

ZIGZAG

The Rock Magazine

48

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20 pence



Neil Young

Butts Band Jesse Winchester
John Sebastian
Curt Boetcher
Tim Buckley
Arthur Lee



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APPROXIMATELY 286 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO JESSE WINCHESTER

If you've been a reader of ZigZag for as long as I have, i.e., since very early on, you'll recall how, at the start, there weren't too many interviews, most of the features being of the type now more often found in the younger fanzines such as *Fat Angel*, *Omaha Rainbow*, *Hot Wacks* et al, that is, extended eulogies of a band/singer garnished with whatever biographical information the authors were/are able to glean from their subjects' press offices.

I'd like to revert to that praiseworthy (if wanting) form in the case of Jesse Winchester because (a) I doubt if enough people are familiar enough with Jesse's work for an extended interview to be warranted at this time, and (b) because he wasn't in when I phoned him.

Anyway, that's the waffle taken care of, so let's progress without further ado to . . .

THE SKIMPY BIOGRAPHY

Jesse was born in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1945. He was a musical infant, playing piano by the time he was six and organ in the local church by the time he was twelve.

In 1959 Jesse discovered rock'n'roll, got himself a cheap guitar and joined a group on the strength of the three chords he learned the same day he bought the guitar. His heroes at this time were Ray Charles and Jerry Lee Lewis.

Jesse played the local clubs, bars, dance-halls and college circuits with various bands and eventually (1967) ended up in Hamburg with a now forgotten band.

Jesse's trip to Hamburg coincided with the arrival of his draft papers—which, as you may recall, was the equivalent of an invitation to play soldiers in Vietnam. Jesse did what any sane young man would do in the face of such an invitation—he split to Canada. And he's been there ever since.

But Jesse's self-imposed exile did a lot more for him than save his body from target practice—it also proved to be the place where he could flower from faceless backing guitarist into one of the finest singer-songwriters to emerge in the last five years.

Here's how it happened!

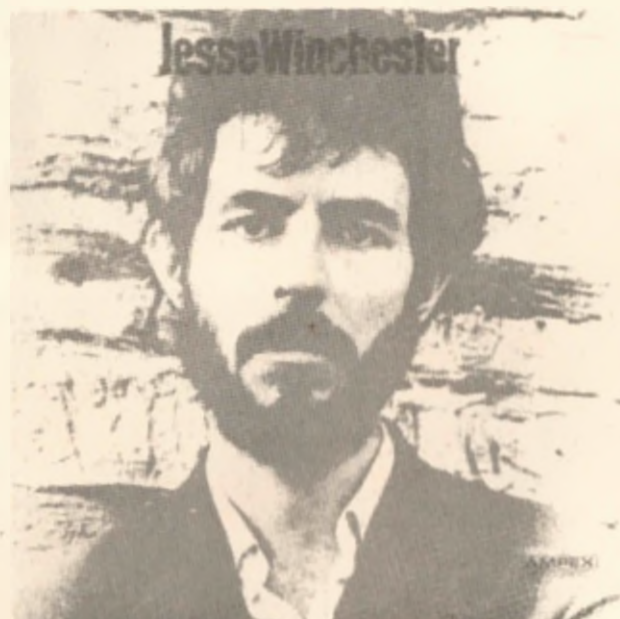
When he first arrived in Montreal, Jesse found himself at an immediate disadvantage: for a start, he couldn't speak French, and secondly, there weren't that many vacancies for American rock guitarists. Nevertheless Jesse soon found a gig with a French-Canadian dance band. The collaboration didn't last too long because of the obvious incompatibility of both music

and ethnic background but it was the spur that convinced Jesse that he ought to try going it alone.

It can't have been too easy at first (or ever would be, as there are only a handful of places to play in Montreal), but Jesse eventually built up both a repertoire and a following.

Jesse's break came when he supported The Band—Robbie Robertson was impressed enough by Jesse's vocal and writing talents to help him get a recording contract, eventually flying back up to Canada to produce the album himself.

Which takes care of most of the skimpy biography and leads into the records:



(1) 'JESSE WINCHESTER' (Ampex—deleted)

The deleted Ampex album had a fold-out sleeve which had, on each of its four faces the same picture of Jesse—a bleached sepia shot (head and shoulders) of a serious-looking young man, shirtless and in what appears to be a very old suit-jacket; the effect is rather like those pictures of dustbowl farmers taken during the Depression and/or stills of Henry Fonda in *The Grapes of Wrath*. I mention the sleeve not only because it's a very good one but because my copy of the album doesn't fold out—apparently Ampex folded shortly after the record came out and the Canadian issue was on the Bears-ville label (BR 2045/0629). So anyone who's been trying to get a copy on import, and has been told about the Ampex deletion, is advised to ask their import shop to get in touch with Bearsville in Canada.

The album was produced, as I've already said, by Robbie Robertson, with Todd Rundgren as engineer. The instrumentation was divided up as follows:

Winchester (vocals, gtr., piano), Robertson (guitar), Levon Helm (drms, mandolin), Bob Boucher (Fender and upright electric bass), David Rea (gtrs, vibes, vcels), Ken Pearson (piano, organ, vibes), David Lewis (drums), Guy Black (drums), and Al Cherney (violin).

As you may imagine from the line-up listed above, not everybody credited could possibly have played on every track (the drummers alone would out-percuss Blue Cheer!), but despite the shuffling of personnel, the record's a remarkably cohesive work.

The opening cut 'Payday' is a full-tilt rocker with tinkling piano, slippery guitar and appropriately simple but very forceful drumming. It's not typical Winchester, nor even typical of what's to follow on the album, but then it's no easy task to say what is typical Winchester—suffice it to say that it's a fine attention grabber. The lyrics are pure rock'n'roll, about getting paid, drinking and dancing with a young lady who's 'got a heart as big as your mama's stove and a body like Brigitte Bardot'.

Jesse's beautiful tenor vocals lose their rock edge for the gentle 'Biloxi', accompanied by watery piano and acoustic guitar Jesse paints an idyllic picture of pretty girls swimming in the sea as the sun sets over New Orleans and he takes his girl for a walk by the ocean and then a swim (naked, because they want to)—which sounds a bit schmaltzy written down but it's a beautifully evocative song and even the surf noises of gently brushed cymbals work perfectly.

The full electric band comes back in for 'Snow', a humorous comment on Canadian weather co-authored by Robertson. It begins: 'I was tuning in the 6 o'clock newscast, when the weatherman mentioned snow/as soon as I heard that four-letter word, I was making my plans to go.' It's a very catchy tune and I sing it all the time. The playing's fine too.

'The Brand New Tennessee Waltz' has been covered by Joan Baez ('Blessed Are . . .') LP), and the Everly Brothers on 'Stories We Could Tell', but neither match Jesse's original. It really is a waltz, but it's a beautiful tune given a strong country (as opposed to Strauss?) feel by tasteful use of violin and mandolin. The lyrics are superficially about a wandering Romantic, but they're also the words of a man who is genuinely homesick: 'Oh my but you have a pretty face, you favour a girl that I knew/ I imagine that she's still in Tennessee, and



by God I should be there too . . . I've a sadness too sad to be true', and the end reveals the wanderer to be an outlaw: 'So have all of your passionate violins play a tune for a Tennessee kid, who's feeling like leaving another town/with no place to go if he did/'cause they'll catch you whenever you're hid.' It's a classic song achieving, as the band did with 'The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down' among others, a feeling that's both timeless and quintessentially American without ever seeming contrived in the manner of such embarrassments as, say, 'Billy Don't Be A Hero'.

Side One ends with 'That's A Touch I Like', a jaunty little rocker with a similar

feel and line-up as 'Payday'. It also has a bass line that's right out of 'March Of The Mods', but not, I hasten to add, all the way through.

'Yankee Lady' ties with . . . Tennessee Waltz' as the album's finest; it's a mid-paced gentle love story recounted against acoustic guitar and mandolin backings along with percussion that's so restrained it's positively polite. I'd rank it alongside Tim Hardin's 'Lady Came From Baltimore' and Love's 'Andmoreagain' as one of my favourite love songs—need I say more?

'The Skip Rope Song' is almost as simple as the title suggests. Using similar instrumentation to 'Biloxi', the song recalls a childhood love and comes to

terms with an adult love at the same time . . . and maybe it is just a little bit too sweet for most palates, but it's quite an engaging little melody for all that. And if you don't like it there's only just over two minutes of it, so why worry?

'Rosy Shy' is an unrequited love song with a positively ominous chorus line: ' . . . and I can't find grace in the human face today'. Echoes of Dylan and Hardin in lyric and melody respectively leading out via a drone from the violin.

If 'Rosy Shy' is ominous in parts then its successor, 'Black Dog' is positively chilling. It's just a song about a dog really, but moody piano and upright bass behind lines like: 'Black Dog don't

believe in sin/think of where he's been today,' tend to conjure up images a lot closer to the Hounds of the Baskervilles than Rin Tin Tin. Truly weird, this one.

The album closes with 'The Nudge', an infectious stomper built around a simple but very attractive guitar riff with lyrics that are as deliciously ambiguous as 'Roll With Me Henry'.

All of which I'm sure doesn't even begin to do justice to one of the best debut albums by any performer you'd care to mention, if not one of the finest albums by anybody to appear in 1970.

A lot of critics said basically the same thing at the time but, as so often happens, this didn't lead to overnight success for Jesse, as the album's subsequent deletion testifies. Still, if you can get hold of one, please do—you'll be making a long-term investment you won't regret.

Between mid-1970 and the Autumn of '72, which saw the release of a second album, Jesse continued to play small clubs for small sums. Meanwhile other artists began to pick up on the first album and, as well as the cover versions already mentioned, Tim Hardin did 'Yankee Lady' and, in case you're interested, Ian Hunter borrowed Guy Stevens' copy and still hasn't returned it. . . .



(2) 'THIRD DOWN, 110 TO GO' (Bearsville BR 2102 0598)

Unlike its predecessor, Jesse's second album did get a UK release (although the only copies I've seen are US pressings selling at UK prices). It appeared in the States in mid-October of '72 and had apparently been some twenty months in the making. Three tracks were produced by Todd Rundgren and the remainder by Jesse himself. It's a lot less rockier than 'Jesse Winchester' but is, in retrospect, a better recording. His lyrics are simpler, as is the instrumentation overall, and the quality of the vocals on the ten self-produced tracks suggests that Jesse is his own best producer.

The supporting musicians are: Amos Garrett (gtr, vcls), Andre Benichou and Doug Schmolze (gtrs), Charles Viber (violin), Gord Flemmyng (piano), three bass players: Bob Boucher, Jimmy Oliver and Gene Cotton, N.D. Smart and Ron Frankel (drums), Sam Kelly (conga, bongos), and Don Abrams (percussion).

The title (which is the first line of a short poem on the back cover) refers to Canadian football; being no expert on the game I couldn't tell you what it means in tactical terms but I do know it means things don't look too hot. This implied despair is underlined by the back cover

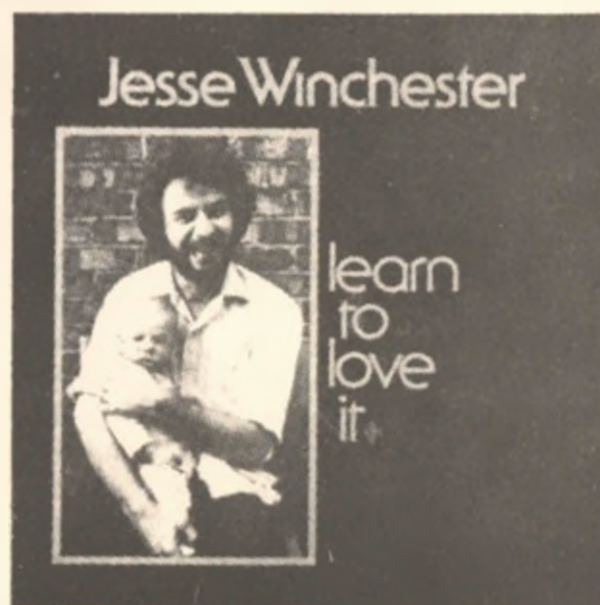
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photo of Jess holding his head as if he's just seen the gas bill. Which is maybe a slightly facile way of saying that the album's not the melancholy downer that some of the packaging and title suggest. My copy also had a leaflet tucked in the seal which tells you what a wonderful record you're buying. It reads a bit like an ad for washing machines but it's reasonably informative and quite honest about the record's content.

As I've already limped my way through the first album track by track, I don't see much point in repeating the exercise, so here's a brief resume: the strongest of the Rundgren tracks as far as instant appeal goes is 'Midnight Bus'—a number that should be familiar to Chilli Willi fans as the Willis do a particularly fine version of it onstage. New departures are Jesse's newly-mastered flute, which features splendidly on a number of tracks and, as I've said already, an improvement of the vocals' texture. There are fewer love songs and in their place comes a continuation of the first album's bittersweet homespun philosophies. 'Do It' for example, is a delicious little titbit of a song (1.28) with the chorus: 'Do it 'til you're sick of it/do it 'til you can't do it no more'. There's also an instrumental, 'Lullabye For The First Born' which Jesse wrote in anticipation of the son his lady bore him soon after it was written—Jesse hums the melody along with flute and violin. Once again it may sound schmaltzy in print but it's a beautiful little tune. God turns up again in 'Isn't That So?' another amusing dialogue with a catchy melody, whilst 'North Star' starts out as what could be a serious philosophical enquiry but comes delightfully back to earth with the enquiry: 'Does the world have a belly button?/I can't get this out of my head/if it turns up in my yard, I'll tickle it so hard/That the whole world will laugh to wake the dead. . . .'

It's a gentle record, thoughtful, warm and often humorous; the melodies are strong, the lyrics and playing wonderfully concise (Amos Garrett's electric guitar in particular) and it's great to charm the rain away. Maybe I'm getting old, but I get the feeling again and again when I listen to this man's albums (and this one in particular) that I'm sharing the room with an adult—by which I mean no insult to children, merely that most of the records I get seem to be the product of rather confused adolescents of various ages.

More silence (except a rumoured UK visit that never came off) until September of this year when a fresh album appeared in the shops:



(3) 'LEARN TO LOVE IT' (Bearsville BR6953 0698)

This one will, I'm assured, be released, but as yet it hasn't been scheduled by Warner Bros, the UK distributors, so it probably won't be available until mid-January.

'Rolling Stone' seems to have taken up Jesse as some kind of political mascot—at least that was the underlying tone of the interview they published in RS 170. Surely now that Mr Ford has given the draft dodgers a conditional pardon Jesse would want to go home? Apparently not—Jesse's replies were mostly negative, he'd learnt to love Canada and was happy there he said. Almost predictably, the review of the album, when it appeared worked on the premise that Jesse wasn't writing good songs anymore now that he wasn't pissed off with the good old USA.

But it wasn't only the fact that I could see it coming that pissed me off about the review, it was the reviewer's assumption that his own interpretation of Jesse's work had not fulfilled its promise.

Anyway, all cattiness aside, 'Learn To Love It' is no great disappointment—far from it. In fact, and despite what he said in the RS interview, there's probably more nostalgia in this record than on either of the others: on the first side there's 'L'Air De La Louisiane' one of the album's two songs sung in French (thus neatly coming to terms with both the lost and gained paradises); it's a sad ballad and the lyrics I can decipher with my schoolboy French (it didn't help with Clifton Chenier either) are about walking with a girl in 'the Louisiana air'. Directly afterwards comes 'Mississippi You're On My Mind' one of Jesse's finest songs and a sure-fire candidate for the next Joan Baez album. It's slow and sad and beautifully put together. There's a lot more nostalgia inherent in the traditional (although Jesse gets the composer's credit) 'Laisse Les Bons Temps Rouler'—this one gets the full Cajun treatment and the only complaint I'd make is that you can't *not* dance to it, lovely stuff. Then there's three gospel songs: Jesse's own 'Wake Me' which isn't actually gospel, but is certainly structured that way, Martha Carson's 'I Can't Stand Up Alone' which closes the album and is done acapella, and most important of all the traditional 'Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt', a call and reply song (the reply is: 'Poor man's friend') to which Jesse has added this verse of his own: 'Cause in the year of 1967, as a somewhat younger man/the call to bloody glory came and I would not raise my hand/cause I'm baptised by water so I pass the one by fire/but if you wanna fight go on and fight if that be your desire/That's why I like Pierre Trudeau/Good God Almighty that's the poor man's friend.'

And that's only scraping the surface as the rest of the album's just as superb as its two predecessors.

Oh, by the way, Jesse's got another kid now, he's holding it on the front cover (where there's also a fleur de lys) and he looks almost as happy as he makes me with his records.

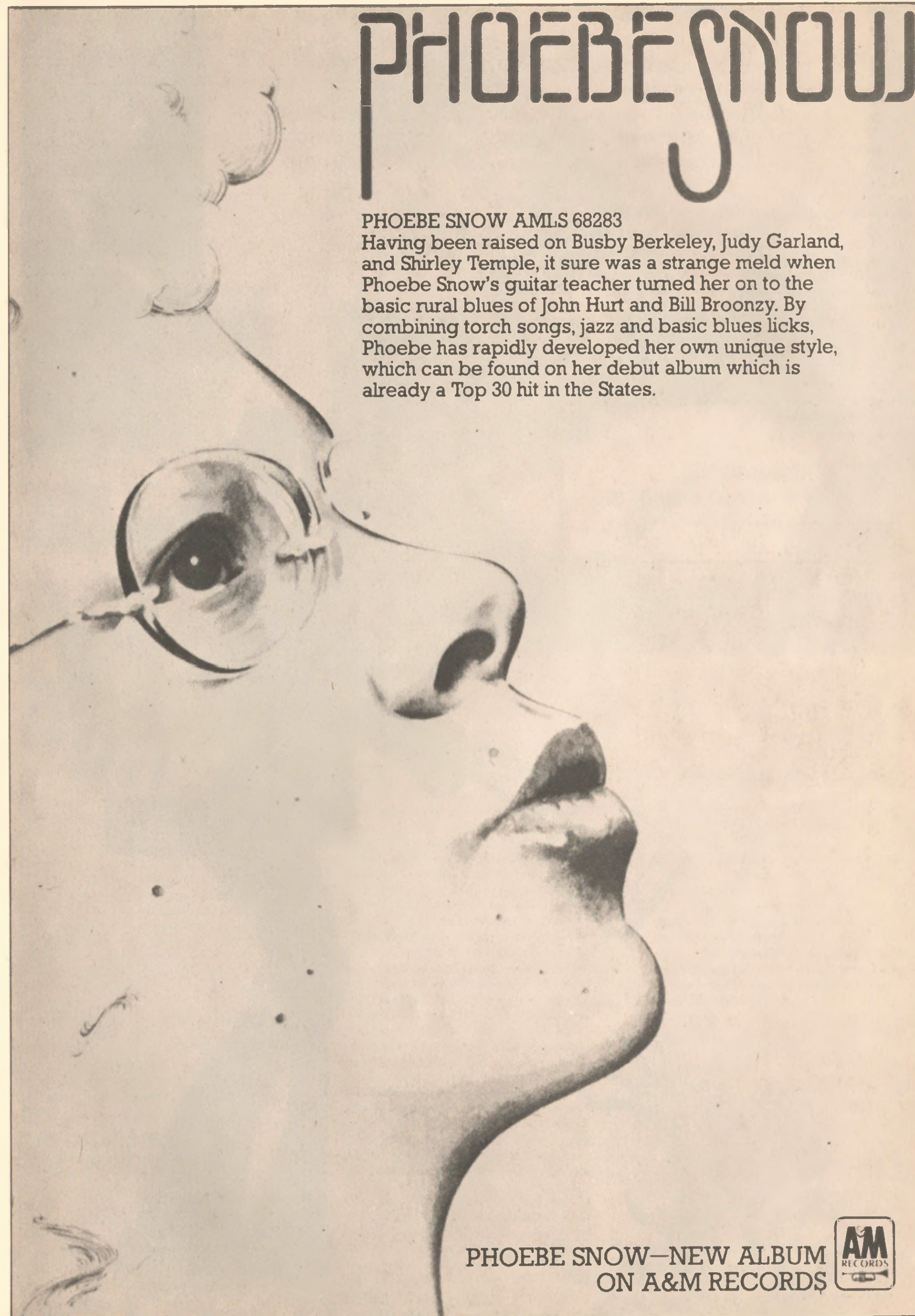
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(With special thanks to John Du Castel without whose help the biography would've been a lot skimpier.)

