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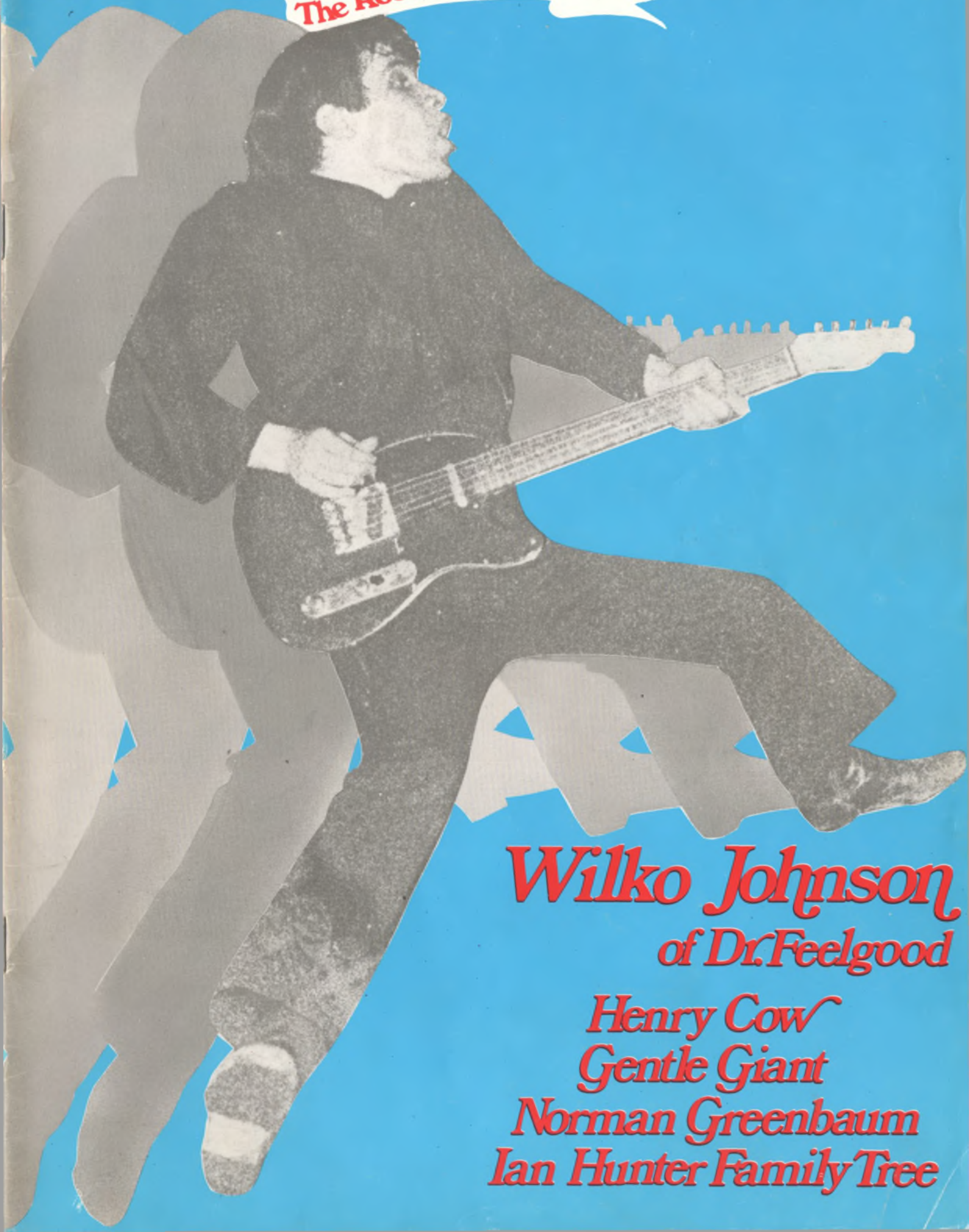

Wilko Johnson
of Dr. Feelgood

Henry Cow
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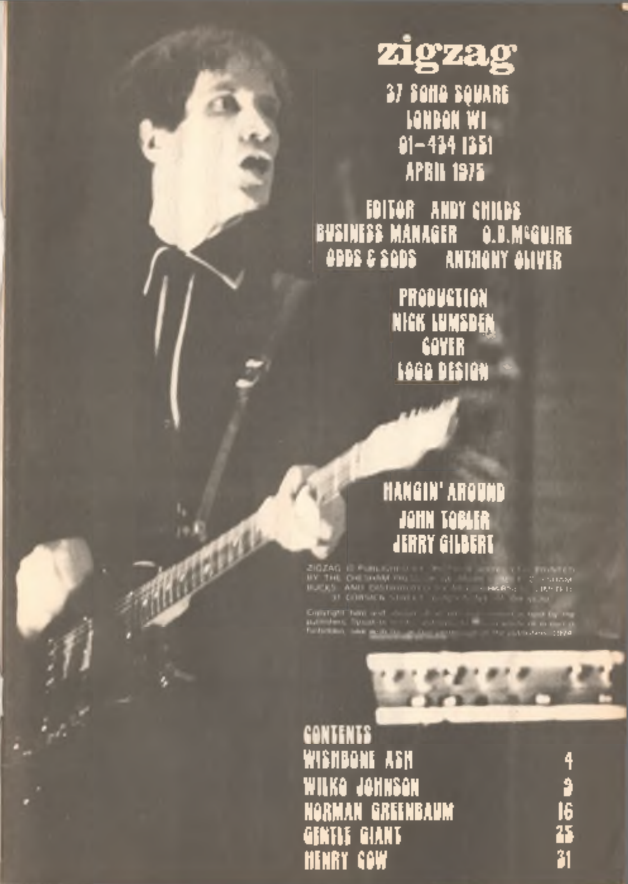
Ian Hunter Family Tree



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CONTENTS

Wishbone Ash
their trials and tribulations their hopes and aspirations (part one)

OF ALL the gigs I have ever been to, I think it is true to say that the one which sticks most vividly in my memory is the first time I ever saw Wishbone Ash. The first thing that struck me about Wishbone was the amazing guitar playing of Andy Powell, and to this day I still reckon he must be one of the best guitarists Britain has ever produced. Never before had I seen a band use a twin lead guitar line-up (Ted Turner and Andy Powell) so effectively. Since then, of course, Wishbone have become much more well-known, and Ted has unfortunately left, to be replaced however, by the equally talented Laurie Wisefield. In this first part of Wishbone's history, their career is followed up until the beginning of 1972, and it is probably easiest to start with drummer Steve Upton. The album numbers quoted here are the current ones, the original ones being different, due to the fact that MCA were originally distributed by Decca.

Born in Wrexham on May 24, 1946, Steve started his career as a drummer more or less by accident at technical college in Torquay, at the age of 16. A couple of guys at the college were playing guitar at a Christmas concert, backing a singer, and after Christmas one of them asked Steve if he knew of any drummers, because they were going to form a band. Just for a laugh Steve told him that he could play, and thought nothing more of it until about a month later when they asked him to join them. Despite his explanations that he'd only been joking, they still wanted him to join and he soon found himself drumming away on some old tin cans in his first ever band, the Scimitars. As his proficiency increased however, his Quality Street drum kit proved somewhat inadequate, so it was decided that they would all club together and buy him something a little more professional. "We got the drum kit through a mail order club and it cost each group member four shillings and twopence a week towards the HP."

The Scimitars became quite popular in and around Torquay for their renditions of Shadows songs, and Steve found that he was really getting into playing the drums. One of the original guitarists left the band after a while and was replaced by a friend from Sheffield who, when the Scimitars finally broke up, returned home together with Steve and the bassist, where they set about forming a blues band. After building the band up to a five-piece they returned to Torquay and toured for the summer, Steve working on a building site during the day and playing in the band at night. When one of the guys split from the band they got hold of a keyboards player and went off to Germany for three months, where they played their first professional gig at the Star Club in Hamburg. The band split up in Germany however and Steve returned to Exeter, where his mother lived, and just sat around painting for a couple of months.

"Then I got a job and I stuck that for about four years in all, but during that time I played with a folk band, I can't remember what they were called, but they were so bad they were nearly good, if you know what I mean. Martin [Turner] and his brother, Glen, came along one night and they were sort of

TANGLEWOOD. L-R: Martin Turner, Steve Upton, Glen Turner.

looking, frowning, at the side of the stage saying, "That can't be Steve Upton," you know, because they used to come and watch me in the blues band I was in when we came back to Torquay from Sheffield, although I didn't really know them then."

Following that, Steve joined up with a blues band called the Blue Sounds and he stayed with them for a total of four months, after which they gave him the sack because the bass player couldn't keep up with his drumming! Then one night he was sitting in Dirty Dot's Cafe, ("The sort of Blue Boar of Dickensian Exeter") when Martin and his brother came in, having just done a gig. They told Steve that their drummer had split and asked him to join them, and after a couple of rehearsals he accepted their offer.

Martin Turner was a local guy, born in Torquay on October 1 1947, and he and his younger brother, Glen, had a number of three-piece, semi-pro bands around Torquay before Steve joined them. He had been playing guitar since he was fifteen, getting his first band together with Glen shortly before leaving school, and all of the bands which followed were basically the same format (Martin on bass, Glen on guitar, plus a drummer). By the time Steve joined them, they had been through three or four drummers and a number of name changes, having previously been known at various times as the Torinoes, Tacky, and the Turner Brothers. When Steve joined them, the Empty Vessels was a name they used for a long time, later changing it to Tanglewood.

So Steve joined the band and this partnership lasted for three years, until the middle of 1969, by which time they were writing what Steve describes as "third-rate, three-piece progressive . . . very schizophrenic progressive". Shortly before breaking up they moved to London where they played a gig at the Country Club in Hampstead with Keith Relf, and it was here that they first met Miles Copeland, Wishbone's present manager. Glen had decided to leave the band by this time, so Miles, who was already involved with Rupert's People (a band which included John Tout, Renaissance's keyboards player), offered to help Martin and Steve find a replacement. Glen Turner, incidentally, is still playing, and for a while was in a band called Watt-Roy-Turner with Martin's youngest brother, Kim, on drums, and guitarist Garth Watt-Roy from East of Eden. They broke up a few months ago and Kim is now the drummer in the new Andy Fraser Band, while Glen, having spent a while with Rock Island Line, is now looking for a new band.

WISHBONE ASH. L-R: Andy Powell, Steve Upton, Ted Turner, Martin Turner.

Steve: Mart and I went over to Miles' house and discussed it and he offered to pay for an advertisement for musicians in ***Melody Maker***. At the time we thought, "Well, you don't form groups that way, you get to know people and do it like that," but he said, "Well you haven't come up with anyone yet," so we went ahead and advertised.

> **LEAD GUITARIST**, positive thinking, creative, and adaptable, for strongly backed group with great future. — Call (01) JUN 6696

The advertisement brought hundreds of replies, one of which was from a young Birmingham guitarist, Ted Turner. Born David Alan Turner on August 2, 1950, Ted did not start playing guitar until he was sixteen and seemingly had little to recommend him when he answered the advertisement, having had no previous experience of playing in bands, apart from a Birmingham blues band called King Biscuit, although he had auditioned with Jon Hiseman. However, when Steve and Martin heard him play they were amazed.

Steve: He had a Les Paul Junior then and he was really great. At that time he wasn't that conversant with a lot of chords but he really had the right feel.

Still undecided as to what to do, Martin and Steve advertised again and this time Andy Powell turned up for an audition. Andy was born in Stepney on February 8, 1950, but was now living in Hemel Hempstead, where he had been playing in bands for a number of years. He started playing guitar at the age of eleven and had his first band at about fifteen or sixteen.

Andy: I used to play at Christmas parties and things, and then I was in a number of semi-pro groups, starting off in pop groups. One of them was called the Sunsets, I remember . . . and the Decoys. From there I went through a couple of soul bands, ending up in one called the Sugarband which was quite well known around London. I remember I liked Peter Green's playing a lot, and Hank Marvin. I suppose there are quite a lot of guitarists who have had an influence on my playing. A lot of my friends from those days are still in bands, which is great. There was a drummer called Mac who has just formed a band with a couple of guys from Home, which is really strange, and then there was a guy called Mick Groom . . . and Phil Shutt.

The Mac that Andy was talking about is Patrick McInerney who has joined Cliff Williams and Dave Skillin from Home in their new band, Stars. Mick Groom was a guy who played with Andy in the Sugarband and he's now the bass player in Ducks Deluxe, and Phil Shutt, although he wasn't a member of the Sugarband, often used to jam with Andy, and since then he's played for Arthur Brown's Kingdom Come and is now bassist with the Kiki Dee Band, having changed his name to Phil Curtis.

After leaving school at eighteen, Andy took a job as a trainee fashion buyer which he stuck for one and a half years, by which time he'd decided that he wouldn't be happy unless he was playing in a band, so he gave up work, and after a short stint of being a Tonibell ice-cream man (!) answered the advertisement.

Steve and Mart were very impressed with Andy, and after rejecting the idea of having a keyboards player (Hugh Banton of Van Der Graaf Generator was considered for a while), they asked Andy and Ted to come down again, to see how they would play together. After a couple of rehearsals, Ted and Andy's styles complemented each other so perfectly that they decided to stay together, and Wishbone Ash was formed.

BY NOW it was around October 1969, and as Steve and Martin were already living in London, it was decided that Andy and Ted should move into a flat near them.

Andy: Martin and Steve had this little bedsit in Chalk Farm and they said, "We think we can get you and Ted a place," so Ted came down from Birmingham and we went round there. Sure enough, they'd got us a place—but they didn't tell us it was due for demolition.

You know, their place up the road had a shower and everything, it had a modicum of decency, but this was just an out and out slum. We lived there for six or nine months.

Miles offered to fix up some gigs for Wishbone, so they told him they'd be ready in a month, which meant that they would have to cram all their rehearsing into a short space of time, writing new material and re-working a couple of the things which Steve and Mart had previously been playing. A month later, Wishbone Ash emerged from the basement of Miles' house, where they had been rehearsing, as an incredibly competent, but as yet unknown rock band, and they played their first gig with Aynsley Dunbar's Retaliation at Dunstable Civic Hall on November 10, 1969, for which they were paid the princely sum of £5. All through the following year Wishbone gigged furiously, steadily building up a following among college and club audiences, and everywhere they went they received the same enthusiastic reception. At that time there weren't many bands around who were exploring the possibilities of a twin lead guitar line-up and Wishbone's unique style soon attracted a large number of followers.

Before negotiating for a record contract, Wishbone took the wise step of recording a demo album (engineered, funnily enough, by Eddie Offord in his earlier days at Advision), and this provided them with both some experience of recording and an album which they could then take round to various record companies. Wishbone were signed to MCA late in 1970, partly thanks to the efforts of record producer, Derek Lawrence.

Martin: Derek Lawrence really helped in getting the record deal set up. We did a gig with Deep Purple one night at Dunstable Civic Hall, and during the sound check Andy was on stage playing his guitar when Ritchie Blackmore walked on and started playing. At first it was like two guitarists, one on each side of the stage, ignoring each other, playing their respective guitars, but gradually they started speaking to each other with their guitars and there was quite a little rapport going on there. Anyway, Ritchie Blackmore didn't say a word to us, but afterwards he told Derek Lawrence, who had been Deep Purple's producer some time before then, about us. Derek was at that time looking for bands to record, so he contacted us, and we gave him the demo tape that we'd done, and I think it was he who took it to MCA in Los Angeles, to someone he knew in the company, and that was the reason that MCA signed us.

In the autumn of 1970 Wishbone went into De Lane Lea studios in London and, with Derek Lawrence producing, recorded their first album. Ted was still using his Les Paul Junior at that time, and Andy had just bought a Gibson SG Special, having previously been using a Les Paul copy which he had built himself. Martin was still playing what he describes as "a Micky Mouse Special", which had cost him £5 to build, so for the first album he hired a Fender Jazz Bass.

Wishbone Ash (MCG 3507) was released in December 1970 and sold very well for a first album, partly due to the fact that Wishbone had spent the previous twelve months gigging solidly all over Britain. Many of the numbers Wishbone had been playing on stage were on that first album. 'Blind Eye' was one that they had written during the first month of rehearsals, and, when it was recorded Derek Lawrence invited Matthew Fisher, who had just left Procol Harum, to come down and play piano on it. All the Wishbone trade marks were on the album, Ted and Andy's guitar playing having by now developed into a really unique relationship. One of Ted's most tasteful solos on the album is to be found on 'Errors Of My Way', which, although fairly simple in structure, is packed full of emotion, building up to a tremendous climax, without developing into what could so easily become a boring, guitar-bashing ending. This depth of feeling is a feature which often characterises Ted's playing and many of the more subdued solos are left to him, while Andy usually handles the more aggressive passages, such as in 'Lady Whiskey'.

Martin: 'Lady Whiskey' was about our landlady when we lived in Chalk Farm. She was Irish and a very nice lady but very fond of getting drunk. She kissed Steve once and that was a really traumatic experience for him.
Steve: Yes, she was repulsive, you know, she stuck one of her legs between mine and tried to get me. In fact, to show you what we were living in, her husband came home late one night, really out of his head, and they had a fight, and he knocked her through the front door and down the steps on to the pavement. He locked her out and she wasn't around for two days after that, and she was eventually found in hospital.

'Queen Of Torture' closes side one in true rocking style, with Steve's drums pounding away like a train behind the guitars, and containing some more of Andy's characteristic, energetic guitar playing. 'Queen Of Torture', as its title suggests, refers partly to a girl the band knew who, to use Martin's words, "was into some very weird sexual trips".

Martin: Her name was Sylvie and I think the song was actually written before she was around, but generally it applied very much to her. Ted used to sleep in this little bed which we called the trolley, and I think she used to tie him in there and rape him! She was into, er . . . tying people to beds and whipping them . . . really weird.

The second side of the album comprises two excellent tracks, the second of which, 'Phoenix', became the high spot of Wishbone's act from then onwards. The lyrics are based on the legend of the Phoenix, and from a peaceful beginning it builds up into a real rocker, with Ted breaking away from a harmonised duet with Andy, into an incredibly good solo which is uncharacteristically aggressive for him.

Martin: The other track on that album, 'Handy', had been knocking around from the old band that Steve and I used to play in. We got into John Handy for a while, a jazz musician, and I'd had a 'live' album that he'd done that was really amazing, and that track was inspired by that.

Many people have, in the past, remarked on Martin's beautiful use of chords, and 'Handy' displays this ability more than any other track on the album, as well as containing another of Andy's solos—really full of character. The track wanders through a variety of moods, and a short drum solo from Steve leads the number into a jazzy second half.

'Blind Eye' was released as a single by MCA in February 1971, (MK5061) backed with 'Queen Of Torture'. Meanwhile Wishbone were back on the road, cramming as many gigs in as they possibly could, and after a while there was virtually nowhere left to play where they hadn't been before, so they then started going over to France.

Martin: Miles met up with a French girl one night and she said that if he was nice to her (!) she would fix us up with some gigs in Paris. So Miles was nice to her, and we started going over there. I'll always remember Ted asking this girl if she could "Remouvez les culottes" in a Birmingham accent, because we were sharing rooms at the time, and it struck me as being hysterically funny. .
Andy: We also went to the States for the first time in 1971, and I think we spent most of the time on the beach because we didn't have many gigs to do. It was pretty weird

because we were totally unknown over there and we couldn't even manage to get enough gigs to fill up the eight weeks that we were there.

IN MAY of that year, Wishbone returned to De Lane Lea with Derek Lawrence, and recorded their second album, ***Pilgrimage*** (MCG 3504), which was subsequently released in September. Wishbone were quite well known by this time (they had just won the 1971 awards for top new band in ***Melody Maker*** and ***Sounds***), and the album was well received by both critics and public alike.

Martin: The opening track on the album, 'Vas Dis', was written by a jazz musician, Jack McDuff, and we arranged it for dual lead guitars, which was not the easiest thing in the world to do. He was an organist, and he had an album out called ***Live!*** which that track was on.

The following track, 'The Pilgrim', has some lovely peaceful guitar from Ted Turner towards the beginning, before developing into a classic dual lead guitar piece with some interesting and slightly unorthodox use of harmonies in the passage towards the end.

Martin: I was really into 'The Pilgrim' from the standpoint of a musical version of ***Lord Of The Rings***, but that was probably just because I had been reading the book at around the same time that we were putting that tune together. That's what it meant for me, but I don't think it meant that for anyone else in the band.

There are three particularly good quiet tracks on the album, 'Alone', 'Lullaby', and 'Valediction', the first two of which are instrumentals, and all of which have some beautiful playing from Ted and Andy, especially 'Lullaby', which is a straight guitar track with no percussion. The vocal harmonies on 'Valediction' are also worth a mention, and they are in fact probably the best vocals to be found on any of Wishbone's albums.

Steve: 'Alone' was actually a song originally, but our record company cut all the lyrics off.

Martin: Yes, I in particular was very insulted by that, because it was a tune that I'd put together and the lyric was very melodic. I was really kind of quite proud of it, because I had never done anything like that before, and I was really pissed off that it got chopped around. But 'Valediction' though, that was really nice, and Andy's solo on that was particularly good. I reckon that was a really exceptional bit of playing.

The remaining two tracks on the album are a couple of rockers, 'Jail Bait' and 'Where Were You Tomorrow', the latter having been recorded 'live' in June, at De Montfort Hall, Leicester. 'Jail Bait' has a particularly infectious riff running through it and some good interplay between the guitars, but the 'live' track, although an enjoyable piece of music in itself, breaks the mood created by the two previous quiet tracks, ('Lullaby' and 'Valediction'). This is, however, the only fault that could be found with the album.

Martin: 'Jail Bait' was written about a young lady called Linda who we met on our visit to the States. She 'operates' from New York and Miami—a very beautiful girl for fifteen years old!

That year, Ted had also done some sessions, together with Rod Lynton who was Wishbone's publicist at that time, for John Lennon's ***Imagine*** album (PAS 10004), which was released in November 1971. Rod had already done work for Harrison and Ringo, so when Lennon asked him to bring a guitarist along with him, he took Ted. Ted and Rod played acoustic guitars on 'Crippled Inside', and Rod can also be heard on 'Give Me Some Truth' and 'Oh Yoko!'

After ***Pilgrimage*** had been released, Wishbone began touring more extensively in America, where they were now much more popular, and it was their British tour with Mott The Hoople which really broke them over there. Ironically, exactly the same thing happened with Home.

Wishbone's playing was now reaching a peak, and their next album was widely regarded as the best they had ever done, more of which will be said in part two . . . .

