OTHER STORIES. Frank O'Connor Pan 35p
THE HOLY DOOR AND OTHER STORIES. Frank O'Connor Pan 35p
THE TALKING TREES. Sean O'Faolain Penguin 30p

The best interview I've ever read about the Beatles was when Jann Wenner interviewed John Lennon for Rolling Stone three years ago. Now, under the title LENNON REMEMBERS, it appears in Penguin, in an edition far better than that I saw recently in America. Penguin have had the bright idea of collecting together a great many photographs to augment the text and I find them almost as fascinating as the interview. The reason why this is worth buying is because it shows for the first time The Beatles warts and all, how they really were. I gather afterwards there were the usual statements by Lennon that he disowned the whole thing. Certainly Derek Taylor, the Beatles' press officer who was rather heavily put down in the interview didn't wish it to be repeated when I interviewed him for my book Vox-pop last year. And sometimes it is the straightforward almost tongue in cheek question which gets the best and most direct answer as when Wenner asks: 'What accounts for your great popularity?' Lennon: 'Because I fuckin' did it. I copped out in that Beatle thing. I was like an artist that went off....Have you never heard of like Dylan Thomas and all of them who never fuckin' wrote, but just went up drinking and Brendan Behan and all of them, they died of drink....everybody that's done anything is like that. I just got meself in a party, I was an emperor. I had millions of chicks, drugs, drink, power, and everybody saying how great I was. How could I get out of it? It was just like being in a fuckin' train. I couldn't get out.' After my blandishments of last month Penguin seem to have made a small recovery in their lists of the coming weeks. Besides LENNON REMEMBERS there's also that zany piece of original Lennon writing about Silly Norman and Nicely, Nicely Clive etc. under the title THE PENGUIN JOHN LENNON.

The refreshing thing about reviewing paperbacks is that you don't get too much hype from the publishers. By the time a



book comes out in paperback the hardback houses have lost interest in it anyway.

However, they have already conjured up in the PR minds what is a ZIGZAG book, and good luck to them, although most times it doesn't coincide with my taste. Thus was winged to me the worst paperback of the moment, Bob Dylan's TARANTULA. Thank God he chose a musical rather than a literary career.

I was in America recently which always means for my buying literally dozens of paperbacks because they come out so much more quickly after the hardback than they do here. Come to think of it, there ought to be an import bookshop because for about 60p you could buy the American hardback bestseller Johnathan Livingston Seagull which is an amazing, short little paen to flight and one seagull in particular. Imagine going to a publisher and saying you wanted to write a book about a seagull, and adding that the book would only be about 5-10,000 words long? I'm thinking of writing one about my cat Tigger (as in Winnie The Pooh) who has worked out how my typewriter works, which is more than I have, as Claire who re-types all this stuff will bear out. Tigger currently thinks she's a parrot and likes perching on my shoulder. Which reminds me of a story Brendan Behan told me when I lived in Dublin. When he was a kid he used to lean over O'Connell Street Bridge looking down at the Guinness barges that used to take the precious liquid up to the mouth of the river and then return. Behan would anger the captain immensely by shouting: 'Hey mister, bring us back a parrot.'

Another unusual book I got hold of which will be coming out here in due course is Report from Engine Co 82 written by a fireman about his experiences with a section of the New York fire brigade. Again—just written down on the page—that it's about a fireman's life doesn't sound anything. But it's a great book. A book which you may still be able to get here, which has the same flavour as 'Sir You Bastard' about a police detective and the deals such gentlemen sometimes do. Worth buying if you ever see it around.

Lastly I got hold of Richard Ellmann's 'Identity of Yeats', seeing as he wrote the definitive book on Joyce, which I stumbled across in paperback in The Irish Shop of Wigmore Street a year ago last Christmas. Thankfully escaping the dreaded London for the weekend recently I found a pile of Faber paperbacks at Charing Cross station bookstall. The trouble with paperbacks is that once they've been released that's that. Very few shops hang onto them, presumably handing them back on a sale or return deal. The result is you should always buy a paperback you want when you see it, or you may never get the chance again. Still, there was this pile of not even recently published books hidden around a corner of the bookstall. The best being Sylvia Plath's poems. Her only novel 'The Bell Jar' was my favourite novel of last year, a personal account of someone cracking up and fighting their way back to recovery.

Pan keep their Irish list in action with two collections of Frank O'Connor's short stories, THE HOLY DOOR and DAYDREAMS while Penguin bring out Sean O'Faolain's short story collection THE TALKING TREES. They are similar writers with a knack for the De Maupassant-like twist to the story line. They write about a world gone by, although they both earned much of their money as short story writers from the same market—The New Yorker magazine. O'Connor is dead now, but O'Faolain lives on helping to run the Arts Council of Ireland. How much better to have a participator in charge rather than a successful official as we have in England! I'm not sure whether that feverish adaptor of things Irish, Hugh Leonard, has ever adapted any of Frank O'Connor's work for television but he has certainly done justice to the stories of O'Faolain. If you like short stories these three books contain some of the best.

Michael Wale



Jay Bernstein, Public Relations man, blows the Byrd trumpet: "One of the few groups to start out with a definite goal in mind, the Byrds, in 3 years, have now achieved that goal... to bring maturity to the rock'n'roll field. They have succeeded because their direction has been clear and straight and not confused with any ideas of aiming principally for hit records or quick wealth". Ho ho ho! My god, these publicists can sure conjure up some pompous bullshit when they're getting paid to.