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THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE BUTTS BAND

Defunct groups are not normally my stock in trade, or that of ZigZag in general, but very occasionally the opportunity arises to learn something of a bunch who for one reason or another have ceased to function. In this case, the group's extinction became clear a short while after doing the interview, which was intended as a contribution to 'RockSpeak' which was not used, just because of the group's extinction. My thanks therefore to John Walters for allowing me to use the interview as the basis for this piece.

Perhaps the first part of this should be edited interview. All you need to know is that I'm speaking with John Densmore, drummer with the Butts Band, and that the interview was done around the spring of this year, when the band were briefly over here.

THE INTERVIEW

ZZ: What are you doing in England?
JD: Well, Jess [Roden], Phil [Chen] and Roy [Davies] had been to LA the last two times, and since half of us live in England and half in LA, it was our turn to come here. We're doing a TV show (OGWT), playing the Palladium and a couple of other gigs, and we're getting back together.

ZZ: How long is it since you saw the rest of the band?



JD: About a month and a half. We're nearly always in touch—maybe three weeks go by, but not much more.

ZZ: You've made one album, which took a long time to get together seemingly. Are you working on another, or has this one recently come out in the States?

JD: It's been out about two months, but songs are constantly cropping up. I don't know how soon, or with whom, they're going to be recorded, but Robbie's [Krieger] writing a lot more good stuff. [Remember, he wrote 'Light My Fire'?] But the first album took a long time [since the last Doors' album, that is], because of a lot of changes. First, we came over with Ray [Manzarek] as The Doors, and we were still together, then Ray split off and went back home, and we realised our musical directions were really going differently. Then Robbie and I decided that as we'd come over here to start something new, we should do just that, so for the next four months, we lived here, and jammed with different people, and sorted it all out. Then we recorded half of the album at Olympic, and the other half in Jamaica on the way home. Jess was the first guy to join the band. We hadn't heard Bronco, because they didn't make any dent in the States, but Davy Harper, our roadie whom we shared with Traffic, mentioned Jess, and that's how we got on to him. We went through a few singers—it's kinda touchy, because you try to seem relaxed and just jam, but then everybody knows you're checking them out. Jess seemed right though, because he sang Robbie's melodies well, and he had some of his own stuff, and he brought Phillip and Roy.

Phillip's really an excellent bass player, that's why we got him, for sure. We went through a lot of bass players, and then he came in, and we didn't even start a song—he played for ten seconds, and Robbie and I looked at each other—"That's it!"

ZZ: Jess is going to make a solo album. Are you involved in that?

JD: No, that's something to do with his commitment to Island, because he's been on the label for years.

ZZ: Why, after your long connection with Elektra as The Doors, did you move to Blue Thumb?

JD: While we were in the process of thinking about signing the Butts Band to Elektra, Jac Holzman 'retired', and we had had a fairly good relationship with him over the years. He was a sort of friend as well as our 'father', and he was up and gone, so we were out on the street.

ZZ: Wasn't the original idea to be signed to Island in the UK and to Elektra in the States because of the various contractual commitments?

JD: That was one of the ideas. It changed round quite a bit, because Jac was going, and Bob Krasnow (of Blue Thumb) had been in the background all along, and he had really liked the band. So when Jac went, which we don't mind, because he was perfectly entitled to do that, we remembered Krasnow, and he was really enthusiastic. That was it—it wasn't money really, he was just very committed.

ZZ: According to the record, it seems that Mick Weaver [Wynder K. Frogg] was the original organ player in the band...

JD: I don't think Mick was to be in the

band, and Mick knew it too. He just did a couple of sessions for us on the London side of the record.

ZZ: There's a live track of 'Kansas City' on the album. Where was that recorded?
JD: It was done at Olympic Studios with some people in there. It's definitely over-used as a song, but we were just having a good time in the studio, and we liked it.

ZZ: Phillip was born in Jamaica, and he's credited with 'reggae guitar' on one track. Is the fact that you recorded in Jamaica something to do with him? And has reggae given you some food for thought, to the extent that you want to continue with it?
JD: Perhaps it was his influence that we recorded there, but I don't know. . . . he's lived in England for about eight years. But we don't play reggae, it's just influenced, not Jimmy Cliff by any means. In fact, the bit in the press handout that says we're really caught up with reggae has been blown out of all proportion. It's just that Phil was born there. . . . I think we're more a white soul band than a reggae type.

ZZ: Listening to the album, I get the impression that this is the first album where I've really been able to hear Robbie. Is it possible that he'd wanted to be upfront a little more in the past?
JD: I think so. With Ray, they'd always share the solos in Doors songs, and now Robbie can stand out a bit more—not as a showman, but as a guitar player, because he's sorta shy. But he gets to pick a lot more now, so it's good.

ZZ: Was that the reason that the Doors finally broke up?
JD: No, it wasn't really that, it was more the writing. Everybody was writing songs, including me, and all Ray's songs were real personal, so that it finally got to the point where it was obvious that he would be the only one who could sing them, because they'd be very philosophical and cosmic and whatever, and another singer couldn't relate to them, because they were so personal. And that's what happened.

ZZ: The last album you made as The Doors, "Full Circle", was a bit of a disaster to me. Does it strike you that way, in retrospect?
JD: In retrospect, yeah. But at the time, we had our hearts in it, although halfway through, the songwriting thing started to get on everyone's nerves—which song were we going to do, and Ray's were turning out this way, and Robbie's that way, and it got a little touchy, so that the album didn't turn out all that well.

ZZ: The fact that you have a vocalist in the Butts Band seems to indicate that you felt you really needed one again. . . .
JD: That's what we all originally came over for, Robbie, Ray and I, and as we started jamming with vocalists, we realised that more than ever, because when you have a professional singer, a good singer who can do with his voice what someone else can do with his instrument, then you realise how much more fluent it is.

ZZ: Do you feel that your record is inevitably going to sound a little like the Doors, just because of what you and Robbie have done in the past?
JD: No, I don't think it sounds like the Doors. I can be objective now, but when we were making it, I couldn't tell, actually. I don't think it sounds like the Doors beyond that the guitar player and the drummer are from the Doors, but I think Ray's going to

take off where the Doors left off, with your mystical piano playing. Robbie and I really have been influenced by different stuff now, and I think it's going to go further away. Feels good to do new. . . . to be done with the Doors. I mean, it was great, believe me, but it's fresh now, and it's exciting to start all over again, and scuffle around.

ZZ: Have you heard about this group in the States who have a vocalist who sounds like Jim [Morrison]?
JD: Yeah, Calm Before The Storm. I knew right away it wasn't Jim, immediately. The guy's voice is much deeper. But as the song went along, I thought "Damn, he's sure copped the style!" It definitely got a chuckle out of me.

ZZ: I think the legend of Jim Morrison continues. Whatever anyone says, it seems there are still Morrison freaks around.
JD: He was supposed to have appeared in San Francisco a few months back, and he went into a bank and took out an account. But then we read the article, and he was with two bodyguards, and we said, "No, that's not Jim." Nobody ever recognised Jim.

ZZ: Personally, I'm not too sure that he is dead, because of the strange circumstances.
JD: I'm sure. All I can say is if anyone tried to pull something off like this, he'd be the one.

SUBSEQUENT HAPPENINGS

Since our conversation, certain things have happened. Let's just summarise, starting with Ray Manzarek, the Door who, like Renee, walked away. Ray signed up with Mercury, and made an album called 'The

Golden Scarab', backed by a basic group of Larry Carlton, Jerry Scheff and Tony Williams, about which more a little later. Recently, he is supposed to have befriended one Iggy Stooze, the intention being to "do another Doors," I should think. They have as much chance as I have of being king.

After playing their one concert at the Palladium, which I saw, and which was fabulous, even though Nick Kent disagreed with me at the time, the Butts Band have to all intents and purposes broken up. Jess Roden was, I think, the first to go, and that solo album which was referred to in the interview has now been made. There is also now a Jess Roden band, which was known before (without Jess), as Iguana, who had a fairly harmless album out a couple of years ago on Polydor. Roy Davies, who was stunning on the gig at the Palladium, decided to stay with Gonzalez, a band with whom he was playing on and off during the Butts Band's life. Densmore said of that band: ". . . this band which has fifteen or twenty have two or three drummers or bass players or whatever. When someone can't make it, the other one does. They're just a local band of really good players who play the clubs, and I think they've just made an album."

Through the good offices of Panda Agency, a bunch who are not at all disconnected with the extremely wonderful Starry Eyed And Laughing, I have some more details of the mythical Gonzalez, who claim to have been going for three years or more, although it was only this



year that they have achieved any prominence. Among the members of the group are Mick Eve (tenor), ex Blue Flames and Herbie Goins and the Nightimers, Chris Mercer (various saxes), ex Mayall, Hartley, Juicy Lucy (!), and it says here Dr John, Steve Gregory (various saxes), ex Tony Colton and the Crawdaddies, Geno Washington, Alan Price, Airforce and possibly still a member of Riff Raff, if they're still going, Bud Beadle (more various saxes), ex Geno Washington, Airforce and also perhaps still with Riff Raff, Gordon Hunte (guitar), ex Noir and Johnny Nash, Lisle Harper (bass), ex Gass, Nightimers, Juicy Lucy and Stealer's Wheel and so on etc., etc. I've also read that Rosko Gee, now Traffic's bass player, was in the band for a while, and it may be worth noting that several of these people are with Georgie Fame's new touring Blue Flames. It is rumoured that the Gonzalez album should be available through the miracle of EMI before the end of the year, and may be worth watching and listening for. Phillip Chen appears to have returned to session work, and he's pretty good as well, so look out for his name. Connor, the aborigine of the group, tells me that Chen is on a Linda Lewis album somewhere, but as I don't have any of that lady's work, all I can think of to say is "Rock-a-doodle-doo".

THE RECORDS

As there is no Gonzalez album so far (see footnote), that leaves us with three. First off, the Butts Band album, on Blue Thumb as you know. The front cover is worth a mention—it is a picture of a very wonderful, but rather battered Fender amplifier, which John Densmore says belongs to Robbie Krieger. It has thus seen some truly astonishing music, and while I'm not about to give you a line about the Butts Band being the equal of The Doors albums where Jim Morrison was involved, it is probably better than 'Other Voices', the first post Morrison Doors album and it is infinitely superior to 'Full Circle'. There is something to enjoy in every track, and while I can't comment on their live performances of particular songs, due to the

fact that no introductions were made at the Palladium, I'm sure that I heard some of it sounding just as good on stage. The Jamaican side of the record, side one, is preferable, with two fine Krieger solos on 'I Won't Be Alone Anymore' and 'Pop-A-Top', the latter of which also has Phillip Chen playing something called reggae guitar, which makes a splendid noise. I'm afraid that whatever John thinks, I can definitely hear The Doors in the two Krieger written tracks, 'I Won't Be Alone Anymore' and 'Baja Bus', while the other two songs don't have any definite sound to them, which is not meant to be a negative judgement. The second side has still more Krieger brilliance on the Roden composition 'New Ways' and especially on the live 'Kansas City', where the guitar reaches heights of absurd brilliance. You'll have to forgive me for singling out Robbie Krieger, because I'm hopelessly biased in his favour, but it is only fair to say that Davies takes several excellent solos, notably on 'Baja Bus' and 'Sweet Danger', Chen is as brilliant as it is possible for a bass player to be throughout, Densmore is as solidly reliable as he was in The Doors, and he is, I'm sure, the most under-rated drummer there is—I've watched him from very close, on the side of the stage, and he seems so much more aware than your average tub thumper—while Jess Roden shows once again that he can sing the clothes off most of the other pretenders in the blue men sing the whites stakes. A drop of info about some of the people



mentioned on the sleeve as helpers—Jonathan Clyde was Elektra's UK chief for a while, certainly when The Doors came over seeking musicians, and is now the boss of George Harrison's Dark Horse label, while Bill Siddons was The Doors' manager in their greatest years, although I don't know what he's doing now. Chris Blackwell and Bob Krasnow are the respective heads, or maybe ex-heads, of Island and Blue Thumb, and I don't know who Abe Somer is. Davy Harper is the roadie mentioned in the interview. So there.

Next is Manzarek's album. Listening to it, you can't help remembering Densmore's words about the songs being personal—they're so personal that I had no idea what it was all about. The album is called 'The Golden Scarab', subtitled 'A Rhythm Myth', and I think it's some kind of concept album, although I could be wrong through sheer lack of comprehension. For some of the record, the tracks are introduced in a speaking voice, something like that 'Incense and Oldies' album of a couple of years ago. When I say some of the record, the lyric sheet seems to indicate that it should happen all the time, but perhaps someone forgot and that kind of approach seems to me, probably a trifle unfairly, to permeate this outrage. Where Densmore and Krieger decided they needed a vocalist, Manzarek obviously thought he didn't, and there are several poor Jim Morrison impersonations around. The group, as mentioned above, are all splendid musicians, Carlton (of The Crusaders) taking some nice solos, and Scheff (ex Millennium and now Elvis' bass player) and Williams, once of Miles Davis, Lifetime and a bunch of other people I know little of, play very competently throughout. Manzarek's musicianship doesn't lead to complaints, except in an irritatingly tedious synthesiser instrumental called 'The Moorish Idol', but his singing, and more importantly the songs deserve a "Danger! Nasty Record!" sticker. There are two interesting things for me in the package, the first being the references to 'Moonlight Drive' and 'Tightrope Ride', both excellent Doors' compositions, you know, in 'The Solar Boat', and the second being a bell solo (far out) by one Steve Forman on 'He Can't Come Today'. On the debit side is a Chuck Berry cover in 'Downbound Train', although I was quite unable to recognise the original, the word 'celestial' in 'Oh Thou Precious Nectar Filled Form', is the sub-title to the same song which is 'A Little Fart', the fact that the tracks are all overlong when their usefulness is taken into consideration, and most of all, the horrendous sleeve which shows my one-time hero Ray looking like a rejected extra





from 'Goldfinger' or perhaps a fugitive from 'Star Trek' (cartoon version). It is not my desire or my habit to put down albums, or more particularly to applaud when an American record stays unreleased here, but in this case I earnestly feel that the fewer people who hear this, the better.

Finally, we come around to Jess Roden. He's done the fashionable thing, which he maybe learnt with the Butts Band, and recorded half the album in the States and half here. In New Orleans, the backing musicians include Allen Toussaint and Art Neville (Aaron's brother—Aaron did 'Tell It Like It Is'), and in England, Roy Davies,

Mick Weaver, Simon Kirke and Rabbit. I'd say that overall I preferred Roden's work with the Butts Band, but again that may be blind prejudice—anyway, it's heavily superior to Manzanera's effort. The musician-ship is beyond reproach, like the excellent sax solo by one George Lee on 'I'm On Your Side', but in general the material is a little ordinary. Understand me, I don't mean bad, like Manzanera's, but just a little unexciting. Jess himself is certainly more upfront than he was on the Butts Band album, and his singing is again exemplary. Someone said to me that they quite liked his record, but they wouldn't feel that they had to re-

place it if it were pinched. That about sums it up for me too. I think it's a shame that he didn't stay with Densmore and Krieger and tried it out a little longer, because although he'll probably increase his stature with what he's doing now, it could have been a quicker leap to fame with those who have experienced it all before.

EPILOGUE

It's difficult to write a piece like this, being objective about a bunch of musicians from whom one has been removed. You know who I mean—the totally unique Jim Morrison. In terms of rock musicians, Morrison has been my favourite since the first day I heard his music, and I'd still love to see him return. Not in a blasphemous rising from the dead manner, but just maybe he isn't really dead, but has gone to ground. For the uninitiated, if Morrison returned, there would be no continuation of the search for the next big thing... If you read this, Jim, I'm not the only one. And just before I go, does anyone have any news of the projected Morrison book by Jerry Hopkins? And for those of you who read French, a friend of ours named Herve Muller has written a book titled 'Jim Morrison Au Dela Des Doors', which is published by Albin Michel/Rock and Folk. Well, what we obviously need is an English translation—how about it publishers? Jim Morrison lives.

□ JOHN TOBLER

FOOTNOTE: This article was obviously written before the release of the Gonzalez album which is now available, just called 'Gonzalez' (EMI EMC 3046).

ZIGZAG BACK ISSUES

1-20 & 24 Sold out completely.

Marc Bolan, Jo Mama/Danny Kootch
21 Tree, Al Kooper Pt 1, Amazing Blondel, Buffy St Marie, Kevin Coyne.

Jack Bruce Tree, Mott The Hoople,
22 Allman Brothers, Alice Cooper, Link Wray, Donovan, Terry Riley.

John Sebastian, Colin Blunstone, Rory
23 Gallagher, Big Brother, Fairport & Stoneground Trees.

Elton John, Lou Reed, Flamin' Groovies,
25 Zappa/Mothers Trees, Love Tree, Floyd's Earliest Days.

Hawkwind, Joe Cocker, Dave van Ronk,
26 Greenwich Village, Brewer's Droop, Dan Hicks/S.F. Tree.

Jimmy Page, Bridget St John, Procul/
27 Traffic Tree, Ducks Deluxe, Kinks, Steve Stills, Byrds Part 1.

Led Zeppelin, The Nitty Gritty Dirt
28 Band, Kim Fowley, Stealers Wheel, Kevin Ayers Tree, Byrds Part 2.

Genesis, Everly Bros, Eagles/Burritos
29 Family Tree, Silverhead, Johnny Speight, Beefheart, Byrds Part 3.

30 Sold out completely.

31 Sold out completely.

Pink Floyd, Steve Ellis, The Story of
32 Spirit, Clifford T. Ward, John Cale, Roy Buchanan, Byrds Part 6.

McKendree Spring, Robert Plant, Boz
33 Scaggs, Clarence White, Steve Miller/Sir Douglas Quintet tree.

Family, Lou Reed, Asleep At The Wheel,
34 Captain Beefheart, The Dillards.

35 Sold out completely.

Van Morrison, Stan Tracey, Kevin
36 Coyne, Grateful Dead Part 2, Byron Berline.

Charlie Watts, Mighty Baby, Nils Lofgren,
37 Grateful Dead, Part 3, Country Joe McDonald

Quicksilver Messenger Service, Richard
38 Greene Tree, Ben Sidran, Loggins & Messina, John Stewart

Michael Nesmith interview, Steve
39 Miller, ZigZag Poll, Ralph McTell, Evan Parker

Dave Mason, Michael Nesmith: post-
40 Monkees, Peter Hammill, Macon, Georgia

Quicksilver, John Martyn, David Blue,
41 Free, Moby Grape, Michael Fennelly, Byrds story Part 7 (!?!)

Nick Drake, Albert Hammond, Moby
42 Grape, Dr Hook, Free, Lovin' Spoonful, John Weider, John Stewart

Tim Hardin, Jackie Lomax, Bees
43 Make Honey, Man Tree, Love, Sopwith Camel, Townshend, Steely Dan

Tim Buckley, 10cc, Marc Benno, Town-
44 shend, Clapton Tree, Beefheart, Tangerine Dream, Blue Oyster Cult

Russ Ballard, Bruce Springsteen, New
45 Riders Chart, Dead Sound System, Poco Chart, Bert Jansch

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SITTIN' IN LIMBO

THE CONTINUING STORY OF JOHN SEBASTIAN

The activities of John B. Sebastian post-Woodstock haven't so much been a mystery as mystifying.

Take 'The Four Of Us', for instance, the recorded proof of John and Catherine Sebastian's perignations around the hinter States with another couple. Many were mystified why Sebastian should make such a personalised scrapbook available to the public as the world continued to wait for a worthy follow up to 'John B. Sebastian'.

"I think the only people who bought that album," pondered John, reflecting on that album two years later, "were... the four of us." His attitude was, as always, smug, deliberate and with just a trace of regret that it hadn't been more palatable to the public, though the experience had been no less worthwhile for all that.

John Sebastian's recent career has been one of strange ironies. At Woodstock he unwittingly found some kind of place in the annals for creating the biggest impression in front of the largest audience without actually having been booked to appear. At the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival he saved the day, arriving onstage Sunday morning, depping for whoever should have appeared but had probably overslept, and lifting the field of slumber gently from their sweet dreams and into an early morning world of soft songs—ragtime and smiles as someone once wrote.