☐ **TREVOR GARDINER**

ZIGZAG TALKS TO WILKO JOHNSON OF DR.FEELGOOD

To those fortunate enough to have seen and heard them, the name Dr. Feelgood has become synonymous with the spirit of rock'n'roll in 1975. At a time when the amount of shoddy, pretentious, arty-farty 'progressive' rock music is reaching new heights of abundance, Dr. Feelgood come on like a piledriver through so much candyfloss. They are aggresive, primitive, mean, uncompromising, and they sweat a lot. They are also slick, talented, and incredibly exciting. Their appeal is almost universal among rock audiences. To those who were too young at the time to appreciate the end of the rock'n'roll era or the beginning of the r'n'b boom, they will come across as something new and refreshing, and all those old stalwarts who lived through it all and whose memories haven't been annihilated by the excesses of 'flower power' will love them for everything they stand for. Believe it or not, I fall (with a youthful bounce) into the first category, and I've been totally caught up in the whole thing. I think they're an ace band. . . .what they do is simple and straightforward, but like Smirnoff, the effect is shattering. On a good night they'll leave you drained and tingling with excitement as very few bands are capable of doing. All things considered, their rise to fame, fortune, and diamond-encrusted coke-spoons seems almost assured. Their success on the Naughty Rhythms Tour is undisputed, and now it seems that 1975 will definitely be their year.

So I thought that now is the time to take a closer look at the band through the eyes of their demonic lead guitarist Wilko Johnson, a man whose startling stage presence is responsible for much of their visual appeal.

Now the Feelgoods and their manager Chris Fenwick all live on Canvey Island, a desolate, wind-swept, water-logged piece of land out in the Thames Estuary, and it was there that I made my way for the interview which

took place in Wilko's front room. Obviously tired and weary from the extensive Naughty Rhythms Tour, which still had three gigs to run, Wilko didn't career around the room like an amphetamised dalek, he just talked quietly, deliberately, and with a sense of humour that he rarely exhibits onstage. An extremely pleasant bloke to meet. Afterwards, Lee, Chris, their able accountant, and myself went out on the piss and stayed up till some ridiculous hour in the morning listening to old Muddy Waters' records, but that's another story.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

ZZ: Can you tell us a bit about your early history. When did you start playing?
WJ: Well it was like most kids, I was at school and I saw people with electric guitars, so I just started because a lot of kids do. As a matter of fact I started with The Figure, our drummer, he's a very old friend of mine. In fact he was born just around the corner and we've known each other literally all our lives. I told him I wanted to start playing, and it seemed like a good idea to him, so he bought a drum and I bought a guitar, and we started basically trying to do rock'n'roll numbers. We got going, learnt to play to an extent, and after awhile we went our separate ways. I was getting more interested in rhythm 'n blues. I think the way I play started when all the Liverpool thing was going. I'd just started, and I was very struck by the guitar solo on Johnny Kidd And The Pirates' 'I'll Never Get Over You', and it seemed to me like nothing anyone else was playing... it seemed so much better. Then I started finding out about this guitarist Mick Green, just getting all the records I could of his playing and trying to play like that, because it seemed to me that he was much closer to the heart of real American rhythm'n blues, although I'd hardly heard any real American rhythm'n blues, but I just knew he was there whereas most of the other guitarists in pop groups weren't. They'd got it second-hand somehow or other, and as I got to hear more and more real stuff, I realised I was right about that. Not only that, but he was also one of the very few guitarists in the world who could honestly claim to have added something to the vocabulary of the guitar. So I carried on playing rock'n'roll and rhythm'n blues, and trying to play like him. I was doing that while I was at school, and then when I left school I kept on at it for a bit longer. I was in a rock'n'roll band then... we had a piano and things like that, it was quite a good band but things were changing. People didn't want to hear it anymore, and we weren't really attracting any attention. I went to University then and I just stopped playing. I put my guitar away and thought well that's the end of it. I did try to find a band at University, and I couldn't, so I just forgot all about it, I just left it completely.

Towards the end of this rock'n'roll band, my brother had started playing the guitar and he was very interested in traditional blues and things like that, and I liked it a lot as well. So we got this little jug-band together... we used to play in the streets, he'd play the guitar and I'd play the comb and paper and harmonica. We had a tea chest bass and all that sort of stuff, but we didn't do it much, it was just something to do occasionally for a laugh. Anyway on one of these occasions this boy came up to me, well two or three kids came up actually, and it was Lee (Brilleaux) and Sparko (John B. Sparks), or was it Sparko?, I don't know. Anyway Lee was there and also Chris (Fenwick) who's now our manager. Chris at this time was a sort of tubby little boy... I just can't really remember him at all. But Lee struck me quite a bit because although he was about 14 or 15 I think, and I was 18, he was very self-assured, and I found that I didn't have to talk down to him at all, because that's quite a big age difference when you're that age. He was very interested in what we were doing, I started telling him about jug-bands and things, and I told him I was in a rock'n'roll band. They started coming round now and again, and they (Lee, Chris, & Sparko) started a jug-band of their own like that. Shortly after that was when I went to University.

ZZ: How did you get to University? Was it something that just came along or had you always wanted to go?
WJ: I wanted to go to University. I wanted to be a poet actually, and I went to University... I was sort of writing away, and I ran poetry magazines and things like that. I suppose that was really the centre of my life at that time. I forgot about music quite easily, it just didn't seem like any great loss to me once I'd stopped. In the meantime, Lee and the others were getting their jug-band going... they did it quite seriously and started getting gigs and things. I eventually left University and went to India. I was there for awhile.

ZZ: What were you doing over there?
WJ: Just cruising around, the same as everyone else was... getting out of my head, and also trying to work things out. I was in quite a bad way before I went, and I was probably in a worse way when I got back. I got back and I was unemployed, and I was just living in a kind of nightmare at that time. I was mentally disturbed I think, and I just had nothing then. Out in India I'd realised that I was never going to be more than a mediocre writer, and so I stopped because there are too many mediocre writers in the world and I didn't want to be another one.

ZZ: What sort of stuff were you writing?
WJ: Well I don't know really, that was the thing. I mean I wanted to write poetry because I was full of ideas, and I felt, I suppose like lots of people when you're that age, you sort of think you've seen some kind of secret that you've never seen revealed before. But I found that technically I wasn't good enough as a writer to write about the things that were concerning me. The most successful things that I wrote were really on a much more mundane level. So I realised out there that I wasn't going to write the things I wanted to write, and I packed that up, so that was another thing gone. Then I decided I was going to be a painter.

As I say, I got back, I was in a right state, and I was doing nothing really, I was just getting more and more lost. Then I met Lee in the street one day, and we started talking, and I found out that this jug-band had gradually developed into a rock'n'roll band, and they'd just split up. The guitarist had left or something, and there was just Lee and Sparko. So we were talking, and as we were talking I started thinking I'd like to start again, and maybe they'll ask me to join this group and start again. But Lee was kind of giving off this vibe that he was fed up and didn't want to do it anymore, and I didn't like to ask, so I left it. And a few days later, Sparko came knocking at my door and said, "I don't know if you remember me, but we were wondering if you'd like to join this group". And I said "yeah, yeah, great". Apparently Lee had been wanting to ask me but hadn't liked to because I think I'd been giving off the same impression, that I didn't want to know. And that really was how we got going.

We had a rough idea of what we wanted to do. We thought we'll do some Chicago things, and some rock'n'roll, and we'll learn some pop songs so that we can get some work. We had a couple of practices, and for the first one Lee brought this Little Walter album along, and he put it on. It was ages since I'd heard Little Walter and it just sounded so great I said "oh f**k all this pop stuff, we'll just do this, it doesn't matter if no one wants to hear it". So we started doing that. As we'd got that kind of line-up..... they'd found a drummer from somewhere .... and it was that kind of guitar, bass and drums set-up, and I said "oh, Johnny Kidd And The Pirates - they really had this technique off and we've got to style it on that. So I played all the records I'd got, and we started learning a lot of things like that.

ZZ: What was the name of that original drummer?
WJ: Well we used to call him 'Bandsman' Howarth. His name was Terry Howarth, and he'd just come out of the army. He was quite a bit older, I think he was 27 or something, and he never really seemed to fit. I suppose we used to find him fairly amusing in a way, he was quite good, he drummed quite well, and he was a nice guy. 'Bandsman' Howarth was with us for awhile.... we were just doing little gigs, no real gigs at all; we used to play at a pub up the road to a completely straight audience who were just down there to have a drink. Nobody would look at us, and we had to play at about 5 watts. I don't think anyone ever clapped once in the time we were playing there. We just carried on, forged away at it, but all the time it was doing me good and I started to get my feet back on the ground and getting much more into it. Then Chris, who I hadn't seen since the early days, since I'd first met him doing the jug-band thing, suddenly turned up again. In fact one of the first things that he did.... I was sitting at home and I'd just got my dinner, I didn't feel too hungry and I put it down beside me, and Chris kind of burst into my house. One of the first things he said was "don't you want that?", and I said "well I'm not all that hungry", so he ate my dinner, which seems like quite a good start for a manager. He was just kind of hanging around because he was Lee's mate. Then he went out to Holland for something or other, and while he was out there he started talking to this geezer and told him he knew this famous English band. This bloke said he'd put some gigs on for us, so Chris fixed all this up for us to go to Holland. 'Bandsman' Howarth wanted to go back in the army, so I said I'd get my mate The Figure. The Figure had meanwhile been drumming with all sorts of pop bands... he'd been professional for quite a while. We drove

over to see him and asked him if he wanted to come to Holland with us, and he said "yes". He made some excuse to his pop band and got a bit of time off, and came with us. He was really a much better drummer and the whole thing started sounding a lot more real. We got out there, and for the first time we were confronted with a real rock'n'roll audience who were there to hear the music, and it all went very well. At that point I realised that I wanted to play as a kind of way of life or something, and I got serious about it then. Chris, who fixed it up, came along with us, and he had such a good time that he said "look if I buy a van can I be the manager". So we said "all right". So he did that, and The Figure had such a good time that he decided he didn't want to be involved with these pop groups anymore, so he quit that scene. ...he had to go and get a straight job again to make a living so he could play with us. We were just chugging along semi-professionally for quite a long time, a year or more, until we started to get gigs in London, on the pub circuit. It was quite good because the whole scene had been built up by the Ducks, the Brinsleys, and people like that, quite unbeknown to us, and the first generation of those bands had moved on. So there was a little bit of a vacuum, and we came along. As far as London audiences were concerned we were completely new, we were all quite unknown, nobody had been in any bands before, and yet at the same time we'd had time to form a sound and an act that was ours. It had come together to a large extent, so we had the advantage of having some experience, and also the advantage of being something completely new as well. So we started doing very well, and also getting a lot more work than we'd ever had in front of good audiences, and that really kind of shaped us up a lot as well. And from then on I suppose it's all well-known what's happened.

ZZ: Those early bands you played in, can you remember some of the names? Was there one called The Fix, or The Roamers?
WJ: When me and The Figure started our first little group we called it The Roamers, which is a very ingenuous sort of name. Then when I went on to get more involved with rock'n'roll I had a group called The Heap, which was a very appropriate name.... that was a real punk, r'n'b band... there was me, and my voice had hardly broken, trying to sing 'I'm A Man'. I went on then to a group that were quite good called The Flowerpots... in fact that was the rock'n'roll band, that was the last band I was in. I did join this band called The Fix that were going locally, after this band had split up and I was waiting to go to University, so I knew I was packing it all in. I was with them for a while, but that was nothing really. In fact I think Lee and Sparko got involved with them sometime while they were evolving from a jug-band into a rock'n'roll band. But basically I've only ever been in two groups - The Heap and The Flowerpots, and they were only local bands. None of us apart from The Figure has ever played in a real band before.

ZZ: At one point you were asked to join Robin Trower's band weren't you?
WJ: Well at the time I was starting there were several bands in Southend that were working in the rhythm'n - blues thing; there were The Paramounts that had Gary Brooker and Robin Trower, etc, and there was a group called The Orioles which later evolved into a band called Legend. The Paramounts were the top one and The Orioles were next, but in fact they were my favourite; they had a guy called Mick Jupp who was the leader I think - he's the best white singer I've ever heard, also an excellent songwriter; they also had a brilliant guitarist called Mo Whitten... he was one of the only other people I'd heard apart from Mick Green that could really play, so I learnt quite a bit from them. That Flowerpots group were like a kind of poor mans version of them, although this band had a couple of very good musicians in it, but the other two of us, me and the drummer, weren't up to their standard really. In the last days of this Flowerpots band we had a regular gig at a place in Southend where about ten people used to turn up to see us, and sometimes more or less no one. On a few occasions the only people in there were Micky Jupp, Mo Whitten and Robin Trower, and after awhile they would get up and play with our instruments. It was all very embarassing for me having two such excellent guitarists just standing there watching me, but I got to know them. At this time as well, Gary Brooker had gone off and done 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale', Robin was in Southend without a band, and he started trying to put one together; I think for a little while there was him and Micky Jupp and a couple of other people, and I think it was called The Jam or something... they were working on a rhythm'n bluesy thing they were doing, I only heard them rehearsing once, and then I think Juppy went off somewhere else and Robin Trower turned up here one day, and asked me if I wanted to join this band as a second guitarist. I thought about it but I had to say no because for one thing I'd got a place at University and I was going within a few months, and I didn't think it was really right to start a band with someone knowing I would only be there for awhile; and also because I was a little bit paranoid about standing on stage with him because he was a lot better than me. That was all it was, and in fact nothing came of the band anyway because Gary Brooker got him into Procol Harum, but it was just like a couple of names I could drop if ever I wanted to start talking about how I used to play the guitar... that's all that was.

ZZ: Have you ever been asked to join any other bands? I believe Sparks asked you to join them.
WJ: Yeah, I was asked on several ocassions when we first got going in London; two or three people came up and said to me "we've got this band, do you want to do this, do you want to do that"... just really sort of bands more or less in the same position as us, maybe a bit further on. And I said "no" because this whole thing started off as just five people who happened to know each other, just started from scratch with nothing and no one behind us. And we were making progress, things were getting very enjoyable, and I didn't think it'd be really right to leave, because it would leave everyone else in the lurch. And also because of that I didn't want to be involved with anyone else because we were getting on fine. When Sparks' people came up and asked me to join, that didn't take any thinking about. They were sort of urging me quite hard, but for exactly the same reasons I just wasn't interested. I didn't even have to turn it over in my mind, I didn't want to play their music, I didn't want to be in the position where I was just acting under instructions from someone else, so I didn't join them. There's been a couple of other things like that.... people have offered me money.

ZZ: People talk about The Yardbirds and Johnny Kidd And The Pirates, but a lot of people seem to compare you with the early Who. How do you feel about that?
WJ: I don't know whether it's flattering or not - I suppose it is, it depends on how you take it. I mean when people say The Yardbirds or The Who or whatever, I think it's not so much that we've been influenced by them or anything like that, because none of us have. The thing is that they are all bands that started and were influenced by the same kind of things that we were influenced by, so similar things have come out.

ZZ: Also, as far as yourselves and The Who are concerned, you've got similar backgrounds in as much that all the people came from roughly the same area and got together early on.
WJ: Yeah, right. Because it doesn't happen so much these days that local bands do break through now - most bands that get anywhere these days are bands with established musicians who get together as professional musicians. It's unusual to see an amateur group make its way like that these days, which is another quite enjoyable thing about being in this group, that it's all just a completely new thing for all of us, every stage we get to is something exciting.

I'd like to think that it's going to go on. As soon as it stops going on I'm going to stop doing it, I think everybody in the band feels like that. If we get to a stage where we've reached a certain level, and we think we're not going to get any further than that, then obviously the whole thing about it - y'know the trip will be over because we'll have done it and it won't have any new experience to offer. Personally I've led my life just going from one experience to another. I've probably been at this longer that I've been at anything else now, because normally I get through things in about a year or two years, but with this particular one it kind of keeps offering new things. But once that stops then we'll stop. I think that's what's happened to Brinsley Schwarz, they all thought they'd got to that stage and they'd done every gig, and they thought well we're not going any further than this and so they stopped. It's a great shame, but I understand why they've done it.

ZZ: Apart from Johnny Kidd And The Pirates, what other bands do you like?
WJ: Johnny Kidd And The Pirates, and particularly Mick Green, are the kind of things I can point to that have influenced the way I play, but I've always liked listening to all kinds of music. I really really enjoy Chilli Willi and now they're gone as well. I just like them so much; a lot of the bands that have been on that club circuit I really like, and a lot of more famous bands as well. It's a bit hard making lists of people you like, but I do like lots of people.

ZZ: When did you start writing your own songs?
WJ: I think about the time shortly after we'd done this Holland thing, and I started getting seriously interested in the band. And also it started when I realised it was the biggest preoccupation in my mind, and that I was devoting more energy to that than to anything else. I started to write songs then because I just always feel like I've got to make things. Previously I didn't feel the need because I thought well first of all I'm never going to be able to write a song as good as 'Route 66', and so what's the point in writing songs, because there's so many of those sort of songs around that we could do. Why bore people with something of mine when I could be doing that. But then I started thinking, we've got a band and it's taking a definite shape and direction and we found the songs that we were doing, we gradually came down to choosing a few songs in particular because they seemed to reflect what we felt, but I could get nearer to exactly what I felt by writing my own material.

ZZ: Can you see your style of songwriting developing perhaps a little away from the strict r'n'b, rock'n'roll format that you're writing in now, because a lot of your songs are very disciplined three-minute things.
WJ: Well, the three-minute thing I think comes about because a lot of the

Bad Company

STRAIGHT SHOOTER

music that we're interested in is made in that way. Also because we're very much a performing band, doing the kind of performance that we do, you can't keep that energy level up longer than that length of time in those kind of bursts, and so it falls naturally like that. We couldn't do a song for ten minutes with that kind of energy. Also you've got to consider that Lee sings the songs mainly, he's got a certain kind of personality, a certain kind of image, a certain kind of singing style, so consequently any songs that are going to be used by this band have got to fit in with that. I quite often start writing songs that are quite a way away from that kind of thing, and then you know after a while I think we're never going to be able to do this song, it's not our kind of thing, and so the song won't get finished, because first and foremost we've got to find material for ourselves. I can't really waste my time writing some kind of ballad or something that's never going to be used. I'd like to think that things will develop, I think the others will probably get into writing, they'll probably feel the same way that I felt.

ZZ: Do you find the four-man line-up, with three instruments, a bit restricting?
WJ: Well of course that's another thing, you've got to have material that will work like that; it is restricting, but I think what we want to do can be done with that. Again because we're a performing band I think it's a very good kind of situation for a performance, when you've got that few people. Once you start getting more people it's very difficult to get a performance going because there's that many elements. In fact I met Mick Green recently... we've had a couple of sessions twanging our guitars together and that.... and I've been asking him all about this. Like I asked him how he got his guitar style, and he said, "listening to James Burton", and I said "yeah, but it's not like that is it?". And he said "well it's because we were a trio and if you're just doing James Burton licks it won't fill it out enough". Afterwards I said to myself well I thought they were a trio because he could play the guitar that way, so they didn't need another instrument. So the next time I saw him I said "look, why were you a trio, why weren't there more instruments if you needed to work something out to fit in", and he said "Johnny Kidd wanted it like that because he said it looked better - if there were just two guitarists and a drummer, and the singer standing in between the two guitarists, it looked a whole lot better than having another instrument which destroyed the balance of the set". That seemed really great, this whole great way of playing the guitar had come about just because it looked better on stage.

ZZ: Did your stage act develop naturally, or did you go out of your way to put on a show?
WJ: When we started getting in front of proper audiences, firstly in Holland, we realised we could create far more of an effect and emphasise the attack of the music by moving a lot. We'd all done this in the past.... apparently the rock'n'roll band that Lee and Sparko had before had been into moving around and I'd also done this on occasions in bands I'd been in. That band called The Heap, we were all rolling on our backs and all sorts of mad things. It was like any kind of musical shortcomings you had, you could make up for by performing. I still feel that now, that you can play a guitar solo that's nothing amazing, but if you're going along at 100 miles an hour while you're doing it, then it has a whole lot more effect.

ZZ: Like the two note guitar solo in 'I'm A Hog For You Baby'?
WJ: Exactly, yeah. It's been suggested that we should have put that on the album, but the thing is, the reason that number always goes down a storm is because there are 36 bars of violent movement in it, and without that violent movement you've just got 36 bars of the guitar playing two notes, which is a different feeling. Nobody sort of planned how to move or anything like that, we all just started doing it. I started moving the way I move because the same nerves are working on your body as are working on your mind when your playing. It seems to me to express what I'm trying to put across the same as the way I'm trying to play the guitar, and then you find that certain things you do have such and such effect on an audience and you start exaggerating them.

ZZ: How do you feel about the album, were you satisfied with it?
WJ: Yeah, oh yeah. You know we'd become established through our own efforts as a band playing 'live', and we'd been reviewed in the press and that, and people had come to know us as playing a certain way, doing certain kinds of things. So we thought when we come to record the first album, we want to do that.... play as we normally play. We thought we'd try and get the sound as it is, and to record very directly, do things in one take, with as little over-dubbing as possible. There's a couple of extra instruments added on some tracks - apart from that more or less nothing. And then we thought that although a lot of our act was built up on standards, we didn't want to fill an album with standards because for one thing we all really dig the originals, and we're not too sure about the way we do them, and another thing, there's a whole kind of scene of rock'n'roll revival bands, teddy boy bands, that just fill albums with reworks of standards, which never seems very satisfying. Also we wanted to make an album that had some variety and interest as an album, rather than a reminder for people of what our gigs are like, because if we just took a stream of the ones that always go down a storm, it would suffer as an album on variety. And combined with all that was the fact that we were all totally new to recording, we didn't have any plan of what the album was going to be, we just recorded quite a few tracks, sat back, looked at what we'd got, and picked out the ones we thought were best. Some things I'm not happy with, and although the album's been criticised, I think the criticisms have been misdirected really. I think people have got a certain idea of what rock'n'roll's supposed to sound like, and this has been established largely I think by the Rolling Stones and people like that, which is a very kind of big, churning, full sound, very kind of loose really, a big rolling sound, and this isn't the sound that we make.

ZZ: It's more r'n'b than rock'n'roll really.
WJ: Yeah, sure. I think we were right in what we did.... we've had some reactions from America about it, and they've all been good, which is quite encouraging. The people that have criticised it are all critics that know the band as a performing band, the sort of people that have got a certain idea built up in their mind of what we ought to have done. If we'd have come completely new and they'd never seen us, then they wouldn't have any preconceptions. Also I've found that the punters that come along and see us at a gig, everyone of them I've spoken to has been very happy with the album. For instance, there was a group of people, our first group of people that you could actually call a following, a sort of bunch of yobs from Southend, and they'd read the review in the NME where Nick Kent really slagged us off, and they came round to Chris' place, desperately worried, they hadn't heard the album. They'd got the impression that it didn't sound like us, and they wanted to hear it. So Chris played it to them and they all sort of said "where do we find this guy Kent?". They really dug it, and a load of people since have dug it, just ordinary punters, and also people that have never seen the band and have just heard the record. It's gone down consistently well with people that haven't seen us, and haven't got any preconceptions about us. So I think it was right, although obviously you listen to what anyone says and think about it, but I think generally we're right and they're wrong.