Gram Parsons, guided by the same business manager as the Byrds joins the floundering trio as pianist/rhythm guitar/vocalist in March - principally to fill out the sound and add "a new dimension to their music". Parsons, from Georgia, had been hung up on rock, but at Harvard in 1966, he'd formed what was to become the International Submarine Band, the fore-runner of country-rock groups, although its influence was never very wide spread. The band moved to LA, playing the clubs and bars wherever they could, and though it was a fairly loose organisation, they eventually recorded an album in 1967 for the LHI label, owned by Lee Hazelwood, once Duane Eddy's manager and later a cabaret pop star himself.

The release of this album (LHI-S-12, 001 - not released in England) was for some reason delayed until the band had broken up, and only weeks later, Gram was in the Byrds. "It wasn't until Chris Hillman and I got together" he says, "and sang a bunch of country songs that we convinced McGuinn that it would be best to take a country excursion... their imitation Dylan songs weren't working too well".²

So in came Parsons, who I have always considered the nigger in the Byrds wood pile.

Within weeks of his joining, the Byrds came to Europe (in May), playing two gigs in that dirty cavern which used to house Middle Earth in Covent Garden. The line up was Roger McGuinn (on Rickenbacker 12string, acoustic 12string and Gretsch Country Gentleman guitars), Chris Hillman on Fender bass, Kevin Kelley on drums (he was great -terrific player, I thought), Gram Parsons on electric piano and acoustic guitar, and Doug Dillard on banjo - including a dazzling solo spot. According to McGuinn, Sneaky Pete Kleinow was also a Byrd but couldn't get over with them.³ As a matter of interest, McGuinn, like the others, had short hair and no facial whiskers at all! (See photos, taken at Middle Earth by Pete Sanders. Roger McGuinn in leather jacket, and Hillman with Doug Dillard).

As a Byrdfan, not only was I totally captivated by the music, but I was also

CHAPTER SIX COUNTRY BYRDS MORE CHANGES SOUTH AFRICA &.....COLLAPSE March 1968 - October 1968

astonished by the degree of musical proficiency... and they must've played every song that they ever knew on that second night - but I wasn't quite so keen on the country stuff they were interspersing.

Between the two Middle Earth gigs, they flew to Rome and a Dutch reader called Gerard Davelaar sent me an excellent tape of one of their performances at The Piper Club (recorded on 7th May 1968). This, of course, is an extremely rare recording, not only because it has Kelley and Parsons playing live, but also because right in there, plunking along with great fervour is Doug Dillard, who was a Byrd only for that tour. You ought to hear him picking away in 'The Chimes of Freedom'. Recording quality is remarkably good, vastly superior to most of the 70/71 era bootlegs for instance, and the full track listing is 'You don't miss your water!'/ 'Hickory Wind!'/ 'I'll feel a whole lot better!'/ 'Chimes of Freedom!'/ 'The Christian Life!'/ 'Turn Turn Turn!'/ 'My Back Pages medley!'/ 'Mr Spaceman!'. (Unfortunately, I don't know where copies of this tape can be obtained - besides, it's illegal!)

Gram Parsons' influence had obviously been immediate; with Hillman's approval he'd persuaded McGuinn that the Byrds future lay in Country & Western - or at least in the area between rock and C&W. They'd take the traditions of Nashville

and adapt them accordingly - in much the same way as Parsons had done in The International Submarine Band. The basic idea was to penetrate the C&W sales area as well as the rock/pop field, thereby attracting a much wider audience. In fact, the Byrds fell between two stools.

They (neither Dillard nor Sneaky Pete were associated with them by now) managed to play 'The Grand Ole Opry', the stronghold of the redneck Tennesseans, but in doing so alienated themselves from the old fans to a certain extent. To compound their misery, the rednecks ignored the sincerity of their attempts and rejected their approaches (witness, for instance, the subsequent put down of 'Ralph', the two-faced drug-store truck-driving DJ who took the piss out of the Byrds on his radio show).

However, they were determined to pursue the Nashville idea, which, they said, represented the antithesis of what they'd been used to in LA.⁴ "I'm terribly disillusioned about LA" Chris said. "You walk down the street and on every corner you see a rock group - but they're not really musicians. They think just because they have long hair and wear an Indian morning coat that they're saying something, that they're making the scene".

"That's right" Gram said, "but to be really honest about wearing an Indian morning coat, you must be an Indian in

the morning. It's part of the whole scene; these people don't wear honest clothes, and they don't produce honest music. They have absolutely no soul or integrity in their music. What we want to do is produce honest music".

"In Nashville we can forget the business end of the trade and concentrate on our music" Roger said.

'Sweetheart of the Rodeo', in my opinion their least outstanding record to date, is released on August 30th (September 27th in England, on CBS 63353), produced once again (and finally) by Gary Usher.⁵ Can't say that I'm wild about the sleeve either; it has its charm maybe, but no photos of the Byrds of the period and (as usual) irritatingly incomplete information... where was it recorded? when? who played on which tracks? etc.

In fact, this album is the worst selling (up until 1971 anyway) of all Byrd albums but was paradoxically the origin of a whole spate of country rock (having predated 'Nashville Skyline', for instance, by eight months).