Only stopping to welcome his old Lovin' Spoonful buddy Zal Yanovsky up onstage to join in the fun, John B. gave a two hour reminder of his contribution to the sixties in a kind of magical connection between then and now.

The albums that followed 'John B. Sebastian', which in itself took an age to record and release while contractual hassles were sorted out, were full of the J.B. enigma. Aside from 'The Four Of Us', what was the meaning of the apparent lack of finesse that had characterised the poorly recorded live solo pastiche 'Cheapo Cheapo Productions Presents... Real Live Sebastian', a sort of do-it-yourself album kit that preceded 'The Four Of Us' in 1971?

Again it typified Sebastian, the itinerant folkie, whose life with his new wife Catherine seemed to be one of forever travelling... on foot, on bicycle, whatever. Turning up and passing through. Even the Isle of Wight was only a station on the way... part of a trek across Europe which took the Sebastians to John's much beloved Italy.

'Real Live' was also a fond hark back to jug band music and the Cambridge/Green-

wich Village environment that had spawned it in the early mid-sixties. Relationships with people like Fred Neil, Eric Jacobsen and Bob Dylan that were to continue into the seventies in various shapes and forms.

Listening to John's very first recording, as part of that odd college dinosaur The Even Dozen Jug Band it is evident that John B. has never lost that affinity with mainstream blues and syncopation that manifests itself in all his music right through to his latest album 'Tarzana Kid'.

Just look at the track selection: 'Overseas Stomp' and 'Take Your Fingers Off It' from 1965, 'Fishin' Blues' and 'Mobile Line' (1971) and now 'Wild About My Lovin'' and 'Sportin' Life' once again in 1974.



But there came a time when the touring had to stop, and in order not to reiterate too much ground already covered by Pete Frame and John Tobler in earlier ZigZags, we'll flash forward to 1973 and John's home in Laurel Canyon.

Though his spiritual home was still very much the east coast—he'd even stayed in Bob Dylan's Woodstock home on that last tour back east—he was eminently at peace with the Californian climate. Catherine returned to art and photography, John weighed anchor and newly born offspring Ben started to grow up.

And yet, with well over a year to dig in his heels, John was still caught hopping without a band when it was time to go out on tour at the beginning of '73.

"My first answer had been to call up Ry Cooder and Jim Keltner and a few people like that. The first people I tried to do this with actually were with Paul Harris, Dallas

Taylor and Kenny Altman because at that point soloing had more or less exhausted itself as far as the possibilities ahead were concerned."

John B. was looking not for another Lovin' Spoonful but a good rock rhythm section that would free him to make facile changes on stage between guitar, harmonica and autoharp.

"The potential was there and we started to make 'The Four Of Us' which I wanted to be a band album. I wanted to find the right combination and then move on but everyone in the group was horrified as had become the tradition among musicians."

So one by one Sebastian's chosen men fell by the wayside. Taylor and Harris went off to join Manassas and Kenny Altman set off for New York to star in a movie.

Having flirted briefly with the silver screen Altman returned to play with Sebastian once more, who by this time was working with drummer Johnny Cider who had been with Spanky And Our Gang. But that was another short-lived trio which ended when Altman decided to get back into movies.

Still maintaining that somewhere in Los Angeles the right permutation of musicians was just waiting to go on tour with him, John B. embarked on what was to become his most costly project to date. He produced Phil Everly's solo album 'Stories We Could Tell' in the luxury of his own home, and in doing so thought he'd found the perfect partner with whom to take to the road. They started duetting and called up Ry Cooder to help them on a bunch of gigs. But according to John, Ry seemed "rather horrified by it all" and then Kenny decided he didn't want the gig and finally Phil, after returning from a vacation with his parents, had second thoughts and abandoned the project.

Eighteen months later John shrugged aside any bitterness and disclaimed that the schism had been a major upheaval, although at the time he felt bitterly let down by Phil's decision and did little to conceal the fact.

Finally he had seen the full potential—another Spoonful in the making—only to see it fragment with no apparent reason. "That singing combination could have put away any of the pseudo-LA country bands and rather dreary country vocalist groups that there are now."

One can only speculate as to what such an aggregation might have realised, but certainly it's fair to assume that it would have loaded John away from the predominance

of goodtime songs to which the American populace has become rather over-exposed judging from recent reviews he has been picking up in the States. "So when are we going to hear something new, John?" was the tone of many of the reviews.

John's reasons for keeping those old bangers on the road are sound enough . . . but more of that later. Back to the plot. Where were we? Oh yeah, the Everly turn-around.

This upheaval which John B. later played down almost mushroomed to become a turning point in his life as he tried to piece together his future philosophically.

"Whilst some people can contrive such happenings," he mused with reference to pulling musicians, "it works for me not at all. What works for me is what falls out of the skies—and strangely enough it did at just that point.

"It had been a year since I'd stopped working and said to myself 'OK I'm sending John B. back into the wings for a little while while I go and see just which way I can expand'. It was almost back to that point again, but this time I figured I'd have to go out and do gigs by myself again just solo.

"It would have been very disappointing because although in England . . . I mean it's just so strange that I've accumulated this reputation as being an entertainer. You see The Spoonful and all that started very simply because I was a guitar player and a harmonica player and really the main source of my input is music. So playing alone becomes murder for someone who gets his main source of inspiration as a studio man. You know for that whole year I wasn't working or doing any concerts, I was in the studios like mad working for other people."

Eventually he found the right bunch of musicians who were able to keep pace with his changes and his erratic nature as a performer. "If I've just written in one idiom

I become compelled to write in the other," he once said. "It becomes hard to find people who can follow me around. Zally did because he was into the same kind of craziness—but we were all novices in those days, so that in making a lot of albums . . . you realise that the percentage isn't very high when you're learning . . ."

What happened was this. Ray Neapolitan,

who had played bass on 'John B. Sebastian' had just finished work as a pit musician during the run of 'Jesus Christ Superstar' and was looking for a regular rock gig. At the same time along came Ronnie Koss, an experienced Detroit guitarist and with him was a superb drummer called Kelly Shanahan, who had barely turned nineteen.

"Well . . . to take up the story . . . we had three weeks to put together a set to go out on the road and with very little trouble this band became the tightest little thing I'd ever heard playing my songs.

"All that Spoonful stuff suddenly began to sound wonderful, even the stuff that hadn't sounded good with the Spoonful," beamed John. And that probably explains his preoccupation with those old songs onstage—to show that not only have they stood the test of time (a fact that none of us ever doubted) but that as separate entities they are like little chameleons that will blend musically into whatever shape or form.

"Y'see the Spoonful were never very consistent at playing anything. If you'd heard us on our token appearance in England you'd have heard 'Do You Believe In Magic' played much too fast for the simple reason that as a foursome we weren't very strong. Now I'm playing with a band that's much stronger and it's a joy to play some of those tunes with the right inflection and right mood."

Even his stage role changed as he was forced to recede and hand out the honours rather more. "That doesn't mean I don't

still blab a lot onstage," he emphasised. "I'm a front man as far as talk goes because I love entertaining, so I'm a front man in the theatrical sense but it's slowly disappearing in the musical sense. And whereas with the Spoonful I was writing for myself I was writing for everybody else only by extension because I felt very much a part of everybody.

"But 'The Four Of Us' was a much more intimate experience in that it was one side of an album only but that little song was written for four people—and indeed about four people bought it. Yet it was righteous because it was a love song about this wonderful experience that we had."

He admits that in terms, to use that old record company cliché, of commercial viability, 'The Four Of Us' was probably a mistake. But there again his relationship with Warner Bros hasn't always been as healthy as it is now. They claim he has been uncooperative, he counters by saying they never put the full weight of the Burbank machinery behind either of his two 1970-71 albums, but his aversion is probably the legacy of bad experiences which brought the 'John B. Sebastian' album grinding to a halt, and further exploitation going back to the days of the Lovin' Spoonful.

"Yep, the sixties have certainly taken their toll in one way or another and we're missing some of the folks who should be around to do it now," he mused. "Perhaps the sixties didn't take their toll on me because I had it all then, but my 'career' has certainly been slowed down by a great long series of record companies. All the time you have to grin and bear these things but at the same time you realise your career has taken one big punch in the face. This happened for an entire year while a record company sat on an album and refused to release it ['John B. Sebastian'] before I went to Warner Bros."

In February 1973 John Sebastian started work on what was ultimately to become 'Tarzana Kid' and by May the musicians had recorded an album's worth of material, about half of which they later rejected. "We've done a lot of harmonica music," explained John at the time, "also Lowell George's 'Dixie Chicken', my own 'Stories We Could Tell' and Eric Von Schmidt's 'Catch It While You Can' (which didn't find its way onto 'Tarzana')."

John claimed during this period that he was embarking on the happiest time of his life. "Having all this material available is a luxury I've never had before. I've got the bitchingest little band I've ever had and while we're growing we're performing . . ."

John B. went back on tour in an attempt to find out just who remembered him. His goal was to reach Europe for the summer and play dates in London—a project that seemed likely to be fulfilled since he was anxious to show off his new colours

to England. "Forget the Isle of Wight I've got my own high now and despite the enthusiasm with which I was met last time I wasn't nearly as happy as with what I'll be taking over next time," he insisted in a state of gay euphoria. Yet eighteen months later we still wait patiently for that visit.

Finally it was 'Tarzana Kid' that came between John B. and a trip to Britain. "You might construe it that the album took a long time to record but that isn't strictly so. What happened was that after I'd got six tunes down I cancelled out because I was producing the album and I just didn't like the way it was sounding." Thus the setback that radically altered his programme.

"I threw the album away at that point and called up my old friend Erik Jacobsen, suggesting that there might be something worth getting into together. Two weeks later he called back agreeing with the idea, and then suddenly it became very business-like."

Jerry McKuen joined the ranks of Sebastian's band back in the summer during the brief departure of Ronnie Koss, and plays lead guitar on 'Dixie Chicken'. It seems likely that Lowell George would have played more than just a cameo role on 'Tarzana Kid' but for his commitments in putting Little Feat back together. Sebastian rates Little Feat the best band around but he probably rues the fact that George should have chosen such an inopportune moment to relaunch the band as undoubtedly the two musicians would have worked more closely.

"The relationship there materialised in songwriting ['Face Of Appalachia'] rather than band form. I haven't seen him for a while in any case because I've been touring and he's been in Maryland recording Little Feat's new album," announced Sebastian back in August.

The low key, almost slapdash attitude of Sebastian's in recording 'Tarzana Kid' has come in for criticism which is somewhat bewildering since it's a fairly honest to goodness album. The title alludes to the Sebastians' move from the Laurel Canyon area of Los Angeles to Tarzana. "We had to," quipped John, "when my son started to walk and it looked as though he might



start teetering towards that cliff."

His touring programme is accompanied by a unique consciousness of his role as a performer and an entertainer—conscious that he still holds the attendance record in New York's Central Park, conscious that on his last trip to Europe he only reached Hanover, West Germany before returning to the States, missing the promised visit to England and a pilgrimage to Italy to visit his father.

He says he's "very definitely happy" with life in LA yet one wonders just how much time he spends there. One wonders too, whilst acknowledging the musical strength of his band, just how much he relies on past memories on those trips back east with his tales of staying up in Woodstock and New York and hanging out with people like Fred Neil.

'Sportin' Life' and 'Wild About My Lovin'' date back to 1965 and the Spoonful's very first album and yet they reappear on 'Tarzana Kid'. Onstage he'll still play those time honoured classics like 'Did You Ever Have To Make Up Your

Mind', 'Summer In The City', 'Daydream', 'Younger Girl' and 'Do You Believe In Magic', perhaps to remind himself that in the sixties he was a real tour de force as a songwriter.

But you'd better believe that old John B. still exudes a very personal magic and if he's getting the charge and the buzz that he claims he is from working with the present premutation of musicians then it's a pretty sure bet that the songs will soon start to flow once again.

□ JERRY GILBERT

Only a matter of days after Jerry gave me the above article, it was announced that The Lovin' Spoonful were discussing the possibility of re-forming for a tour and recording purposes. The band of course comprised John Sebastian, Zal Yanovsky, Steve Boone, and Joe Butler, and one can only sit back and hope that they are still capable of producing music of the calibre that so distinguished them in the late sixties. I wonder . . .



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- ZZ: Who was your first manager then, Herb Cohen?
- AL: You mean Micky Cohen's nephew?
- ZZ: I don't know if I mean Micky Cohen's nephew.
- AL: I think you do. Did you know that? That's what I read. He thought he'd really pull a fast one with me, man. At the time I signed a contract with him to be my first manager. Hey, what is this anyway? Getting back to Herb Cohen . . . oh, man, Herb Cohen said he was my first manager . . . I'll tell you what. We started out as The Grass Roots . . .
- ZZ: It wasn't the total Love, was it? There was a guy called Johnny Fleckenstein in it, wasn't there?
- AL: Fleckenstein . . . yeah, he was in it. He didn't know whether he wanted to be a cameraman or a camera, I don't think. He sort of fell out of it . . . he's still out of it.
- ZZ: That was before Ken Forssi. There was Fleckenstein, you, John Echols, Bryan Maclean, and maybe Don Conka.
- AL: Yeah, Don Conka. Don Conka was just by the other night. And Bryan was by last night.
- ZZ: Don Conka just vanished as far as we were concerned.
- AL: Wow. Well, you shouldn't be so concerned, because he's well and all, man, the cat's all right.
- ZZ: There was a guy called Don Poncher who was on 'Liquidator', and we thought "Is this Don Conka in disguise?"
- AL: Oh, no, definitely, *definitely*, *definitely* not. He's not the same guy. They all look alike but he's not the same guy.
- ZZ: What about Arthur Lee and the LAGs? How long ago is that?
- AL: It's right after Booker T and the MGs. I'm from Memphis, and I got the idea LAGs—LA Group. We did a song for Capitol Records called 'The Ninth Wave' and 'Rumpelstiltskin'. Instrumentals. Terrible, man. I didn't know anything about it, I was just getting into it, and I was all excited. Capitol Records has always been . . . I don't know, man, when I was a little kid, I used to look at these albums, and like 78s, you know, purple with a silver Capitol building or something, and Nat King Cole was on records all the time, and I always had a sort of premonition that one day I would be on Capitol Records. So I got on Capitol Records and thought "This is it", you know.
- ZZ: There's a story about 'Seven And Seven Is', like it took about sixty takes . . . Is that true?
- AL: I don't know. I know that I had to stand there, stand in front of the guy, Snoopy, and coach him, you know. I had to do that with that group, that first group, all the time. These guys I'm working with now more or less feel the same, that feeling that we're trying to portray now, you know? Those guys, man they were like —when they saw that crowd, when they saw the limelight, they were starstruck, is what happened. But you have to be a star in order to be starstruck, I guess, and . . . For example . . . I don't know, and I'm not downing anybody, but what are all of them doing now, you know?
- ZZ: What's Kenny Forssi doing now?
- AL: Kenny Forssi's brother died in Florida, and I presume maybe that's where he is.



Johnny Echols is either in San Francisco, Hong Kong or maybe Africa. I heard he could be in Florida . . . No, I think it was Japan. Michael Stuart, he was the guy who came in after Snoopy from the Sons of Adam. The Sound Of The Seventh Son. Did you ever hear that group? There's a place on Sunset . . . Stratford's on the Strip. Did you ever hear of that? It was across the street from Ciro's. You used to have to go down the steps. All the American groups were trying to imitate the English. One of the guys in the group plays organ for Three Dog Night, and he was in that Sound Of The Seventh Sun. Anyway, the bass player in that group was with me before I even . . . Mike Dowd. His father used to write the 'Gunsmoke' TV series until '72, and his brother Dave Dowd . . . Anyway, two weeks ago, man, someone shot him in the head three times, and beat him with a baseball bat, so that's that. It was a grand slam. It was a terrible trip.

ZZ: What's Johnny Echols doing?
AL: Robbing doughnut stands. Not in Florida—Jamaica. No man, I wouldn't discuss anything like that with you.

ZZ: There's another story that you made some tracks between 'Forever Changes' and 'Four Sail', about half a dozen tracks.
AL: Yeah, Elektra's got a couple of songs I did they never released.

ZZ: Because they put out 'Laughing Stock' and 'Your Mind And We Belong Together' as a single in England at least.
AL: They did that here too, but they didn't do anything with it, and they always blamed me, because I didn't travel. Have Love, will travel, you know what I mean? I don't dig travelling but you know, I like to be happy, and I'm happy doing my thing in music.

ZZ: How about when somebody said they saw you playing once, and they said you

had a boot on one leg.

AL: I used to wear one shoe. I wore one shoe for about a year and a half. Do you want to know the reason why I had one shoe on?

ZZ: No, we'll leave that for people to think about. What about 'Revelation', the track? Some people say it came from 'Smokestack Lightning'.
AL: Came from 'Smokestack Lightning'? No, man, it didn't. How could it possibly come from 'Smokestack Lightning'? We used to play 'Smokestack Lightning'. No. It didn't evolve over the months into 'Revelation', because I was doing that, man, before I was even in the Grass Roots.

ZZ: Did Snoopy play that intro on harpsichord, and then not play anything else throughout the song?

AL: He appeared in the beginning, and he appeared in the end, and that's all life and death is. It's a revelation. 'Revolver', the Beatles said, you know. It's the same thing, 'Da Capo', 'Revelation', 'Revolver'. I hope they weren't talking about a '45.

ZZ: Can you tell us something about Nooney Ricket?

AL: Nooney Ricket is a cat that should have been recognised. I think he's too drunk to . . . I don't know, man, what can I say? The cat's a showman.

ZZ: Didn't he do a James Brown trip?
AL: How could he?

ZZ: After 'Forever Changes', the band changed . . .

AL: Yeah, those guys couldn't cut it no more. I mean like they started doing weird things, and I couldn't handle it, so I figured, you know, I ain't gonna stop, I'm gonna keep on rolling. I think it's right for me. No offence to anyone. I want to get back to Nooney Ricket. Nooney Ricket . . . Jimmy came over, like we were going down to the Record Plant, and we were going to

do 'The Everlasting First', and whatever else came into our minds at the time over again, and Nooney Ricket saw Jimi Hendrix, and he said, "You know, you really sound a lot like B.B. King." The look Jimi gave him . . . And after that I said, "Jimi, this is the President of the record company, Bob Krasnow," and he never even looked at the cat, man, he just kept walking.

ZZ: How did you find the band that's on 'Four Sail'?

AL: It wasn't luck, that's for sure. They were all individuals, they did their best, and sweated in the studio.

ZZ: Did you not advertise that you wanted a new band?

AL: Oh no. I went down to this club, The Brass Ring, on Ventura, and Frank and I, Frank Fayad, the bass player, who played on a couple of albums with me, we'd known each other since about '63, maybe, and he was working with Nooney Ricket, and like I saw Nooney Ricket, man, he was really good at Ciro's once. I don't know if this was the time exactly or not. But anyway, I had this wig on—it was like in 1963 or maybe '64. Brian Jones got kicked out because he didn't have any ID which you'd got to have to get an alcoholic beverage . . . Brian was coming this way, and I was going that way. I looked at him as weird as he looked at me, you know. I never met any of the Rolling Stones—I don't care to, but I do look in the mirror occasionally, and I do see a Rolling Stone.

ZZ: They listen to your music, for sure.

AL: Oh yeah? Well, man, I tell you, I was going to—before negotiating—like they got a few records of mine, what's that, 'Sticky Fingers' . . . the chick who was doing my trip, so-called at the time, Ronnie, she got in touch with that guy who came from Chess Records, Marshall Chess, the son . . . What were we saying? Nooney Ricket's band, playing in the 'Brass Ring'. They were playing 'You Got Me Floating' and all kinds of things, and that drummer George . . . they really knocked me out, you know, so I said, "Well, you're making X amount here, and I don't have a group, and you can make X amount here." So Nooney got X'ed. Then I wound up with him in the group too, so I snatched a whole group! But Nooney only wanted to perform on the 'False Start' album and that means a lot to me, 'False Start', because I think the way I started with the name Love was definitely a false start. Really. That's why I went into A&M and I did 'Vindicator'.

ZZ: Vindicated the false start, right?

AL: Vindicated *after* the false start. You know what vindicate means. So —

ZZ: Love jumped through your window.
AL: Got the scars to prove it. No, I jumped out of the window.