ZZ: Obviously you eventually reach a stage where you don't have to play that often, but can you always see yourselves as primarily a 'live' band rather than a recording band?
WJ: Well I think that's the whole reason why I do it, and I think it probably goes for the others as well. I'm a very kind of morose sort of person really, I'm often wondering around enveloped in gloom, and when I get on stage I can just get all the rage out of me. Like I think we generally always exert ourselves beyond limits, we always play totally and just throw everything we've got into it always, whatever the gig is, whatever the audience is like. We just do it, and I think it's because we're doing it for ourselves, it's something we want to do, and that's the main reason why we're doing it. So I suppose for that reason we see ourselves as a performing band really. Then again who knows, I don't know what it'll turn into, but certainly the most important thing to me is performance, because that's what the music's for; it's for release, and that's when you get the release. I mean standing around in studios and trying to get the sound right is exactly the opposite of release, it's tedium. Like a performance we do is just us trying to break out of the tedium and anyone else can come along with it if they want to.

ZZ: Is there a chance that you'll put some more 'live' material out?
WJ: Yeah, it's quite possible... we've got some 'live' tapes of the band. Just before we were signed we were on a tour supporting Brinsley Schwarz and Dave Edmunds, and United Artists had brought the Pye mobile along to a couple of the gigs. In fact it was a result of that that the 'Bonie Moronie' track was done, and we got some 'live' tapes of that. At the time, we knew they were recording, but we didn't know if they were actually recording our set. So we just went ahead and played; we were still very much an amateur sort of thing then I suppose.

ZZ: Was that when UA first got in contact with you?
WJ: Yeah, well shortly after that was done; it was in fact more or less at the time of the tour that we were signed. They made the tapes and a little while after that they signed us. There's some things on those tapes that are quite usable and that I think are quite exciting. They've perhaps got a bit more edge than what we've managed to get in the studio, but then again there are other deficiences which you can get away with 'live', but it's not really on if someone's got to hear it over and over again. But I think there's enough there to sort of make you feel well yeah, you could do a 'live' album. But I think rather than do that, what we're probably going to do is carry on now we're more confident in the studio. We've tried different sorts of methods of making a 'live' sound in the studio, and I think we're going to press on with that for a while; I think we'll do much better on the next album. As I say, we're all pleased with this album, and I can't look back on it now and say "shit, I wish we hadn't done this or hadn't done that". I think well we did it and I'm satisfied that we did the best we could, and I think it's good. But everybody's already thinking of ways of getting more of that attack, y'know.

ZZ: What was it like in the studio? Did you perform as you would 'live', did you go through all the motions?
WJ: Well actually, first of all everyone was kind of standing there and just concentrating on getting everything right, and then after a while I found that I couldn't stand still really anyway. I found myself moving around a bit, but a lot of the 'live' performance is provoked by the fact that there is an audience there, so it's a different thing. I think a lot of the tracks we felt best on, that came out best, was where we just got the gear set up in the studio, stood there together, and we didn't have all this kind of scene where everyone's boxed off in different parts, and we're all just bashing away as though it were a rehearsal for a 'live' gig.

ZZ: Have you got much more material written?
WJ: We're all starting to think of things now, but we've been so busy on the road that it's not been possible. As soon as this tour is over, we're going to France for four gigs, and then when we come back we've got a break. During that time certainly we're going to change the repertoire quite a bit, because there are a lot of things in the repertoire at the minute that we're fed up with, or we feel could have a rest now. We'll be looking either for things that have been forgotten or new things, just numbers that anyone can think of that we can do. We've all started thinking of old songs that we could do for the next album, and I've started trying to write some new things, but just how much I'm going to write I don't know. It'll be the same as what it was with the last album, we're just going to look at what we've got and decide what comes out best. If it's all sort of non-original stuff, that's the way it'll be. I don't think it will, I've got some things coming along now that I think are going to be alright. Also having met Mick Green I've been getting a whole lot of new ideas.... maybe we might write some things together, I don't know.

ZZ: Does it generate you more playing somewhere like the Rainbow to a big audience as opposed to the average pub?
WJ: Yeah, I prefer playing to a big audience in a way actually, because for one thing it's nice to have a great big stage.... you've got that much more scope with what you're doing onstage, you're not in danger of poking peoples' eyes out with your guitar and things like that; and also it gives you a bigger rush if there's a great big audience - there's blinding lights and things, it's a different feeling, but it's potentially a much bigger feeling, so I like it for that. Also I feel very sort of scared of people, I don't know, when we used to do the pub gigs I could never look in anyones eyes or anything like that. I'd just try and get completely possessed by what I was doing, and try and almost forget there were all those people there and I was close to them. So if you're on a big stage you're that much more detached. Although that's supposed to be a bad thing, in a way it's a good thing for us because I'm just in a world of my own when I'm playing anyway, and it just makes it that much more unreal, and that much more like I feel.

ZZ: Is that why you adopt that stance? Because you're looking somewhere between the top of the audiences head and the ceiling.
WJ: Well that's it you know. I don't know what happens when I go onstage, I'm not really there, I don't know what's going on, it's just a weird thing. I suppose if I stopped and thought about standing there with all those people looking at me, and I'm doing this thing, it would be quite frightening really. But if I withdraw and become completely involved with what I'm doing, it's OK, I can carry it through.

ZZ: Do you think your guitar style has developed a lot since you started?
WJ: I think I've got better over the time we've been playing regularly simply through practice - doing it that often. I'm not that good. I do everything I want to do; I don't sort of think oh I wish I could suddenly do this or that... I'm doing everything I want to do, I don't have to sit at home and practise for eight hours a day or something.

ZZ: Is it something that develops naturally?
WJ: Oh yeah. I mean there's always little bits in my mind and suddenly I'll find myself doing them. Yeah, I suppose I'd really like to play better. I'd like to play as well as Mick Green, but I don't think I will, because it's not like he's better than me, he's just in another class. He was doing that when he was 18; he joined Johnny Kidd when he was 17, and he's just got a natural thing. I mean I don't play just like him, it's like everything else, you're influenced by someone, you try and do it, you get it wrong, and then you end up with something that's your own. But I don't get too bothered about technique really.

ZZ: You mentioned before that you filled a vacuum in the London pub scene, but if you draw a larger parallel you've filled a gap in rock music today, because there isn't another band around doing what you're doing on that level.
WJ: Yeah, I think a lot of the reason that we got on was because we were doing a certain thing at a time when there was a need for it. Probably nobody even felt the need until some people had started doing it, but I think generally there's a feeling now of people wanting to get back to basic music. I think the Naughty Rhythms Tour has proved this really, because you've got three bands that are all playing basic music. There's no kind of hype or fantasy or anything - well there's always fantasy with any performance I suppose, particularly ours- but these three bands are quite different and they've all been going down very very well. And I think that's because people want it, they want something more direct.

ZZ: Do you feel that you've broken out of the pub circuit now?
WJ: Well we've got to really. We can't go on forever doing what we were doing, which is just one-nighters all over, because it really brings you down bad, the work's so hard, and you go out night after night and give yourself totally, and there's no real kind of end in sight, just gigs stretching on for infinity. It's not really very healthy.... it's a great situation at first, and then gradually it turns round. So we had to get into a position where we could just become a touring band rather than a gigging band, because then it means you can organise yourself with a tour of a certain number of dates, and then each gig becomes significant again. In the early days when we started doing the pub thing, every gig was significant then because it was a whole new audience, and we were building up a reputation, and it all meant something. Every gig you feel is important, and it's the same with the tour.... every gig becomes part of the tour, and there's an end in sight. Then you can assess what the tour's achieved. When you're just gigging and gigging because you've got to earn your living this feeling gets lost, and I think in order to retain what we've got, we've got to change that situation, and I think the tour has been good. We've come out of the tour well.

ZZ: How did the name Dr. Feelgood come about? Is it from the song?
WJ: Yeah, in fact it was a song that I always used to do in the old days when I was playing. In fact Johnny Kidd And The Pirates do it, and it was one of the first ones we learnt when we were going through all these old Johnny Kidd records. Sparko thought of using it for the band, and it seemed like a good name so we used it.'

Andy.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO NORMAN GREENBAUM?

SNUGGLED IN Erik Jacobsen's Sausalito houseboat, swaying gently from side to side, bobbing up and down on the swell, staring out across the waters of Richardson Bay, I was listening to extravagant tales involving various artists that Jacobsen had produced since he dumped his banjo ten years earlier.

Ace Yank journalist Ed Ward, on whose floor I was sleeping during my few days in Marin County, lives just up the hillside, a ten minute stroll away, and we'd sauntered down to the houseboat area, a series of perilous plankwalks flanked by luxury floating homes and rotting, patched-up hulks, to interview Erik and one of his current protegées, Peter Kraemer from the re-formed Sopwith Camel.

Having been through several hours of tape and exhausted all my planned questioning, we were chatting about the advantages of the Californian lifestyle, Jacobsen's extraordinary fishing exploits, and the good old days of the Lovin' Spoonful in Greenwich Village.

"What about Norman Greenbaum?" I asked, ". . . what's become of him?" In fact, Greenbaum was, and is, one of my favourite recording artists: I loved his work with Dr West's Medicine Show, and parts of his solo albums just put me on my back. To meet the fellow, who'd ostensibly retired into a dairy business, would rip me up.

"I haven't seen Greenbaum in about seven or eight months," said Jacobsen, ". . . he's having a few marital problems, but . . ."

Whether it was the drugs, or whether it was a mere act of God, I really don't know—but at that precise moment, Norman Greenbaum walked in through the open door!

"Jesus Christ!" Ed exclaimed. Greenbaum looked around, wondering why our eyes should be rivetted on him, as though he were the ghost of Leadbelly or something—but when all was explained, he invited us up to his place the following day.

He dictated the directions, which Ed scribbled on the back of a dogeared envelope.

"Go north on Route 101, take the Pengrove exit towards Petaluma, go right on Pengrove, then left on Goodwin. About 300 yards on the right, you'll see a red brick house set back from the road. Go up the drive, past the side of the house, and you'll see a chicken coop . . . I live in there."

NEXT DAY, Ed drove our rented Ford Pinto up to Greenbaum's place, following his directions to the letter, and we ended up in front of a sort of timber shack—from which he emerged to greet us.

He was indeed, suffering from a spot of domestic unrest—but he was happy enough to live in the chicken coop until any troubles could be resolved one way or another. Meanwhile his wife was living in the farmhouse and had apparently taken over the administration of their 13-acre dairy farm while Greenbaum prepared for a return to showbiz.

Amazingly enough, the coop had been converted into a neat little home; a kitchen, a bathroom, and a living room where we settled down twixt a bunk, a couple of speakers, and a Fender amp.

Norman took time out from his endeavours (he was making a chicken costume, more about which later on), to go over his colourful history.

HIS MUSICAL interests developed and were nourished during his years at Boston University, where he found his mind wandering off the pages of his geography textbooks and into the numerous folk haunts of Boston and Cambridge.

"I eventually quit school and started to hang around the clubs and coffee houses, though to begin with I wasn't actually performing. I worked as a doorman in one, had a job in the kitchen of another, and contented myself by being around folkies. During this time I was writing songs and messing around with guitar, and after a while I began to do a few gigs.

"The days of the folkie were numbered, however, because before anybody knew what had hit them, the Beatles blew across America like a hurricane . . . and I knew I

wanted to be in a group and to make records.

"Now at that time, there was no record scene in Boston, and I certainly had no intention of going to New York where most of the East Coast record companies were based—so I decided to move to California . . . partly to see if I could get into recording, and partly to get out of the snow and into the sunshine. So, after an exploratory trip to Hollywood, where I stayed with friends, I came back to Boston to pick up my belongings and I moved to Los Angeles in Spring 1965.

"Just by hanging around and meeting people, I managed to put together my first group, which was called Dr West's Medicine Show and Junk Band."

The other members were remnants of an obsolescent folk group which had recently split up: Bonnie Wallach sang and played guitar, Jack Carington played washtub bass, guitar and banjo, and Evan Engber was brought in as percussionist. Another guy, Bill Summer was in the original line-up but dropped out to become their equipment man and Dr West remained a quartet throughout their flickering career.

The Los Angeles music scene was just beginning to feel the birthpangs of the folk rock splurge, with the Byrds, Barry McGuire, Sonny and Cher, all coming to prominence with massive hit singles, but Greenbaum's bunch, though based in folk rock, took their inspiration from a predominantly East Coast phenomenon, the jug band revival.

Only the Jim Kweskin Jug Band outlasted the fad, but during the early sixties, jug bands were ten a penny: The Even Dozen, the Jug Stompers, the True Endeavour and Washington Square, all had a brief fling at a folk circuit too impoverished to support such enterprise—but Greenbaum was far more interested in the sources than the imitators.

"I was listening to as many old jug band and country blues recordings as I could find, and I was particularly attracted to those with humourous content. It seemed to me that some of these old timers had rich veins of humour running through their repertoires, making their songs far more colourful than the current pop songs which were characterised by drab lyrics . . . and I began to lace humour into the songs I was writing."

Having rehearsed an act, found some managers and done a few gigs, Dr West's Medicine Show went into the studio to cut some demos. "One of the demos," says Greenbaum, "was released as a single, a song called 'The Eggplant That Ate Chicago', and it became a fair sized hit even though our managers had placed it with a smallish company—the Go Go label, which had a picture of a bicycle as its logo. Mind you, it was difficult for us to get it on any label, because we were such a weird bunch.

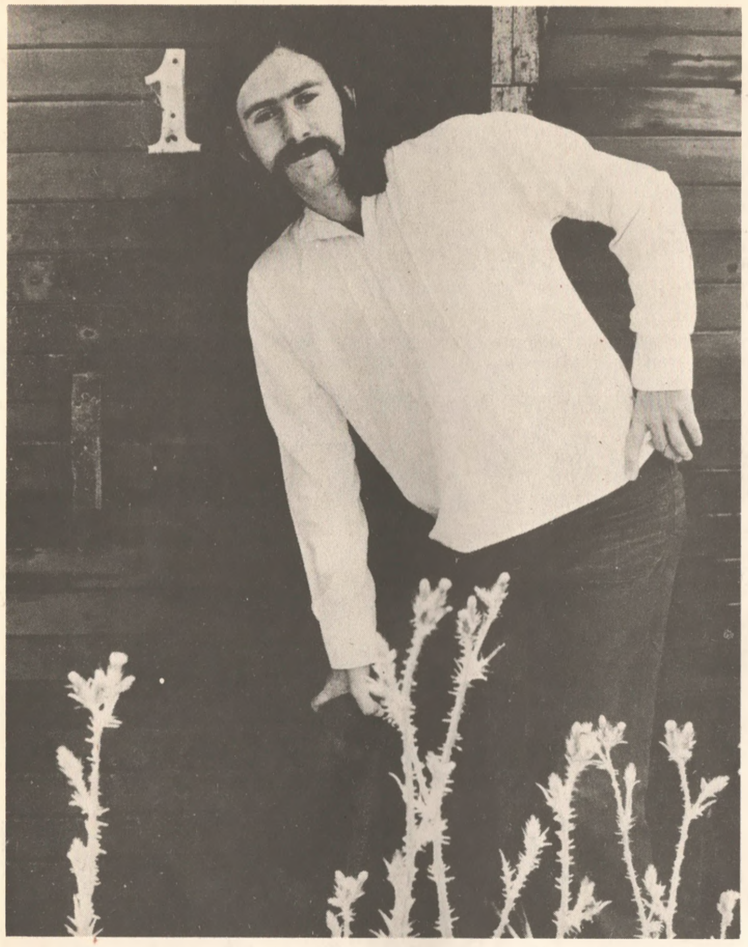
"By late 1965, we had got into a very bizarre and unprecedented trip; as a result of Evan temporarily leaving the group to go and stay up in San Francisco with Kesey, the Pranksters, and all those acid pioneers, we got into a theatrical thing which involved us painting our faces and using a light show, which was of course soon to become very fashionable during the psychedelic era which was just on the point of rolling out of the shadows and into the national news."

The single became a hit, top 5 in some cities, and the group embarked on tours to consolidate its success.

"This scheme was beset by difficulties because some people, especially club owners, experienced a little difficulty relating to us. To them, we were a dreadful manifestation of the Californian psychedelic scene, and the last thing they wanted to attract into their clubs were bunches of acid-heads.

"They used to say things like 'We'd like to book you, but we don't want you to paint your faces and act so weird'. The thing was that we used to invite members of the audience up to have their faces painted too; loads of people would accept our invitation to come along between sets and get themselves painted so you'd see sections of the audience wandering about with rainbow faces . . . strange days.

"We played some really peculiar places. One, I remember, was this awful drinking



club which was primarily an R&B club catering for the more thuggish element; the owners had recently changed its name—after the eleventh knifing incident or something like that. The audience was basically low-intelligence, semi-hoodlum types, totally bewildered by a bunch of painted lunatics playing stuff you couldn't dance to . . . but they were fascinated because it was so outlandish—and the adventurous ones were even coming in to get their faces painted.

"I'll never forget two guys who came to see what was happening; one of them was cajoled into being painted, and then got all embarrassed when he saw himself in the mirror. He turned to his friend and said, 'Are you having your's done?', and when he said he didn't think he would, this guy got real hot under the collar . . . 'Yes you are, Ralph,' he shouted, 'you sit in that chair and get your face painted or I'll pound your head in—I ain't going out there alone looking like this!'"

When the bass player decided to leave, Greenbaum brought in George T Bouquet, an erstwhile member of Kweskin's band (under another of his pseudonyms, Bruno Wolfe), but he only lasted a month and then the band split up.

"I don't know where George went, but Evan and Bonnie joined the Hog Farm with Wavy Gravy, and I decided to restructure the group. I got rid of the face painting and light show, brought in an electric bass rather than the wash-tub effort we'd used previously, a fiddle player called Barry Kane (once a New Christy Minstrel), and a really great drummer who made up this junk drum kit from a Corvair radiator grille decorated with false teeth that he'd bought in a secondhand lot . . . it looked like a huge hideous smile.

"It was a much more musical unit, and we continued to gig and make records, but I was tiring of the style I'd wedged myself into, and eventually we split up towards the end of 1967. I decided that rock'n'roll was where it's at."

During Greenbaum's subsequent spate of fame, DJM re-released various Dr West recordings here, but these have since been deleted, which is somewhat sad in view of their unique quality. The song titles alone give some indication of Greenbaum's unusual approach . . . 'How Lew Sin Ate', 'The Modern Day Fish', 'Gondoliers, Shakespeares, Overseers, Playboys and Bums'. Magnificent stuff!

GREENBAUM'S ROCK group idea never quite fired on all cylinders. Under various names, Hasty Pudding, S T Pudding, Natty Bumppo, and going through musicians like wildfire, they played a string of small outskirt and beach clubs with little success.

"We did a lot of experimenting with ideas, none of which quite came together—with the result that musicians trickled through the band like water from a leaking faucet . . . for instance, J D Souther was my drummer for a while, and only Robbie Robinson, a guitarist, stayed long enough to get onto the first album.'

Eventually, halfway through 1968, the big break came: Erik Jacobsen, a highly successful producer, happened to be in the Troubadour audience looking for new talent.

"He hated the group, but liked one song I did, 'School For Sweet Talk'—so he came backstage and discussed the idea of signing me to his publishing company. He was interested in getting Peter Kraemer from the Sopwith Camel to record the song, but nothing seemed to happen, and after a few weeks I went to him and said 'Sign me—I'll record the song myself,' which is what he did.

"We recorded the song as a single, and it was absolutely terrible; Erik's worst production job ever, my worst singing, and a rather uninspired backing by the Sopwith Camel. It was released under the name of Doctor Greenbaum."

Undaunted by the flop, Norman set to writing the songs which subsequently made up his first solo album, ***Spirit In The Sky***. This time, the Jacobsen magic touch returned, and the album remains a classic—comprising excellent songs, executed with flair and imagination. (You ask Gus Dudgeon.)

The title track, pulled as a single, became a surprise smash, a worldwide number one, and remains Reprise's biggest selling single to this day.

"I originally wrote 'Spirit In The Sky' as a cajun number. I wanted to record it with fiddles and an accordion a la Clifton Chenier, but Erik didn't like it, so we put it to one side while we concentrated on other songs.

"Then one day, Robbie Robinson, who was always a bit of an electronics wizard, said he'd found a way to build a fuzz-box into the body of a guitar—and proceeded to do just that, with the result that it became the sort of novelty that you just can't stop experimenting with. So I was messing around, making full use of this fuzz-tone contraption, and I came up with a lick that I liked so much, I restructured 'Spirit In The Sky' to fit.

"It seemed to do the trick—everything fitted into place naturally, and William Truckaway, who discovered them, brought the Stovell Sisters along to add the background vocals which provided the icing on the cake, as you might say."

Despite its amazing popularity, the lyrics of the song incensed certain sectors of the public—particularly those blinkered old farts who believe that religion and God are exclusive to people who visit church every week and follow the straight and narrow path defined by self-appointed God representatives on earth.

"The idea for the song came to me whilst I was watching Porter Wagoner on television. He had this weekly show, and always had a 'hymn for today' spot—where he'd do a religious song, quite seriously, as a contrast to the snazzy country hokum, you know. Well, I was watching the show one week, smoking a little weed, and it suddenly flashed on me that I needed a religious tune to round out my set. I thought it would be a great little interlude—as a relief from all these serious, far-out, crazy tunes I was writing—and I chose to write about Jesus because he was the religious figure that most people could relate to. Once the idea had taken seed in my mind, the song came out real fast.

"I did get a fair amount of hate-mail, once

the record was getting a lot of airplay. People wrote to me saying things like 'What business does a little Jew like you have writing about our beloved Jesus?' It was pretty vicious, but on the other hand there was a lot of favourable reaction too: I got letters from a lot of people—mostly married women in their thirties and forties—who thanked me for pointing the way and straightening them out! They had stopped going to church, were fighting with their husbands, were screaming at their kids, and were on the verge of divorce . . . . then they heard 'Spirit In The Sky' on the radio, and it really flashed them out. The number of people who reacted that way was just mindblowing . . . I couldn't get over it!

"In some ways, there was a responsibility thrust upon me—to follow up the hit with something equally therapeutic . . . which 'Canned Ham' certainly wasn't! How serious that song was, I'm not really sure; at this point I prefer to leave the interpretation of my songs to the listener . . . that way, I'm not forced up against a wall to explain it."

The album caused less of a chart sensation than the single, a fact which Greenbaum partly attributes to his lack of live appearances. For gigs, he was using Russell Dashiell's band Crowfoot—and they wanted to revert to their solo career, so after a couple of months of live work, supporting people like John Mayall, the Moodies, Chicago, and Grand Funk, Crowfoot went their way and Greenbaum came to Europe for a promotional visit and to receive a silver disc on Top Of The Pops.

Returning to California, he set about forming a new group, and picked up an excellent local guitarist, Steve Busfield, but by the time he'd located a drummer and bass player, the follow-up single, 'Canned Ham', and the second album, ***Back Home***, had both floundered, and the expected gigs weren't forthcoming. Caught in this limbo-land, the band split, and Greenbaum concentrated his efforts on another hit single.