After an album without a Dylan song, we're straight into one; 'You ain't going nowhere', the words of which Dylan subsequently revised (on his 'Greatest Hits Volume 2', Oct 1971) to "pack up your money, pull up your tent McGuinn - you ain't going nowhere". Well, in mid 1968 McGuinn seemingly wasn't going anywhere in particular - didn't even contribute a single original song to the album (first time yet).

Plenty of the usual Country & Western tongue in cheek style (later carried to excess by the Burritos); loads of pedal steel and Nashville tradition poured over songs about Christianity, forlorn love, remorseful murderers, romantic outlaws (we're all outlaws), empty liquor bottles and broken hearts, bar rooms and piss heads - in fact, the whole Nashville music scene compressed and distilled into a single album.

The vocal harmonies are nice (and corny); we're not missing Crosby yet (can you imagine Crosby having anything to do with an album like this?), and Clarence White appears on his third album as Byrd assistant - he's on 'The Christian Life', 'One Hundred Years From Now' and 'Blue Canadian Rockies'.

Gram Parsons' song (one of only two recorded by the Byrds) 'Hickory Wind' is a great one and is, I believe, the only one on which he sings lead. (No vocal credits were given, purposely, on the sleeve. Parsons' clear voice had originally been very much in evidence on most of the tracks, but then the usual rock-biz ballyhoo broke out over which company held legal contracts to record him, LHI

seemingly had a watertight case and to preclude the necessity of shelling out vast amounts for his release, CBS decided to mix Parsons' contributions out and substitute the voices of either Hillman or McGuinn. To complicate matters further, the legal dispute was resolved at the 11th hour, and the final album was released in that form only for economical and time reasons. Though a success in McGuinn's view, the record was a balls up as far as Parsons was concerned though the details of his discontent have never really been made clear. According to Gene Parsons, the screws were put on Gram and none of his vocals remained at one point: "it was too bad, because Roger'll tell you that Gram's voice was real good...but Gram does appear in concept because a lot of it was due to his influence".

Gram himself partly clarifies the situation in an extract from an interview for Dutch radio (once again sent by Gerard). Gram: Chris had just been aching to get back into country music because he'd been in a bluegrass group years before, and when I came along, that was it. From my experience, it was alright to get away with one or possibly two country ballads in a rock set, but the audiences weren't willing to tolerate more...but the Byrds already had an audience, so that was half the battle".

"Columbia, for some reason, thought that if I sang on the album they would get sued because my release from Lee Hazlewood looked shaky - so a few songs they overdubbed completely and my voice was stuck way in the background and used as a guide only. As a result, too much of that old Byrds sound, which we were fighting against because it had already been done, got onto the album... which was a pity because the idea had been 'don't look back', as Bob Dylan once put it".

"Things were really coming out well until this thing about the lawsuit, and then everything went wrong; they decided to pull things out of the can to use - things we'd recorded purely as warm-up songs... like 'Life in Prison' and 'You're still on my mind', both of which could've been so much better".

"They were just about to scrap the last one of mine that they'd saved - 'Hickory Wind' - when the lawyer came in waving the piece of paper confirming my release".

Altogether, the album is a weird excursion for the Byrds - not an electric Rickenbacker in sight! Hillman plays mandolin on 'Pretty Boy Floyd' and the banjo on this track is by John Hartford, who also plays all the fiddle parts on the



Chris Hillman and Doug Dillard at Middle Earth in May 1968

album though the sleeve omits this information. The banjo on 'I am a Pilgrim' is by McGuinn (who played fabulous banjo on 'Judy Collins 3', mentioned earlier) and the other bass player mentioned, Roy M Huskey, is no doubt the string bassist on 'I am a Pilgrim' and 'Pretty Boy Floyd'. Earl Ball (famed LA session man - the International Submarine Band, Burritos, etc) makes his sole Byrd appearance on piano in 'You don't miss your water' and

though Jon Corneal is credited as having drummed on some tracks, this (according to Hillman) is not so - Kevin Kelley did all the drumming. It would be interesting to know which member introduced each song to the group... just how far in the background was McGuinn, labelled "leader" on the 'Turn Turn Turn' album, edged? Just to keep it all in perspective, they start and end with a song by Dylan, who had just begun

to investigate the possibilities of country music himself. On reflection, I don't dislike this album - it's just the one I listen to least. ***** Here is Roger McGuinn talking to John Cohen for 'Sing Out' magazine about country music and his attitude towards it, and the Byrds of this era.

Q: Let's start with the Byrds' new record... it's a departure... RM: It's a departure for the Byrds, but not a departure from my music. I was interested in this kind of music ten years ago. This particular album is a mixture of modern country and old-timey country music, and has some countrified Dylan songs as well.

Q: And the album has a 1930 Western, cowboy style cover... 'Sweetheart of the Rodeo' - it's a very friendly kind of thing.

RM: It's real mellow... I fell in love with it. The designer brought in the whole package, title and everything, and we said "yeah, that's it". Usually we have to think about album titles, but this one just came in the mail.

Q: What led to this change of style?