ZZ: How did you get involved with Drachen Theaker?

AL: I don't know. He turned up. He was mixed up at the time, man. The guy was in love or something, I don't know. Luff, I think it was, L?U?F?F? This chick really had him by the balls you know, and God, man, it was a sorry situation. But he got together, and came back, you know, a couple of years later. I think I saw him about a year, maybe a year and a half ago, and he was asking me about royalties. At the time I wanted him in the group—"No. I just want to be paid scale." OK, so I paid him scale. And then two years later, he didn't have

any money. He comes round—"Where are all the royalties, I'm broke." That guy Tjay Cantrelli and Michael Stuart, who never signed contracts with the group Love were suing me, until I found out—Sue is a boy's name. Tjay Cantrelli came up to my house and he wanted a quarter of a million dollars for each of them. I had to pay a 250 dollar retainer fee, get a lawyer to tell those cats that they were crazy, man. They never signed a contract. I never signed. Michael Stuart, or he never signed a paper saying that he was in the group or anything. They did play on a couple of songs. But they were too lazy to go and sign a contract. Tjay Cantrelli was only with the group a couple of months, and the couple of months that he was with the group, the next thing I knew, he was trying to take over. And take over what? I couldn't figure it out. We were all individuals, everybody did his own thing. If somebody had a song, they did their own thing in that song, and that's the way I work. I like people to do their part. You get the best out of somebody when he feels he's doing what he wants to do, and Michael Stuart took the letter over to Tjay Cantrelli . . . We picked straws to see who would go over to tell him, and Michael got the straw, and funny as it may seem, they both got a law suit for me. Half a million dollars . . . half an ass.

ZZ: You once talked about getting all the previous members of Love together and making another album.

AL: Oh, that. You mean getting all those guys from the past together, and making an album. Yeah, I did say that, and that's still in the back of my head. It's just the thing of getting in the position, financially mostly, to be able to do that. Not pressing the record company, just having my own enough. You know, I'm not interested in having a lot of money, I never have been. That's why I do what I do. I do

believe in having a good time. You gotta have good times, and you gotta have bad times. Day, night, negative, positive, whatever . . . But I like to have a good time. I don't know how we arrived at this, but that's where it's at.

ZZ: How about Jay Donnellan?

AL: He did his best.

ZZ: He did an interview in England recently, when he was playing with Albert Hammond . . .

AL: Really? That's great! I'm glad for him.

ZZ: Who designed the initial logo?

AL: I did. Some people say it shows I copped out of being a schizoid or whatever. There's still day and night, whoever's schidoiz.

ZZ: Have you got five dogs?

AL: Yeah. Three Afghans, an Irish wolfhound and a Russian wolfhound. The Irish wolfhound, whose father was named Vindicator, he's supposedly the largest dog in the States. He stands over seven feet, man. A very far out cat—dog, I mean.

ZZ: Is that right that you used to play a double neck guitar?

AL: That was Johnny Echols who played the double neck guitar way before Jimmy Page.

ZZ: Don't you reckon Johnny Echols was a really great guitarist?

AL: He thought he was. I went to school with him. He told me that I couldn't play guitar because my left hand wasn't active. It took me about a year to learn how to press the string down for a note to sustain. That was Johnny Echols, because I was playing congas. I still play guitar now. But Melvin over there, Melvin Whittington, he's a really outasite cat. Johnny Echols was a good guitar player, still is, but Melvin—I don't want to categorise anybody, but

Melvin is capable of being a Jimi Hendrix on the guitar. I mean, I ain't hung around with this cat for a year for nothing, man.

ZZ: So you've got more confidence in your present band than previous ones?

AL: No, I don't have confidence in anybody. You never know when they're going to croak. I look at life as today is for ever, and today has been for ever for years with me. We've sweated it out, man, like we've gone from disaster to disaster, we're hanging in there, and we're going to make it. That's the way I look at it—I'm going to do what I want to do and I'm going to do it well. And there's nothing going to stop me, and we're still together. My first group, man, we were making a whole lot of money and all that stuff, and these guys that I have now, man, haven't been making much money, but they're still right there with me, and I'm with them, but still I'm not confident, because this cat could walk out of this door right now, and I'd never see him again. What am I supposed to say—"Oh, I felt so confident in him". It's like being married, man, you put a law in between the word love, you divide the word love, and the state takes over. You might as well be a communist or what I've heard of communism. I don't know, but I know I never thought what Richard Nixon told me to think. I did my best at whatever I did, I'm sure.

ZZ: You can't seriously look back on all your albums and say you didn't do well . . .

AL: Yeah, I can do that, I can. There was a time that I thought I could get the sound of my voice that didn't make it to my ear now. I didn't make it, man, I could re-do that stuff much, much better now. My voice control, I've got it down, really, really. I'm into it. Then I thought I could do it, now I know I can do it.

ZZ: Have you done that through listening to other people, or practising?

AL: I never practise voice control or singing.



Of course, I've listened to other people. In my surroundings . . . you have to be influenced by your surroundings, and right now, to me, Al Green is *all* right, *all* right, and of course, Otis was definitely a trip, man. I didn't dig Otis until he was dead, you know. You see, at the time when I was wearing one shoe, I went to the Whisky and I saw Otis and his whole band was dressed in these little suits, all blue, everybody wears blue satin with white shirts and black ties, and like it was stiped on my part. I looked at the outside, I mean, you can't judge a book by its cover, and I was sort of judging the book by its cover, and that was a mistake I made, and that's the reason. After I heard James Brown and Little Richard and a few other cats and then Otis Redding, popped up, man, to me it was like a competitive thing between Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding, put out records and see who could scream. But if there is a word called genius, the cat was outtasite, man, he still lives. He's really outtasite now, can't nobody see him. We've got a funk thing going in our group—it's good and black and everything, man, and that's just the way I feel.

ZZ: So you converted to vegetarian . . .
AL: I've got an unfertile egg and milk hang-up, but that's it. That wasn't exactly the result of seeing 'Satyricon', but it had a lot to do with it. I've seen the film twenty five times or more, and I take people to see it. I haven't eaten flesh since I saw this movie, which was first four years ago. I always knew I was going to try to be a vegetarian, but I don't really want to talk about that, because a fool against his own will is of the same opinion still.

ZZ: You mention that the new band's black. Do you consider that that's a significant factor. Is that what you've been looking for?

AL: The way I feel about it is, as far as the black trip goes, it goes as far as the red or yellow or white trip. It's a good trip . . . it's Love, man.

ZZ: Is this band called Love?
AL: Yeah.

ZZ: Do you know the surnames of the people in the group?

AL: What? The signs? Well the signs are weird, because Robert Rosell, who played bass on the album we did for Buffalo Records—Sherwood Okuna is going to be playing on this next album—now he's a Pisces, I'm a Pisces and Joe Blocker, the drummer, is a Pisces. Melvin is a Leo, and he's the other guitar player, and Sherwood, he's a Pisces, and like he's replacing Robert, maybe, maybe not; but Robert's a Pisces too. That's weird—talk about black, man, those signs, whew! We don't need to talk too much to each other, because we think so much alike. And it's cool, but it could be a hassle . . . Johnny Echols is Pisces too. I don't know.

ZZ: Talking of songs, are you playing any of the old songs with this new band?
AL: I always do that, because people want to hear those things. You keep on going, man, and you keep on creating if you're capable of doing that, and I don't like to go back into the past too much. I don't like that, but certain people only know you by things you did when they were hip to the trip, you know? We do 'Seven And Seven Is', 'My Little Red Book' . . .

ZZ: 'Andmoreagain'?
AL: I don't know. . . these cats don't think

that's too hip, man. Every time I get with a new group, they always down the musicians that were in the group prior to them. I don't like to get anybody uptight, but there are more people to please that I'm aware of than just the fxxking group that I'm with at the present time, so you gotta do it anyway. It's a part of the trip, man, the biggest part, those old songs.

ZZ: You recorded 'Signed D.C.' twice.
AL: Fxxked up both times.

ZZ: You intended it to be better the second time . . .
AL: Yeah, I intended it to be amplified on the harmonica. I think I played it better the second time, but like Brachen and Jay, man . . . I did my best.

ZZ: What happened to D.C.?
AL: He's still around. He sure plays the fxxk out of drums. He's real good. He had groupies come around like Sal Mineo, and the rest of us would split, and he'd play for about an hour, two hours, just him.

ZZ: Did Snoopy come . . . ?
AL: Snoopy was a groupie that was in the audience. He came up to me and said he played drums, and anybody that could carry a back beat was about all I was using at the present, because Conka, I couldn't get the cat together, man. Maybe he was together and I wasn't, so I wasn't questioning anything, I just had to move on.

ZZ: Snoopy came at the right time . . . for him . . .
AL: For him, yeah.

ZZ: Was Snoopy just the temporary member until Don Conka could sort himself out?
AL: Don Conka . . . Don Conka . . . he was Don Conka from the time I met him until now.

ZZ: Was he ever on any of the records?
AL: No. He recorded some things we did in those clubs. But what a waste. It's the same way with Noony Ricket. I mean there are a lot of artists, you know . . . that's why I feel fortunate, making all the bread, and doing what I want.

ZZ: Another story is that you were the first person in Hollywood to have glasses like crystal spectacles . . .
AL: Yeah. What does that have to do with anything, man?

ZZ: Is it true that you took the name of the Grass Roots from the riots in Watts?
AL: I didn't take anything. I named the group the Grass Roots behind a trip, or an album I heard that Malcolm X did, and he said, "The grass roots of the people are out in the street doing something about their problems instead of sitting around talking about it." They were the grass roots, so that's where I got the name Grass Roots from.

ZZ: Do you think it would have been a more appropriate name than Love?
AL: What's a name, man? No, I think, as far as groups go, Love was the name of this fxxking existing group, period. I mean, I couldn't believe that. I went down and registered that name legally. So I got the name Love. That's too much—everybody's Love, that's the way I feel about it. I'm part of everybody, everybody's Love. It's a great name.

ZZ: Can you tell us where the Brave New World was, and where Dracula's fireplace is, and all that stuff?
AL: The fireplace was Bela Lugosi's incinerator. It was Lookout Mountain and

Laurel Canyon, which is near here. That's where his mistress stays, in that house, I believe. It's not the corner house. But they tore that down, that thing I used twice.

ZZ: Where was the Brave New World?
AL: On Melrose. It's not there now, they sell rugs there or something.

ZZ: Kenny Forssi had been in the Surfaris . . .
AL: Kenny Forssi's a liar. Kenfly Forssi's a liar to boot. Oh, he'd done a Japan tour or some shit. The Surfaris . . . they were wiped out from the beginning.

ZZ: What did George Suranovich do after you left him, or he left you?
AL: Became an alcoholic. No man, he's still playing.

ZZ: I heard he was going to join Eric Burdon . . .
AL: Oh yeah, he couldn't cut it. Like you have to have a foundation before you build a building, right? Well, he's a skyscraper on the drums without a foundation. He doesn't have that funk. He never could quite get that together. I hope he got it together, or he does whatever he wants to do, man.

ZZ: Gary Rowles did OK, because he joined the Turtles . . .
AL: The WHAT? Serves him right.

ZZ: Was 'Out Here' going to be a single album?
AL: That was 'Four Sail'. That was all one lot. 26 songs. I paid for it myself, and gave it to the record companies.

ZZ: What about that picture in the middle?
AL: With the gun, you mean? If you notice, I'm the only one who doesn't have the gun pointed at anyone. That was on purpose. The guy says, "Run out there, and shoot each other, and we'll put the smoke like you shot each other." If you'll notice, everybody else is shooting each other, but my gun is down. That ain't my trip.

ZZ: This was when you developed your new name for a brief period . . .
AL: What, Arthurlly? It was just a trip. I was going to call myself Arthur Two Ex Lax once.

ZZ: What was that 'Neil's Song'? Who was Neil?
AL: Neil was a guy I hung around with. He was our road manager, and he died.

ZZ: What about 'Laughing Stock'? Was it an autobiographical song in any way?
AL: I don't know what that means. I know what it means, but you'll have to go into detail.

ZZ: It says, "Are we supposed to be like history".
AL: Yeah, right. If you hear the words, man, that's it. "Keep on singing my song, keep on rolling along". Fxxk it, man I'm not going to let anyone hold me down.

ZZ: When were those two tracks recorded?
AL: They were the last things that the original group did together. They were recorded after 'Forever Changes'.

ZZ: 'Laughing Stock' seems to be not quite finished. The middle part of it is dead right, but it tails off.
AL: You know, you're born like that, and you die like that, so that's that.

□ JOHN TOBLER

4* Chunky

Warner Bros. albums



TIM BUCKLEY
'LOOK AT THE FOOL'



BONNIE RAITT
'STREET LIGHTS'



LITTLE FEAT
'FEATS DON'T FAIL ME NOW'



MARIA MULDAUR
'WAITRESS IN A DONUT SHOP'

*** Well, it's not quite soul, and not quite funky. One thing it isn't, is laid back but it's certainly well in there... Hence Chunky because there just is no other word for it.**

FROM WB WARNER BROS.

THE NEIL YOUNG STORY

PART ONE: EXPECTING TO FLY



Without any doubt, one of the musical highlights of this year was the memorable concert held at Wembley Stadium a few months back. A day when the sun shone down brilliantly on more than 70,000 people who had travelled from far and wide to witness the performances of Jesse Colin Young, The Band, Joni Mitchell, and Crosby Stills Nash & Young. The day's music began in great style with Jesse Colin Young playing much of the material from his last two albums, and it continued with a superb set from The Band, and an enjoyable if over-long one from Joni Mitchell plus Tom Scott & The L.A. Express. Then came the moment that I suspect most people had been patiently waiting for. The sun had by now gone down and it was just about dark. Where before the whole arena appeared as one mass of brilliant colour and endless activity, all that could be seen now was the stage,

lit up and waiting for the 'stars' of the show to walk on. As if to prolong and intensify everyone's expectations, Neil Young was, appropriately, the last to make an entrance. The rest of the band were half-way through their first number before I actually saw him, and then suddenly this tall gangly figure in patched jeans, dark coat, shades, and a straw hat emerged from behind the amps, head bowed slightly, bobbing up and down, tearing chords out of a big white Gibson. Neil Young. F**kin' magic. The performance of the whole band that day was really excellent - but Neil Young himself was unbelievably brilliant. Despite some people's favourable reaction to Steve Stills' excessive guitar virtuosity, David Crosby's brand of likeable stoned humour, and Graham Nash's coy sentimentality, there can be few who, deep down, would deny that Neil Young well and truly stole the show.

His renditions of 'Old Man' and 'Don't Be Denied' will long remain in my memory, and if after recent LPs and concerts, his stature before that gig remained in some doubt to the non-committed listener, there can be no argument about it now. The man is a giant....one of the true so-called 'superstars', and quite definitely one of the most influential and important rock figures to emerge from the late-sixties West Coast scene.

I'm sure that most of you are fairly familiar with a rough history of Young's career and I'm positive you're all aware that he was a member of the legendary Buffalo Springfield, a band whose own tempestuous story has been told before in this magazine from the Richie Furay viewpoint. But do you realise and appreciate his quality and incisiveness as a songwriter, his taste and ability as a guitarist, and the overwhelming influence he has on

everyone who plays with him? Do you know about all of his songs that have never found their way onto official records but which form an important part of his repertoire? Well if you don't, I hope to throw some light on these subjects as we bring his career into perspective and, in this part, delve a little deeper into the fascinating and tragically short life of The Buffalo Springfield.

Young was born in Toronto, Canada on the 12th of November 1945, the son of a respected news journalist. In 1958 his parents split up and he moved with his mother to Winnipeg where he began to take a serious interest in music, forming a band called The Squires and playing the local colleges and clubs. From there he started to pursue a career as a solo folk-singer going through

the obligatory initiation of the coffee-house circuit touring mainly around the border between Canada and the United States. At eighteen years old Young, and a friend of his named Bruce Palmer, left Canada for the West Coast.

"We had a black 1953 Pontiac Hearse. We drove to LA 'cause that's where the sun was. I never thought of going anywhere else. I had a guitar, and a dollar in my pocket. I don't know how I did it... or how I lived."

Young's decision to head for LA may have been prompted by the same decision taken by one Steve Stills months earlier. Stills had been part of a commercially orientated New York-based folk group called The Au Go Go Singers and he decided to move out to California to investigate the birth of what was to become the hugely influential folk-rock boom of the late mid-

sixties. He made his way out there via Canada, for some reason, which is where he first met Neil Young, and after an unsuccessful attempt to start a group with Van Dyke Parks, returned briefly to the East Coast to try and persuade Young to join him in LA. At the time Young wasn't interested, so Stills flew back to the West Coast and pondered awhile before calling up Richie Furay in New York - one of his old mates from The Au Go Go Singers. At the time Stills was staying at the house of a guy named Dick Davis who later became the Springfield's manager/partner/friend, and here's how he described the arrival of Richie Furay, who had been tempted by Stills' talk of 'a terrific band' to fly out to LA. "He stepped off the plane in a Brooks Brothers' suit and a crewcut. Steve and I didn't look like that at all. I thought right then that nothing was going to happen."

Well nothing much did happen for awhile. As Furay remarked in ZZ24: "When I got there (LA) I found that Stephen had no-one....it was just me and him sitting in a room playing our guitars and singing songs to ourselves."

But they did make some effort to organise a band. A guy called Barry Friedman found them a Canadian bass player named Ken Koblun who soon found it all a bit too much however, heading straight back home.

And so now we're at the point where Neil Young and Bruce Palmer arrive on the scene and that historic meeting, which you've probably heard recounted a thousand times, takes place....you know, the one where Stills and Furay are caught up in a traffic jam behind Young and Palmer in their black hearse. Well anyway they of course decided to form a band and soon recruited drummer Dewey Martin from The Dillards, who were going back into country and bluegrass music and didn't need him anymore.

After they'd decided to call themselves Buffalo Springfield (the name came from a steamroller parked in front of Barry Friedman's house on Fountain Avenue, Hollywood, where they were rehearsing), a tour with The Byrds was quickly organised for them and their very first gig, at the Orange Show grounds in San Bernardino, was reputedly excellent and received much critical acclaim - ask John Peel, he was there.

Fittingly enough, the first song that the Springfield tackled seriously was a Neil Young number called 'Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing' which Young had taught Furay a long time before, and which Furay subsequently taught to Stills prior to Young joining up with them. So that was the obvious thing to start with.

'Nowadays' was in fact the group's first single with 'Go And Say Goodbye' on the b-side, although it was scheduled to be released the other way around, and would have been if the record company, Atlantic, hadn't claimed a heavy demand from distributors for it to be switched. But the record barely made the Top 25 in Los Angeles, suffering from lack of air-play because it contained the word 'damn'. Not a very auspicious start to a recording career in terms of sales, but the record is great. Young was still singing it on solo gigs up to about three years ago and he performed it beautifully on his first gig here at the Festival Hall....just him with an acoustic guitar, at a much slower pace so that the melody and the foreboding lyrics are accentuated revealing a very powerful and moving song. The Springfield's treatment of it, however, sounds a lot more optimistic,

as did most of their recorded material, and I can't help feeling that Young's almost constant dissatisfaction with the group wasn't helped by a slight misinterpretation of his material, especially early on.

This dissatisfaction and uneasiness, of which we shall hear a lot more, virtually started as soon as the band took the stage for the first time. The egos of Stills and Young clashed head-on with violent frequency, and the harmony within the group wasn't helped by Bruce Palmer's continual absence from rehearsals and the fact that neither Young nor Palmer were in the country legally making them less than comfortable a lot of the time. On top of this, Young suffered a very unpleasant experience soon after they formed. Apparently he was arrested and beaten up so badly that he had to attend the UCLA neuropsychiatric hospital for a long time to undergo tests for continual 'attacks'.

Meanwhile, the band had run out of money, having used up all of the \$12,000 advance that Atlantic paid them, although by this time their first album was ready for release. Gigs in the Los Angeles area were few and far between and they had to go out to Sausalito for work playing the Fillmore and Avalon before returning home dispirited and discouraged. Stills went into hiding on a ranch in Topanga Canyon to do some writing, and a short while later came out with a song called 'For What It's Worth' which was recorded as a single and, because of its political nature as well as its musical merit, reached number seven in the charts. Then more trouble. Palmer got busted and was sent back to Canada on a 'voluntary departure', and Ken Forssi, the bass player from Love filled in for him until Ken Koblun made his way back from Canada. Also, the first album was now out but was quickly withdrawn so that the successful single, 'For What It's Worth' could be substituted for 'Baby Don't Scold Me'. Anybody with the original version of 'BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD' should definitely hang on to it, it's probably worth a few bob now.