"I decided it was a case of make or break . . . if this didn't get it, I would quit—call it a day, and retire from the music business. I set my hopes on a song called 'Don't Let The California Earthquake Scare You Away', which I thought had all the elements for a hit: a topical lyric, a nice tune, a positive observation on a situation we were facing here in California . . .but it didn't work. It was number one in Seattle—higher than the Stones' 'Brown Sugar'—but elsewhere, it just didn't exist . . . got to number 91 on the national chart. So I said 'fxxk it' and left the rock scene; I'd made some bread, and I decided to go headlong into a dairy business."

Specialising in a breed of goats known as Anglo-Nubians, Greenbaum built a dairy up in Petaluma (which, paradoxically, is known as 'the chicken capital of the world'), and set up a delivery round. Today goat's milk from his farm, brand name 'Velvet Acres', can be purchased from various health-food shops and delicatessens in Marin County—though Greenbaum has since retired from the business.

"We had around 32 goats; my wife, Vicki, took care of the milking and feeding, and I was the promotion/delivery man. Of course, it was never a money-spinner, but when I left it, we'd built it up to break-even point."

Having felt the nagging itch to return to music, Greenbaum began to write songs depicting life on the farm, and these were subsequently recorded on a third Warner Brothers album, ***Petaluma***—produced once more by Jacobsen. Featuring a stripped-down, jug-bandy acoustic setting, and an excellent sleeve cum booklet designed by Gary Hallgren, the album finds Greenbaum in good voice.

"We really worked hard on it . . . got Ry Cooder to put stuff on it, because he's the only guy who can play like that, got Fritz Richmond, who's the best wash-tub bassist there is—he even came out of retirement to help us, and Richie Olsen from the old Charlatans is on there too. We felt we really had something; consistent tunes, a concept, a distinctive sleeve (which had a naked chick air-brushed off at Warners' insistence, as a matter of interest), and I was ready to go out on promotional tours as an acoustic act . . . but the album flopped; Warners did no promotion, no-one seemed to give a damn about it, and it ended up selling less than 5,000 copies. It broke my heart, because of the three, I thought it was my best performance . . . I just sat and moped for six months after that.

"But in this business, you have to take the rough with the smooth, and I realised that though there have been several lumps in my career, there's always been a great impetus and enthusiasm deep down . . . so, because I'd made the decision to come back to music, I determined to keep trying."

Having found a superb local Petaluma group called Crossfire, Greenbaum set about getting them a deal. His experiences were disappointing. "Every record company I went to turned them down. They liked the tapes, but that wasn't enough. Their rejections hinged on three factors: (a) Norman Greenbaum, as a producer, doesn't have anything on the charts . . . no rating. (b) Norman Greenbaum, as a talent, has had two flop albums in a row . . . no rating. (c) Who is Crossfire's manager? It's not Grossman or Geffen . . . no rating there either. They are the criteria they relate to—and I came up with three zeros. It doesn't make a lot of sense to me, but they adhere to that formula, so I can only conclude that as far as the national recording scene is concerned, I'm not exactly in huge demand right now.

"However, like I said earlier, one has to take the downs with the ups—and I'm enthusiastic about both musical trips I'm pursuing at present; I'm getting plenty of work as a solo—just me and my acoustic guitar—and some concert work with Crossfire . . . so it's a question of a little groundwork and a little building before I'm off and rolling again."

Greenbaum's optimism remains unshrivelled by temporary set-backs and when we spoke, he'd recently done successful gigs at various relatively local venues like Uncle Sam's in Petaluma, The Clover Theatre, The Sleeping Lady in Fairfax, and clubs in San José and Oregon. His set comprises oldies-but-goodies—including 'The Eggplant That Ate Chicago', 'Petaluma', 'The Titfield Thunder', 'The Day The Well Went Dry', 'Japanese Silky', 'Jubilee' and 'Spirit In The Sky'—interspersed with a lot of "real good new tunes", one of which had a typical Greenbaum lyric which went something like "A gallon of gas, a bottle of wine . . . my car and I feel fine".

As we chatted, he was finishing a costume he had prepared for a gig in San Francisco the following evening. In a whimsical fit of local patriotism, he'd decided to dress as a chicken! His orange stockings, red felt comb and yellow beak, were complemented by a white shirt onto which he'd glued rows and rows of chicken feathers.

You can't keep a good man down.

☐ **MAC GARRY**

"HELLO GOODBYE HELLO"

THE STORY OF HOOPLE

(incorporating the rise and fall of that legendary bunch, Mott the Hoople)

To talk to Ian Hunter today, and listen to him outline his future with impregnable confidence and determination, it's difficult to remember just what a scuffling, mixed up waif he was back in 1969, when Mott the Hoople was no more than a twinkle in Guy Stevens' eyes.

Guy, in a typical fit of inspired lunacy, was going beserk in a Denmark Street rehearsal studio, rejecting streams of applicants for a gig he'd advertised. He was looking for a singing piano player to complement a group he had just signed to Island Records – but because he had such a clear idea of the sound and approach he wanted to achieve, it seemed impossible to find the right man for the job. Musicians came and went – with alarming rapidity – punctuated by Guy tearing his hair and yelling "next one, next one".

Hunter, oblivious to these peculiar events being enacted in Soho, was ensconced in front of his television when the phone rang. "It was a bloke called Bill Farley, who ran Regent Sound Studios; I used to do a lot of demos there when I was a staff songwriter for Francis Day and Hunter, and I'd got to know him quite well. He asked me if I'd seen the ad in Melody Maker – because the group was down at his place – and he reckoned it would be worth my while having a go for it. Well, I wasn't in a very good mood; I had a headache and I was tired – so I told him I didn't feel like it, because though I was out of work and looking for a job, he'd got me to go to other auditions previously and they never turned out to be any good. In any case, I was a really crappy piano player".

Two hours later, around ten o'clock, the phone rang again. "It was Bill, ringing to tell me there were only two to go, and the group didn't like any of them so far – and what's more, there was a retainer involved. Well, I still didn't bother – primarily because I didn't have a car; to get from Archway to Denmark Street involved 3 bus rides and a wait of about half an hour between each."

At eleven, Bill phoned again. "He said I ought to get down there because they'd run out of applicants and the job was still vacant – so I relented and said I was on the way. The gods must have been with me because I got to the end of the road just in time to catch a bus – which got to Kings Cross just as my other one was leaving. So I nipped on that – and there was no wait at the next change either..... so I arrived at Regent Sound within half an hour. Despite this, I went in the studio in one of those violent filthy moods when you think 'bollocks, what have I got to lose?' I had absolutely no confidence or ability on piano, so it was a case of brazening it out, and when they asked me what songs I knew, I said 'what about Like A Rolling Stone', because I could just about stumble through that. Well, as we played, this scruffy looking bloke who'd been lurking down the bottom end of the studio, slowly wandered around until he was standing directly behind me – and apparently he began to gesticulate wildly at the others, making signs of approval..... it turned out to be Guy Stevens. So I'd played and sung, and they'd played along – and in some ways, it felt as if I was auditioning them – and then they sent me off to this club next door whilst they talked over whether I'd do or not. About a half hour later, Bill came in and told me I'd got the job – and got a phone call from Island Records the next morning confirming it."

"I walked into that audition knowing C F and G chords.... which just happened to be right for the occasion. I could have played a Bach Concerto on the bass, but that wouldn't have impressed them. Playing 'Like a Rolling Stone' in my own primitive way did impress them enough to offer me the job – though they were very dubious about my appearance. I was wearing a grease-stained brown serge suit, and Guy and Pete rang me a few days later to say that I could buy clothing up to £100. At the time I didn't have a clue what to get, so I had to ask them to advise me".

Thus, Ian Hunter joined Herefordshire group Silence, and MOTT THE HOOPLE was born.

Silence's ancestry is far too complex to examine in detail, but, briefly, the picture is built up as follows: Overend Watts and Buffin played together (for five bob a night each) in a school band called the ANCHORS, who gigged at the Hope & Anchor in Ross-on-Wye during the summer of 1963. Deciding that their approach was too theatrically tame, they became WILD DOG'S HELL HOUNDS, led by Wild Dog Walks, who's accessories included a gold lamé waistcoat made up from curtain material, a Beatle wig, and a dog's bowl from which he would drink water.

This ensemble was responsible for fairly diverting R&B performances at local school dances and Conservative club parties, but evolved into the SOULENTS – still retaining the Overend/Buffin nucleus, but this time specialising in Who imitations. Leaving school, but remaining semi-pro musicians, they became SILENCE (Mark 1), until Overend accepted an invitation to join Mick Ralphs' band.

Mick, having started in a Bromyard outfit called the BUDDIES, went on to PROBLEM before forming the DOC THOMAS GROUP, with Stan Tippins on vocals.

Overend was seduced into this band from his career as a trainee architect, and he was followed by Buffin and an organist called Verden Allen. Then followed some gruelling years of what the musical press tend to brush aside with the useful phrase "paying their dues" – mainly on the continent, and particularly in Italy, where they recorded an album.

Mick: "The gigs in Italy lasted, on and off, for a couple of years and gave us a good deal of experience. Good English groups were very popular over there at the time – but we got really sick of pandering to the pop crowd with numbers like 'Release Me'. We really wanted to play our own music."

The Doc Thomas Group folded in a fit of anguish, with the members anxious to re-assess their future – and during this limbo period, Mick, Verden and Buffin played in Jimmy Cliff's backing band – but the group reformed, firstly as the SHAKEDOWN SOUND, and then as SILENCE (Mark 2)..... which was when the optimistic Mick Ralphs visited Island Records bearing demo tapes.

Overend: "We were gigging mostly in Wales at the time, and had practically made up our minds to split up because of the dwindling work situation. Guy Stevens was our last hope, I suppose."

Guy listened to their demos, but remained unimpressed. Gripped by a fit of tenacity, however, Mick Ralphs refused to take no for an answer – and pestered Guy to reconsider his refusal.

This time, Guy (to my mind one of the ten most important figures in British rock in the sixties) relented; he decided to modify Silence's line-up to a Band/Procol Harum/piano and organ combination and assume to roles of producer, manager and mentor..... he even had a new name ready for them.

THE MOTT DISCOGRAPHY

MOTT THE HOOPLE #1

'MOTT THE HOOPLE'
Island ILPS 9108 Released November 1969
Produced by Guy Stevens
You really got me / At the crossroads / Laugh at me / Backsliding fearlessly / Rock'n'roll queen / Rabbit foot and toby time / Half Moon Bay / Wrath and roll.

'MAD SHADOWS'
Island ILPS 9119 Released September 1970
Produced by Guy Stevens
Thunderbuck Ram / No wheels to ride / You are one of us / Walking with a mountain / I can feel / Threads of iron / When my minds gone.

'WILDLIFE'
Island ILPS 9144 Released February 1971
Produced by Mott the Hoople
Whisky women / Angel of Eighth Avenue / Wrong side of the river / Waterlow / Lay Down / It must be love / Original mixed-up kid / Home is where I want to be / Keep a knocking.

'BRAIN CAPERS'
Island ILPS 9178 Released September 1971
Produced by Guy Stevens
Death may be your Santa Claus / Your own back yard / Darkness darkness / The journey / Sweet Angeline / Second love / The moon upstairs / The wheel of the quivering meat conception.

'ALL THE YOUNG DUDES'
CBS 65184 Released 8th September 1972
Produced by David Bowie
Sweet Jane / Momma's little jewel / All the young dudes / Sucker / Jerkin crocus / One of the boys / Soft ground / Ready for love – after lights / Sea diver.

'ROCK AND ROLL QUEEN'
Island ILPS 9215 Released October 1972
Compilation of previously released tracks
Rock and roll queen / The wheel of the quivering meat conception / You really got me / Thunderbuck Ram / Walking with a mountain / Death may be your Santa Clause / Midnight Lady / Keep a knocking.

SINGLES:
Rock and roll queen / Road to Birmingham* Island WIP October 1969
Midnight Lady / The Debt* Island WIP 6105 October 1971
Downtown* / Home is where I want to be Island WIP 6112 December 1971
All the young dudes / One of the boys CBS 8271 28th July 1972

MOTT THE HOOPLE #2

'MOTT'
CBS 69039 Released 20th July 1973
Produced by Mott the Hoople
All the way from Memphis / Whizz Kid / Hymn for the dudes / Honaloochie Boogie / Violence / Drivin sister / Ballad of Mott the Hoople / I'm a Cadillac – El Camino Dolo Roso / I wish I was your mother.

SINGLES:
Honaloochie Boogie / Rose*: CBS 1530 25th May 1973
All the way from Memphis / Ballad of Mott CBS 1764 31st Aug 1973

MOTT THE HOOPLE #2/3

SINGLE:
Roll away the stone / Where do you all come from?* CBS 1895 9th Nov 1973

MOTT THE HOOPLE #3

'THE HOOPLE'
CBS 69062 Released 29th March 1974
Produced by Ian Hunter / Dale Griffin / Pete Watts
The Golden age of rock'n'roll / Marionette / Alice / Crash street kids / Born late 58 / Trudi's Song / Pearl'n'roy (England) / Through the looking glass / Roll away the stone.

'LIVE'
CBS 69093 Released 1st Nov 1974
Produced by Dale Griffin
All the way from Memphis / Sucker / Rest in peace / All the young dudes / Walking with a mountain / Sweet Angeline / Rose / Jerkin crocus / One of the boys / Rock'n'roll queen / Get back / Whole lotta shakin / Violence.

SINGLES:
The golden age of rock'n'roll / Rest in peace* CBS 2177 15th March 1974
Foxy Foxy / Trudi's Song CBS 2439 7th June 1974

MOTT THE HOOPLE #4

SINGLE:
Saturday gigs* / Medley Jerkin Crocus / Sucker / Violence© CBS 2754 18th October 1974

* tracks not featured on albums
:*: different takes from tracks on 'Live'
© b-side is by Mott #3

Researched and drawn by Pete Frame, March 1975. Hello to Ian, two Micks, Phally, Buffin, Overend, Ariel, Morgan and Guy; Stan, Ritchie, Phil and Booster; Trudi and Lil; Solveig and Dude; Dave Stopps and his 13000 Friars; Kris Needs and the Sea Divers, and to Julia

Thanks to Bill Henderson and Johnny Boy Tobler

"WE GREW UP ON THOSE SATURDAY GIGS"

During an extended vacation, Guy found ample time to catch up on his reading, and a novel which rather impressed him was the story of one Norman Mott: 'Mott the Hoople' by Willard Manus (published here in 1967 by Secker and Warburg). You ought to read it – it's an amusing little book – and you should also read Ian Hunter's account of a Mott tour of America: 'Diary of a Rock and Roll Star' (available in paperback everywhere).

Some more pre-Mott background on Hunter: After leaving school he put in a spell behind the typewriters of the Wellington Evening Journal and also played with various semi-pro groups including the APEX and the HOME LANDERS, both working out of Nottingham, and SCENERY with Miller Anderson.

"The first time the bug really bit me was when I went to Germany, playing bass in Freddie 'Fingers' Lee's band; that's when music became the obsession which took over my life. After that, I moved down to London because I knew what I wanted to do; I'd seen Traffic – and that made me realise there was more to music than playing back-up for three quid a night"

It was whilst he was waiting for circumstances to throw him into a suitable position that he took the interim job as a songwriter.

MOTT THE HOOPLE #1 JUNE 1969 to JAN 1973

On a good night, this was the greatest rock band in the world, bar none – but try as they might to increase their status in the music world, their acclaim was limited to an utterly devoted but relatively small following – probably due to their totally energetic but seemingly directionless and haphazard approach. Mott and their management were an erratic crew; the union with Guy ebbed and flowed, the quality of live gigs varied greatly, their level of morale wavered like a speedo, album tracks were either genius or rubbish, and their assaults on America were usually ill-planned and unrewarding. Their live pulling power was never reflected in record sales, and it was this failure to gain mass acceptance which led to the growing frustration and petty turbulence which eventually precipitated their much-publicised split after a gig in Zurich on March 26th 1972 – a date which marked the turning point of their careers. Getting wind of their demise, David Bowie, then at the peak of his influence and popularity, suddenly revealed himself as a hard-core Mott fan, and persuaded them that all was not lost. Inspired by his encouragement, they hastily reformed, signed with CBS, and released 'All the young Dudes' – one of the biggest and most distinctive hits of that summer. The succeeding months saw the rejuvenated Mott going from strength to strength; their sell-out tours of America and Europe punctuated by a string of hit singles as Hunter, now the undisputed leader and front man, swaggered across the front pages of the world's musical press. Mott were stars!

- VERDEN ALLEN – organ/piano
- IAN HUNTER – vocals, guitar/piano
- OVEREND WATTS – bass/vocals
- BUFFIN (DALE GRIFFIN) – drums/vocals
- MICK RALPHS – guitar/vocals

"Phally" (as Verden Allen was always known to his mates) quit Mott in a characteristic flurry of passion and anger. If he ever disagreed with the group's direction, he would register his disapproval strongly – often graphically, as in the case of 'Mad Shadows', a copy of which he mutilated in front of the others in a show of hatred for its shortcomings. His leaving followed a violent argument based on his suggestion that his repertoire over the group's repertoire was being continually eroded by stronger forces. After a long hibernation in Hereford, he emerged last year fronting a new band called CHEEKS – but he seems to have gone to ground once more.

On the whole, Mott's American critics have always been far more interesting than their English counterparts. For example, I always liked this piece on the 'Mott' album, written by Bud Scoppa. "Mott the Hoople's path – from audacity and optimism, through a series of false starts, pitfalls, wrong turns and missed opportunities, to its present point of view, permeated by weariness, sadness and a frighteningly full well of irony – seems a necessary part of the band's specialness. It's now apparent that Mott the Hoople is not playing out the role it once thought it was (emerging superstars) but that of those who dream and struggle only to watch options run out – in other words, the loser. That they became aware of this crucial paradox and were able to capitalise on it aesthetically is impressive enough. Literally and symbolically, 'Mott' sounds very much like a terminal statement. The album is so well done, however, that Mott may well have to deal with still another irony: success following a full acceptance of failure – a success in the very terms by which that failure has been defined".

MOTT THE HOOPLE #2

FEBRUARY 1973 to JULY 1973 Continuing as a four-piece following Verden Allen's departure, the group forged on to greater popularity, but Mick Ralphs' [illegible] Mott [illegible] was decision to go off with Paul Rodgers and Simon Kirke to form a new band. Mott searched for a replacement.

- IAN HUNTER – vocals/guitar
- OVEREND WATTS – bass/vocals
- DALE GRIFFIN – drums/vocals
- MICK RALPHS – guitar/vocals

They made it in the end, but it was a long uphill grind all the way for Mott. Provided with a p.a., 15 quid a week each, and a string of gigs, they set out to conquer the world – succeeding only in lurching into a quagmire of apathy, abuse, insecurity, poverty and rejection – but they, along with a handful of followers, knew that they were great..... and this shaky certainty pulled them through all the bad times.

After a disastrous get-it-together residency at a club in Italy, they began to gig in England; I must have seen them around 40 times during their first 2 years – from their earliest gigs at Friars Aylesbury and the Country Club (where, due to a shortage of rehearsed material, they played everything twice) to the heady heights of their second anniversary triumph at the Albert Hall, where a little misdirected fan energy resulted in a few broken chairs and a lifetime ban on Mott – and it was great to see that latent magic develop, as Mott evolved into a world class band.

By late 1971, they were still in the doldrums; so near to success and yet so far, I could never speak to them without sensing that element of dissatisfaction and frustration. American tours were financially and critically unrewarding, a pair of commercially inclined singles had been dismal flops, their four albums had only nudged the lower reaches of the charts and the future was getting hazy. What's more, their unity and faith were becoming hazier.

A British tour, supported by comedian Max Wall and jugglers and knife throwers, represented a new nadir in their career and the subsequent despondency reduced their morale to its lowest ebb in the Spring of 1972 when they returned from a Swiss visit to announce their decision to quit. (Listen to 'The ballad of Mott the Hoople' to catch the sense of futility within the band at the time).

As mentioned elsewhere, Bowie's patronage produced a single which rocketed Mott to the pinnacles they'd been seeking and dreaming about for 3 years [illegible] Ian, originally the 'new boy', used to remain on the side, hidden behind a battered electric piano, blurting his heart out into the mike, stealing the occasional glance at his pumping fingers, and leaving theatrics and cross-stage cavortion to Mick and Overend. Now he was out-front, the focal point, playing a string of the most ostentatious guitars in the history of rock – from the Maltese Cross (shown on the front of Zigzag 22) to that H shaped monster he dragged out to climax the later Mott spectaculars.

MOTT THE HOOPLE #3 AUGUST 1973 to AUGUST 1974

For a while it seemed as though Ariel Bender (a thin disguise for Luther Grosvenor – an old friend of Mott's from the days at Island in 1969) was the answer to the band's problems; he learned up their repertoire and didn't object to Ian being the out-front star (as long as he could swagger ostentatiously around the stage now and then). This was the pinnacle of success for Mott; 'The Hoople' was their biggest selling album and their success in America was reflected in their ability to pack the Uris Theatre on Broadway for a solid week. In England, their gig at Hammersmith (recorded for posterity on their 'Live' album) was acclaimed as "one of the century's greatest rock performances" – and it seemed as though any cracks in the group's unity had been successfully patched up. It was wishful thinking: Bender, not entirely satisfied with his contribution to their recorded works, decided to make a graceful exit and form his own group.

- ARIEL BENDER – guitar/vocals
- IAN HUNTER – vocals/guitar
- OVEREND WATTS – bass/vocals
- DALE GRIFFIN – drums/vocals
- AUXILIARY HOOPLERS ONLY!
  - MORGAN FISHER – piano
  - MICK BOLTON replaced by BLUE WEAVER – organ
  - THUNDER THIGHS – backing vocals (for US tour July/August 1973)

When it was learned that Mick Ralphs had opted to walk out of Mott at the zenith of their success, the initial reaction was that he must be crackers to throw away all he'd worked so hard for – and nobody was particularly confident about his future until it became known that he had combined with the stable half of Free, under the management of Peter Grant.

From then on, it was all cut and dried; Bad Company became the biggest new group of 1973-74

'73 was a jamboree; we were the dudes and the dudes were we – but in 74, on the Broad way tour, we didn't much like dressing up no more – don't wanna be hip.... but thanks for the great trip". When Ian Hunter joined Mott, after a few years of scuffling, he was about as directionless as a dodgem. He knew stardom was his goal, but he left the choice of route to others – like Guy and Mick Ralphs.

A year later, having seen and studied failure and mistakes, he was a changed man – and since then I've never spoken to Hunter when he didn't have very definite and positive short and long term plans to work to. This latest venture appears to be the natural culmination of these plans; Hunter, now largely out on his own, is at last the master of his own fate – realising that failure at this stage can only be attributable to him. (Not that there's the slightest chance of any failure)

Details of the album:
'IAN HUNTER'
CBS 80710 Released 28th March 1975
Produced by Mick Ronson
Once bitten twice Shy / Who do you love / Lounge Lizard / Boy / Three thousand miles from here / The truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth / It ain't easy when you fall / Shades off / I get so excited.