RM: Well, we've always dabbled in country music on other albums, but then we ran into Gram Parsons, who wants to be the world champion country singer, and he hung out with us for a few months. He was going to be in the group, but it didn't work out... but while he was with us he led us headlong in this direction. We'd never have done it on our own - we were afraid to commit ourselves. It was a little foreign to us, but the Byrds have always jumped around in different forms, so we dove into it.

Q: There's a honky-tonk sound, with the piano and so on, and I got the impression that it's like the sort of music you'd hear on a back country juke-box, rather than in the psychedelic music scene.

RM: If you want to get into the psychological reasoning behind it, it's sort of a backlash from the psychedelic scene, which I'm personally saturated with. I mean, we were somewhat influential in starting that kind of stuff before it was really appreciated, and a year later these groups did it up and made a great success with it. Everyone's jumping on the bandwagon, so we wanted to get off and clear the slate for a while. I think that we can offer country music what we know from the other fields. It's basically a very simple music, but will accept a little change every once in a while and we want to stick in as much as we can... we might even go as far as to put a synthesiser into it in such a way as to make it

blend in with it.

Q: What do you mean by synthesiser?

RM: The synthesiser is an electronic music machine, five feet wide, three feet tall. It's got voltage regulated oscillators and amplifiers, it's got equalisation (frequency control) devices, time-delay devices, and you can get pulses from fractions of a second to one or two seconds. You can hook up the oscillators to make tones, or you can make them interact with each other. You might have heard it used in space music, science fiction music, but that's only one application because you can actually make any kind of sound with one. I've got one coming, and our next album is going to be all electronic music. (It wasn't, of course).

Q: Having just done such an earthbound album...

RM: Right, we're going to go spacebound.

Q: And you're taking Clarence White with you?

RM: Right!

Q: It sounds as if the synthesiser is very close to your heart.

RM: It is; I'm very involved in that area. There are two people making them; Moog on the east coast, and Bukala in Oakland. Bukala is the 'underground/hippie' kind of synthesiser.

Q: Does it attract you because of the actual emotional response to the sound or is it the nature of the mechanical things?

RM: I think it's my love of the gadgetry, but I'm not sure if that's primary... it's a new instrument - it's another frontier. I know the album will sell in a different area than 'Sweetheart of the Rodeo'... England is already hot on this kind of thing.

Q: Are you running into a collision course with yourself? On one hand is your ability to play instruments and sing and on the other is the implication of a self-perpetuating electronic machine.

RM: Are you saying "will I phase myself out?" Well, I don't think that any direction is permanent really. I think it's a lot of fun to keep moving around... it's like space exploration. I'm exploring in the world of concepts and ideas. I think that there is a tremendous freedom in music - you can get away with anything... as long as it's good music. The barriers existing between musical forms are basically fear of the unknown.

Q: Perhaps your record will break down a few of these barriers...

RM: I hope so. I think that's basically our purpose; to break down those barriers



Their message is all country...their sound is all Byrds. On Columbia Records

Left: The 'Sweetheart Of The Rodeo' Byrds...back row, Kevin Kelley and Gram Parsons...front row Chris Hillman and Roger McGuinn.

...and I think we've succeeded at certain levels. *****

In July 1968, the Byrds returned to play a charity gig at the Albert Hall, then flew off for a tour of South Africa - but the Byrds who actually made the trip were Roger McGuinn, Chris Hillman, Kevin Kelley and Carlos Bernal. Carlos, who was their roadie, explains exactly what happened;

ZZ: Can you tell us how it came to be that you were a Byrd during that tour?

Carlos: Well, we were here in England - we'd just done the Albert Hall - and there were Chris Hillman, Roger McGuinn Kevin Kelley and Gram Parsons in the band at that time. We had a South African tour, but we had a bit of trouble on the day of departure... Mr Parsons - our boy Gram - decided he didn't want to go - it was personal and business reasons combined.

ZZ: That was actually on the morning you had to leave?

Carlos: Yes - the bags had been collected by the porters... and it came down that Gram wasn't going to go on the tour because he couldn't have things just exactly how he wanted them in the group... the things that he wanted, he could have had after a while, but he wanted them immediately - you know, he wanted a steel guitar to do a lot of his tunes and things that the band wasn't prepared to jump into overnight. So Gram didn't make it to the airport - he went off somewhere and we went off to get the plane.

Roger asked me if I could do the guitar work on the tour so I said "sure - if you could run down some of the things for me" and we rehearsed on the plane down to Johannesburg. We had 16 or 17 concerts throughout South Africa and they worked out alright - we hired another fellow to take care of the sound, and I'd take care of all the gear at the concert before the show, dash back to the hotel and bring back everybody, and then change into Gram. Then after a while I changed into a combination of him and me, and then I finally became just me - at our last gigs in Rhodesia. The whole tour took about a month.

ZZ: Were you playing to strictly white audiences?

Carlos: Right - we were. We had a contract in the beginning which stipulated that audiences would be mixed. When we

arrived, we found that there had been changes in our contracts but there was nothing we could do. . . . we were sort of trapped by the promoters, P— B— — and B— J—. We wanted to leave but couldn't because they held the tickets and things, and then we found that we'd entered the country illegally by some way, so we were sort of hanging in the breach as to whether to get ourselves into trouble for being in the country illegally or whether to stick it out despite the contract changes. We decided to stick it out — mainly because we couldn't get our hands on the tickets, or any of the papers you need to get out of South Africa.