There are five Neil Young compositions on that first album - 'Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing', 'Flying On The Ground Is Wrong', 'Burned', 'Do I Have To Come Right Out And Say It', and 'Out Of My Mind' - all great songs worthy of longer discussion and quite distinct from the rest of the group's material. 'Out Of My Mind' stands out in particular as a vivid portrayal of some of the pressures faced by a successful rock star. The album was released in February 1967, about

four months later than originally scheduled, and so work began on a second one almost immediately. Ahmet Ertegun came in to supervise recording sessions as they didn't have a producer, but only one of about a dozen tracks they recorded ever appeared on an album, and that was 'Pretty Girl Why', which is on the third LP. Neil Young songs such as 'Down To The Wire', 'One More Sign', and 'There Goes My Babe' are securely locked away in the vaults of Atlantic Records along with several hours of other Springfield material, waiting for someone to give the word to release them.

The second LP, 'BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD AGAIN', is generally accepted as being their best, and certainly Young's three contributions, 'Mr. Soul', 'Expecting To Fly', and 'Broken Arrow', are among his best ever compositions. More changes in personnel had taken place by now though; Ken Koblun left again and was replaced by Jim Fielder (from The Mothers), who Stills considered unsuitable - another cause for argument. They did a tour of the mid-western United States while the second album was being made, each of them making separate trips back and forth between Chicago and Los Angeles to record. It was at this time that Young met producer Jack Nitzsche and began to work closely with him, hence the complex arrangements and orchestration on 'Expecting To Fly' and 'Broken Arrow'. Not unnaturally, Young felt that his songs would benefit by a more personal and singular approach, so when the band finished their tour, he called a meeting and announced that he was leaving them. After that, Jim Fielder got the boot (he went off to find fame and fortune with Blood, Sweat & Tears), and Bruce Palmer re-joined having sneaked back into the country. So the new-look Buffalo Springfield, without Neil Young, went on tour, with disastrous results. Everybody expecting to see that characteristic figure in his now-famous Commence War Shirt were bitterly disappointed at his absence and it was quite obvious that musically they weren't half as good without him. Back to L.A. again, and they recruit lead guitarist Doug Hastings from The Daily Flash to try and fill the gap left by Young. With that line-up they played the Monterey Pop Festival with David Crosby, then of the Byrds, guesting for them. But the writing was on the wall. They were all thoroughly disillusioned by now and were obviously past their best. Next month we discuss the final break-up and the beginning of Neil Young's solo claim to fame.

Andy.

OLD PALS



AND THEN ALONG CAME



CURT BOETCHER

Before we begin the task of sorting through the illustrious career of Curt Boetcher, it should be stated right now that for the main part his music has always been strongly vocally orientated, with musical instruments playing a secondary but nevertheless important role.

This style of music, which covers people like The Ink Spots, The Limelighters, Four Freshmen, Hi-Lo's, Lettermen, and getting closer to home—The Cascades and The Beach Boys, has either been consistently ignored, or even worse, classed in the same category as some of the more mindless bubblegum rock. For example, a record like 'Windy' by The Association may be very catchy and commercial, but it has resounding subtleties that really aren't appreciated, and the same goes for countless other records too numerous to mention.

A pretty unanimous choice in the vocal field as far as songs go has got to be 'God Only Knows' by The Beach Boys, and further investigation would re-direct the emphasis, in particular to the things that Curt has put his hands to. And this extends to others long gone such as Harpers Bizarre, Parade, Spanky And Our Gang, Cross Country, and American Spring, the last two still tottering on, and in need of support.

But it is Curt Boetcher we are investigating, and not the whole enchilada. But as you shall discover it is Curt Boetcher's enchilada.

Curt explains his early musical life: "Let's see—how did I get into music, whooh! Ah, I was going to the University of Minnesota, and I was studying languages, and kind of goofing around with music. And I decided I wanted to get into it."

"I had a group together called The Goldbriars, and we used to play church socials in and around the town of Minneapolis. One night this guy named John Haney ran into us at a coffee house and asked us if we'd like to make records. Since then, as you may already know, John has become an engineer of high repute. I think he's one of the best engineers in the business. John got us our first contract, which was with Epic, through a producer named Bob Morgan. Our record was released the same week as the Beatles, so you can guess the rest from there. I think we were the first folk-rock group, and we had a Mamas and Papas-type harmony. A friend of mine, who has just come over from New York, has the last session I ever conducted for the group, other than playing. I was about eighteen then."

The Goldbriars recorded two albums, 'The Goldbriars' (Epic BN 26087) and 'Straight Ahead' (Epic BN 26114) which were mostly folk things. A large share of the writing was handled by the two girl singers in the group. Curt takes some solos on the albums and he is credited with a couple of songs. 'Haiku', a song on the second album features him entirely, but, as I said, the girls handle most of the work.

After this group folded Curt got together with a girlfriend of his and they formed a duo, Summers Children. Their very first recording by the duo was on ABC-Paramount's APT label—a very brief arrangement. Their next release was on Date records, a single called 'Milk And Honey' (Date 1508). Curt also recorded a single, which he produced, for the trio consisting of Cass Elliot, Jim Hendricks and Tim Rose. The songs were Cass' 'Everybody's Been Talking' and a Curt/

Ron McKuen number, 'Summer's Long'. Consequently, nothing too strong happened with the record, but Phil Spector heard it and recognised Curt's potential as a producer.

Curt again: "I came out here gigging, and I played the Pasadena Ice House and a place down in Luna Park called The Mecca. And The Associations' path crossed with mine. At the time they were putting the group together and they asked me if I'd like to be in it. I declined since my group hadn't broken up yet, but we stayed friends. During this time I was getting my shit together as a producer. I ran into Phil Spector again and did some 'handclaps' for him. Then I did a tape with the last money I had, about \$85, of some crazy songs like, 'Meet Me At The Hotdog Stand'—things like that. I took it to a guy called Steve Clark, his claim to fame being that he was involved with Bill Lowery and Jay Lasker. They had been at Vee Jay Records and had all the Beatles masters that they hadn't been able to sell, prior to the Capitol thing. When I took Steve my tape he discovered that I had production talent—he happened to be working with Tommy Roe at the time."

So Steve and Curt formed a production company with a friendly name—Our Productions. Our Productions became involved in Tommy Roe's career, which was on the verge of tottering at the time. However, they worked on two big hits for him, 'Sweet Pea', and its follow-up, 'Hooray For Hazel', and its subsequent album which took its title from those songs. His next album, 'It's Now Winter's Day' (ABCS 594) was of particular interest. It was a collection of songs Tommy had been working on through the years that were more serious than his usual commercial fare. And they were certainly worth of the effort, especially the title track.



The album, according to the sleeve notes, was produced by Steve Clark, but familiarity with Curt's work, and his subsequent statement, proves otherwise. The vocal arrangements, by Curt, are for me the highlight of the album. And the songs are strong enough to support the credits. Most noteworthy is 'Sweet Sounds'—one of those perfect tracks, and any deviation from the arrangement would only mar its perfection. There was such a variety of songs on the album, from blue-eyed soul with 'Have Pity On Me', a little freaky track, 'Moontalk' with its sound effects, to the Bo Diddley styled 'Misty Eyes'. Whatever the track, however, a very effective vocal arrangement is there in support. Of course, it turned out that the album became more of a vocal group album than a Tommy Roe set—his voice is not drowned out by what's going on in the back-

ground, but supported. Whereas instruments, in a more normal sense, would do all the support here, it really is the voices. The album was nowhere near as successful as the 'Sweet Pea'/'It's Now Winter's Day' set, but a couple of hits resulted, namely, 'Sing Along With Me', and 'It's Now Winter's Day'. The line-up was one that found themselves on many other productions for Our Productions, namely, Mike Deasy, Tommy Roe, Ben Benay (still working with ABC a lot, and lately with Cashman and West—but check your LA albums, you are sure to find him on one or two) on guitars; Butch Parker, piano; Jim Bell, oboe; Jerry Scheff, bass; Jim Troxell, drums; Curt Boetcher, percussion; Toxie French, vibes; Mike Henderson, organ; Sandy Salisbury, Jim Bell, Michelle O'Malley, Dottie Holmberg, Sharon Olsen and Lee Mallory on vocals; and, of course, vocal arrangements by Curt.

The next album from Tommy Roe contained virtually the same musicians but minus Curt vocally and adding T Jacobson, M. Clingen and P. Clingen (whoever they might be) on vocals. The album, 'Phantasy' (ABC 610) suffered in this respect, being rather thin vocally despite the additions. And, coincidentally, the songs were not as strong. Vocal arrangement on this album, as on the previous, 'It's Now Winter's Day', were handled by Jim Bell and it was produced by Steve Clark for Our Productions. Only one single, 'Little Miss Sunshine' created a stir, albeit a small one from this album. Sandy Salisbury from Our Productions' publishing company, Since, wrote a couple of the tracks, namely, 'These Are The Children' and 'Goodbye Yesterday', the remainder being Tommy Roe compositions. Sandy figures in the story later, so take note of this early contribution which was towards the end of '66.

All was not perfect harmony in Our Productions however. Curt's contribution to these albums was more than the sleeves mentioned, and they were pretty thorough for those days. But we'll stick to the tale in hand. And so to Tommy Roe's brush with harmony. Although it pleased him artistically, saleswise it was a write-off. From here on Tommy was produced by Steve Barri, a combination which gave us 'Dizzy', 'Jam Up Jelly Tight', and others, in a row of hits.

This was a busy time for Curt, the most productive, but only in terms of quantity not quality. However, his work with The Association was surely outstanding. Curt had not joined the group, but they had come together and initially recorded for Jubilee, but to no avail. The Association comprised Gary Alexander on lead guitar; Russ Giguere on guitar; Brian Cole on bass guitar; Jim Yester on guitar, piano; Terry Kirkman on recorder; flugel horn, piano, percussion; and Ted Bluechel Jr on drums; and they were next contracted to Four Star Television's label—Valiant. The Valiant label itself had been around for a few years. Remember The Cascades and 'Rhythm Of The Rain', or Barry & The Tamberlans, 'I Wonder What She's Doing Tonight'? The label was distributed by Warner Bros, at the time and eventually sold with the artists contracts in 1967.

The Association's first single on the label was 'One Too Many Mornings' a well-known Dylan tune. The initial single failed to do anything, but the second, written by Curt and Tandy Almer, 'Along Comes Mary', and in fact produced by Curt, fared some-

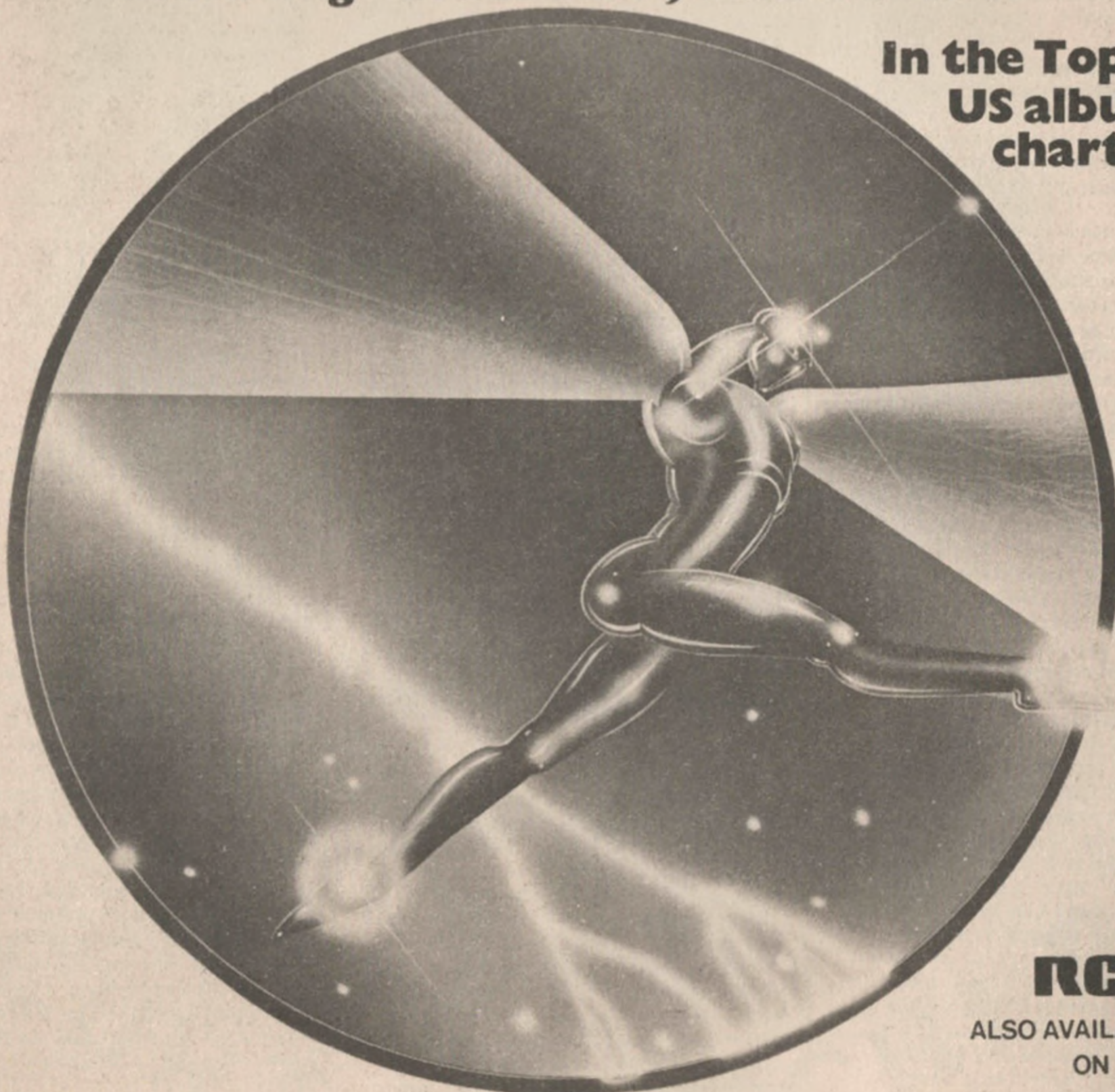
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CURT BOETCHER

what better, reaching the US Top Ten. The album that followed, 'And Then Along Comes...' The Association' (Valiant VLS 25002/Warner Bros WS 1702/London HAT 8305), was also produced for Our Productions, this time by Curt.



Curt: "I said, hey guys, I think I can cut it as a producer. I saw the show a million times and knew them inside out. So we went into the studio together with the troops, Ben Benay and all those guys, and that's how it came to pass, with Gary Paxton."

Gary Paxton, from Skip And Flip to being engineer on this record.

Curt: "Some of the songs were recorded in Gary Paxton's living room. I remember it was a really hot day, and his wife had left a bucket of dirty diapers in the corner, so I was in a hurry to finish up the tracks! The rest of them were recorded in a garage, with the recording equipment in a bus in the driveway—really funky!"

So, with the success of 'Mary' the group became regulars in concerts and the syndicated television shows, 'Andy Williams Show', and all that sort of thing. And in support of this initial success they followed it up with a Terry Kirkman song, 'Cherish'.

'Cherish' became gold in about three weeks, and provided Our Productions with its biggest success and, of course, allowed the group to ride along for some time on the impact of those two songs.

Curt and Tandy wrote another song for the album that is a true beauty. A soothing ballad with clever vocal interplay on the title, 'Message Of Our Love', via the lyrics, with some electric effects added for interest. The majority of the rest of the tracks on the album were written by members of the group, the most interesting being provided by Gary Alexander. A definite jazz feel there, and considering the majority of debut albums around at this time it was truly an amazing release, well worth searching out. For their next album 'Renaissance', Jerry Yester—a Lovin' Spoonful in a year's time, and brother of Associate Jim Yester—was brought in for the production work. It contains even more Gary Alexander songs, and if you follow the group, it is an essential item. But this is where the connection with The Association comes to an end, although, in a few more years their paths cross again.

The Association, as I said, are an essential part of the vocal group puzzle, but they always left one feeling deprived. Deprived because they never really topped the promise of the first album, never made a 'classic' album—apart from the debut—although their '1800' album came pretty close, especially with the complex 'Under Branches'. Amazing lyrically, as it is musically, if you can imagine a 'Heroes And Villains' ballad. Think about it!

Singlewise 'Renaissance' did not provide the group with a Top Twenty hit, but the weird 'Pandora's Golden Heebie Jeebies' reached the lower 40. Certainly too weird for the audience that swooned to 'Cherish' on the 'Andy Williams Show'. The next ballad, 'No Fair At All', fared even worse for the group. Part of the reason was that on this single there was a split sale with the B-side, 'Looking Glass'. I must say that I prefer the B-side.

The further adventures of The Association are really worthy of another article, but trailing off, they of course, met up with Bones Howe, an ex-jazz producer who had, in his past, been the engineer for most of the Jan & Dean hits. But with The Association he turned their career on the up with 'Windy', 'Never My Love', and further episodes.

Lee Mallory was also one of the artists on Valiant, and Curt has a story to tell of that association (ugh!).

Curt: "That's The Way It's Gonna Be' [Valiant 751] was written by Bob Gibson and Hamilton Camp. It was produced right after I produced The Association's first album. A lot of people thought that Lee was Russ Giguere from The Association because they sounded alike, and the label didn't want to have conflicting records out on The Association (???). I think that The Association were partially responsible for having the record squelched. It was starting to climb up the charts, and was really being well received, and in my estimation, even at this point, it was a good record. But

it got sat on and nothing ever happened with it, except that a few people like Brian Wilson and Gary Usher, who heard it, got hold of me as a result."

After this Curt was involved with some strange projects with Our Productions. Not ones that he had particularly wished to do, and not the sort of things that one could cherish, but worthy curios. There was one by a group called Your Gang... an instrumental album, not a Venture's type of thing, more of a jug band without kazoo. It contained all the guys you must be familiar with now. Mike Deasy, Ben Benay, Jerry Scheff etc. It covered a strange selection of material, from Bob Dylan's 'Rainy Day Women 12 And 35' to 'Leaning On The Lamp Post', from the Beatles, 'I Call Your Name' to Tony Hatch's 'A Sign Of The Times'. Actually, that last title is probably a clue to the whole affair. According to the sleeve, the record was produced for My Productions, which, in fact meant Steve Clark.

Curt: "Steve was the crazy general, leader of the whole mess. He was talking everybody into doing these crazy projects. Everybody just got kind of drunk and put together this instrumental album. Studio album, studio musicians, and somehow it was peddled to Mercury."

The cover is like a newspaper at the top, but someone may have got tired of the idea after a while. Anyway under the newspaper heading 'The Daily Trip', are seven guys in the strangest guise they could manage in time for the printing. One of them I am sure is Curt, with the fur hat loping across his right ear. Curthad a track on the album called 'Tomorrow's Dreams', which is the sort of thing you get across the credits of a film, a comedy in this case. The record number, if you're keeping score, was Mercury SR 61094. Actually, the whole thing sounds pretty sober to me.

Later there was 'Friar Tuck And His Psychedelic Guitar' (Mercury SR 61111) which was again produced for My Pro-

The Daily Trip



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CURT BOETCHER

ductions, only this time by Mike Deasy—who I suspect is Friar Tuck. The idea behind the album is pretty well explained by its title, a cash-in on the growing psychedelic age. The top side of the album is devoted to extended versions of well known songs, including a reworking of 'Sweet Pea'. One might imagine, without surprise really, that there would be some guitar work worthy of note. However, the songs are embroidered with plenty of slurring guitar, more limited than the title of the album implies. The vocals are really the thing of interest, arranged by Curt, par natural. Plenty of weaving goes on with the voices to add a spark of interest to my dulled mind, and some obligatory sound effects provide added interest. Again, as with the 'Your Gang' album, it seemed amazing that a company would pick these up. Suffer little angels.

Some pertinent reasons for these albums appearing are given by Curt.