MOTT THE HOOPLE #4 SEPTEMBER 1974 to DECEMBER 1974

After much speculation, Mick Ronson joined Mott in a blaze of publicity – and everything looked tickety-boo. He'd been a friend since the Bowie Kiss-of-life period, and was seen by the press (and Hunter) as the saviour of the band. Reports of their October/November European tour indicated that Mott were about to storm back to unprecedented success, but pressures within the band were building up. Whether Ronson's presence intimidated the others, or whether Hunter's ideas were considered too ambitious – who knows? In November, just before their scheduled British tour, Hunter, visiting friends in New York, collapsed and was hospitalised with a condition diagnosed as "physical exhaustion". He recovered, but the stability of the band never did – and the hastily re-scheduled gigs were never played. By the middle of December, 65 months and over 75 album tracks since the band had first got together, it became public knowledge that Mott the Hoople were no more. Hunter had left the group to go solo, and Ronson had chosen to go with him, leaving Overend, Buffin and Morgan Fisher thinking about forming the nucleus of a new band. One of the great singles of 1974, 'Saturday Gigs', Mott's last – plotting the milestones of their failures and successes – was a chart flop. They went out in a blaze of ignominy – but it was as if they knew; the fade out featured Ronson's guitar sizzling as Hunter chanted the prophetic "goodbye" over and over. We'll remember those Saturday gigs!

- MICK RONSON – guitar/vocals
- IAN HUNTER – vocals/guitar
- OVEREND WATTS – bass/vocals
- DALE GRIFFIN – drums/vocals
- MORGAN FISHER – piano (now a full member)
- BLUE WEAVER – organ

HUNTER RONSON JANUARY 1975 to THE PRESENT

The Hunter Ronson alliance has been busy at AIR Studios in Oxford Street, preparing Hunter's first solo album. A British tour is set for March and this will be followed by extensive work in America, where Hunter is now domiciled. As a counterploy to the "goodbye" of 'Saturday gigs', the first word heard on the new solo album is "hello". (The old bugger always had a flair for the dramatic!)

- PETE ARNESEN – keyboards
- JEFF APPLEBY – bass
- DENNIS ELLIOTT – drums
- MICK RONSON – guitar/vocals
- IAN HUNTER – vocals/guitar

As I rush this chart off to the printer, I understand that Overend, Buffin and Morgan are still hovering on the brink of uncertainty. Underground rumours insist that their search for a vocalist and lead guitarist have turned up a suitably dynamic duo and that the modified ensemble plan to re-launch themselves under the abbreviated name of MOTT, but their manager assures me that although various musicians are under consideration, nothing has been finalised. "We just want to get a fantastic band together" he says, "and it takes time". Kris Needs, of the Mott Sea Divers, says that Overend Watts has written loads of great new songs and reckons the new Mott will be fantastic.

The members of the new band are largely unknown quantities but were hand picked (from millions of applicants) by Ronson and acquit themselves superbly on the new album. Having heard about three quarters of 'Ian Hunter', once only, I am unable to offer other than initial impressions. Albums invariably sound great when they're booming out of huge studio speakers, directly off the master tape but, in my semi-inebriated state, I could scarcely believe what I was hearing. Some "supergroups" just don't happen – but the Hunter Ronson hook up has undoubted magic. One track, 'Boy', must represent both Hunter's finest creation and Ronson's finest production. Can't wait to hear it again.

Yet another rushed production. Address all abuse and criticism to Andy Childs and watch out for a monster Bowie/Mott/Free chart.

GENTLE GIANT

Until recently, Gentle Giant were one of the only, perhaps ***the*** only band deserving of the title 'Britain's biggest unknown band'. It's quite a treat when you go to see what to you is a new band, for the first time and find a thoroughly professional outfit with four years on the road and five albums behind them, playing to a crowd that's consistently in the two thousand bracket.

When I was at college, a friend on the same course used to say "I've got a friend who knows a group called Gentle Giant and she says they're terribly good, have you heard of them?" and I could cheerfully say "No". Two years later (January '74) I'm sitting in the bar of the Marquee with folk's fuzziest double bass player, Brillo, comparing superlatives on Capability Brown (they'll make it yet I tell you), and he starts raving about this here Gentle Giant. His conviction is compelling and a mental note is made to go and see them. Meanwhile back at the chateau, by sheer cosmic design, my own dear brother has bought Gentle Giant's ***In A Glasshouse*** album on the recommendation of friends. Yours truly is impressed and is soon heading up to Birmingham to see them.

A more upfront arranged music band you'd be hard put to find and I was bowled over, and amazed that the media have been resolutely ignoring the band since its inception. That was March '74 and subsequently the media have started picking up on Gentle Giant. I've seen them a few more times and acquired all six albums. By the end of '74 the writer finds himself being invited to write a History on Gentle Giant for this august journal and despite an antipathy for vast sums of money he agrees. I suppose he must like the band . . . .

This is the story of how two ordinary, typical average young kids called Ray and Derek (who lived at the seaside) learnt to play their scales, went through all the traumas of turning semi-pro, experienced the even greater traumas of being manipulated, and survived to form the band of their dreams. It is also the story of how drummer John Wethers got ripped off in Wales and invariably ripped every night, whilst in Germany, young and tender Kerry Minnear was starving in a hovel and writing letters to his mum for the fare home. It's also a little bit of a story about Gary Green but he didn't get conned like the others . . . He just played the blues and lived a life of serenity and contentment with mum and dad.

EPISODE ONE: LOCAL BOYS MAKE GOOD

Derek–guitar, Ray–violin and cousin Paul and brother Terry.

Ray and Derek Shulman tend to talk quite a lot when they get going and often at the same time, and I was even tempted to write all their speech down as one person called Derekanray Shulman but unfortunately quotes like "Ray was still at school" could introduce elements of schizophrenia. Our two heroes finally spilled the beans on Giant's pre-history after years of trying to forget they were ever called Simon Dupree and The Big Sound. Amongst other things it gives an interesting insight into the machinations of the pop business in the sixties:

ZZ: Where does the saga begin?
RS: Derek and our other brother Phil were born in Glasgow . . . in the Gorbals. They moved down when Derek was a very small little boy to Portsmouth, 'cos it's much nicer there and it's by the sea and the Gorbals was 'orrible. Daddy got posted there in the war.
ZZ: And what was daddy's occupation?
RS: Musician . . . he was a jazz trumpeter. I was born in Portsmouth . . . we were raised in a terraced house in Eastney Road, Southsea. Working class–father out every night doing gigs and working during the day as a sales rep. He gave music lessons as well so the house was always full of musicians and middle-aged drop-outs.
ZZ: Were you influenced by your environment?
RS: I must have been really–house full of musicians and instruments . . . I started learning trumpet when I was five just because it was there and then took up violin when I was seven. We were made to practice for an hour a day at least, when we really wanted to go out and play. I suppose it was a good thing we were really, and eventually I wanted to do it anyway . . . I wasn't formally taught at all. I liked music and singing and dad bought me an electric guitar when I was ten . . . . The first group we had was me strumming the violin, Derek on his Vox Shadow Guitar . . . £20 . . . through the radiogram.
DS: Fourth year school friends, a cakestand as a cymbal and pots as drums . . . I was sixteen and Ray was thirteen . . . . We went through all the traumas–somebody's got to leave the band–the drummer's not good enough–a school friend–how can I tell him he's out of the band?–all in our front room! . . . . Our first semi-pro band was called The Howling Wolves.
ZZ: What kind of music?
RS: R&B of course. The Stones were IT then. We did about a gig a month and then we started getting gigs at schools and things. We just had a couple of amplifiers–no PA. We

GENTLE GIANT. L-R: Kerry Minnear, John Wethers, Derek Shulman, Ray Shulman, Gary Green.

thought we'd be venturesome and get a manager so we asked our brother Phil . . . . And a van as well—a manager and a van. The first priority was a van but we couldn't afford the £25 so we asked Phil to be our manager. He was at teacher training college at the time and he got us a gig there for £18 which at the time we couldn't believe . . . . After that we thought he was a great manager and he also bought the van. The band developed into 'The Road Runners' and got more gigs and we decided we needed an organist . . . and soon we had an amplifier each and Ray Feast had a Fender Strat. That was it—a ***Fender guitar***! . . . I couldn't believe it. We decided that to get an authentic R&B sound we needed a horn in the band so we said to Phil, "Can you blow a sax and play it?" and he said OK and bought a sax . . . It was an Adolph Sax silver saxophone wasn't it . . . .

DS: He learnt to play it and started doing some numbers with us. We were doing Johnny Rivers and Howlin' Wolf stuff and we decided that now that Phil was in the band he couldn't really manage us but we'd heard of a guy who was managing another band in Portsmouth and getting them gigs in Southampton! We figured he must be good so we asked him to manage us and he said, "Okay, but you've got to change your name to Simon Dupree and The Big Sound". So we said OK, although it sounded a bit duff. He wasn't very good so our brother-in-law, John King, who was a producer at the BBC started managing us. We were getting about five or six gigs a month at twenty or twenty-five quid which wasn't proving very satisfactory. We were still at school but we were really quite big round the south and Portsmouth. John took us down to Bristol to do a demo and said it was to get a recording contract and we thought, "Fxxk, a recording contract!" We did a number (in mono, I think) called 'I See The Light' which we had in the act—it was a number by the Five Americans and we rearranged it for our show. John took the tape to EMI and they asked us to come up and do an audition so we played like an hour's set in front of these three producers. It was ridiculous, really embarrassing. Anyway the outcome was they signed us for five years. In those days a record contract really meant something.

ZZ: Did you get an advance?

DS: There were no such things in those days—to get a record contract was unbelievable. We went to Arthur Howes Agency and said we'd got a recording contract with EMI and they took us on. There was this bullshit story in the papers saying we'd signed for a quarter of a million pounds or something. They got us a package tour with The Beach Boys and Helen Shapiro.

RS: That was amazing. The first gig we did on that kind of circuit was the ABC Blackpool and we'd been used to playing clubs with 400 people and suddenly we were thrust into this seemingly enormous place with 2,000 people. We recorded 'I See The Light' as a single and it made 45 in the charts. Radio Caroline and Radio London played us a lot.

DS: I'd just finished school and we started playing all round the country—five or six nights a week. Ray was still at school, and Phil was teaching. Eric, my schoolfriend on keyboards had also just left school and we realised that we were earning thirty quid a week each from gigs alone so we turned pro in 1966-67. And then for two years we did the clubs and ballroom circuit and built up a name for ourselves. We put out 'Reservations' which got to number thirty and 'Daytime Nighttime' which didn't do quite so well . . .

RS: We were getting something like £300 a night which was good money in those days and we got around with one van, one roadie and very little gear.

DS: We asked John to find us a hit single because writing your own material was almost unheard of then and he went to Robbins Music and got a song called 'Kites' which we said was utter shxt. We said "No thanks, we're not gonna record it—we're a rock band. Forget it." He said, "Play it for me," and we just fxxked it up deliberately and he walked out in disgust and said "You've got to record it or else I'm not your manager," so we said OK we'd record it. We recorded it under duress in 2½ hours, did Top Of The Pops and went off to tour Sweden. We came back and a secretary from the office came up and said that it was straight in the charts at number twenty-one. We couldn't believe that it had made it (***a ballad***) instead of the others. It got to about number five, we did some more package tours, not through any choice of our own we started getting very pop orientated.

RS: Unfortunately we listened to other people's opinions and we weren't strong-willed enough at the time to control our own future. We had a glamour image with frilly shirts and suits. The irony of it was that we were doing what we wanted on our own circuit before the hit single and the gig money didn't go up that much after that anyway. We were getting maybe fifty or a hundred more but that's all. We were a sweaty rock band really and suddenly we had this stupid ballad type image.

DS: We started doing cabaret and that was the final crunch. We did a couple of weeks and then said, "Right, that's it, let's break the band up". Stockton Fiesta clinched it and at the next gig at Bath we told the band "We're breaking up tonight"—which was a fair shock.

RS: We just announced to the band it was the last gig and they said "What are you talking about, we're doing well" and we said we couldn't do it any more. It was utter crap and we had no respect for each other musically—that was the thing.

ZZ: Couldn't you have just left the band?

RS: Not really because we were into it too deeply and Derek was known by then as 'Simon Dupree'!

ZZ: Did you do interviews as Simon Dupree?

RS: Yeah sure, I used to get asked, "What's it like having a famous brother?" and things like that.

DS: I felt so false doing it, I was so embarrassed. I was told to say things by publicists who I thought knew better than me. Eventually I started blowing things out and saying the wrong things 'cos I was so fed up.

RS: We used to have these publicity stunts where like a snake would be delivered to a theatre where we were playing as a present from some 'Eastern fan' and ***it went missing!***

DS: Those sort of things got into the national newspapers and it was so embarrassing. It was even embarrassing at the time. The last year was so frustrating but we had to do it because we were feathering our nest for what turned out to be Gentle Giant. We broke up the band at the end of 1969 and we had enough money to rest for a year and find a new band.

EPISODE TWO: ENTER THE GIANT

ZZ: When did you decide to form Giant? Did you know what form it would take?

RS: Well, we knew we couldn't continue with the musicians we'd had before. We weren't interested in the other musicians in the band—they couldn't contribute anything. We had to teach them what to do. It got rather heavy when we could play drums better than the drummer, and even on records we were doing more and more of it with overdubs. It got stupid having a band like that.

The first thing was to get some musicians of a higher standard. It was a great bit of luck finding Kerry [Minnear] and he was the first person we contacted. He'd just come out of the Royal College of Music and then gone straight off to Germany with a band called Rust' He had a very bad time—he was conned. There was no money, no food and no gigs, and he had to stay there for four months, just to try and save enough to get back. He got his parents to repatriate him. We found him

a week after he got back, living in a bedsit in Clapham. We invited him down to Portsmouth for a blow and he brought down this guitarist he knew. We spent a week playing each others' compositions and we decided that Kerry was just the person we were looking for but the guitarist didn't fit in. We were a bit nervous about telling Kerry we didn't want the guitarist but it turned out all right because he was planning to ask us the same thing.

DS: We auditioned guitarists for about four months through ads in the Melody Maker, saying "Wanted—guitarist for band with recording contract, prospects etc".

ZZ: Did you have a recording contract then?

DS: No, but we'd had offers. Anyway we looked around for a guitarist and found Gary [Green] eventually. He was about the forty-fifth guitarist we'd auditioned and about the only one who asked to tune up before playing which encouraged us for a start. We asked him what sort of things he liked and he said Freddie King, B B King and Soft Machine and we said, "Oh well, can you play this?" and he played it straight away. He wasn't particularly into what we were doing but he wanted to get out of the blues thing and do something experimental. We didn't have any aims ourselves really—we just had a few compositions which we'd written that year.

By then we had the whole six-piece band so we went into rehearsal for about six months and then started recording the first album with Tony Visconti. We had a management deal with Gerry Bron and recording with Vertigo. It was 1970 and King Crimson were happening. Yes were just coming up and we were into the same sort of thing. The album didn't do very great shakes but it got our name known. We recorded the next album, ***Acquiring The Taste***, without any idea of what it would be like before we got into the studio. It was a very experimental album and we still didn't have an ultimate direction. It turned out surprisingly well but it was definitely our weirdest. Tony was taking a backseat by then—he was well into it but we'd taken over most of the production. Phil and Martin the drummer weren't getting on too well so Martin left and we got Malcolm Mortimore in on drums. We left Gerry Bron because he wasn't into what we were doing and we agreed to split amicably.

RS: We released the ***Three Friends*** album and when we toured Europe with Jethro Tull we established ourselves in our own right. We did very well in Italy, Germany and Switzerland and we followed that up immediately with our own tours in those places. Then we were due to tour Britain with the Groundhogs and Malcolm had a motorcycle accident so we got John Wethers in at a week's notice. We knew he was a good drummer 'cos we'd met him before but we didn't know what he was into. We took him anyway and he changed the band quite a lot, 'cos he was very laid down, solid offbeat sort of thing, whereas the previous drummers were quite fiddly and it shaped us into a solid unit.

DS: We toured the States and then came back to record the ***Octopus*** album which was quite a success especially in the States. Relations between Phil and the rest of the band had been deteriorating for a while and when we went to Italy we decided he must go and to keep it as a five piece.

RS: With ***Octopus*** doing well in the States we went out there and did a very good tour and although we were doing well we weren't feeling too good with all the business about Phil and we rushed back and recorded ***In A Glasshouse***.

DS: We haven't done much this last year because of managerial reorganisation but we did do the tour of Britain in March. We tried to get a more spontaneous feel with the current album, ***Power And The Glory***, by doing it all on first or second takes. It's done very well in the States—in the charts, but here twenty thousand copies were leaked before the release date so it hasn't had the same impact.

Days after we had this interview, Derek was told that he had to rest because of a stomach ulcer and Giant's British tour was shelved. At the same time they switched management to Chrysalis. No new plans for England have yet been made.

EPISODE THREE: GARY BLUE PLAYS THE GREENS

Suddenly with the help of modern science, we beam down to the BBC for a chat with the other members of the band—their hopes, their fears and their pre-history as well. First in the chair is Gary Green with a bunged-up nose:

ZZ: Take it from the top.

GG: I was born in Stroud Green, November 20, 1950. It was quite amazing actually 'cos like fourteen years later I formed a band at school and there was another guy in the band called Austin Bigg and he was born on the same day as me. I went home and told my mum about it and she said, "Austin, that's a strange name. The only other little boy I remember called Austin was a boy born in the next bed to you," and sure enough it was this geezer—bedmates almost.

I grew up in Tufnell Park, North London, and went to a mixed primary school Then we moved, dad got another job, selling jewellery, and we moved out to Essex and I started to work as a messenger boy for a commercial art studio under the guise that they would teach me the tricks of the trade. I was doing like about four hours commuting a day for about a fiver a week so I gave that up and became a messenger for Drake Personnel and other boring jobs. Finally I ended up in the Co-op at Brentwood and I got so down and depressed that I started answering adverts in the Melody Maker. There were millions of auditions and then I went to one at The Pied Bull in Islington—I walked in and it was this team you know, loads of equipment and 'Simon Dupree And The Big Sound' on the bass drum and I thought, "Aargh, what am I doing?" I wasn't into SD&TBS at all, I thought they were a soul band and I was into blues and all that—but it turned out it wasn't them—they'd changed! It wasn't even a box advert—it was just like a normal ad: "Guitarist wanted to play with name musicians" so I went along, got the job, I was surprised.

ZZ: Wasn't it a bit odd playing Giant music after the blues?

GG: No, not really 'cos I'd like played the blues with the kids at school at lunchtimes and developed an interest in it from there. I kept playing the guitar, and didn't break away from the blues, but I started to lean towards jazz 'cos my dad's a jazz freak and my brother's got millions of jazz albums by Duke Ellington and everyone.

ZZ: Did you play with any other bands before Giant?

GG: Yes, semi-pro. I formed a group at school, oh dear, dare I say it, called The In Sect. Then we changed it to The Outcry—same line-up, same tunes . . . . Then after that, there was a friend of my brother's who was reputedly a friend of John Mayall's and he managed to get a residency at this place called New Merlin's Cave in Mount Pleasant and we called the band Kokomo Phoenix. There was me other brother on drums, this bloke John Hawkins and a bass player called Dan. It was quite a good band really—Peter Green came down to listen to us, Duster Bennett was doing spots with us and then a band called Fish Hook came down to the place to do a couple of weeks and they asked me to join. I joined them and that was like my first proper semi-pro band. Good band that was. Shame nobody ever heard us—real stomping band. Nicky Connell on guitar, Des Fisher—we used to rehearse in his dad's plastic extruding factory up in Loughton. We did a few local gigs round Essex—I think the furthest we went was Bridgend which was like a day out—packed sandwiches—really good.

I left school at fifteen. We had a ludicrous choice at school We had to choose between woodwork, art, and music—you could only do one of them. I went to the woodwork class and that was full up so I went to the music class and that was full up, so I did art and I failed that . . . .

ZZ: Did it take long to shape up a direction in Giant's music?

GG: Relatively quickly, strangely enough, because most of the material was already written or partly written and we spent quite a few months just rehearsing in Portsmouth. It started off being a very experimental band. I mean we didn't really care too much about whether the audience was going to like us or not. I wanted to get away from blues and to lay down the sort of expression I was putting into blues into another sort of music. That's what I believe Derek and Ray were feeling 'cos they'd just come out of a pop group and they must have been pretty frustrated. Kerry was fresh out of the Academy brimming with ideas and with the new toy of a ready made group at his fingertips—raring to go. After a couple of years we found our pattern—I suppose anyone does really. I couldn't put my finger on it exactly but I suppose it's down to arrangement, that's our trademark really.

EPISODE FOUR: KERRY ON PLAYING THE CLASSICS

Kerry Minnear comes from the West Country and plays lots of instruments. According to Brillo, he is also the first person in ten years to have come out of the Royal Academy with a degree in composition.

KM: I was born in Salisbury and then moved to Gloucester. I went to two schools—my mother taught at the first and my father taught at the second so I felt very much at home at school, if you see what I mean. It was a bit tough 'cos they had to overact the impartiality bit. When we moved to Bath I had three interviews after the eleven plus to decide if I should go to grammar school or secondary modern 'cos I was right on the borderline. They decided "All right he's keen, he's turned up to all three interviews—he can go the grammar school," which was a pretty bad move really 'cos it was a tough place but I found refuge playing tymps in the school orchestra.

I was seven when I started playing the piano. My parents had it all arranged—they said 'We've got a teacher for you" so I did my da-da-da, da-da-da and so on and then I did it with the left hand when I was about fourteen and then . . . . No really about five years elapsed and meanwhile I was just singing (I used to sing a bit before my voice broke), my dad was a tenor and we used to sing duets. I think it was sixteen before anything drastic happened. I had to take an extra O level because of this thing of taking and passing so many O levels so you could go on to the sixth form, so I had to take up music to make up the number and I liked it—I really enjoyed it. I was always interested in music but the O level made me realise that I wanted to listen to classical music, learn it, write it, and then I went on to take the A level. I applied for positions in various universities to read music and I got some offers but I favoured the Royal Academy of Music above the others just because of the name I suppose to be quite honest. I was told that composition should be my first concern so I became a composer at the RA for three years and got my degree and ventured forth on this rugged trail.

When I was at school I had a group—I started as a drummer and then progressed to guitarist because I was the only one who knew the chords to 'She Loves You'. While I was at the Academy I didn't pay much attention to pop although I was aware of it and I only went to see two groups—one was King Crimson in their early days and the other was Yes in their early days and I was impressed by both. I was impressed with the noise for one thing. I was quite interested in jazz—I used to go to Ronnie Scott's about once a year which was pretty good for me 'cos it was rather expensive. I thought I'd probably teach when I left the Academy and write in my spare time but I fancied trying a group first. I joined a group called Rust and ended up stuck in Germany with no money, no food—I've never been so near to starvation—living literally on rice and goulash. I was recovering from that when the boys contacted me through a mutual friend and I joined the band in 1970.