ZZ: The Byrds laid some pretty direct criticism (of apartheid and the regime in SA) on the press, didn't they?

Carlos: I think the press had been waiting for quite a long time to be able to speak through someone and they had a lot of things they wanted to say — so they fed us these loaded questions, knowing what our attitudes would be. . . . like they asked us whether we condoned apartheid. We were relatively tactful — we didn't want to upset the whole country — so we told them that maybe in time they'd come round to seeing that people are actually the same, and perhaps that apartheid would gradually be relaxed. Then they asked about audiences, and we mentioned one or two specific instances, like one place the audience was making rude noises and shouting obscenities, and when it came out in the newspapers, there were these enormous headlines in big, black, bold print; "BYRDS SAY THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS!" and then in even larger letters "SICK, BACKWARDS AND RUDE", which wasn't what we had said at all.

ZZ: Were there any threats as a result?

Carlos: Well, Chris Hillman received a telegram — I can't remember the exact wording, but it ran something like "DON'T CHIRP TONIGHT, TWIRPS; THE BYRDS AREN'T GOING TO FLY ANYMORE". But we did the concert anyhow, and nothing happened, though we heard lots of shots outside our hotel later. . . . but maybe that goes on all the time in Cape Town.

ZZ: You aren't planning a holiday in South Africa?

Carlos: No, I've got all the souvenirs that I want — I don't want to go back.

ZZ: Then when you returned home after the tour, Clarence was brought in.

Carlos: Well, we were real tired from that tour and had a lot of time off. The plane flight back was really long too — South African airlines can't fly across parts of Africa and have to go round the

coast to save them being shot down. We rested for a very long time after that.

And here is McGuinn talking to Jazz and Pop magazine about the tour:

Roger: We just did South Africa, which is a terrible place; we did sixteen concerts in ten days, and I got flu during it and still had to work, you know, like a trouper and all that. And just about worked myself right out there, and I mean, my nerves were just frayed from all of this — and I'm spoiled in a way — I'm not used to doing all that; we were doing weekends before that. In the early days, we did much more work and it didn't really affect me as much. But this time — I guess it also has to do with who is listening.

Q: Were you playing to the same kind of audience you would play here, primarily under thirty, say?

Roger: No, actually everybody in the whole town would come to these concerts. It was sort of like watching the haircuts, because there was nothing else to do. And the reviews. . . . the press would come to every show and review every show. The first couple of reviews were sort of OK, they didn't really say we were fantastic but they didn't really put us down. And then this old guy who likes. . . . well, I was told he's a frustrated comic and he never really made it in show business — and he likes Mario Lanza kind of people; he knocked us for doing things which in

his opinion just weren't done in showbiz. . . . like turning around on stage or wearing the wrong kind of clothes. He wanted us to have tuxedos; said we were wearing scruffy clothes and looked like gardeners. . . . all these things that we've come to take for granted, like wearing blue jeans and funky shirts, and turning around to get feedback from the amp. . . . they weren't even ready for things like that. I'd say they were anywhere from a hundred years, on some levels, to five or ten years behind the scene. . . . and of course the segregation thing is terrible; they wouldn't let any spades in to see us.

Q: Were you given a chance to play for any black audiences?

RM: Yeah, finally, in Salisbury Rhodesia which was then an integrated country, we were. Originally, we were promised we would have more chances than that, which is the only reason we went over there — but they sort of copped out. In fact, they didn't even pay us all the bread they were supposed to. . . . they were really bad to us. Let me tell you a little bit about the place; television is illegal in South Africa — they don't allow television because it would drastically change the status quo if all these oppressed people saw what they were missing in the world. Even the tight controls they have might leak something through. I proposed to some of the groovy people down there, of which there is a very small group, that they should start an underground television station (and risk life imprisonment or death?)



THE BYRDS last night . . . (from left) Chris Hillman, Carlos Pernel, Roger McGuinn and Kevin Kelly.

You're not even allowed to mention the Beatles on the radio because of what they said about Jesus. . . .

Q: This is South Africa, right?

RM: Right. They have this 'Dusty Springfield Law' there too, because she said something to the effect that she would rather sleep with a spade than any of them. . . . they kicked her out of the country and made a law against her; it's on the books, 'the Dusty Springfield Law'. We told the press various things, like they should take away the segregation signs, and they really blasted us — they hated us. . . . and I heard that as a result of going down there, we've been banned from playing in England by the Musicians' Union, which is ridiculous, man, because we did a painful, sacrificial missionary trip down to South Africa. . . . didn't even make any bread out of it. We went down there for more or less political reasons, to help straighten out the scene or agitate or try to change the status quo as much as we could. I thought I was going to get assassinated because of what we said in the papers; we were getting threats and telephone calls saying get out of the country or else. . . . stuff like that. It was like Nazi Germany before the war, man. . . . a tremendous nationalistic feeling — sort of a self-conscious, defensive attitude that "we're right, even if we're wrong". They knew they were wrong. And they knew that WE knew they were wrong. . . . and they hated us for that.

And a word from publicist Billy James: "I'd like one thing to be more generally known about the South African tour. . . . McGuinn took final advice from Miriam Makeba, who grew up there knowing its oppression. . . . she told Roger he ought to go and see it for himself".