Curt: "Steve had all these drinking buddies and race track buddies, and all that, and he used to get us involved in the weirdest projects. As I was kind of half demented myself I usually didn't care what I was doing, as long as I was working and getting session money. I was always so stoned everything was beautiful and love as far as I was concerned, so Steve took great advantage of it. He was actually drinking up my money, and billing it up at the racetrack, and through this cute corporate legal bullshit, screwed me out of all my money. I had no legal recourse, and the corporation owned my contracts which I had to bargain my way out of. Steve was threatening all kinds of people, making it seem as if I was all wrong and he was the one that was right. It split my whole little group right down the middle."

Not too happy a scene as you can imagine, but there were a couple of other things via the Our/My Productions heading.

Curt: "We also did another crazy song at the time, I think it was on Mercury too, with this crazy dude that came from South Africa. Oh wow! He had a dance called 'Aquella'. He sold the name to Tom McCann who made quella boots—it was insane. Bobby Jameson? ... I just lent myself here and there. The mix I thought was atrocious, it never really did come together. I had already left by then, I had boycotted Our Productions."



I don't have the quella boots thing, but I can cast a comment on the Bobby Jameson album, 'Colour Him In' (Verve 65015). Mr Jameson's only real claim to fame, musically that is (he was involved in some weird scenes too involved, nay forgotten, to mention), was for writing 'Would You Like To Go', which appears later on in the story, but not on his album. The album appeared in July '67 and one can be sure that the usual band of musicians were involved. I can see what Curt means about the mix, that is if we are talking about the same thing. The backing is mixed far too low, certainly the vocals are, which seems a waste as there are some interesting songs there. It could have come close to the Tommy Roe 'Winter's Day' album, and certainly it tries despite the fact that Bobby Jameson's voice is hardly an attraction. I can claim, however, to like 'See Dawn' and his version of 'Know Yourself', which is due for re-cycling in a further album. The background vocals are not as imaginative as on some of the past albums discussed. Finally, the credits read, 'produced by Curt Boettcher, Jim Bell and Steve Clark for Our Productions' with all songs written by Jameson. If that seems fairly obscure to you then cast an eye over these.

A Ray Whitley song on Columbia 43980 came out around this time. Ray had co-written a couple of the tracks on the Tommy Roe 'Winter's Day' album. A Jacobson/Tansley single out in '67 called 'Dream With Me', an excellent single with nice harmonies. Then there was his involvement with the Sunshine Company. He wrote 'If You Only Knew' on the 'Sunshine Company' album (Imperial 12368) and 'I Just Want To Be Your Friend' appears on the 'Happy Is' album (Imperial 12359).

Ballroom was a group that Curt got together and cut the only money that he had been able to get back from Steve Clark. They were under contract to Warner Bros, but only one single, 'Spinning, Spinning, Spinning' was ever released. And here is where we should mention him meeting the legendary figure of Gary Usher.

Curt: "Gary and I met at a 'love-in', and the first thing he asked me was if we could take acid together. So he came over to the house and we dropped acid together. I put the Ballroom tapes on, which he had never heard before, and he just freaked out."

Gary and Curt then got together to produce the two albums they are most famous for. Firstly, 'Present Tense' by Sagittarius (Columbia CS 9644).

Curt: "In the meantime Gary was doing his own little pet projects while we were around so he utilised our talents for sessions which kept us alive while we were waiting for Columbia to get their contract shit together, which took ages."

So you get the picture? It was really Gary Usher's album but he utilised Curt's abilities as singer, writer, arranger, and producer. Other people on the album included Lee Mallory, Doug Rhodes, Mike Fennelly, Sandy Salisbury, Joey Stec, Ron Edgar (with Curt—The Millennium). Others adding their touches to the album included Bruce Johnston (also a Beach Boy), Steve Clark (?), Glen Campbell and an old college friend, Fred Olsen. The album yielded a hit too, namely 'My World Fell Down', a song written by Geoff Stevens and John Carter, now the pillars of First Class. The single was longer than the album version with a gorgeous acapella middle, with sound effects, and more relevant than the way it was used

as a soundtrack in 'Poor Cow'. The chorus is particularly impressive, with Bruce Johnston taking the title in a similar way to 'God Only Knows'.

To call the songs ballads would give you an incomplete impression, likewise if you called them rockers. Billboard used to coin it well in their reviews, "Easy beat rocker has the potential to go all the way!" But that would be too simple to say really. Just believe me when I say that they are a vocal group freaks' delight. With little break between each track the record flows in rare perfection with 'Another Time' (Curt's song) 'Song To The Magic Frog' (Curt and Michelle O'Malley), 'Would You Like To Go' (Curt and Associate Gary Alexander—although this particular song has also been credited to Bobby Jameson) and 'Keeper Of The Games' (Curt). The vocal arrangements on the tracks, which are by Curt, are, of course, the highlight worth pointing out, apart from 'My World Fell Down', which is arranged by Gary Usher. Roy Halee engineered the album—famed producer later on the Simon & Garfunkel efforts, both solo and together. Also on the album was 'Hotel Indiscreet' which has a great vocal arrangement by Gary and Curt, and is quite a neat little song too, written by James Griffin long before Bread and M.Z. Gordon.

Gary has an amazing history as well, with both production and writing credits. Writing with LA's Roger Christian from radio KFWB such surf-in' and hot rod songs as 'Black Denim', 'Hot Rod High', 'You're Gonna Ride With Me', in fact, most of the Hondells things on Mercury, which were produced by Mike Curb, with Gary on arrangements. The best of the Hondells were also recorded by The Surfaris, and produced by Gary. About this time he was also involved in writing with Brian Wilson, and amongst the things they wrote together were 'In My Room' for the Beach Boys, 'My Buddy Seat' recorded by both The Hondells and The Surfaris, and another Beach Boys track 'Pom Pom Play Girl' from 'Shut Down Vol.2'. His production credits number many through the years. The most noteworthy around the Sagittarius time was 'Of Cabbages And Kings' (Columbia CS 9471) and later 'The Ark' (Columbia CS 9699) both by Chad Stewart and Jeremy Clyde. Curt was also involved on these two. Finally, there was The Byrds with whom Gary produced both 'Sweetheart Of The Rodeo' and 'The Notorious Byrd Brothers', plus other less famous artists.

One of the last things he did was 'The Ship' for Elektra.

When issuing a single Gary always placed instrumentals on the B-sides giving them zodiac sign titles. This was a continuation of the Sagittarius theme. 'Another Time', a single which gained some recognition, had 'Virgo' on the B-side. 'My World Fell Down' was coupled with 'Libra', both titles having eastern feels. 'Hotel Indiscreet' was also put out as a single although it differed tremendously from the original. It was basically the same track but it was interspersed with some silly ramblings, going from a wedding at the 'hotel' to some Hitler-type shouting, marring what was a good track.

Curt: "'Hotel Indiscreet' was Gary's idea. He thought it was a big laugh, and we all had a good time making it. On the album 'Sagittarius', 'Another Time', 'Song To The Magic Frog', 'Would You Like To Go' and 'Keeper Of The Games', were all written by

CURT BOETCHER

me and done with the regular troops—Mike Deasy, Butch Parker, and all those people. They were, however, originally done by The Ballroom specifically for The Ballroom. '5am', 'The Know It All', 'Karmic Dream Sequence No.1' and 'I Just Want To Be Your Friend' were not The Millenium, they were Ballroom. The other cuts were, 'Spinning, Spinning, Spinning' and 'Musty Dusty'. One third of the titles were released by Millenium, the other third by Sagittarius and the rest remained unreleased."

The final single from the Sagittarius album was 'Keeper Of The Games' coupled with 'I'm Not Living Here'; no embellishments, just a straight single.

A month later, September '68, saw the *event* of the Curt Boettcher calendar, it was even more spectacular than the Sagittarius album with its marvellous use of vocals. It was the formation of The Millenium. Its members, mentioned previously, were Curt, Mike Fennelly, Lee Mallory, Sandy Salisbury, Joe Stec, and three members from the band The Music Machine, Doug Rhodes, Ron Edgar and Keith Olsen. The Music Machine had a hit with 'Talk, Talk' in early '67, and upon the split re-emerged as Bonniwell Music Machine for just one album, namely, 'Bonniwell Music Machine Turns You On', fronted again by their leader Sean Bonniwell. The album was released on Warner Bros.

"Talk Talk" featured Keith Olsen on bass; Doug Rhodes, bass; Ron Edgar, drums; Michael Landen, guitar; and the very egotistical Sean Bonniwell on lead. I think this was a lesser known milestone of rock music in the '60's, but it was certainly a unique song. Ron's drumming is super cherry, super cherry drums." But back to the Millenium, did I ever leave them...?



The album 'Millenium... Begin' (Columbia CS 9663) features songs from all the members, but in the main Curt and Michael Fennelly. By this time Curt had formed

another production company, Mee Moo, and he and Keith produced the set. I should add here that Keith was not actually a group member, but co-producer, while Gary's role was classed as executive co-ordination. The sound created on the album is even richer than with Sagittarius, more heavily produced and with intricate harmonies throughout.

The first track is 'Prelude'. A rather short instrumental reminiscent of a carousel, leading into Michael Fennelly's 'To Claudia On A Thursday' which has weird percussion effects. 'The Island', in particular, is great. A fine visual sound is created via the effects and the tubas. The vocal on 'I Just Want To Be Your Friend' is a beauty. A gentle beat exists throughout the main portion of the song and the heavenly feeling created is ended by the lyrical message of reality. It's strange how a lot of the tracks have a sort of Latin feel with just enough rock to put a border on things. The Lee Mallory track 'Sing To Me' has almost an Association feel. If you are familiar with the band you will notice how they always seem to include a track of this type. Try 'You Hear Me Call Your Name', 'Yes I Will', 'Kicking The Gong Around'. No criticism, just a sundry comment. 'I'm With You' is probably a better example of what Lee can do.

Sandy Salisbury's '5am' was issued as a single. It missed out on any chart action, but in the Philippines it reached number one!! It was the most straightforward of all the tracks and minus any effects which exist throughout the rest of the album. The heaviest track was Curt's 'The Know It All' which had ample drumming effects, flashes of lightning, guitar work and distant mex trumpeting. In fact, everything. The last track on the album is 'There Is Nothing More To Say', which is really a song about Millenium. Here is a snatch of the lyrics:
Oh if you will listen you will see what I mean,

As You watch other ways of the world that you're in

And if you listen when you know what you've seen

You will watch and be ready when it's time to begin.

Another single taken from the album was Michael Fennelly's 'It's You', which was perhaps his finest on the album. But again, no recognition was given. Other musicians on the album were, Doug Dillard, Red Rhodes, Pat Shanahan, and Jim Ryan (ex-Critters and now in Carly Simon's band). Plus, of course, some of the older associates, such as Toxie French, Jim Bell, Ben Benay, Jerry Scheff and Steve Clark (?).

The album, one of the first 16-track recordings, was duly honoured by those in the know and was amongst Jac Holzman's three 'desert island' discs. However, only a small number of people managed to add the album to their collection, mainly because it was released first and not as a follow-up to one of the singles taken from it. It probably seemed too heavy in ideas, but I found it the more rewarding for the very same reason. There was so much more to listen to than the listed 14 track recordings. That however, was my reaction to the album and here now is Curt's tale and his explanation as to why Millenium did not keep its word 'to be continued'.

Curt: "After the first album we recorded the second amongst a hail of bad shit from

Columbia. They really came down on us. They thought that we were some kind of cosmic hoax. Nobody was approving of the music, everyone was attacking us so vehemently that I couldn't believe it. That's the reason the group broke up, we were attacked to death.

"We had no direction, no management, nobody cared about us. Everyone thought we were a clump of shit. And so me, being daddy cool, head of the pack and all that, everyone said—it's your fault! And then all of a sudden everyone was jumping on everyone, the group kind of ate itself up. The reason the group broke up... we had recorded two songs, one called 'Just About The Same', which I thought was cherry. It actually has parts of 'It's You' where it goes—ahh aah aah aah aah la la la—that's from 'It's You'—it's you whoo whoo whoo whoo. If you take that and play it backwards you'll get what I just sang. So, as a little pun, we called it 'Just About The Same' because it was written by playing the tape back of 'It's You'. Then we wrote one about our plight as a group, how we couldn't get anything going, how everybody was down on us.

"We were thinking of dressing up in white pants, white Indian shirts, flimsy little shirts, and wearing sandals, Indian sandals. We were really getting spaced. I hate to admit it but it was my idea. Of course I think it's atrocious now. We sang about LA falling into the ocean, we were down, it was a down song. But it had 1930's scat singing—and Michael and I did two part scat singing, which I thought was really a gas. And Jack Gold heard the two new things, which were really an added dimension of music for The Millenium, we were ripening into a beautiful group. And he said, 'that's a piece of shit,' and that's all it took, we just disintegrated."

So to end this stage of affairs a couple of comments from Curt concerning the recordings.

Curt: "'I'm Not Living Here', 'Keeper Of The Games' and 'The Island' were all done in Queretaro, Mexico. 'The Know It All', that was one of Herbie Alpert's trumpet players, and that was real wind blowing at the end of 'Karmic Dream'."

With another of Curt's projects destroyed by the business route, he was again doing some one-off things to keep the money flowing, such as Eternity's Children and 'Mrs Bluebird'. A track that was produced by Curt and Keith Olsen, which garnered some chart action the same time that everybody was buying 'Hey Jude' and 'Those Were The Days' as a matter of course. The record was released on Tower in the States, part of the Mike Curb thing, and released in England on Capitol. Again it was a vocal group thing with a lady singer amongst them. It was a jolly record, real fine, in a Spanky & Our Gang mould, but this type of record was finding less favour, so hindering any further impression it might have had. An album followed too. "Eternity's Children did pay the rent. We got a telephone call from down South, and they flew us down to Dallas, Texas. We went into the studio and cut for a solid week. 'Bluebird' was one of them—they were talented."

Next month: Together Records and related subjects.

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TIM BUCKLEY PART TWO



Right, where were we? Oh yes, 'Blue Afternoon'. But first of all apologies for the delay in getting this second part to you. Any of you at all familiar with Buckley's work will realise that the latter half of his total recorded material is by far the more complex and demanding, and it took about twenty plays each of 'Lorca' and 'Starsailor' before I could gather my own thoughts together in any coherent form, and even now, they're both nearly as hard and jagged on the ear as when I first heard them some four years ago.

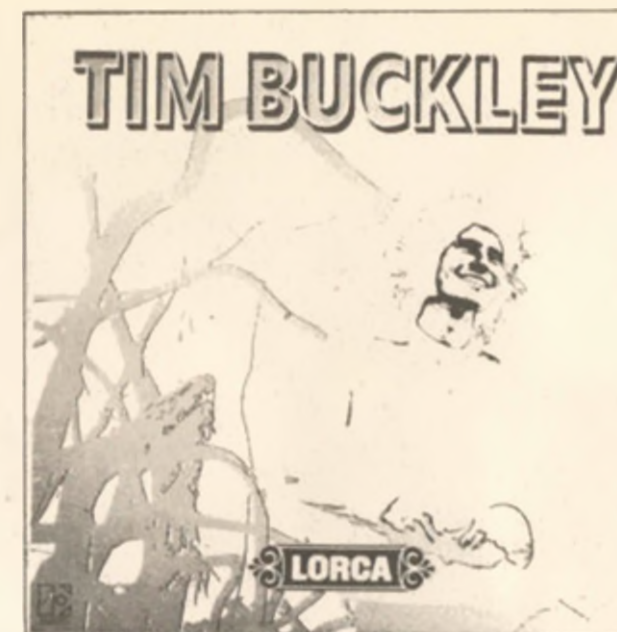
Still, more of that later. We'll continue where we left off with an appraisal of 'Blue Afternoon', Buckley's fourth album, and his first for Straight Records. The personnel listing is the same as for 'Happy Sad', except for the addition of a drummer, Jimmy Madison, and the general theme and feel of the album is equally similar. As Buckley has said, 'Blue Afternoon' comprised a lot of songs that he didn't have finished from the first three albums, and he probably needed to get them out of his system before embarking on the style of music exhibited on 'Lorca' and 'Starsailor'.

"When I did 'Blue Afternoon' I had just about finished writing set songs. I was just writing differently and I had to stretch out a little bit."

The one obvious indication of things to come, on 'Blue Afternoon', is a track called 'The Train' which has a very loose, jazzy structure with lots of atonal staccato guitar work and an imaginative, but by this time not totally surprising, exhibition of Buckley's vocal abilities. The rest of the album is, as mentioned though, very much like 'Happy Sad', which means it's great. The opening track is 'Happy Time' which has a beautifully straightforward melody and lightness of touch that he unfortunately seems to have sacrificed to some extent as of late, and the other three tracks on side one, 'Chase The Blues Away', 'I Must Have Been Blind', and 'The River' are all in the same class. The vibes playing of David Friedman deserves special mention for its taste and imagination throughout. Listen to his work, and Madison's dramatic use of cymbals, on 'The River' and marvel at the tension created with such simple but effective use of instrumentation. The first side of this album is, if the truth be known, as good as some of the finest moments on 'Happy Sad'. Side two is musically very similar, but lyrically it has more than an edge of sadness and despondency to it, exhibited in titles like 'So Lonely' and 'Blue Melody'. A gem of a record though, and one I know I'll keep playing even when I've finished this article and the music of Tim Buckley is dripping out of my ears. As Dick Lawson said in an old issue of *Friends*: "Albums of such gentleness, beauty and profound sadness are impossible to write about, to put down in words. You go with it, or you don't... each cut is a hymn to a number of different shades and depths of Buckley's mood." How very true.

'LORCA' (Elektra EKS-74074)

Buckley didn't have an awful lot to say about this album, which he owed Elektra and was his last for them, and it may or may not be some indication as to the way he feels about it. Released in 1970, it was probably deemed "years ahead of its time," such is its wayward, uncomformist structure. Again the album features Lee Underwood on electric guitar and piano, and Carter C.C. Collins on congas, but John Miller is replaced by John Balkin on bass, and both David Friedman and Jimmy



Madison are absent. 'Lorca' is really an album of two basic styles which often overlap and sometimes collide, providing results which range from inspired to confusing. There are only five tracks, none of them under five minutes in length. Side one contains the title track, nearly ten minutes of it, opening with a doomy, menacing organ sound and featuring a lot of fast, jazzy keyboard work and vocal acrobatics. The other track on side one is 'Anonymous Proposition' which is deathly slow with Buckley singing in his deepest, most resonant voice over some adventurous and at times frantic bass and guitar work. A truly weird side that demonstrates the free-form, avant-garde jazz style that contrasts quite sharply with parts of side two like the first cut, 'I Had A Talk With My Woman', which is a comparatively simple, melodious song with a lot of very tasty guitar work, and neat conga playing giving it a constant rhythm—something in short supply on this album. 'Driftin'' does just what the title suggests—slow and relaxed, capturing the feel of his earlier records on one or two occasions. And then there's the concluding track, 'Nobody Walkin'', which is very up-tempo highlighting Lee Underwood's keyboard work and Buckley himself on strident rhythm guitar.

Overall, not a completely satisfying album I would venture, but an important one for him nonetheless, as it leaves behind one style and commences on another in a way that jars and provokes nearly as much as it soothes and pacifies. I think only devoted Buckley fans would be able to take that.



'STARSAILOR' (Straight STS 1064)

The least comprehensible and most demanding Tim Buckley album to date. Most of it is so strange, both lyrically and musically, that I prefer not to exercise my confused critical faculties lest I get too wrapped up in its many complications. By now, Buckley is working very much in the seemingly limitless confines of jazz, although he admits that

on 'Starsailor' he went about as far as he could as a singer in that syndrome. Certainly, I think if he went any further he'd do permanent damage to his voice, such is the way he tortures it here. Many people, at the time of its release, and in retrospect, have said that it's an 'important' and 'innovative' album, and I'll probably cause a lot of anger and startled expressions of disbelief when I say that to me it sounds erratic, forced, disjointed, and very very difficult to listen to all the way through.