ZZ: Was the group anything like you expected?

KM: Well anything was an improvement on what I'd just experienced quite honestly. We do things on a very sound basis. Meagre though it may be we never go without. At the time it was an offer of £20 which was pretty good. My opinion of the band has always been that there aren't many bands I would rather have been in at that stage and definitely no other band now. I hope I keep a grasp on classical music 'cos I'm very fond of it—I wouldn't like to get to the stage where I just enjoyed it and couldn't construct anything vaguely like it, if you see what I mean, but obviously at the moment one can't 'cos I'm in a rock band working with rock instruments and even though you can try and write classically influenced material it's not going to sound great on electric instruments. It's obviously not practical to write classical music in terms of rock instruments but the influence is bound to be there. I don't consciously write in a classical vein any more but I hope that the will to do so remains.

ZZ: Did you find it easy moving from classical composition to writing rock material?

KM: It took about three years to get the idea. It wasn't until ***Octopus*** when John [Wethers] arrived that I really woke up to it 'cos he offered a different type of drumming to anything I'd heard before or taken any notice of before and it brought me round to the fact that we really are a rock band and we can rock as much as an out-and-out rock'n' roll band and obviously it was something they never taught at the Academy so I didn't know about it.

Kerry Minnear (far right) with The Phantoms.

ZZ: Did you find the Academy starchy?

KM: It wasn't a great social place—the food was cheap in the canteen but there wasn't any other reason to stay there outside lessons. On the whole they were very friendly people but the competition is rather high in a place like that—especially in the more common instruments like violin and piano you get a lot of cattiness and a lot of drug taking before exams and people collapsing and leaving, and tears in the corridor and stuff like that—quite amusing really.

EPISODE FIVE: WETHERS FINE

John Wethers is not only a drummer—he is also a piece of living history as important in his own way as the Elgin Marbles or the Petrified Forest. He's played with many a legendary band, lived life to excess and tells a mean story too. I cannot vouch for the height or otherwise of the following dialogue but at least it's colourful. It might even be true . . . .

JW: I was born in Carmarthen, South Wales—main interests, motor cycles and punchin' people up, dances—that's where I got interested in music in fact. I used to go and watch people like Gene Vincent, Duffy Power, The Outlaws and Jerry Lee Lewis. We used to have a big dance hall about fifteen miles away and every Saturday there was a big rock group—they had a lot of American rock acts come over. I also spent a lot of time living in Liverpool with some in-laws just when the Beatles were sort of exploding. In fact the first job I got playing was because all the local groups were very keen on having me 'cos I could play the 'Mersey beat' as it were.

ZZ: But what about your pre-teen history?

JW: I just told you—drinking and fighting. We were well into drinking when we were eleven or twelve. I wasn't very interested in education at all—bit of a rebel. I kept sneaking off from school all the time.

ZZ: And what did you do when you were five years old?

JW: Ah well, when I was five I was taking away and driving other people's lorries. No, I learnt to drive at a very early age, about six, six and a half. There used to be this old wrecked tin works place where I lived and there were loads of old lorries there that were still running but quite sort of delapidated and all the kids used to drive them around and play bumpers. It was very exciting. And looking for rats, fishing—only a bit of fishing, I wasn't too keen on that, it was a bit too quiet for me. Rugby, I was quite keen on that. Nothing much else—Dinky Toys. I was very fortunate—my mother used to clean a pub at the time and the owners were quite well off and the two sons of the pub misbehaved quite a lot and whenever they misbehaved their mother would take their Dinky Toys and give them to my mother in a fit of rage and say, "Take them to your son, he's a much better child," and consequently I had millions of Dinky Toys and never paid anything for them. My mother used to come home with about two or three a week. Anyhow, that's up to sixteen. The first group I was in we turned pro, stupidly, when we were getting about three bookings a week at fourteen guineas a time. We started getting a few gigs in England. That was a major task that was: Torquay was a three day job—took a day just getting up to Cardiff, stopping at every pub on the way. That petered out after about a month of starvation, so I got a job as a timekeeper and then as a labourer when I realised that the guys I was clocking in were getting three times as much as me. Then I was going to be a male nurse, mainly because we were working on a hospital and I could see all the pussy rushing back and forth and I thought, "Christ, there's not many men and the only male nurses we ran up against were all queer," so I thought "It's all there for me. All I've gotta do is become a male nurse and get laid every night."

The biggest local group at the time was Eyes Of Blue and their drummer quit so they asked me to fill in. It became a permanent thing so I never made the male nurse thing although I passed the exams. I was in Eyes Of Blue from 1965 to 1970. We won the Melody

Maker Beat competition in 1966—I've still got the cup—that was the worst thing we ever did, we were a good group and *that* was the kiss of death. Rick Gunnell was doing agency at the time, dear Mr Gunnell, and that was the first time we ran across being conned. A couple of times we did gigs (billed of course as 'Winner of MM 1966 Beat Competition') and the blokes said "Shall we pay you now or send it to the office?" and we said, "Oh, piss up! We'll take it now," and we thought it was sixty quid and the guy would come up with a hundred quid and say, "There you go, there's the money," and we'd say, "No, it's not a hundred quid, it's sixty quid," and he'd whip out his contract and there it would be, a hundred quid, and we'd whip out ours and there it would be—sixty quid plus were were paying him 10% of the sixty on ours! We just drifted into oblivion eventually and I joined Pete Brown in Piblokto Mark III for a while.

ZZ: What was Eyes Of Blue like?

JW: All kinds. We started off as a soul band playing all-American stuff, which was very progressive at the time. Skinheads with suits and stuff—that was during the mod era. Everybody else was playing R&B at the time. Then we went on to play West Coast stuff and then we started to write our own stuff. We had a terrible rat who was ripping us off, he was quite famous, but I shouldn't mention him. We were the roadies of Britain's collective favourite group. We used to pack the Speakeasy with roadies—it was great it was. We were just a group of piss artists—how we survived I'll never know. It would be really an occasion if we got to the gig. If we got to the gig that was great, set the gear up and go and get pissed just to celebrate the whole thing—we didn't make any money.

I joined Wild Turkey for a bit but I left before they made the stage, and joined Graham Bond's Magic. I starved more than ever with Graham—it was weird. We used to go on gigs, get paid twenty quid and come back short. I'd spend the five quid I'd taken for expenses plus the twenty quid I'd got paid and come back penniless. Happy mind but penniless. Graham knew all these old tenor players I'd never heard of. Eventually it used to be me, Graham and his wife travelling in one car and anybody who fancied coming along for a blow in the other.

Then I joined the last six or eight months of The Greaseband. It pulled me together—I was quite a prat before that, I wasn't a very nice person to know. I'm not much better now but it did improve my demeanour a bit because I thought I was playing great when I wasn't you see, and they soon told me I wasn't. We did one tour of Europe with Leon Russell which was quite amazing because Henry [McCulloch] was going through it then. He eventually managed to break his hand. He went out drinking one night and they had all these old English songs on the speaker system like 'Roll Out The Barrel' and stuff, and after five or six litres of this gear we started singing them, you see, and all these Swedes started getting a bit uptight so we told them to piss off and this guy pinched the hat I wearing 'cos I was very conscious about my forthcoming baldness and Henry turned round and smacked him in the mouth and so a great fight ensued with all these Swedes piling in. I just sat down, I couldn't believe it—I'm a bit of a pacifist really. I was holding this guy, mind! He broke a couple of fingers then, but he made a good job of it later when he hit somebody else. We weren't playing well that tour, but the last couple of gigs we did were at the Rainbow in London and they were really great. All it did was cool my head a bit 'cos they were so wild—they were really desperate characters—great musicians to a man, all of them, and I wasn't ready to meet people like that. I wasn't anywhere near good enough to even talk to them and they just cooled my head out completely. Meeting people like that and them being so wild, I went away thinking how fortunate I was to be less wild than them but how unfortunate not to be able to play like them. So I went back to work just to get my head together—carrying carpets. Then I joined this lot. I'd known them in Simon Dupree days and they gave me a ring.

ZZ: How did you find it—joining an 'arranged music' band?

JW: Well you see, towards the end, Eyes Of Blue was a very arranged band so I was used to doing that but also I liked playing rock music—I liked playing both. Four to the bar is great if it can be complemented with arrangements and little fancy bits. I mean you hear some great players about—Bill Bruford and such—but they don't seem to hold it down. That's why they got me in 'cos I could hold it down and play arrangements as well.

ZZ: Is this the band you want it to be?

JW: I think so. I think if you're completely happy with what's going on you get into a terrible rut. It's only minor things the same as any other band. You're always improving—it goes on and on but I'm completely happy. They can rock these boys, you know.

☐ **PAUL WEIR**

DISSECTING THE COW (A COMPLETE HISTORY OF HENRY COW)

I was wondering how to introduce the following article and interview with Henry Cow; obviously their LPs needed a mention and brief discussion (ie tabulation of my own highly biased opinions) and a few personal reminiscences could be introduced, but how to start it, that was the real problem. Then fortune smiled on your perplexed reporter, passing his beady eyes over his hot-from-the press copy of *ZigZag* 45 he happened to chance upon the ZigZag poll results, and there at number two in the "zz band uk" section was . . . Henry Cow! What a good point to mention in the introductory paragraph—OK it's been mentioned; now on . . . .

My love of Henry Cow developed slowly; the first time I saw them (discounting the time I ran into them playing as a theatre band for a dubiously avant garde production of a rock *Bacchae*) I was quite sure I didn't want to see them again, this odd band that would stop and re-start numbers that went wrong. I thought their music was ludicrously self-indulgent and rambling. However as luck would have it, they periodically turned up on the bill of concerts headlined by, or featuring, people I really wanted to see. Gradually I found all my prejudices against the combo being chipped away; whether this was because they were actually improving or because I was becoming more accustomed to their music I can't rightly say, but I should imagine that it was a combination of both. Before too long I found myself taking positive steps to see the band and thus awaited their debut LP.

Henry Cow 1 was a Cambridge-based group that eventually emerged as the brainchild of Fred Frith, and Tim Hodgkinson. Fred Frith describes how it raised its head in October 1968:

FF: Tim and I were brought together by a bloke called Roger Bacon who ran a dance group we both played in (I played violin and he played alto), and we used to play neo-Hiroshima style music (?) while everybody lurched about. I met a lot of other people at the same time and I in fact did one gig with a group that consisted of Andy Powell playing bass and Dave Attwood on drums, that was called The Nasty; we did one gig. Subsequent to that, Tim and I, and a friend of Dave's called Rob Brooks (who's a rugby player from Sheen) on rhythm guitar, played together. Joss Graham did the first gig on bass but the entire Pink Floyd came into the room and started shouting at him because he was out of tune so we sacked him. In fact it was Andy Powell who was egging them on to boo, you see, because he wanted the bass-playing job, which he subsequently got. We were all from Cambridge except Rob, he'd come up from London and was still at school at the time I think. He wasn't from the university, but everybody else was.

Both Fred and Tim came from different musical backgrounds, Fred came from a history of R&B groups at school and later solo folk club work between 1967 and 1969, Tim had come from a Free-Jazz Poetry and Happenings group, so what kind of music was this early group playing?

Tim Hodgkinson (TH): Well, we used to do lots of numbers, mostly things like 'Rock Me Baby'.

FF: We did Bessie Smith's 'Judge Judge', we also did a Coltrane number, I can't remember which one. It was a very straight bluesy thing, I used to play a bit of piano in this.

TH: We used to do a sort of improvisation number as well.

FF: 'Amnesia'. That was a good number. It consisted of the same chord of D major for about an hour.

TH: We had these very loud piercing sounds and the occasional odd bits of sax playing that linked up numbers, and strange "relevant" things happened.

FF: At the end of each tour and in the breaks we were doing silly things, like having people shaving, or alarm clocks, things like that.

TH: This struck us as amusing at the time!

And this led into Henry Cow 2:

FF: Henry Cow 2 was very important. Andy, Tim and I split off from the others under Andy's very strong influence. He was a music student at Kings College at the time and very much under the wing of people like Roger Smalley, who was the resident composer, and also the Soft Machine who he knew vaguely, and he turned us on to odd rhythms and all that Soft Machine thing about the same time as Soft Machine were doing it in fact. He played drums, very badly—I'm sure he'd be the first to admit that, because he's primarily a bass and keyboards player. That was a very important period for lurching us very rapidly into the future.

TH: He had the idea of actually writing pieces of music for a rock group to play. It wasn't so much the fact that they were written down in blobs or lines, but in the conceiving of quite long structures which were musically interesting.

FF: He had lots of energy, he really pulled us on. It was at that time we formulated the approach whereby we started to write music that we couldn't play and used it to teach us to play instruments. Andy and I forced Tim to play an organ. We bought him an organ, sat him behind it and forced him to start playing it. It was quite a long time before it was bearable to listen to. What with Andy drumming and me playing bass it was quite a momentous grouping!

TH: People actually quite liked it at some of the gigs; but we were very small on gigs.

FF: We were only doing gigs that came up on the university calendar, which I can number on the fingers of two hands. There were the May Balls, the Architects' Ball in December, and any private parties we could get. And the occasional odd gig, like we played on the roof of a 14-storey building in Cambridge; that was one of the last gigs in the first group. And we did the Midsummer Common Festival. Not many gigs.

Eventually Andy left the trio . . . .

TH: Andy, he was very interesting, but impossible to work with.

FF: He was also getting more involved in the Roger Smalley scene and he went from us into Intermodulation, Roger Smalley's group, before he went on to Come To The Edge. Now, he's arranging for Cockney Rebel.

TH: After Andy left there was quite a long gap.

FF: About six months, if not more, in which time Tim and I seriously contemplated working as a duo.

It was then that John Greaves (bass) (JG) joined Cow.

FF: It took us several months to get John along to rehearsals because we wanted him to join but he was very reluctant.

JG: The only thing I'd ever done before was play in my old man's band, a dance band. I didn't attend rehearsals with Henry Cow very often; I was into drinking a lot at the time.

FF: It's true! He'd come in and say, "I can't make rehearsals tonight, I'm going out drinking"! I remember it well, times have changed. I think it was about our most uncompromising period actually, some of the things we were doing on stage must have sounded really terrible. It was certainly the only time we've ever been physically booed off—no, it's not actually true, is it?—there's been four or five times over the years. But I particularly remember this time when we were a trio; it was at a dance, a hop, we were the top attraction and we were playing a lot of free-sounding stuff. We weren't even playing well, we were playing pretty badly. It was not a very pleasant experience, certainly a lot less palatable than anything we've done since.

When John joined the band they were playing without a drummer, this was simply because they couldn't find one who could play the music although they auditioned many. Several people played with the band temporarily: Frank Perry who was living in Cambridge at that time was one, another was Ashley Brown who has since played straight jazz gigs with Fred Frith. The first

Fred Frith

drummer they took on a permanent basis was Sean Jenkins who John knew from a group called the Elastic Band (which also contained Andy Scott who is now with Sweet). Sean Jenkins was a heavy drummer though, how did that fit in with Henry Cow's free jazz style?

TH: It was very good for us having been a three-piece group playing a lot of free-ish kind of music and launching that on top of this very heavy drummer in these peculiar times, well, almost peculiar times.
FF: He always managed to make a 7 and a 5 sound like a 3/4! It was magnificent!
JG: He handled it very well actually, we were doing some quite funky things.
FF: It was very good for you actually John, because the effect of not having a drummer on a bass player is that you have to play a lot and there was no time when you were able to lay back.
JG: I don't think it ever could have worked out though, Sean was into something very different. He was quite bewildered by it and had a sort of respect for it. He did the tapes for Peel, and the subsequent broadcast. We went down at a time when we were plying everybody with tapes and it was quite embarrassing. We were still students and didn't have a clear idea of what we were doing. I took a tape down to John Walters; I actually got into the BBC and saw his name on the door, so I knocked tentatively and handed a tape to him. It was only having done that that I noticed he was peering from behind this enormous mound of tapes, he could barely see me over the top. He shook his head and said, "Alright, leave it". But he phoned up a couple of weeks after and said, "I'm not saying that your tape is any good but it's better than the other crap I've got so we might as well give you a show; you've won the contest.'

Did Henry Cow know they'd entered John Peel's Rockortunity Knocks Contest?

FF: No. We never even knew it existed!
JG: So we went down and did this first broadcast from the old studios in Maida Vale which are converted drama studios; well they're not really converted yet, terribly old machinery, but it was the first thing we'd done. We were terrified; in fact he [John Walters] was very encouraging in his cynical, hard-bitten way.
FF: I don't think we could have survived without that Rockortunity Knocks, not in terms of the gigs it got us because it got us virtually none, but I think our name just started to mean a little bit more. You meet all kinds of people who heard it on the radio, and wouldn't have heard it any other way.

However, the unlikely combination of Sean Jenkins and Henry Cow eventually came to an end. But Fred Frith used to do some jazz gigs with Ian Hamlett and Roger Odell from CMU who introduced him to Steve Cook (bassist with Barbara Thompson). He'd just played with Martin Ditcham who he said was good, but not working at that time. Fred rang Martin and he joined only two weeks after Sean Jenkins had left.

FF: He stayed with us the whole summer, and we did the Glastonbury Fayre and a lot of other gigs down in that part of the world. It was a very enjoyable time. He was a very good drummer. He had a very odd set-up; he was left-handed and left-footed and had all his kit round the wrong way, as a result he had some quite odd techniques. He left us to join Nucleus. Roy Babbington got him into the band after he'd been down to the Barry School. He left his job and then he left us just as we were on the verge of becoming better known. I imagine it was a very good professional experience for him, but he's had almost nothing to do since. He was only with them six months.

So Martin left the band at the end of the summer, and by the time Henry Cow played with the Velvet Underground in November Chris Cutler was gigging with them. How did he come into contact with Cow?

CC: Well, I put lots of adverts in the ***Melody Maker*** over a period of about nine months and got a lot of replies and I went to see a lot of groups. I guess that was it, they must have seen this peculiarly worded ad.

So Henry Cow answered the ad in ***Melody Maker*** for a prospective musician?

TH: If you'd have seen the ad you would have answered it.
FF: It said "A Wyatt, Varese peculiar . . . ." It didn't say anything like "Busks" or "Seven nights a week" . . . .
TH: Or "Needs transport. Lives at Epping"!
JG: So that's how we got in contact, and we invited him along to a rehearsal. He kept referring to our music as "row" which was very endearing!
FF: When I first heard him I thought I'd never seen such an incompetent drummer! He was really into "style".
TH: He'd not quite hit the drum.
FF: That's a thing he's developed to a very fine art now, where you use your wrists all the time but you only actually hit the drum about once in every ten strokes. But he was doing that in a very flamboyant manner in those days.

What background did Chris come from?

CC: Long and varied. I started off playing Shadows-style instrumentals, through rhythm'n'blues and all that stuff. Then about 1966, I settled in a group called Louise who were like Barrett's Pink Floyd a bit; a lot of songs and a lot of improvised electronic row. I was with that group for about three and a bit years until it collapsed. We weren't very successful but we played in the London psychedelic clubs and so forth. Then once I was out of work I started looking for another band and I didn't find one for well over a year. I wasn't going to waste any time, and I wasn't going to do something I wasn't certain I wanted to do. So it just went on and on, and I wasn't doing anything. I got the Ottawa Company together at that time though, which included Egg and Khan and various people. It was a huge twenty-four piece ensemble of musicians who only did about seven gigs in all. The idea of it was that a pool of musicians existed to play music that was composed, ideally for them. There were about five composers I guess, and these were mostly composers who weren't in groups and whose music wasn't being heard at all, and who have subsequently just vanished. It's a great shame.

The next major step for Henry Cow was as the band for a rock musical version of ***The Bacchae*** by Euripides. I saw this show in Cambridge, and it was interesting but somehow failed. The overall effect was as if someone who didn't understand the media was trying to make a lot of money out of nudity and rock music. But how did Henry Cow become involved?

FF: The producer Rob Walker rang us up and said, "I hear you're a loud, heavy rock group".
TH: "We want a group with a hot, Dionysiac, Bacchic sound . . . ."
FF: He thought he was going to have a really heavy group because he wanted us to reinforce the role of Dionysius. He had such a caricature vision of what a rock group is. He didn't credit us with any kind of intelligence whatsoever, he just came and said, "Well, yeah, I'm going to have a lot of nudes about, it's going to be really great, you'll love it and I'm going to pay you a lot of money."
FF: One of the important things that happened in rehearsals was that we and the actors were moving the production away from the director all the time. We were working in very close co-operation with the actors. Many of the tunes were actually worked out with Dionysius, getting the words and getting the note lengths. It was very exciting for us. We tried to rescue Pentheus a bit because Pentheus, in this particular production, represented the opposite side to all that frenzy. In Euripides' play we didn't think it was all Dionysius; it was as much to do with balance

as anything. And we were trying to support him a lot more of the time than the producer would admit was necessary.
TH: I've been involved in earlier productions of ***The Bacchae***.
FF: We both had . . . but financially we were secure, as a result of that production, for the first time. Also it was the first time we'd had a sustained, really intense work period. We had to work incredibly hard on that production because there was so much trouble in it and the music was completely unlike anything we'd done before in the discipline that it involved. We were going up to Watford every day and hobbled back late at night. We all stayed after the actors had gone and continued playing into the night. Then we'd drive back, fall into bed, get up at nine o'clock the next morning, drive back to Watford and spend the day doing the thing. That was for two weeks and it really got us together.

And it was as a result of ***The Bacchae*** that Geoff Leigh joined the band to play tenor sax having once turned down an offer to join them.

FF: What actually happened was that the Ottawa Company, which we joined after we got in contact with Chris, did a series of three concerts. Geoff had been at college with Chris and he and Clive Bell both came and played some of our material. We were very impressed with Geoff's playing then and we asked him to join after the last Ottawa concert. He turned us down because he thought we were a lot of wankers. Then he came along to ***The Bacchae*** and was sufficiently knocked out to say "OK I'll join".

With the line-up complete Henry Cow then had a long formative period during which they worked extremely hard prior to their first album release.
FF: We were running a lot of our own gigs, we were running the Cabaret Voltaire and the Explorers' Club, and making comparative successes out of them. And we were playing with a lot of people who we still want to play with and who were important influences on us. Lol Coxhill used to play with us a lot in those days. Derek Bailey played with us a couple of times. The Shaw Theatre was quite an important gig for us because it was the one when Ian McDonald first wrote a glowing report on us. That was the first national press coverage of any note we'd ever had.
CC: For about a year and a half, or whatever it was, it was a deliberate policy decision to have nothing to do with the business, record companies, agencies, management or anything. It took us a long time to decide to actually look for a record company, because we wanted to make a record. Then we took the tapes round to about four companies: CBS was one of them.
FF: They'd just had a big shake-up and they thought they were going to drop the Soft Machine and start all over again with another group.
CC: And then there was Virgin.