A Zigzag reader (Dave Gibbon) who lived in South Africa at the time and saw the Byrds there (he supplied the press cuttings) gives his assessment of the tour: "As you can see from the cuttings, the local press was pretty sympathetic, as was the national radio, and I was rather disappointed to see McGuinn being so poisonous in his 'Rolling Stone' interview, although I suppose he had to, to clear his reputation. Fair enough, they did speak their minds when they were down there and the situation does stink, but on a musical and personal level they had no cause to complain, because they were greeted with love that they did nothing to deserve. Imagine yourself at a Byrds concert; the curtain opens, there they are, wreathed in smiles, they step up to the mikes together and launch into a hideously unbalanced version of 'I'll feel a whole lot better', with McGuinn singing lead and harmony! The thing got worse from there,



Two of the Byrds, the American pop group now in Durban, read Press reports on their visit to Durban so far. Roger McGuinn (left) and Chris Hillman are the leaders of the four-man group, whose tour in South Africa has raised much controversy.

with Bernal playing 'Turn Turn Turn' in a different key from the others. Really they were the worst professional group I had ever heard and they shouldn't have offered that crap to any audience, even one as starved of name bands as the South African freaks. Still, as you no doubt know, it would take more than that to put off a Byrd fanatic".

Following their return to Los Angeles in August, the knackered and tattered remains of the Byrds rested up for a while — until it was time to pick up the pieces of their battered morale and pull themselves into shape again. To fill the void created by Gram Parsons' departure, they co-opted Clarence White, who had already played on many Byrd tracks of course, and no sooner had he arrived than the boat started to rock once more and Kevin Kelley

was dismissed.

What happened, I asked Chris Hillman (see also following chapter on McGuinn as hirer/firer).

ZZ: Can you explain the circumstances in which Kevin Kelley was replaced by Gene Parsons? Was it a case of Clarence wanting his old mate from Nashville West in the group?

CH: Well, I'd got Clarence into the group but it wasn't really happening the way it should have been; Kevin was a good drummer, but sometimes you need to cool out and have a rest. It got a little too much for Kevin for one reason and another and so we got Gene in because he'd been playing with Clarence for a year or two, and Clarence reckoned that he was the man for the job. . . . I only played two gigs with the Byrds in that line-up though, and then I left.

ZZ: Do you want to say why exactly?

CH: There were a lot of reasons actually. . . . I was pretty mad with Roger and the management we had at that time; I got the feeling that they were stealing us rotten — at least, they were stealing me and Roger rotten, because the other two guys were on salary which was fixed. We were being robbed stupid, so I said to Roger "I'm leaving. . . . and you ought to do something about it too". I got out with some of the money, but he went on and eventually he worked the status of the group up again by sheer persistence and determination. The first record after I left ('Dr Byrds and Mr Hyde') was a total blunder, but they're making great records again now. . . . and last time I saw them, I liked them.

ZZ: If Roger asked you back, would you join?

CHEERS, SYMPATHY FOR BYRD ROGER

THE leader of the Byrds — the American pop group which appeared at the Durban City Hall last night — was on the verge of collapse during their second performance.

Roger McGuinn (right), the leader is suffering from a virus infection picked up in Johannesburg two weeks ago. During their second song in last night's final performance, Roger was unable to continue and apologised to the audience saying he was still suffering from the influenza which caused the group to cancel one of their Cape Town shows and asked to be excused for a few minutes.

The packed audience waited patiently while a doctor was called.

RE-APPEARED

Five minutes later, the group re-appeared amid cheers from the capacity audience and Roger McGuinn carried on.

Several times during the show he apologised to the audience saying he felt dizzy, but they were in full sympathy and cheered him on.

The group cut the show by about five songs, despite calls for more.

Later, a pale Roger McGuinn told me that he was feeling "washed out" and was suffering from nervous exhaustion.

"I picked up flu in Johannesburg and haven't been able to shake it off. I'm really sorry if I've disappointed any of my fans," he said.

The group had also received several threatening phone



calls yesterday telling them to get out and go home, following stories that the group had said South Africa was "sick, backward and rude."

"They were obviously from cranks but all the same it was all very upsetting," said the lead singer.

He was taken by car to his hotel immediately after the show and attended to by a doctor.

The group left Durban for Rhodesia by air early today and will stage one performance there before returning to the United States.

CH: (Great hesitation and a slight smile) I don't know — it depends.

So, Hillman followed Kelley, leaving in October 1968, almost a nervous and physical wreck. He drifted off to Topanga Canyon to sort himself out and re-united, strangely enough, with Gram Parsons to form the Flying Burrito Brothers.

The Byrds, meanwhile, now down to Roger McGuinn and two new guys, were left floundering through those dying days of 1968. Before they could fulfil either their concert or recording obligations they had to find a bass player and then do one hell of a lot of rehearsal.

I think it's fair to say that October 1968 saw the Byrds at the lowest ebb of their career.

SUMMARY: Gram Parsons joined in April but after relatively few gigs, including 2 visits to Europe, walked out on the eve of the Byrds' disastrous tour of South Africa in July/August. He appeared, however, on the 'Sweetheart of the Rodeo' album (released 30/3/68 in USA, 27/9/68 in UK on CBS 63353). During this period, Doug Dillard and Sneaky Pete sat in on several gigs as auxiliary Byrds but didn't record with them. Ex session man Clarence White joined in September and Gene Parsons replaced drummer Kevin Kelley in October, during which month Chris Hillman also left.