The first three tracks, 'Come Here Woman', 'I Woke Up', and 'Monterey' demonstrate the physical limits of Buckley's voice—often painful to comprehend, backed by frenetic, formless bass and guitar that would do the original Mahavishnu Orchestra credit, although the playing here is nowhere near as loud or intense. There then follows two tracks which are almost totally dissimilar in structure to each other and the rest of the album—'Moulin Rouge', a comparatively conventional song, almost attractive in its simple European flavour, and partly sung in French. And then there's 'Song To The Siren', my favourite track, mostly because it bears the greatest resemblance to his earlier work. A prejudiced and probably unfair judgement. I'm sure Buckley himself would think so, but then that's just my own personal opinion. The whole of the second side is total weirdness. At various times I can hear snatches of the Magic Band, John Coltrane, Mahavishnu Orchestra, and several other artists from both rock and jazz and areas in between, but I honestly don't feel prepared to unreservedly recommend it to anyone but the most open-minded and patient listener. It requires a fair amount of effort and concentration, and as I said at the beginning, it's taken me at least twenty plays to be able to keep up with it and understand fully what's going on all the time. I think 'Starsailor' is my least favourite Buckley album, but I can appreciate the thought and motivation behind it, which, for me, makes it far from dismissable. The musicians on the album are the same as on 'Lorca' except that the conga-playing of Carter C.C. Collins is absent and instead there's Buzz Gardner on trumpet and flugelhorn, Bunk Gardner on alto flute and tenor sax, and Maury Baker on tympani. Incidentally, the songwriting credits feature Larry Beckett for the first time since 'Goodbye And Hello', and he had a hand in four compositions on 'Starsailor'.

'GREETINGS FROM L.A.' (Warner Bros. BS 2631)

"There's a lot of space between 'Starsailor' and 'Greetings From L.A.' when I didn't record, because I knew I was repeating myself. There was nothing to write, nothing to settle into. I hope to make it all clear on the 'live' album, what my intentions were." (See further on.)

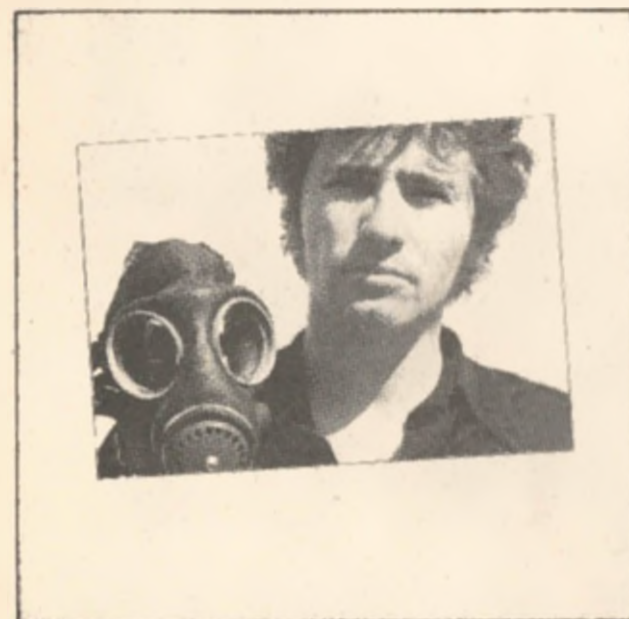
"I actually took a rest after 'Lorca' and 'Starsailor'. I took a year off, and then started up with 'Greetings' around the middle of 1972. 'Cause I'd been going strong since 1966 and I really needed a rest. I hadn't caught up with any living."

So, a long gap, nearly two years actually, and then 'Greetings From L.A.' appears, revealing a drastic change in style. Buckley has moved on yet again, this time adapting his talents very much to mainstream rock—simple, rhythmic and very out-front. His band is now completely different, a basic line-up of himself on 12 string guitar, Joe



Falsia (guitar), Chuck Rainey (bass) and Ed Greene (drums), but in fact twenty different musicians in all were employed on the album including people like Kevin Kelley on keyboards (who, of course played drums for the Byrds on 'Sweetheart Of The Rodeo' and then with an LA band called Jesse, Wholf and Whings—album on Shelter), Carter C.C. Collins, and King Errison (congas), and vocalists Clydie King, Venetta Fields and Lorna Maxine Willard.

At the time Buckley said: "I listened to the radio a lot before writing the songs for this album. There's a lot of radio music on it. It's full-out blues-type barrelhouse rock. The album really rocks, and I'm very pleased with it."



Which just about sums it up really. It's the sort of album to blow the aural cobwebs away, expertly arranged, overloaded with energy and excitement, and demonstrative once again of Buckley's class and adaptability as a vocalist. 'Move With Me', 'Nighthawkin', 'Devil Eyes' and 'Make It Right' are straightahead rockers with the minimum of elaboration and the accent on

hard, solid playing. The lyrics to most of the songs (Larry Beckett again contributes on a couple of occasions), are of the type not quite suitable for family listening, and when I made the comment that 'Greetings' was his most accessible album to a wider audience, he replied that descriptive sex usually is, which will give you some idea of what to expect. All things considered though, a pretty remarkable album and a refreshing one also to people like myself who felt slightly alienated by 'Starsailor'.

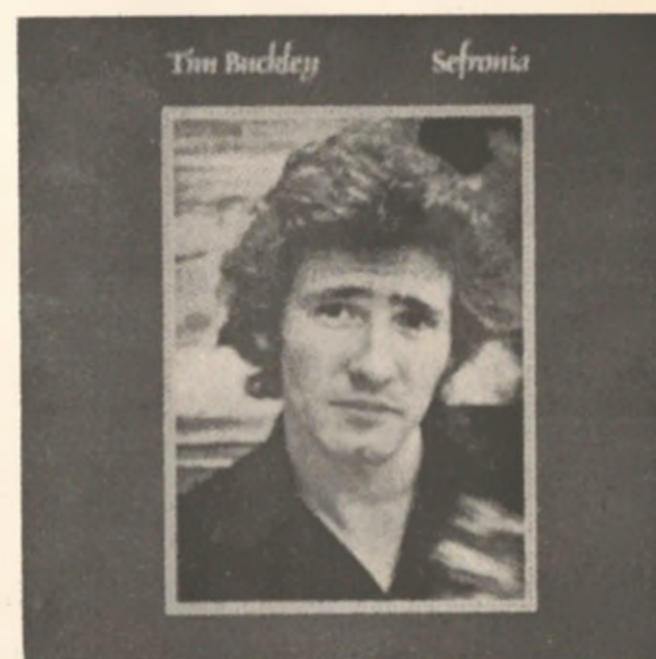
'SEFRONIA' (DiscReet K49201)

Released in 1973, 'Sefronia' seems to me like a refinement and expansion of the style established on 'Greetings'. 'Honey Man', 'Quicksand' and 'Peanut Man' (sounding very much like Harry Nilsson's 'Coconut Song'), are all energetic rockers with catchy riffs and superb guitar work, while there are magnificently soulful ballads like 'Martha', 'Because Of You', and, to a lesser extent, 'I Know I'd Recognize Your Face'. There are also songs like 'Dolphins' and 'Stone In Love' which are pure Buckley, and if you've played any of the records I've recommended so far you'll know just what I mean, so enough said. Of the title track, Buckley says that it is the best thing he's written in a long time, and although I personally wouldn't go as far as to say that, it is a very fine song nonetheless.

Again, there are many musicians used on this album, including Lee Underwood who, alas, only plays on one track, 'Dolphins'. But the basic band, discounting Buckley, only includes one previous member, guitarist Joe Falsia. The rest are Bernie Mysior (bass), Buddy Helm (drums), and Mark Tiernan (keyboards). However, the standard of

playing is as high as ever, and coupled with the excellence of practically all the compositions, it makes this my favourite Tim Buckley album since 'Blue Afternoon'.

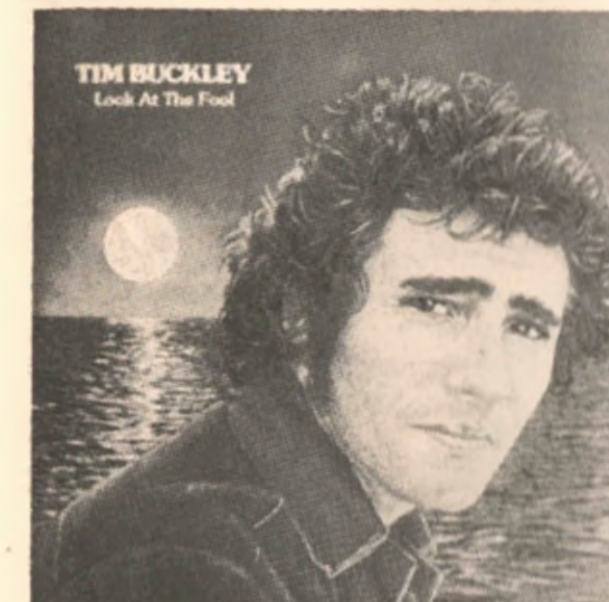
Before we move onto the latest album, 'Look At The Fool', mention must be made of one of Buckley's rare appearances in this country, at Knebworth in July of this year. To my eternal disgust he was placed first on the bill, before the likes of the Alex Harvey Band and The Doobie Brothers!—but his was certainly one of the best acts that took the stage that day. His band consisted of Art Johnson (guitar), Jim Fielder (bass—he of Buffalo Springfield, Blood, Sweat & Tears and Mothers Of Invention fame, of course), Mark Tiernan



(keyboards) and Buddy Helm (drums).

Buckley himself was superb, his incredible voice bellowing, wailing, soaring and diving all over the stately grounds of Knebworth, and when they broke into 'Buzzin' Fly'... well that made my day. His repertoire consisted mainly of material

from 'Sefronia', including a sparkling performance of 'Dolphins', but there was a fair selection of old stuff as well, just to balance it out nicely. A great set which left me regretting that he'd never come over here more often, and hoping that he'd come back soon.



'LOOK AT THE FOOL' (DiscReet K59204)

Originally to be called 'Another American Souvenir', this is an album that somehow I expected so much of, but was quite seriously disappointed with. Only the title track and a song called 'Mexicali Voodoo' make it for me, and if it wasn't for the quality of Buckley's vocals, then the rest of the album would sound quite anonymous. It's not a straight rock album by any means, if anything it veers more towards, dare I say it, a funky soul sound, which is fair enough, but the songs themselves are definitely not among his best work, and in the case of

one track, 'Wanda Lou', encroach dangerously near rip-off territory. Now that's something I'm sure all Buckley freaks will regard as a cardinal sin for him, because if anything he's nearly always been a pioneer and an innovator in which ever style of music he's chosen to work with. 'Wanda Lou', incidentally, is so much like 'Louie Louie' that I secretly suspect it might be a piss-take of some sort, but having spoken to the man and got to know him quite well, I would tend to think it rather unlikely.

I don't really want to say anything more about the album at this point, but I shall keep playing it, out of a weird sense of duty more than anything, and hope that it improves with age.

Now that 'live' album that was mentioned earlier.

"I'm really happy about doing this because I need a break from writing and this will be a record where I can be arranging and putting it together on a different level. Just sort of reviewing everything. It'll cover the whole gamut—all my albums. I'd like to have every song be played by those people who originally recorded them on the albums, I'd love that... a little dream there y'know? But I know I'm going to have to make a compromise, you can't have fifteen people on it. I don't know if or how it will all be rearranged, but I do know one thing I won't be

doing, and that's 'Goodbye And Hello'. There's no way to do that without the orchestra. It just wouldn't be the same. That was, for me, a one shot thing in the studio because so much work went into it. There are a lot of things like that—you just do it, but you never do it again."

As far as I know at the moment, there

are no immediate plans for the release of such an album so I presume that the project has taken much longer to complete than expected. However two things are certain. Firstly, a 'live' album (maybe a double) will be released at some stage—it's not one of those pie-in-the-sky cuckoo ideas that a lot of musicians seem to propagate with alarming frequency, and secondly, when it does appear it'll be dynamite. I get impatient just thinking about it.

Well that's all the records and historical paraphernalia covered, but during the course of the interview Buckley talked with authority and great conviction about music generally, American culture, and other related subjects.

MUSIC

TB: What do you think of music that's happening today, here and in America, in '74?

ZZ: It's a very complex question as far as I can see. There are a lot of things going on which I think are healthy in a lot of ways. I don't know whether there's any music that's got the magic of say, six or seven years ago, but there are enough good records, and enough talented people to keep one occupied.

TB: Well, maybe it was because of the interest in music. It seemed like everything depended on music in the '60s. Protest movements, the flower-power thing, the acid rock, the acid rock jams, now our lives don't depend on that message.

ZZ: No, not to a certain extent. But I still think it's important.

TB: Yeah, I think so. But I don't think the general...

ZZ: Well, they've cheapened the value of



it. They take it for granted, or they cheapen the values of people. I don't know, it's a strange thing about the grass always being greener. A lot of American bands come over here and get very favourable receptions, and the same goes for our bands who go to the States.

TB: It is uncanny, because both countries seem to ignore their natural resources. I have a very strong current there, but it's not the Top 40 syndrome. You can say the same thing about Ray Charles, but still he plays in big places. I think the longer you are around and if they know you are going to play, and you are not a coy entertainer, say, like most of the groups who don't play a lot, they'll say, "Maybe we'll put out this album", and they are assured of a certain amount of success. Somehow they've done that. What happens with someone like Ray Charles or B.B. King, they're players. You go and see them instead of putting them on the Top 40, 'cause they're around. And to me you are more of a part of the culture that way because somehow the Top 40 is not the culture, I don't know why.

ZZ: Well it's anonymous a lot of the time.
TB: Yeah. That's it, it's anonymous. So like when Foghat go to America, or The Strawbs, they do the entire country and then go back through it again and become part of the culture. Whereas someone like Marvin Gaye never plays. So the only taste people get of him is to buy the album, which is good in one respect, but really kinda tragic in another, because he never gets the real feeling from people. Whereas Ray always does, or Stevie Wonder always feels people. Can't live without them. You don't know if you're writing if you don't play for people.

ZZ: I can only see it from this side of the Atlantic, but there seems to be people in the States, especially the West Coast, they seem to be geared to secluding themselves as much as possible.

TB: Yeah, on the West Coast they actually are. They really isolate themselves from the cities where more active living is going on. I can't strike an analogy with anybody here because I don't know how things are done here as far as where people play, but I think it's very important to play Chicago, Detroit, New York City, Boston, the South, and not stay in Los Angeles. Because in Los Angeles you are just with people who are hearing the same notes, and you become a cult instead of a personality. That's a dangerous trap to get into and I know that's what's happening.

See, everyone's playing just about the same thing right now, and that's been happening for the last three or four years because I guess it's a business. You know, you say something sounds like them or like that, I can really see it 'cause everyone's relating to the same thing over there. The same kind of music. That's what was nice about the '60's. Bill Graham would book Clara Ward, gospel music with somebody like B.B. King, and then something like Farrah Sanders. You'd have four different types of music there. What changed was the battle of the guitar night, Jeff Beck, Johnny Winter, all of them on the same bill and it was really monotonous, and not really culturally good for an audience. What it did was milk an audience for a certain style. Try and make it more important than something else. Which is always dangerous in the long run, culturally, because it has to burn out. Then the trag-

edy of music burning out is that there are people involved in the music that burn out. So Bill Graham was the 'hippest' of all the promoters, because he put together a show that was America. That's sad, because it's really needed now, in my opinion.

It was like when an audience goes to see a director's movie it was almost like going to see Bill Graham's show, you understand? And so, you were up for an evening... it was like Jac Holzman, you weren't afraid to buy an album from him. Right now I don't think there is a personality like that, that you can depend on. And that's the problem, that's really the problem. That's why when I asked you the question about what do you think is going on, too much of the same thing is going on, because people are forced to copy each other to exist. Black and white. English and American. That's not good.



ZZ: Are there any real originals do you think?

TB: Well, there are some that may emerge. Dr John is always very unique and fun. Miles [Davis] will always be unique, whether anyone likes him or not or he will always come out smelling like a rose 'cause he's a giant. Cleo has just made a phenomenal impression on America. Cleo Laine. As far as groups, the Mahavishnu thing, well that's dissolving. That had a very healthy effect.

ZZ: You think so?

TB: Oh yeah. In America anyway.

ZZ: I saw them once over here and they just blew my brains out, they were very loud and very fast.

TB: Well let me tell you about Foghat and all those people. The English aren't exactly the softest sounding groups. The thing that's nice about people like Curtis Mayfield and Marvin Gaye, and stuff like that, is that they cook at a musical level, and they don't have to plug into the Grand Cooley Dam to get it off, y'know. They get it off between themselves and the people. It's a cook, it's not a bombardment of World War Two. You know the one that did it, that really made it was Jimi Hendrix, because it was him. But before him was John Coltrane who did

exactly the same thing except without the electronics. You felt an involvement there with the person, that's the important thing. So there are people, there are writers, but it's moving out of music. It's moving into politics, moving into journalism.

INVOLVEMENT WITH FILMS

ZZ: I read somewhere that you were working on film scores.

TB: They were a little too expensive for the shape the business is in. They were all comedies. If you find anybody that's interested the door is always open to discuss a million dollar script.

ZZ: Are you still interested in doing it?

TB: Oh yeah, I believe in what I wrote. I always do.

ZZ: You've got everything you've written?

TB: Yeah, I just have two scripts but very few people are prepared to come up with the money. And those who are don't see eye to eye with the viewpoints. When you're talking about a million dollars you're talking about... they can't really believe in what you're saying. It's a little hard to flim flam a million dollars.

Buckley has, in fact, appeared in professional productions of Edward Albee's 'Zoo Story' and Sartre's 'No Exit', and one of the scripts he talks about is titled 'Fully Airconditioned Inside', which he will probably be turning into a book. According to the latest Warner press release on him, he is also adapting Joseph Conrad's novel 'Out Of The Islands' into a concept album with Larry Beckett.

And that, I suppose, is just about it. While preparing this article, simply for my own enjoyment, I compiled a tape of my favourite Tim Buckley tracks and while playing it through, the thought occurred to me that a 'Best Of' album would be quite something. Of course the number of different record companies involved and the contractual difficulties would probably make such an album almost impossible to release, but there's no harm in day-dreaming, so what about this for a Tim Buckley sampler:

Side One: Valentine Melody (Tim Buckley)
Carnival Song (Goodbye & Hello)
Hallucinations (Goodbye & Hello)
I Never Asked To Be Your Mountain (Goodbye & Hello)
Morning Glory (Goodbye & Hello)
Side Two: Buzzin' Fly (Happy, Sad)
Sing A Song For You (Happy, Sad)
Happy Time (Blue Afternoon)
Dolphins (Sefronia)
Martha (Sefronia)

And that's without taking anything from 'Lorca', 'Starsailor' or 'Greetings From LA'!

Lastly, a few acknowledgements. To John Masters and Maija Deer for re-kindling my interest in Buckley, to all you loyal readers to whom Tim Buckley's music means so much that you were moved enough to write me threatening letters, to Herb Cohen for falling asleep during the interview, and to Nigel Williamson who wrote a nice article on Buckley for a future issue of *Fat Angel*—I mercilessly plundered it for info—many thanks. Oh, and, of course, regards to the man himself, who, believe it or not, is coming back over in February to play a few dates. Wahoo!! (to coin a well-used ZigZag phrase).

□ANDY

Jerry Goodman on electric guitar, violin, viola, violow, electric violin, acoustic guitar and electric mandolin.



Jan Hammer on piano, drums, Moog bass, Moog lead, percussion, Moog and Oberheim Sequencer and electric piano.

Jan Hammer & Jerry Goodman Like Children

The brilliant musicians who played keyboards and violin in the Mahavishnu Orchestra have combined their sonic impact on an impressive and important new album.