The band's signing with Virgin brought the release of their first LP, ***The Legend Of Henry Cow*** (Virgin V2005) which lived up to all expectations. The music had a tight urgency, a result of the compression of material that makes at least some members of Henry Cow unhappy with the album, but which I find very appealing. There are moments that recall the ***Uncle Meat*** period Zappa, the work of Sun Ra and one or two other influences, but generally the music hurtles on in a distinctively unique and enjoyable manner.

Are Henry Cow happy with their album ***Legend Of Henry Cow*** in retrospect?

FF: Well, I haven't listened to it for about a year and at that time I thought it represented things rather than being something I would want to listen to. It was too dense if anything, we'd crammed too much into too little space.
TH: I always get the feeling of wishing things had been different, that we had got different sounds, or done things in different ways. The sound is very odd, very inappropriate in places.

To promote the band Virgin organised a tour for Cow with their stable-mates at that time, Faust.

FF: That was our first tour; Faust more or less did all the gigs. Peter Blegvad from Slapp Happy was with them when we first started and Ulli Trepte too—a great musician. Then the original two came back and then one of them went off to the dentist. It was all chaos from their point of view and most of the time they were horrendously bad. There were one or two occasions during the tour when for a brief period of time you got a glimpse of what they could be. Those times were really sad for me because I think their early recordings, and the ***Faust Tapes*** are terrific. Most of the songs they were performing were off the second album, a few off the fourth. Very loud and very unpleasant. They were into flexibility though, especially Jean Herv-Peron who's probably the most interesting of them as a performing musician, and there were moments on the tour when Geoff would go out there and start playing. One time he went out there towards the end of the Faust set and started playing with Jean-Herv Peron who was playing trumpet, then Tim came on, eventually we were all doing things on stage and it was really interesting for us.

Their next recording to be released was in fact one side of the Greasy Truckers ***Live At Dingwall s*** album (Greasy Trucker Records GT 4997). A whole side of free music that never becomes tedious. Even when working in free areas of music such as this Henry Cow are always cohesive, they always have a direction, shape or form. The side opens with a beautifully spaced solo piano piece, almost lost beneath crackle that predominates throughout my copy, and it progressed from there, fulfilling all the promise of the free music interludes on ***Legend***.

Why though had Henry Cow chosen to use their side of a 'sample' album to record free music?

FF: It was a question of time completely.
TH: It was time, and also the fact that we wanted to use the opportunity of what the Truckers record was, that it was going to be bought by a whole lot of people who wanted to listen to Global Village, Camel, Hawkwind, and Man; to put free music on that album particularly because a lot of people would buy that who have never exposed themselves to that sort of music.
FF: Judging by the sound, I think it's the best thing we've done, the sound quality is quite exceptional. We did it in a day whilst being filmed for French television. Our engineer was not at his most together, by the time we got round to mixing it in fact he was asleep! We had to mix it all, and we sort of prodded him and got him to look at it and make sure the levels were alright and he said "Yeah" (sleepily).

But why was it in fact recorded at the Manor and not at Dingwall's?

CC: By the time we got on it was ten minutes before we had to be out of the place.
FF: We'd been there since two o'clock in the afternoon, as required, to rehearse and we didn't get on to play until ten past two in the morning. We were in that bloody place, the most foul, obnoxious place I'd ever been to, for that length of time for no reward at all.
JG: Except we did a very good gig. A tremendous twenty-minute set.
FF: We had it on tape and they actually wanted to release it, they thought it was very funny. That audience wasn't typical of Dingwall s. We did another gig there after that when the audience was much more the standard audience who tend to be there not for the music; some people are there for the music and they have a bit of difficulty hearing it. The second time we were there the gig ended with Tim playing this very quiet thing on the piano, repeated for about twenty minutes with these people howling and drinking while the rest of us were setting

John Greaves

down the equipment. We recorded a version of what was then an incomplete part of John's piece off ***Unrest*** ('Half Asleep: Half Awake') at that session which we very nearly used on the album with Geoff playing the tune. Very punchy sound, completely different from the one released. We recorded an absolutely massive amount of material considering it was all done in one day. We did a number with the TV crew; we just turned everything on and they were jabbering away and setting things up in the studio, me and Chris just wandered down there and started hitting things. When we do free music we set up the studio so everything possible is miked up and we use ambience mikes and the whole thing is very open, which means you get a very good stereo from just moving about, you hear it all the time. We don't tamper with it, we don't mix it afterwards. Tom Newman [the engineer] thought one of the recordings we did that way which we nearly used on ***Unrest*** again, was the best stereo recording he'd ever heard.

Why did Geoff eventually leave the band?

FF: He left after we did a tiring tour of Holland which was rather mismanaged.
CC: I think it was a matter of temperament in the end. His temperament and the temperament of the rest of us became more and more dislocated over a long period and it was exacerbated by this whole pressure of work and commitment that followed on the recording, and the fact that we were no longer progressing at the rate we had been.
TH: He really likes very clear space around him, he really likes the street; right through his time with us he was busking. You can imagine someone like that being brought down all the time by this thing where the group had to discuss more and more commitments.
CC: His approach was slightly different to ours; he was rather more indiscriminate. His actual philosophic approach to playing is different. He'd play along with it, but he wouldn't often try to spontaneously compose, he'd try and construct architectures, pieces of music, as opposed to free blowing.
FF: The free music especially suffered in this way. That's why he's such a good session player. Almost all the stuff I've heard him do for other people I've really dug. Especially the stuff he's done for Slapp Happy.

When Geoff left the band, eventually to form his own band Radar Favourites just before Christmas 1973, he was replaced by Lindsay Cooper (bassoon, flute, oboe) who enrolled immediately after. Chris Cutler had known her a long time because Dave Stewart of Egg had known her when she was in Comus. Clive Bell (the flautist with Ritual Theatre) knew her too, from the time she played with them:

FF: The first time I saw her was when Chris and I went to see Ritual Theatre when Clive and Lindsay were both in it; it was at a new peak musically then. I've never liked what they've done theatrically at all. The music that night—I was really stunned by it and that was really what interested me in Lindsay. We contacted her when Geoff left.
CC: We contacted a lot of other people first. Initially we were going to carry on as a quartet, but as we had some gigs and we couldn't play any of our material, we eventually got in contact with Lindsay.
FF: She came round to my house and we played some very nice music—improvisation—then she came round again and we played some written stuff. Then she came to some gigs and we asked her to join.

Thus their third recording (and second album) saw Lindsay Cooper (bassoon, flute, oboe) replacing Geoff Leigh (tenor sax) to complete the line-up with Fred Frith (guitar, violin), John Greaves (bass, piano), Tim Hodgkinson (keyboards, alto sax, clarinet) and Chris Cutler (drums, piano). This album was ***Unrest*** (Virgin V2011) and it saw the band giving more space to the ideas found on ***Legend***. To compare the two albums is interesting. On ***Unrest*** the pieces tend to develop fully rather than cutting quickly from one musical axis to the next. With more space for development of ideas a more relaxed atmosphere evolves, less hectic, but still exploring textures and shapes; for example the bleak, punctuated opening of 'Ruins'. There's even one track, 'Bittern Storm Over Ulm', that is based on explorations of ideas found in O. Rasputin's (?) 'Got To Hurry' recorded by the Yardbirds. The sleeve bore a second incarnation of the wire sock (actually made from tube paint—look carefully) that distinctively adorned the cover of their first record. The main feature of Cow's music though, aside from its exploratory nature, has always been the balance and internal logic and structure that can turn on a knife-edge from free/free-sounding pieces to tight harmonies and unison runs, while continually maintaining an integral feeling of unity rather than eclecticism.

On 'Ruins' and 'Linguaphonie' they experimented with variable speed tapes, did they see this as becoming an integral part of the Cow recording technique?

FF: The first album's full of it. The guitar, in particular, on the first LP is often recorded at half speed. The harpsichord sound on that first album is speeded-up guitar. Lots of backwards tapes are used in 'Teenbeat'.
CC: It is true that on the second album we were more able to control, and so do more with, facilities that are strictly studio facilities. The whole of the second side of that album uses the studio as one of the parameters that we are now working within. By the end of recording that side our use of the studio had become very sophisticated. It's certainly an area that we'll continue to work in.
FF: That's one of the great things about the Manor; it's part of their policy to encourage musicians to learn how to use the equipment, whereas a lot of engineers wouldn't let a musician touch the equipment. We mixed the whole of the second side, a lot of the first album and all the Greasy Truckers' side.
CC: It's an interesting correlation between our free music as we perform it and what it's all about extended into the studio; it's almost an unexplored area. I can't think of anyone, except maybe Faust, who've really even made a start on putting these two concepts together with the techniques available in the studio, manipulating and changing it after the event.

Last August, however, there was dissatisfaction in the Cow camp, and eventually they decided to continue as a four-piece and Lindsay Cooper made an exit as unheralded at that time by the music press as her arrival had been.

JG: We wanted to continue as a quartet because we decided we'd wasted enough time and potential, and so there'd be no problem of being behind ourselves and taking stop-gap measures. We were going to stop and take time to do things as we wanted. Which is what we did, consolidating the band.
FF: Lindsay was behind as well. The only music that she ever got to play that was written for her was 'Ruins' on the last album. We never got past the stage where she was playing Geoff's parts, which was unfair on us and her.

Since quitting Cow, Lindsay has surfaced on several occasions. She was in the theatre band for ***The City***, the Tokyo Kid Brothers' moving rock musical for which she was also the musical director at London's Royal Court Theatre. She has also been working in various new jazz line-ups but no regular gig seems to have manifested itself for her although she appeared recently on the Hawkwind Roundhouse bill playing with Lol Coxhill and others in Lady June's Linguistic Leprosy. She also played on Comus' second album (***To Keep From Crying*** on Virgin V2018) and also appeared on the ***Desperate Straights*** Slapp Happy/Henry Cow album and the forthcoming Henry Cow/Slapp Happy album (perhaps a re-integration is at hand?)

There were other pressures at work on Henry Cow though.

Chris Cutler, Tim Hodgkinson

CC: I think you can look on signing with Virgin and making the first album as the beginning of a long period of not making much progress, of having to run very fast to stay in the same spot. Hundreds of problems suddenly arose, we never had time to do anything, we were always behind ourselves with basic commitments, we didn't have time anymore to write material, to work on material the way that we used to, to construct sets the way we used to. Everything got too hurried.

FF: Yes, I think our playing reached its high-spot at that period, about the time of the Rainbow concert with Faust and that was very early on in the Virgin thing. And since then we've really had a job to keep playing the same stuff on a par.

CC: So now we're starting to make time.

JG: And it takes us a long time to write. Obviously some bands can do it; they can do a lot of work, go out on the road and get material together. Our material takes us a lot of time to write.

FF: Probably because we've never had any musical training. Most of the people you find who are writing comparable big pieces of music are people who've had a very, very prolonged musical training. Your Emersons and Wakemans have masses of musical training. I have no respect whatsoever for what they do, but that's just an example of what I'm talking about. But that training eases it; I mean if you've got to teach yourself to write music as you're writing it, it does slow you up a bit.

TH: When I'm writing, I really don't like having a time schedule. It's terrible for me trying to fit in with commitments. I really like making music very dense, putting hours into seconds. I'm not necessarily saying that writing music slowly is a good thing, if I could write the same things fast I would. But so much rock music isn't dense, it's stretched.

FF: Before we got too busy we were always rewriting portions of the set and treating each gig as separate no matter whether it was a little gig or a big gig, and over the last year or so it's just got very difficult to do. Because you have no time to rehearse new material, and if you get all your material into a more or less optimum sort of order and way of playing, then you can't change it and that becomes very frustrating. I think that we may well end up where we work as if each gig is a whole project. Doing less gigs, but making sure that the gigs we do are really worked out. I think that is our most critical area. We got into the way of working as a rock group and as a result we suffered from it.

Fred Frith's solo album ***Guitar Solos*** (Virgin's cheap Caroline label, C1508) emerged at about this time and has the rare distinction of being a solo modernish guitar album that doesn't bore me to tears. From the cheery opening strains of 'Hello Music' the album thankfully avoids over-indulgence, there is the mind of a perceptive editor of material at work, a thing all too rare amongst our 'avant garde' rock musicians. Every track stands as it was recorded except two, one of which was recorded in two parts, the other of which had two notes removed. It was all improvised, either around loosely predetermined structures or completely spontaneously. Recorded in only four days the results are remarkable. 'No Birds' for example opens with a drone reminiscent of Fripp & Eno's ***No Pussyfooting*** and builds almost organically with a beautifully underplayed intensity. The tracks which are less developmental and sustain one or two moods are kept short and thus do not overrun, for example, the near classical acoustic sounding 'Hollow Music'. My personal favourite on this album is the magnificent 'Out Of Their Heads (on locoweed)' which builds up a melodic rhythmic pattern over which distorted guitar squalls—eventually mutating in a distortion of the original pattern. An album that is essential to any guitar-lovers' collection and one which you can keep coming back to on any terms.

FF: Because it's a Caroline record and I had a very small budget for it I had a very limited amount of time, which is a very positive thing for me. So I did it with no kind of technicality to it. It was all 'live' guitar solos with no overdubs at all; I just went into the studio, recorded an awful lot of stuff and chose some of it. I did it over a few days at the beginning of the summer holiday last year.

TH: A lot of it sounds like several guitars, I thought there were overdubs when I listened to it.

Possibly because of the uncompromisingly experimental nature of their music they have also in the past been labelled 'inaccessible' and 'difficult'. How did they feel about that?

JG: It is difficult. It's fxxking difficult to play as a matter of fact, and it's much more difficult to write.

TH: It's very demanding.

FF: When they talk about finding Henry Cow inaccessible it amazes me, it sounds as though they think you have to listen to Henry Cow at every available opportunity. A lot of times I don't want to listen to it, but sometimes I want to listen to it more than anything else; although it's different for me anyway. But then people aren't going to put it on if they don't want to listen to it.

TH: We're not asking people to listen to it if they don't want to.

FF: The impression a lot of these writers seem to give is that you have to listen to our music and no other, which is very silly . . . .

Henry Cow recently worked with Slapp Happy on their third album; during the course of recording, the two groups amalgamated and the album was released under the heading Slapp Happy/Henry Cow. The album, ***Desperate Straights*** (Virgin V2024) marks a new direction for both bands. The arrangements are far better suited to the songs than they were on Slapp Happy's first LP. Everywhere Henry Cow's playing is perfectly attuned to the compositions, from the tight attacking sound of 'Messiah' extract to the the thin delicate sounds of Fred Frith's guitar and Tim Hodgkinson's clarinet on 'In The Sickbay'. Probably the most Cow-esque track on the album is the instrumental 'Caucasian Lullaby', co-written by Anthony Moore of Slapp Happy and Chris Cutler . . . elsewhere it is Dagmar's pure precise voice that soars above the intricate arrangements. It must be one of my favourite album releases in a long while.

In February the amalgamated band returned to the Manor to record the Henry Cow/ Slapp Happy album due for May release, but what other nebulous plans were there in the air for the future?

CC: We're planning an ill-organised residency of a week of concerts, this is being run by us and Slapp Happy; it's like the Cabaret Voltaire and the Explorers' Club, it's back to things being organised by us. It's not a record company promotion or anything like that, it's entirely our affair. There'll be a lot of people in it—Robert [Wyatt], Lol, Derek [Bailey], Geoff's group. It will be casual, relaxed, free for all, anarchic, constructive, and progressive. It lasts six days and each night will be different. We'll probably do a tour with Slapp Happy. And we've just taken two months off, I think we're likely to continue to do that, or longer than that, more regularly too.

FF: And I'm writing this piece for lots and lots of people. Most of the people involved in it (about 99% of them) will be signed to Virgin because whatever positive or negative is said about Virgin they do seem to sign a lot of good people, and I offered to write a piece including as many of them as possible. The projected line-up I suppose I can't really say much about because a lot of them haven't been approached. Basically I intend it to consist of . . . well, Mike Oldfield's agreed to do it, Steve Hillage, Henry Cow and Lindsay as well, Dave Stewart, Robert [Wyatt] is taking a very important part in it, he's writing all the lyrics. Robert and Dagmar [from Slapp Happy] are going to be the chief vocalists, there's going to be five girl singers but Dagmar's going to be the lead singer. A huge rambling section of saxes, trumpets and trombones, including most of Spear, certainly Lol I hope. You name someone in Virgin and the chances are they'll end up in my piece somewhere if they're willing; even Edgar Froese, although I haven't asked him yet. It's going to be a thirty-piece ensemble. I'm looking for a suitable venue at the moment, the big venues aren't interested unfortunately. I've got to find the right place to put it; it needs a very big stage. It's going to be one piece of music but in two parts. There's not much point going into greater detail because I've not really figured out much more myself. But it's going to be interesting I hope. It's certainly going to be chaotic.

It seems like a return to the concepts that lay behind the Ottawa Music Company.

FF: That's very much at the back of my mind. The Ottawa Company was vastly important but has never been credited as such because the people involved in it hadn't got any status. One of the reasons I enjoyed doing ***Tubular Bells*** was that it brought together a lot of disparate people, which I think is a very positive thing that rock music has very seldom known. Centipede was a very positive thing but I felt it was let down because the structure and the music weren't enough, and it was all spirit. I gather, from what Robert has told me anyway that gigs abroad were absolutely fantastic because of the spirit. But the music,certainly on the record, I don't like. What Ottawa had was a viable unit of people who were writing music for each other to play outside of the kind of group/product/package way. All the people I use are involved in a group/product thing but I'm trying to sweep them out of it if you like, put them into a context where they're not having to do their product. I want to make it as little pompous as possible too because the big events like that tend to be very serious and I want to get away from that idea. I think that the whole thing will be a great triumph for shambling idiocy.

Do you think Virgin will record it?

FF: I would think that there's every chance, they're almost certain to.

☐ **KENNETH ANSELL**

☐ **All photographs Michael Dunn**

RECORDS

John Lennon
Rock'n'Roll
Apple PCS 7169

FIRST OFF, note the spelling. I've always known that it's not "rock and roll' or even "rockanroll", and I'm glad that our Mr Lennon agrees. It's also very pleasant to finally have confirmed the suspicion that above, beyond, beneath and even round the sides of all the primal screaming, the badly veiled McCartney baiting, the terrible excesses of New York, and the general rubbish quotient of all but the odd track on the last couple of albums, John Lennon remembers just what made him start all this. It's basically exactly the same thing that made any of the best of our wonderful world beating British musicians step onto the unmade, unsafe road to rock. That is, if they're approaching thirty or have already reached that unhallowed and terrible landmark. Certainly, I'm word perfect on all but one of the songs on Lennon's album, and I'd bet that young Frame is the same or better, and the same surely goes for a whole suitcase full of reviewers.

So it seems to me that there are several ways to look at this. If you're not old enough to have been totally overwhelmed by the Beatles, you'll probably think this is either a very strange and rather primitive record, or else a strange and rather amazing record. If you're specifically one of the Beatle generation, you'll likely shake your head and look forward to the next Wings LP, while a few will come to the over-intellectual conclusion that John is doing a bit of dues paying. Finally, my lot will either want the record because it has so many familiar songs from puberty and beyond, or not want it because the originals are better, and they already have them.

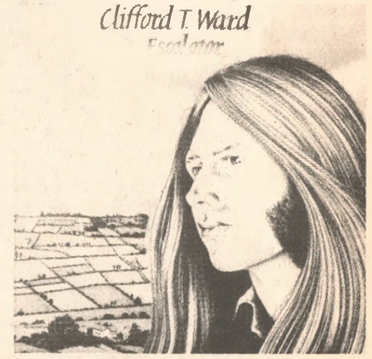
Had this been the latest excitement to issue from Sha Na Na, Fumble or any of the other R'n'R groups who generate such enthusiasm on stage, and totally fail to capture the doughnut when on record, we could dismiss it immediately, but it is John Lennon and Phil Spector, and while they must be teetering on the edge of nowheresville with some of the recent stuff which has had their names appended, this just might be the turning point. No heavy messages here, you see, just a big bundle of twelve bars, totally undemanding, and made expressly for the fun of it. If you go to see your favourite band perform a sound check, unless they happen to be of the Yes ilk, this is the kind of stuff they'll be playing. Music to check out your equipment with.

It is of course possible that some of these songs may not be familiar, so before the flash of inspiration which will end this epic, here's a layman's guide to the songs involved. 'Be Bop A Lula' was Gene Vincent's first and biggest hit in 1956. 'Stand By Me' is the token soul on side one, and was a hit for Ben E. King in the early sixties. 'Rip It Up'/'Are You Ready Teddy' is both sides of a Little Richard single from 1956, although the former was a bigger hit at the time in Britain by Bill Haley. 'You Can't Catch Me' is a late fifties Chuck Berry job that never did quite have the appeal of some of the other car songs. I'd have preferred either 'No Money Down', which has a very similar tune or 'Jaguar And The Thunderbird'. 'Ain't That A Shame' wasn't a hit for its writer, Fats Domino, but should have been. Instead, Pat Boone got the hit, as in a similar vein, did Cliff Richard's later version of Bobby Freeman's original 'Do You Want To Dance'. 'Sweet Little Sixteen' is just about due for one of Buck Cherry's tasteless re-workings. 'Slippin' And Slidin'' was done by both Little Richard, who wrote it, and by the posthumously prolific Buddy Holly. 'Peggy-Sue' was also by Buddy Holly, while 'Bring It On Home To Me' was great by Sam Cooke, but less so by the Animals. 'Send Me Some Lovin'' was also done by Cooke, but several years after Little Richard's original. 'Bony Moronie' was Larry Williams' biggest record in my estimation, although often equalled by other similar works like 'Short Fat Fanny' and 'Dizzy Miss Lizzie'. 'Ya Ya' is this side's token soul, originally by Lee Dorsey, although covered by Petula Clark, if my failing memory is not badly wrong, and 'Just Because' was not a great success by Lloyd Price, and is similar here.

And that's the point really—I wouldn't choose any of these in a straight contest with the original. Occasionally, Lennon changes it round a little, as in 'Do You Want To Dance', but he's only getting into the unfortunate 'Sabre Dance' trip, which a man of his experience should know is to be avoided. So to me it all comes out a bit like a 'Big Fred Scrudbucket Sings the Hits of the Rockin' Fifties', and the reason would seem to be that he didn't spend enough time on it. You certainly can improve on some of the originals here, like 'Ya Ya', perhaps, but only by a careful study of the shortcomings of the object you're copying. Often the backings used are not very good, perhaps remaining uncredited because the musicians weren't too proud of their work, and there's a definite feeling in my mind that a bunch of somewhat overloaded people, possibly including Captain Excess, H. Nilsson, put this lot together in rather too short a time, despite the sleeve dates.