THE BYRDS remaining:
Roger McGuinn guitar/vocals
Clarence White guitar/vocals
Gene Parsons drums/vocals

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS:

1968
March 3rd... 150 police raid Middle Earth in Covent Garden - only 11 drug arrests.
March 8th... Fillmore East opens in New York.
March 17th... Vietnam demonstrations in Grosvenor Square end in pitched battles with police, and students take over LSE, Hornsey Art School, etc.
March 22nd... General Westmoreland relieved of command of US troops in Asia.
March 27th... Yuri Gagarin, first astronaut to circumnavigate Earth, killed in a plane crash.
March 31st... President Johnson announces his decision not to stand for re-election.
April 4th... Martin Luther King assassinated in Memphis Tennessee.
April 8th... 15 year old Black Panther suspect Bobby Hutton killed by Oakland police.
April 10th... Civil Rights Bill passed by United States Congress.
April 15th... 'Children of the Future' by Steve Miller Band and 'Bookends' by Simon & Garfunkel released.
April 20th... Enoch Powell delivers his 'curb immigration before it's too late' speech in Birmingham.
April 27th... UK abortion law effective.
May 3rd... Students and workers start riots and strikes which bring France to a standstill for a month.
May 13th... Vietnam peace talks begin in Paris.
May 21st... Brian Jones arrested on his second cannabis possession charge.
May 25th... 'Jumping Jack Flash' by the Rolling Stones released.
May 5th... Buffalo Springfield play their last gig before splitting.
June... The Band's 'Music from Big Pink' and the Kooper/Bloomfield/Stills Super-session albums released.
June 5th... Robert Kennedy assassinated in Los Angeles.



SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO
(CS 9670)
SIDE ONE: "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere," "I Am a Pilgrim," "The Christian Life," "You Don't Miss Your Water," "You're Still On My Mind," "Pretty Boy Floyd," SIDE TWO: "Hickory Wind," "One

Hundred Years From Now," "Blue Canadian Rockies," "Life In Prison," "Nothing Was Delivered,"
PERSONNEL: Chris Hillman, bass and mandolin; Kevin Kelley, drums; Roger McGuinn, 12-string guitar; Gram Parsons, guitar. ALSO: Earl P. Ball, piano; Jon Corneal, drums;

Lloyd Green, steel guitar; John Hartford, banjo and guitar; Roy M. Huskey, bass; Jaydee Maness, steel guitar; Clarence White, guitar.
PRODUCER: Gary Usher.
ENGINEERS: Roy Halee, Charlie Bragg.
Released: August 30, 1968.

June... First free concerts in Hyde Park staged by Blackhill Enterprises.
June 23rd... Valerie Solanos shoots Andy Warhol and almost misses.
June 30th... Landslide victory for General de Gaulle in French elections.
July... 'Waiting for the Sun' by the Doors and 'Music in a Dolls House' by Family released. Moby Grape break up for the first time.
July 29th... Catholics instructed by Pope to stick to rhythm method.
August... Buffalo Springfield's 'Last time around', Jeff Beck's 'Truth', Jimi Hendrix 'Electric Ladyland' and the Grateful Dead 'Anthem of the Sun' released.
August 20th... Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.
August 26th... Yippie convention held in Chicago; Mayor Daley approves police brutality.
August 27th... 'Fire' by Arthur Brown is top of UK singles chart.
September... End of theatre censorship in Britain - 'Hair' opens in London.
September 3rd... Beatles' 'Hey Jude' is released.
September 6th... Doors and Jefferson Airplane play the Roundhouse in London.
September 10th... Led Zeppelin born from ashes of old Yardbirds.
September 24th... France explodes a hydrogen bomb.
September 25th... MCC cancels tour of South Africa after Basil D'Oillvera is refused entry and the Byrds advise them not to go.
October... 'Sailor' by Steve Miller Band released.
October 2nd... Estimated 273 Mexicans killed by army and police in pre-Olympic Games rioting.
October 8th... Che Guevara dies in Bolivia.
October 16th... Olympic Games begin.
October 20th... Jackie Kennedy marries Aristotle Onassis.
October 30th... Joe Cocker's 'With a little help from my friends' top UK single.

Left: Chris Hillman, a Byrd for over 50 months, finally throws in the towel in October 1968 leaving McGuinn the sole surviving original Byrd.

Doug Dillard -
Sneaky Pete -

Auxiliary Byrds

Gram Parsons
Kevin Kelley
Chris Hillman

Roger McGuinn
Clarence White
Gene Parsons

BYRDS

SPOT ON

A lot of the people that handle the publicity that accompanies any successful band have got to take the cake as far as ineptitude, insensitivity, and incompetence goes. They really are the chiefs. And here's a story that shows why. I thought that it would be a good idea for us to write a feature that dealt with the ancillary figures who make such a huge, and unpublished contribution to the ways in which bands function—roadies, agents, engineers, and so forth. One of the people that I approached to talk about their jobs was a peeper called Noz, who works as chief roadie for The Kinks. Not only is Noz full of stories about the problems that he encounters as roadie for the Kinks but he also spent 10 years working as part of road crews for various other bands. An interesting chap to talk to. When we met I discussed the article with him, and he seemed enthusiastic, and we swapped telephone numbers and so on. Unfortunately I lost the number that he had given me, and had to ask The Kinks' office for a number. The Kinks' office in Highgate Village is run by Marion Rainford, a very pleasant lady who up till this incident I had always considered to be the height of professional competence. Alas no, Noz' phone number would be given to me if I revealed why I wanted it. Guilelessly I told our Marion that it was for an interview that concentrated on the world of roadies. Marion's reply was disarmingly simple: she would have to consult 'the boys' and see what they felt. Two days later she rang up to tell me that 'the boys' didn't think that it was a good idea and that under no circumstances would they countenance an interview with their chief roadie. When I asked her why they felt that way about it, she advanced two explanations. Both explanations vied for the number one silliness position of the year.