K50092



ALBUMS

SILK TORPEDO—Pretty Things (Swansong SSK59400)
 FIVE-A-SIDE—Ace (Anchor ANCL 2001)
 THE BAND KEPT PLAYING—The Electric Flag (Atlantic K590090)
 WAITRESS IN A DONUT SHOP—Maria Muldaur (Reprise K54025)
 BEST OF FAMILY—Family (Reprise K54023)
 TODD RUNDGREN'S UTOPIA—Todd Rundgren (Bearsville K55501)
 DRAGONFLY—Jefferson Starship (Grunut BFL1-0717)
 BEST OF OSIBISA—Osibisa (MCA MCF 2575)
 NIGHT MUSIC—Darryl Way's Wolf (Deram SML 1116)
 PHIL SPECTOR'S CHRISTMAS ALBUM—Various Artists (Warner/Spector K59010)
 GREAT GRAPE—Moby Grape (CBS 64743)
 MOTT THE HOOPLE LIVE—Mott The Hoople (CBS 69093)
 ALL THE FACES OF BUDDY MILES—Buddy Miles (CBS 80349)
 GET YOUR WINGS—Aerosmith (CBS 80015)
 IN FLIGHT—Alvin Lee & Co (Chrysalis CTY 1069)
 STARRY EYED & LAUGHING—Starry Eyed & Laughing (CBS 80450)
 PERFECT ANGEL—Minnie Riperton (Epic 80426)
 PINBALL—Brian Protheroe (Chrysalis CHR 1065)
 AVALANCHE—Mountain (CBS 80492)
 BEADED DREAMS THROUGH TURQUOISE EYES—Redbone (Epic CPC 80429)
 RUSS BALLARD—Russ Ballard (Epic EPC 80341)
 MERLIN—Merlin (CBS 80338)
 MO' ROOTS—Taj Mahal (CBS 80346)
 SLACK ALICE—Slack Alice (Philips 6308 214)
 REAL—Clarence Carter (ABC ABCL 5060)
 SOME OF US—Chip Taylor (Warners K56077)
 FREE BEER & CHICKEN—John Lee Hooker (ABC ABCL 5059)
 THELMA HOUSTON—Thelma Houston (ABC ABCL 5061)

LIKE CHILDREN—Jerry Goodman & Jan Hammer (Atlantic K50092)
 RELAYER—Yes (Atlantic K50096)
 THE MANY SIDES OF ROCK 'N' ROLL VOL. II—Various Artists (United Artists UAD 60093/4)
 THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY—Genesis (Charisma CGS 101)
 THE CIVIL SERVICE—Egg (Caroline C1510)
 PLEASE MIND YOUR HEAD—String Driven Thing (Charisma CAS 1097)
 BURBOLETTA—Santana (CBS 69084)
 QUAAH—Jorma Kaukonen (Grunut BFL1-0209)
 BLUES OBSCURITIES VOL I/II/III—Various Artists (London)
 SITUATION NORMAL—Snafu (WWA 013)
 THE END—Nico (Island ILPS 9311)
 LET THE DAYS GO GY—Bryan Haworth (Island ILPS 9287)
 BLUEJEANS & MOONBEAMS—Captain Beefheart & His Magic Band (Virgin V2023)
 SO... WHERE'S THE SHOW—Jo Jo Gunne (Asylum SYL 9019)
 GREATEST HITS—Elton John (DJM DJLPH 442)
 TAKING TIGER MOUNTAIN (BY STRATEGY)—Eno (Island ILPS 9309)
 HEROES ARE HARD TO FIND—Fleetwood Mac (Warner Bros K54026)
 RELEASE YOURSELF—Graham Central Station (Warner Bros K56062)

SINGLES

Roxette/Get Your Kicks On) Route 66—DR FEELGOOD (United Artists UP 35760).

You may remember that last month I made mention of the fact that Dr Feelgood were the best authentic rock'n'roll and r'n'b band in the country, or words to that effect, and now they've come up with a debut single to prove it. Guitarist Wilko Johnson wrote the a-side which gets off to a thumping start before his abrasive guitar chords lead in to give it that full hard sound that they achieve onstage. There is some characteristic harmonica work from lead singer Lee Brilleaux, and overall it's a solid if unadventurous number and a good example to further the cause of "the simple things often working the best" school of thought. The b-side, 'Route 66' is, I feel, more indicative of the true potential of the band. It's performed in the true tradition with guts, clarity, and an earthy harshness that makes rock'n'roll what it should be, and bollocks to anybody who complains that it's all been done before, because that's not the point. If you want to know what the point is, buy this single and go see 'em.

Gilly I Do/Oh Sweet Annie/Wahtutsi/Love Me Real—CHARLIE & THE WIDEBOYS (Anchor ANCE 1007).

Another first release from an up-and-coming band with rock'n'roll aspirations. Charlie & The Wideboys' brand of music contains less inherent violence than the Feelgoods. It's a few steps away from the real nitty gritty... more good-timey really, but very enjoyable nonetheless. This EP is remarkable value at 55p and all the tracks except for 'Oh Sweet Annie' were written by lead singer Charlie Ainley who seems to understand his medium very well. It would be really something if Charlie & The Wideboys could repeat the success of their Anchor stablemates Ace, although that prospect seems a trifle

unlikely as good rock'n'roll, even from established groups, has a hard enough time breaking the Top 20 stranglehold as it is. Even so, you can all do your little bit and order it from your local phonograph record merchant, and oh yes, the first 10,000 sold will be housed in full colour, laminated sleeves. How can you refuse?

☐ **ANDY**

HONKY TONK GUIDE TO RECORD COLLECTING. Revised end of 1974.

Here's what should be all you need to get practically any record in existence. The shops all make a point of stocking non-top-50 type records, some of them favouring second-hand stuff, others importing from the States, and others holding an exceptional back catalogue of UK releases. The main pitfall for collectors is the recent upsurge in pirate pressings of in-demand items which have been deleted. Most shops refer to these pirates as "second pressings", which are almost all inferior in quality to original "stereo" versions issued officially by record companies.

The Mail Order addresses include both set-price sales and auctions. The procedure for auctions is that you send in a 'blind' bid for the records you want, and the auctioneer informs the highest bidder that he has 'won'. All the lists concentrate on rock'n'roll and 50's oldies; Black Cat is mainly 78's, and Lost Nite is mainly vocal groups.

The magazine section includes some recent newcomers which specialise mainly in contemporary (i.e. post-Beatles) rock music—*Creem*, *Trailing Clouds Of Glory*, *Fat Angel*, *Hot Wacks* and *Omaha Rainbow*.

A. RECORD SHOPS (and also supply mail order lists)

Black Wax, 12 Mitcham Lane, SW16 (01-677 4159)
 Broad Green, 266 London Road, Croydon, Surrey (01-688 5974)
 Chester's Bop Shop, 324 Rayners Lane, Pinner, Middx. (01-866 4164)
 Contempo, 42 Hanway Street, W1 (01-636 2283)
 Dobells, 77 Charing Cross Road, W1 (01-437 5746)
 Moondogs, 400 High St, North Manor Park, E12 (01-552 0809)
 Oldies, 297 Portobello Rd, W11 (Saturdays only)
 Orbitone, 2 Station Offices, Station Rd, NW10 (01-965 8292)
 Record Corner, 27 Bedford Hill, Balham, SW12 (01-673 6130)
 Revival, 61 Grafton Way, Kentish Town, NW1 (01-485 7181)
 Rock On, 93 Goldborne Rd, W11 (Saturdays only)
 Village Bookshop, 69 Lower Regent St, W1 (01-434 1426)
 Vintage Record Centre, 91 Roman Way, N7 (01-607 8586)
 Chris Wellards, 6 Lewisham Way, New Cross, SE14 (01-692 5534)

B. MAIL ORDER ONLY

1. UK

Black Cat, 52 Walsworth Rd, Hitchin, Herts. SG4 9SX (Hitchin 53152)
 Injun Records, 26 Stanford Avenue, Hassocks, Sussex
 Flyright, 21 Wickham Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex
 Record Mart Magazine, 16 London Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS8 7HP

Reddington Rare Records, 20 Moor St, Birmingham 4
 Scarce Sounds, 24 Long Mead, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey

2. USA

Richard Bass, 612 Brooklyn Ave, Oakland, Cal. 94606
 Goldband Records, PO Box 1485, Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601
 J & F Southern Sounds, 4501 Risinghill Road, Altadena, Cal. 91001
 Jin & Swallow, 434 E. Main Street, Ville Platte, Louisiana 70586
 Lost Nite, 1928 Arch St, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
 Terry Pattison, 883 Pontalba Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70124
 Rollin Rock, 10735 Bluffside Drive, Hollywood, Cal. 91604
 Mike Valle, PO Box 538, Springfield, Virginia 23150

C. PUBLICATIONS (and news-stand publications)

Bim Bam Boom, PO Box 301, Bronx, NY 10469, USA
 Black Music, 161/166 Fleet Street, London EC4P 4AA
 Blues and Soul, 42 Hanway Street, London W1
 Blues Link (inc. Blues World), 94 Puller Rd, Barnet, Herts. EN5 4HD
 Blues Unlimited, 38a Sackville Rd, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex
 Creem, PO Box P-1064, Birmingham, Michigan 48011, USA
 Fat Angel, 213 Eastcote Lane, South Harrow, Middx.
 Hot Buttered Soul, 36 Scrapsgate Road, Minster, Sheppey, Kent ME12 2EA.
 Hot Wacks, 104 Spring Gardens, Edinburgh EH8 8EY
 Let It Rock, 23a Aberdare Gardens, London NW5
 Living Blues, PO Box 11303, Chicago, Illinois 60611
 Omaha Rainbow, 10 Lesley Court, Harcourt Road, Wallington, Surrey
 Shout, 46 Siades Drive, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6JX
 Record Exchanger, PO Box 2144, Anaheim, Cal. 92804

D. BOOKS SHOPS SPECIALISING IN MUSIC (London only)

Compendium, 240 Camden High Street, London NW1
 Musical Boutique, 70 Shaftesbury Ave, London W1

E. CHART COMPILATIONS

USA

Record Research, PO Box 82, Menominee Falls, Wisconsin 53051

UK

Rock File 1 (New English Library); Rock File 2 (Panther)

F. DIRECTORIES

London label LP list, 31 Holbeach Road, London SE6
 London label 45 list, see Hot Buttered Soul—address above.
 A to Z list of US R&B releases—Soul Sounds, 17 Great Fox Meadow, Kelvedon Hatch, Brentwood, Essex

The above list was provided by 'Honky-Tonk', the best rock'n'roll show on the radio, every Sunday at noon on BBC Radio London, 206 M.W. and 94.9 V.H.F.



ZIGZAG'S

1974

VINYL VOTE

(Part One....ho ho).

CONNOR McKNIGHT

I can only think of five albums that I would willingly, and without qualification, urge ZigZag readers to buy. Mainly this is due to the supply of review copies drying up, but also to the fact that my limited resources are directed towards filling in the gaps, and if I were to write about records I bought this year that were released some years ago, it would take a page. The other disclaimer I ought to make is that only two of these five are by artists about whom I've never before gone bonkers. Anyone who is at all familiar with my tastes won't be surprised by the inclusion of CHAPMAN/WHITNEY'S 'STREET WALKERS', BOZ SCAGGS' 'SLOW DANCER' or RY COODER'S 'PARADISE & LUNCH'. And the only explanation I can offer is that I've become a dyed-in-the-wool reactionary, who doesn't like anything by new artists; the thing is that I'm proud of it. Most of these new bands seem to me to be like circus performers—and whoever heard of a *good* tightrope walker; they either fall off the wire or they don't—and these new bands are like that. They're neither good nor bad—just there.

The other two albums are ROBERT WYATT'S 'ROCK BOTTOM' and THOMAS JEFFERSON KAYE'S 'FIRST GRADE'. The latter album got a very odd set of reviews—I haven't a clue why. John Peel reviewed the single, 'American Lovers', and said something like 'It's OK until the strings start'. But let me assure you, the strings are dazzling—I like arrangements that tend to the schmaltzy, as these do, but more than that, they're perfectly appropriate to what is, after all, a fairly romantic number. Another review said that his tunes were undistinguished and unmemorable. Again, very puzzling, since there are two ('Northern California' and 'One Man Band') that are absolutely narcotic. Most of the other reviews listed his accomplishments, ran through the musicians he used, and ended. All of which reinforces my belief that professional record reviewers rarely listen to the records more than once.

I've listened to all of these albums a helluva lot. I don't tire of them, and they all give me great pleasure. That's all one can ask really, isn't it?

JIM McGUIRE

FEATS DON'T FAIL ME NOW—Little

Feat

461 OCEAN BOULEVARD—Eric Clapton
 VEEDON FLEECE—Van Morrison
 AVERAGE WHITE BAND
 SEVEN—Bob Seger
 GOOD OLD BOYS—Randy Newman
 REJUVENATION—The Meters
 ON THE BEACH—Neil Young
 HIGHWAY CALL—Richard Batts
 TARZANA KID—John Sebastian

VIRGIN IMPORTS

SUNDAY'S CHILD

John Martyn

MAGIC BUS/MY GENERATION

The Who

HEART LIKE A WHEEL

Linda Ronstadt

MOTHER LODE

Loggins & Messina

DAVE MASON

CANTAMOS

Poco

THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS

WENT ON IN
 LONGBEACH - E. L. O.

IT'LL SHINE WHEN

IT SHINES

Ozark Mountain Daredevils

BRUJO

N.R.P.S.

SMILEY SMILE/FRIENDS

The Beach Boys

BLABBER 'N SMOKE

As Christmas looms ever nearer, life at Zigzag becomes more and more hectic. You probably realise that this issue comes to you just three weeks after the last one (hopefully), and it was necessarily put together in one mad rush although I hope it doesn't show too much. At long last I managed to get the Tim Buckley piece finished, and as one two-part article ends, another one - this time on Curt Boetcher - begins. Boetcher is very much one of those vitally important people who form the heart of the music business rather than the glitter on the surface. He's not really a 'star', but as you'll read elsewhere, he has been involved in so many different things that it becomes impossible to underestimate his importance. If you had a look through your record collection, I bet you'd be quite surprised by the number of times you find his name mentioned.

We've also managed to come up with yet more grist on old Arthur Lee - talk about floggin' a dead horse. My own opinion of Arthur Lee is that he's a long long way over the hill, but still the fanatical interest in him remains. After this instalment there can't possibly be anything that isn't known about Arthur Lee and Love, so it seems the logical thing to terminate Zigzag's intimate Love affair until Arthur comes up with something worth talking about. But also what I'd eventually like to do is present 'A Complete History Of Love' - i.e. all the material on the band that's ever appeared in Zigzag, plus the legendary Snoopy interview, in one limited edition volume....maybe a duplicated thing, depending on our financial resources. Would you be interested?

It seems there's little interest from most of you in those Kaleidoscope albums I talked about last month. Come on, what's the matter with you? Don't you realise how good these albums are? If they're ever going to be released here, then we need a large response from you demanding them, otherwise they're going to be locked away in CBS' vaults forever. Don't forget, write to Rex Oldfield at CBS Records, 28-30 Theobalds Road, London WC1.

Last month brought two pieces of very sad news. First we heard of the death of Mike Leadbitter, eminent authority on the Blues, and advertising manager for Let It Rock. Mike was undoubtedly one of the most popular personalities in the business and I know that all the many people who considered him a friend will miss him greatly. Then a week or so ago we heard the tragic news that Nick Drake had died. I know a lot of you are very fond of Nick Drake's music, after the many letters we received as a result of Connor's article in issue 42, so I'm sure you'll feel as sad and brought down as we do. Apparently he was working on a new one and had been in his happiest frame of mind for a long time so the question of him taking his own life seems very unlikely. In fact he died peacefully in his sleep.

A lot of people write in to enquire why Pete Frame, founder and erstwhile editor of Zigzag, no longer contributes to the magazine. Truth is, he decided to hang up his quill pen for various reasons ("an amicable split" is the appropriate pop press euphemism to cover such contingencies, I believe). Among other things, Framey is currently managing one John Otway, "a red hot property about to set the world alight with his fast-moving, ultra-dynamic, action-packed, spectacular music" (says the over-zealous Frame). I met Otway recently (at a Chilli Willi gig) and was bamboozled completely..... talking to him, I was reminded of Syd Barrett!!?! Framey says that he took over Otway's affairs just in time to talk him out of having a bone put through his nose to draw attention to his talents! The mind boggles furiously! Can't wait to hear the guy on record.

Just a day or so after copy date last month, the ebullient Peter O'Brien brought me in the new issue of 'Omaha Rainbow', the excellent mag that revels and delights in the activities of John Stewart. This new issue is their best yet; it's got an interesting interview with Annie Moore, biographical articles on the Youngbloods, Herbie Hancock, and James Taylor, and a particularly fine interview with Roger McGuinn - a must for all Zigzaggers. In fact the whole mag is well worth your

trouble and your bread - 20p from 10 Lesley Court, Harcourt Road, Wallington Surrey. They're also selling super-duper Omaha Rainbow tee-shirts would you believe..... designed and produced by the inexhaustible Chloe Alexander, late of the Zigzag 'Christ they'll never be able to read that' Art Studios.

By the time you read this, Lynyrd Skynyrd, the band whose name is being uttered in reverent tones throughout the hierarchy of the rock cognoscenti, should be back home after a highly successful tour of Europe. I hope you got the chance to see them 'cause I thought they were dynamite. I caught them twice, once in Glasgow and then at the Rainbow a few days later, and I found them as good as their two albums suggest they might be. I don't believe that all the bands who are coming out of the South at an alarming rate are particularly good, but Lynyrd Skynyrd are certainly worthy of their considerable reputation. John is interviewing them for us so there should be a nice fat Al Kooper/Skynyrd piece soon.

Conversely, a band with an even bigger reputation, one of THE biggest bands, the Pink Floyd, disappointed me quite a lot. The 'special effects', the lights, and the films were great, but I couldn't help thinking that if they'd got up and played without all of that, I'd have probably fallen asleep long before the end. Of the three new songs they did, only one of them provoked a spark of interest from me, and that was 'Shine On You Crazy Diamond' - written about the great Syd Barrett. The rest of the set comprised 'Dark Side Of The Moon' and 'Echoes' - all well performed, but totally devoid of that sense of spontaneity that makes a good gig a great one.

Well I think that's all the waffle finished again for another month. Next month we may or may not have articles on Rufus, the Kinks, Neil Young (2nd part), Henry Cow, and Camel, and we'll also try and think up some gripping grist for 'Happy Trails' which you'll notice is missing this issue - not a very satisfactory state of affairs. Oh and before I forget, John Tobler says that his record auction is now finished, and so am I now, so have yourselves a Merry Yule-tide and I'll see you in 1975.

Andy.

Your New Year Revolutions



Gary Shearston/Dingo



Genesis/The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway



Nazareth/Rampant



Sir John Betjeman/Late Flowering Love



Bert Jansch/L.A. Turnaround



Toots & The Maytals/In The Dark



Judge Dread/Working Class 'ero



String Driven Thing/Please Mind Your Head



Ken Boothe/Everything I Own



John Holt/1000 Volts Of Holt



Decameron/Mammoth Special



G.T. Moore & The Reggae Guitars



Jack The Lad/The Old Straight Track



Bill Withers/Justments



Steeleye Span/Hark! The Village Wait



Tim Moore/Tim Moore



Sharon Forrester/Sharon



Soul Searchers/Salt Of The Earth



Peter Hammill/In Camera



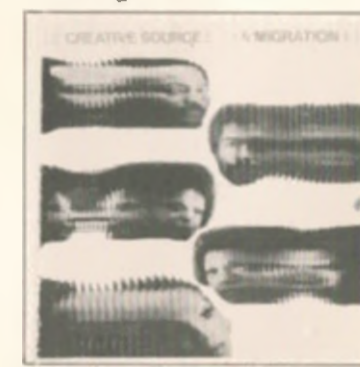
Chilli Willi/Bongos Over Balham



Master Fleet/High On The Seas



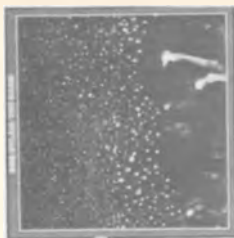
Various Artists/Club Reggae



Creative Source/Migration



Monty Python/Live At Drury Lane



BOB DYLAN / THE BAND

BEFORE THE FLOOD

ALBUM IDBD CASSETTE ZCBD CARTRIDGE Y8BD



CAT STEVENS

BUDDHA AND THE CHOCOLATE BOX

ALBUM ILPS 9274 CASSETTE ZCI 9274 CARTRIDGE Y8I 9274



BAD COMPANY

BAD CO.

ALBUM ILPS 9279 CASSETTE ZCI 9279 CARTRIDGE Y8I 9279



SPARKS

PROPAGANDA

ALBUM ILPS 9312 CASSETTE ZCI 9312 CARTRIDGE Y8I 9312



ROXY MUSIC

COUNTRY LIFE

ALBUM ILPS 9303 CASSETTE ZCI 9303 CARTRIDGE Y8I 9303