Now, the only thing left for me to say is that I like it, and I suppose I do a bit, but I'm worried that there isn't a trace of Jerry Lee Lewis about it, or Lonnie Donegan, and only the merest hint of the Everly Brothers. Why not, Mr L? It's even money that those three had a greater impact on you than Ben E. King, Lee Dorsey or Lloyd Price . . . . What can the unsuspecting buyer do as a result of this non-review? Why, he can go and listen to it, unless of course he can find the originals. It is fair to say, however, that the originals will cost you a whole lot more.

☐ **B.F. SCRUDBUCKET**



Clifford T. Ward
Escalator
Charisma CAS1098

THE FIRST thing to say about Clifford is that it is a crime that he isn't yet the big star he inevitably will eventually become. This is his fourth album, and while there's no particular giant step forward in either writing or performance, what we have here is very classy indeed. For those who don't know, he's not your R&B, or soul, or progressive, or rock'n' roll, or Engelbert, or anything but pop, and pop, when you get right down to it, is the very best form of the music I love. It encompasses, you know, the Beatles, the Doors, and Van Morrison, and a whole bunch of your favourites as well. At its best, pop is impregnable, and don't forget it.

Ten tracks, four superb, and six just very good. The four, if you're interested, are 'Jig-Saw Girl', 'We Could Be Talking', 'Cellophane' and particularly 'Mr Bilbo Baggins', this last of which has the same vibration flowing through it as that from which it was conceived, which along with ***The Wizard Of Oz*** are brand leaders in my book. The only disappointment was the non-inclusion of 'Jayne (From Andromeda Spiral)' a recent single of positively gargantuan fabness.

Clifford's orchestral backings are always faintly predictable, which is in no way an insult. If you can hum along with a tune in a tasteful way, providing your own little arrangement, you have exactly what Clifford does, and no-one anywhere does it with such regularity. As my wife said, if you like Clifford, you'll like everything he's ever done or ever will do, but if you don't, you won't have an idea what all the fuss is about.

The subject matter of these songs is classic Cliff. An observer of human relationships, frailties and hardships, he can write some amusing songs, although I haven't yet found one on this album to match things like 'Open University' or 'Crisis', a problem forced on me by an early copy date. It's

much more simple to be moved by the consciousness of unpleasantness, and the wondering why bad things happen philosophy displayed in 'Miner' or 'A Sad Affair', because Clifford musically portrays such subjects with an insight which few others could equal. It doesn't come across as a downer, you must understand, but as food for thought which you wouldn't normally expect or receive from a record. If you've ever heard the song about Clifford's daughter, Debbie, on his previous album, you might understand.

Just before I finish, you can find the faithful trio of Ken Wright, Derek Thomas and Terry Edwards on the record, providing the very tasty backing tracks, which I, as one who has heard them before embellishment, would like you to know are very good indeed. Use of these three is not exclusive, however, and a bunch of sessioneers are also around, including Pete King on alto sax, who adds a good deal to a couple of tracks.

Right. Clifford T. Ward is a very definite talent, whose work every ZigZagger should have in their collection. His songs are genuinely felt, the work of a sincere man who wants to say something, but in a musical form. His observations are accurate, and it's my feeling that when I get too old, Clifford's music will remain with me as something to which I will always be able to relate.

☐ **JOHN TOBLER**

Emmylou Harris
Pieces Of The Sky
Reprise K 54037

Bud Scoppa once described Gram Parsons as the most convincing singer of sad songs he'd heard. Nothing he recorded was more heart-rending than 'Love Hurts' or 'Hearts On Fire' or 'We'll Sweep Out The Ashes In The Morning', on which Emmylou Harris' slice of their vocal duetting perfectly offsets Gram's emotionally wasted singing. As a twosome they drew comparisons with country teams like Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn or Porter Wagoner and Dolly Parton; Emmylou herself likened their tightness in harmony to the Everly Brothers. Back in '60, Gene Clark took a similar step to Gram, in adding Donna Washburn to round out the vocal strength of the Dillard and Clark Expedition. Without suggesting more than a superficial similarity between Gene Clark and Gram Parsons, but one worth exploring more fully elsewhere, it is interesting to compare their two versions of old Everly Brothers' songs, 'Love Hurts' from ***Grevious Angel*** and 'So Sad' from ***Through The Morning Through The Night***. On 'So Sad' it is Gene Clark who conveys all the pain, Donna Washburn's harmony is all but superfluous. Emmylou and Gram together have you close to slashing your wrists. The track is laid bare instrumentally but for a whining steel guitar, ***they*** inject all the romantic angst to produce an awesomely powerful love song. As an obvious, and not unlikely corollary, I would really love to hear Gene Clark and Emmylou singing together. Possibly for Emmylou herself it would be too painful an experience and for Gene Clark it might seem like stepping into a dead man's shoes. He certainly doesn't need the vocal embellishments he was given on 'No Other', the simplistic feel of 'Roadmaster' shows him at his best, but Gene and Emmylou together . . . .

What we do have though is an Emmylou Harris album, and it's a real beauty. It's not her first either, she made an unashamedly pop album, ***Gliding Bird***, for Jubilee in '68. The songs on her new album, ***Pieces Of The Sky***, mix more pop oriented songs with a larger share of pure country songs. I'd sooner hear Emmylou singing country all the time, but that's my personal taste, it isn't meant to detract from the endearing qualities she brings to a song like the Beatles' 'For No One'. To draw another comparison, this time with Linda Ronstadt, and in particular with her album ***Heart Like A Wheel***, Linda shows herself to be a formidable stylist on rock material like 'You're No Good' and equally adept with country material like 'I Can't Help It If I'm Still In Love With You', on which, incidentally, Emmylou sings harmony, but I don't feel that Linda matches the sheer artistry Emmylou brings to the country flavoured songs she sings. Few female singers could successfully tackle Merle Haggard's 'Bottle Bring Me Down'. When Emmylou sings 'the wine don't take effect like it used to' she really ***feels*** it. She totally transforms Shel Silverstein's 'Queen Of The Silver Dollar' and not simply by the nice twist at the end to allow a female rendition. 'Sleepless Nights', an old Everlys' b-side, is 'Love Hurts' minus zero no limit. The spared sensation in her singing the lines 'why did you go, why did you go? don't you know I need you?' will tear up even the more heartless amongst us. She's not simply a performer of sad songs. Dolly Parton's 'Coat Of Many Colours' requires a more affectionate interpretation, it's a rags to riches theme which might otherwise sound insipid and sickly. As it is, it counterbalances the emotional devastation of 'Sleepless Nights'.

Throughout the album the playing is simply superb, utilising many of the musicians who graced her work with Gram Parsons, plus others like Bernie Leadon, Dan Pendleton and Herb Pederson. His vocal duet with her on Louvins' 'If I Could Only Win Your Love' is another high point of the album. The album is loaded with glorious moments, but it isn't simply a great album. It is also an important album that follows a course set by albums like ***Gilded Palace Of Sin, G.P., Grevious Angel*** or ***Roadmaster***, which is not merely to draw elements from country and rock but to posit a new awareness of the roots of country, a genre especially restrictive to women singers. Gram Parsons used to speak about his music as 'goose bump' music, Emmylou Harris' album is that alright. He also had an ideal of a 'cosmic American music', and ***Pieces Of The Sky*** is a step towards that and only a shot away.

☐ **MICK HOUGHTON**

Led Zeppelin
Physical Graffiti
Swan Song SSK 89400

NOW I should make clear in this context that I'm not by nature a fan of this band in the same way that I like Van Morrison or Love. My position is one of deep respect, mind you, and while I was heard to say some harsh things about Beck copyists, etc, when the first album came out, such notions no longer seem to apply. I feel that I would have to perform a masterpiece of justification if I wanted to put L.Z. down, and in all honesty, there's no fuel for that particular fire.

I suspect that someone somewhere will go into that old thing about making one great album out of two flawed same, as used with the Beatles' White Album and so on, but again, I can't subscribe, and this is where the review really starts. There are fifteen tracks on display here, and three of them, accounting for about a third of the playing time, appeal to me so much that were they on one side of the record, I would find it difficult to play anything else until I knew them from every direction. Specifically, these are 'In My Time Of Dying', 'Houses Of The Holy', and best of all, in a class shared with only a dozen or so tracks in my entire musical existence, 'In The Light'.

That's not to write the rest off in a terse few words, but for my part, the record would be breaking down fresh barriers if it was all as good. It's a question of stand-outs, and if you can imagine putting 'She Loves You' on the first Beatles album, you'll see what I mean. Without my three choice cuts, the album would be of very good quality. Perhaps a little routine, but certainly to be among the critics' choices at the end of the year. With the tracks included, it gets a distinct lift off, and while it's just as certain to figure similarly in critical and public polls, we're all getting a bonus for which we should be grateful. I would say with certainty that prolonged

playing will produce several more tracks which will become highly pleasing, but it all comes down to what makes the biggest initial impact. And that's not to say that the three I've mentioned have a singalong chorus.

Beyond saying "Get it if you're even vaguely into this type of confection," there's not much to add. Jimmy Page as a producer has to be one of the most tasteful people there is, and he continually rejects the temptation to fall into Black Sabbath traps. He also plays the guitar with consummate brillance, and perhaps that's part of the key to Led Zeppelin. They are all musicians of the highest calibre, and the length of time taken to produce this package is a testimony to the fact that second best for them is as bad as nowhere. One for your lists.

☐ **JOHN TOBLER**

10 C.C.
The Original Soundtrack
Mercury 9102 500

IT'S VERY difficult to express a feeling of disappointment in such a medium as this. Like probably many of you, I'd been looking forward to this album on the strength of the other two, but this effort comes across to me as retrogressive. It's too complicated, and where previously a bunch of ace singles were packaged together into an album, this attempt at a concept falls over. The first two LPs were capable of being nibbled as a series of snacks, but when you have the full meal, indigestion is the result. The golden rule relating to the perfection of the three minute single has been unfortunately forgotten in a soup-like mixture dominated by uninspired instrumental passages, over orchestrations and tunelessness resulting in the death (by drowning) of the brilliant simplicity which previously pervaded the group's work.

Specifically, 'Une Nuit A Paris' does not work, because while 10 C.C. mimic Americans to the extent that it's a large part of their appeal, to do the same to the French with second feature accents, is less interesting, and more significantly, unsuccessful. There's a group on Epic called Sailor, who have already done this, so where's the innovation which we've grown to expect? Apparently, this first tripartite track is the basis of the plot, but it seems to vanish as soon as the track is over. Next comes 'I'm Not In Love', which is a nice low key song, until you realise that it seems to have been going on for several days. An edit might make a single. 'Blackmail', the other side one track, is a good idea, but short on execution, with the tuneless aspect showing through, and another over long outro.

Side two starts off with a very strange thing called 'The Second Sitting For The Last Supper'. I understand that some, if not all, of the group, are of a faith which does not include the New Testament in its philosophy, so what are they trying to prove? That all Gentiles are loonies for believing that J.C. will come back? Apart from that, and the unnecessary tastelessness of the idea, the song is too long and rather tedious. 'Brand New Day' sounds like a Moody Blues B-side, which is all right if you happen to like the Moody Blues, but unexpected coming from who it comes from here. 'Flying Junk' presents very reasonable sentiments in a better than average way, but again is a bit tuneless, while 'Life Is A Minestrone' is a good song, but a little too ornate at times. I gather it's the single, and if so, I don't think it will be a hit, and nor will any of the others on the record.

Finally, 'The Film Of My Love' is a good idea lyrically, but Gouldman sings it like a Eurovision song as performed by the vocalist in Joe Loss's Ham. Pal. Ork., and the backing vocals a la the Stargazers do nothing to dispel that feeling. Altogether, this sound like a record made in a hurry, with too much pastry and too little meat, if we can return for a mo to that jolly good food motif in the first paragraph. Seems to me that 10 C.C. have sacrificed their art for money and a fold-out sleeve. But all will be forgiven if they start working on the next one now, and revert to their impregnable previous stance.

☐ **JOHN TOBLER**

Argent
Circus
Epic EPC 80691

I have been looking forward to this album for some time now, even if only to see whether the new-look Argent would sound as good on record as they have on the two occasions I've seen them 'live' over the past few months. I am pleased to say that they do. In fact I'll go as far as to say that they sound approximately twice as good.

Argent have obviously put a great deal of thought into the construction of ***Circus***, and the result is an album which contains many of the technical complexities usually associated with bands like Yes and Mahavishnu Orchestra, without sacrificing any of the musical content in the process. It is a concept album in as much as the imagery used all relates to a central theme, i.e. a circus, but it goes much further than that, and to say that ***Circus*** is a piece of music about a circus, full stop, would be missing completely the whole point of the album. Each track has something to say in itself and the imagery of the circus is just the unifying factor which links them together.

As for the actual musical content, there is a great emphasis on harmony, particularly vocal harmony, and the blending of mellotron, synthesizer and guitar is superb, giving the album a very smooth and flowing texture. One of the first things to become evident on listening to the album, is the amazing ability of Argent's (relatively) new guitarist, John Grimaldi, who although only nineteen (Argent being his first professional band), plays with more ease and professionalism than many of today's better known guitarists. His style blends in perfectly with Rod Argent's keyboards, sometimes staying in the background while the synthesizer weaves and dances on top, at other times coming to the fore with one of his incredibly fast and accurate solos. Just listen to his playing on 'Trapeze' and 'Highwire' and you'll see what I mean.

All but one of the tracks on the album are written by Rod, the exception being 'Trapeze', which, written by Jim Rodford, features some great bass guitar. A couple of quieter tracks, 'Clown' and 'Shine On Sunshine', provide a nice contrast to some of the more heavily arranged tracks, with some nice grand piano from Rod and, 'Clown' especially, having some beautiful vocal harmonies. The whole album is given a nice finishing touch with 'The Jester', complete with jester's bells, ending with a whimsical piece of piano playing which would make a fitting accompaniment to a Charlie Chaplin film.

Yes, Argent have certainly come up with a winner this time. And keep your eyes on Grimaldi—he's going to be around for a long time to come.

☐ **TREVOR GARDINER**

OTHER ALBUMS RELEASED DURING THE PAST MONTH

MAD DOG—John Entwistle's Ox (Decca TXS-R 114)
FLUTE MUSIC—Dudu Pukwana & Spear (Caroline CA2005)
BLUE JAYS—Justin Hayward & John Lodge (Threshold THS 12)
THE ROTTERS' CLUB—Hatfield & The North (Virgin V2030)
NEVER LET HER GO—David Gates (Elektra K52012)
A ROSE IN A FISTED GLOVE—Jonathan King (UK UKAL 1010)
MIKE HERON'S REPUTATION—Mike Heron (Neighbourhood NBH 80637)
RUSH—Rush (Mercury 9100 011)
CHESS GOLDEN DACADE SAMPLER—Various (Chess 6830 181)
ON THE LEVEL—Status Quo (Vertigo 9102 022)
SOMETHING IN MY LIFE—Tom Paxton (Mam AS-R 1012)
WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE—Alice Cooper (Anchor ANCL 2011)
IT'S TIME—The Mighty Clouds Of Joy (ABC ABCL 5097)
ORLEANS—Orleans (ABC ABCL 5017)
THE HANDSOME DEVILS—Hello People (ABC ABCL 5016)
TURN OF THE CARDS—Renaissance (RCA BTM 1000)
LIVE—Curved Air (Deram SML 1119)
MIXED BAG II—Richie Havens (Polydor 2310 356)
MODERN TIMES—Al Stewart (CBS 80477)
UPP—Upp (Epic 80625)
HOKEY POKEY—Richard And Linda Thompson (Island ILPS 9305)
TAXI TO THE TERMINAL ZONE—Ducks Deluxe (RCA SF 8402)
ESSRA MOHAWK—(Mooncrest CREST 24)

BLABBER'N SMOKE

One of the very few pleasures gained from staying up all night getting the magazine ready for the printers is that there's plenty of time to play records, and during the course of the last twenty odd hours the sounds of Nils Lofgren, Eric Clapton, Morning, Donovan, the Who, Jefferson Airplane, Led Zeppelin, Red Rhodes, the Dead, Mighty Baby, and Country Joe And The Fish have been drifting through the cow-gum saturated atmosphere of my room. So I'm a bit tired but in a happy frame of mind nonetheless. And talking of Frame and Country Joe And The Fish, Pete is now busy at work preparing a Fish chart that will appear in the next issue along with a piece on Barry Melton who in my opinion is one of the best guitarists ever. Funnily enough, Country Joe And The Fish were one of the last West Coast bands to make any impression on me, and apart from their first classic album, they did little to convince me of their stature. It was of course complete idiocy on my part as I very soon discovered. Country Joe has written some truly great songs in his time and Melton's guitar work on things like 'Silver And Gold' and 'Flying High' is quite staggering. I only wish I'd seen them both at their recent legendary gig at Dingwalls. 'The Life And Times Of Country Joe And The Fish From Haight Ashbury To Woodstock', which I've recently been playing to death, is an invaluable double album being basically a 'best of' but containing previously unreleased material like a 1965 version of 'I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag', and 'live' stuff from both Fillmores and Woodstock. Anyway, you can read all about them next month.

What other good albums have I heard lately? Oh yeah, Nils Lofgren's solo album is great (I really hope A&M have the gumption to release it over here), and so is the new Eric Clapton and Led Zeppelin. The soundtrack to the 'Tommy' film is naturally very impressive and I can't wait to go and see it myself, especially after hearing Pete Townshend talk about it on John Peel's show. If you've got the time and money also check out new offerings from Commander Cody, Jesse Colin Young, and David Gates.

Now hands up all of you who thought the Grateful Dead had broken up. Well, it's all lies I tell you, and to prove it there's going to be another spate of 'Dead family' albums released quite soon. There's a Phil Lesh / Ned Lagin LP called 'Seastones' which I'm particularly looking forward to, a Keith & Donna Godchaux album, an Old And In The Way album, and a second Robert Hunter LP called 'Tiger Rose' which, if it's as good as its cover, should be amazing. But more significantly, the Dead themselves have or are about to enter the studios to cut another album although it probably won't be released until next year.

Rumours abound that John Cipollina will shortly be visiting this country.... what more can you say?

All you Neil Young freaks who took the time and trouble to write to me will doubtless be fuming at the absence of Part 3 of The Neil Young Story in this issue. Well I'll tell you the truth. I'm not at all sure that you'd want to read my warped opinions of Young's LPs and the tedious facts of his latter-day secluded life, so I'm seriously thinking of abandoning any further instalments until I can present some first-hand information. I'm sure you'll all appreciate that Zigzag is primarily designed to convey information and the last thing we want to do is bombard you with exhaustive, pedantic 'critical' analyses of peoples' albums, and if I attempted to bring Neil Young's career up to date with the sparse information I have, then that's basically all it would be. We'll leave that sort of thing to our friends at Let It Rock. If however you feel so incensed by my decision, please write and tell me, and I'll do something about it. (Pete is off to California again in a month or so, so maybe he'll be able to get to interview Young).

Issue number 6 of Hot Wacks is out now and it looks as good as ever. It contains extensive features on Traffic, Boz Scaggs, and Joe Cocker, and even old Tobler's got his picture in there, standing in front of his record collection with Hot Wacks editor Bert Muirhead. Tobler's the one who looks like the abominable snowman. Despite that, Hot Wacks is well worth purchasing. Send 25p to 16 Almondback Terrace, Ediburgh EH11 155, Scotland.

You may remember that last issue I mentioned the new Flamin' Groovies single 'You Tore Me Down'/'Him Or Me' on Bomp Records. Well now you can obtain this masterpiece and a whole load of other Groovies' grist at Bizzarre Records, 33 Praed Street, London W2. Besides distributing that one and only Bomp record, they also deal with Skydog Records which you'll probably know has the Flamin' Groovies' single 'Alive Forever' featuring 'Jumpin' Jack Flash' and 'Blues From Phillys', and their EP 'Grease' containing 'Let Me Rock', 'Dog Meat', 'Sweet Little Rock'n-Roller', and 'Slow Death'. The single sells for 75p and the EP £1.50. Also, those of you who love, hate, or have any other feelings about Kim Fowley will be delighted/disgusted (delete where not applicable) to learn that Skydog Records have released his new album called 'Animal God Of The Street'. They were good enough to send me a copy, and having played it a couple of times I'm quite sure that anybody having never heard him before would only have to play the album once to realise that Fowley is a completely incurable lunatic. Good or bad doesn't come into it.... he's just mad, and if his particular vision of rock'n'roll appeals to you that much, 'Animal God Of The Street' will cost you £2.75.

This months' issue is the last one that our business manager Jim McGuire will be working on. Jim's decided to forsake the dubious pleasures of our English summer and take a prolonged holiday to South America. I don't know much about South America but it sounds very exotic and I'm sure Jim will do OK out there and have a good time. Since he arrived at Zigzag over a year ago Jim's done a lot to secure the magazine's present comparatively stable financial position as well as making sure we get the requisite sumber of ads each month, and he hands that job over to our new advertising manager Pete Gray who's a Scot, supports Charlton Athletic, and laughs a lot (I suppose he has to if he goes to see Charlton every week). So welcome Pete and bon voyage Jim.

There haven't been that many good gigs since I last wrote this page of dribble, but it looks as though they'll be some interesting things happening in the coming months. There's Led Zeppelin at Earls Court of course, and then Weather Report, the Flying Burrito Brothers, and Blue Oyster Cult are all coming over soon. Whoopee!! Oh yes, and don't forget to go and see Mike Nesmith. John Curd, an old friend of Zigzag is organising that particular gig and he says that there is a distinct possibility that Redwing may also be landing on these shores in the not too distant future. Things are looking up!

Believe it or not I've run out of boring trivia to talk about already and I've still got a third of a column to fill. Oh dear, what to say next. I know, a request to all you readers. How about writing and telling me if you think people like Henry Cow and Tangerine Dream fit comfortably into the Zigzag mould. I have a certain amount of difficulty in convincing certain people that you may possibly be as interested in what Henry Cow are doing in 1975 as you are in what Rick Nelson did in 1965, and that the traditional limitations that Zigzag has in the past chosen to confine itself within are far too restrictive. Please make your criticisms as constructive as possible .... letters like 'Henry Cow are a load of shit, what are they doing in Zigzag, why don't you write about Poco again' aren't particularly welcome, so have a think about it and let me know how you feel. As a matter of interest, I'm personally not all that fond of Henry Cow's music but I know a lot of people are, and our only aim is to enlighten and entertain.

On the subject of letters, if you're still waiting for a reply to a letter you sent months ago please be patient, we're doing our best. The amount of mail we get seems to get bigger every day, which is nice, but it does create difficulties if they all need replying to. Never fear though, your requests, suggestions, and comments do not go unheeded and I'm grateful that so many of you take the trouble to put pen to paper. 'What the bloody hell's happened to Fat Angel?' is a very common postscript to a lot of letters I receive nowadays, and the answer is that a new issue is well under way with articles on Autosalvage, Fairport Convention, Tim Buckley, and a host of others. When it finally appears you'll hopefully find it well worth the wait.

Aha, the end of the page! Goodnight and sweet dreams.

Andy.

SLOW DAZZLE

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