First of all I was told that the band had had a lot of trouble with promoters which they were anxious to live down. Upon enquiry, the trouble seems to have grown up as a result of the gigs that they've done in the old days. Now promoters have got one of the nearest little intelligence services going for them. They have to, for the simple reason that if they don't know what's going on they don't stay promoters for very long. They're all talking to each other, and to agents and probably know what size collar Ray Davies' second cousin wears, so the idea that they are going to read ZigZag, throw up their hands in horror at the tales told therein, and not put on concerts featuring the Kinks is preposterous.

When this was gently pointed out to Marion, she replied that there was another reason, which was that 'the boys' didn't think that it was a good idea for 'employees' of the Kinks to get publicity. Which is understandable I suppose, if you recall that it's roadies who wipe out on the A1, deal with duff promoters, carry contraband, get gear to recording studios on time and so on—'employees' in a word. The idea that the man who wrote songs like 'Waterloo Sunset' needs to have all the publicity focused on him, makes me marvel at the depths of silliness to which some people will stoop.

This is turning out to be a general bitching session, but I can't let the Melody Maker's series 'The Pop Report' pass without a mention, or rather a laugh. If you haven't seen it I thoroughly recommend it. I think that people who go in for ruminations about the state of rock should be visited by some terrible disease anyway, but this one's a beauty. They've got together a bizarre collection of artists—the last issue I saw was called 'American solo artists (Stephen Stills and Johnny Winter, the well known solo artists), and written in three sections called Past, Present and Future. They're full of trite remarks like this one about Bob Dylan: '[he was] the leader of folk-based minstrels who protested against wars, poverty, the government, etc'. Isn't that the most superficial twaddle that has ever been written? Amazing. Not only that but they have the effrontery to include on the same page a treatment along the same lines, for Donny Osmond and David Cassidy. If the Melody Maker

staff don't know what the difference between Donny Osmond and Bob Dylan is, and don't believe that that difference means anything then they should be put out to pasture somewhere with a zigzag subscription. And to think that a year ago they gave three pages to a fantastically good feature on Link Wray. I'd like to think that it was all a leg pull, but I fear that it's just another example of the paper's collapse into gibberish.

Please keep writing, and let us all know what you think and what you'd like things on. In the little poll that is kept in my head about requests, I think that Mike Nesmith is in the lead closely followed by, guess who—right, Arthur. Toller's 'best of' compilation should be out soon, and if he's made any mistakes we can all ring him up at some ridiculous hour. Another record that is in the pipeline is an album of The Misunderstood that Nigel Grange is getting together at Phonogram. Those sort of albums often turn out to be a bit of a let down, but we can keep our fingers crossed.

Next month we've got Family, McKendree Spring, John Dummer, Jim Horn and Herb Pederson, and as Michael's in the States we hope to get some grist from over there.

The ad that you can see on the back cover is to launch a new label called Virgin Records, and I would very much like to urge you to listen, preferably for some time, to 'Tubular Bells' by Mike Oldfield. It was recommended to me in glowing terms, and I've played it continuously since then. I don't usually like long extended instrumental music, but this has been crafted with a grace and subtlety that prevents it becoming shapeless or directionless. I must confess to being a bit disappointed with Gong's record, but if you doubt the potential of the band, then take a listen to their track on the Revelation, Glastonbury album. A complete revelation.

Connor



ZIGZAG

Connor McKnight/John Toller/Michael Wale/Julian Stapleton/
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VIRGIN RELEASES

Mike Oldfield's TUBULAR BELLS V2001

'Well, I've been introducing Top Gear for nearly six years now but I think that it is certainly one of the most impressive LPs I have had the chance to play on the radio. A really remarkable record from Mike Oldfield.'

John Peel

Gong RADIO GNOME INVISIBLE Part 1. The Flying Teapot V2002

'Daavid Allen of Gong could become the Beefheartian cult figure of 1973.'

ZigZag

MANOR LIVE Camelo Pardalis V2003

Manor Live features Steve York, Elkie Brooks, Boz, Mike Patto, Ollie Halsall, Tim Hinkley, Lol Coxhill, Dave Thompson, Graham Bond, Pete Gage and many other luminaries.

Faust THE FAUST TAPES VC501 (Album for 48p)

'The Faust Tapes is a must if you want an offbeat chuckle and don't mind having your mind bent a little. For an album that was never meant for general release, it's excellent - and for 48p, it's ridiculous.'

Ian Macdonald

HENRY COW

Surely one of the most resilient and obstinate of that range of groups normally ignored by the popular music press, graceful, intricate and completely uncompromising.