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ZIGZAG

57

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The Rock Magazine

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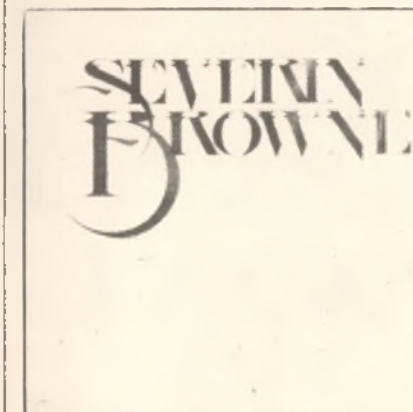
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SEVERIN BROWNE

JACKSON'S KID BROTHER



It has to be an indictment of the tastes of the British record buying public when you consider that Jackson Browne doesn't sell enough records here to keep even a half-dead rake thin wolf from anyone's door. That is a situation which is no credit to those who have stacks of Eagles albums on their coffee tables and play them on their terrifically expensive Danish stereos which match the rest of the furniture, because, as I'm sure you all know, Jackson wrote 'Take It Easy' and 'Nightingale', as well as co-writing 'Desperado', 'Doolin Dalton' and 'James Dean'. Without knowing, I think it likely that most, if not all, of these fine songs will appear on the *Best Of The Eagles* compilation expected before Christmas. Not only that, but Jackson also wrote 'These Days', which is just one of the killer songs of all time, and he still can't get any real success over here.

So what chance does Jackson's younger brother have? Well, not much of a chance at all. I reckon, so here's a slice of salami from me to set the ball rolling, hopefully to be picked up by others in more widely read papers. The name is Severin Browne, the Christian name being apparently of Norwegian extraction, and like Jackson, much of his life has been spent amid the balmy comforts of Southern California. Unlike Jackson, who made his first album, still unreleased, in about 1967 (on Elektra), Severin sublimated his desires to become a rock'n'roll star until comparatively recently, getting his first taste of record companies with Motown, but as a writer, not a performer. Seemingly, he did play in small clubs, notably one in Glendale, but even when the famous Mr Gordy offered him the chance to record some of his own songs, he turned it down initially, eventually accepting some nine months later. The result was an album on the Mowest label, inevitably titled *Severin Browne*, which was released in the States in 1975, and will very likely never see the light of day over here. Seemingly, Severin was signed by Motown as one of the first artists on the Mowest label, the idea of which was to diversify the traditional talent of Tamla, which was almost totally composed of black artists, and take in white talent. I believe the first four acts signed under that premise were Rare Earth, about whom I shall say no more, Lesley Gore, who left after some lack of success, and has re-emerged earlier this year on A&M, Bobby Darin, who unfortunately died while under contract, and Severin. Shortly afterwards, of course, the very fab Four Seasons made the *Chameleon* album for Mowest, from which 'The Night' became a bit hit as a reissued single earlier this year. Anyway, Severin's the only one left out of that lot, and I can't help wondering whether the fact that Motown have never really done too well with white artists may have something to do with the fact that he hasn't made any waves yet.

On to a bit of detail. The first album was produced by Larry Murray, late of Hearts and Flowers, a group which appeared on the Eagles tree, if I remember rightly. It seems Larry has also been involved with Johnny Cash, which may or may not be a

good thing, depending on your particular taste. Also involved are session men like John Guerin, Sneaky Pete, Emory Gordy, Merel Bregante and Steve LeFever, and Paul Parnish does some arranging. Even David Geffen gets a 'thanks' name check. The record contains ten self-written songs dating from 1971 to 1973, the unifying factor being love. But not as simply as that — what you get are a series of vignettes concerning love — lost, found, unrequited and its opposite, past, present, future, and imminently terminating or commencing. They're all very even, and I reckon they only require the magic ingredient of exposure to get people interested. Mind you, as far as this album goes, I'm afraid it's far too late for anything useful to happen unless the man suddenly becomes an overnight star, and the album is re-packaged as *Early Severin*. It's an interesting thought that stand out tracks only stand out because there's something inferior next to them, and I really wouldn't like to decide which was the best of worst song on the record. I pretty much like 'em all. But I'll just mention a couple which I found interesting, and more to the point, I'm able to say something about. 'Raggedy Anne And Me' seems not unlike a Kenny Loggins song, perhaps not least because these heroes of my youth, Winnie the Pooh and Tigger, are mentioned. Then the last track on the record, with the fine title of 'The All American Boy And His Dog' has the equally fine line 'I'm an old

motor scooter that's not worth the repair'. Still, with the current fashion being that reviews of Californian singer/songwriters have of necessity to be put down, such a song as 'Snowflakes' is likely to be branded as being of the John Denver ilk, and while that would do Sev's sales a lot of good, it would decrease his credibility rating to less than zero.

The same, I suppose, could be said of the opening track of the second album, but probably because that song's title is 'Love Notes From Denver'. In fact, it's an ace Los Angeles song with built in sunshine, and lines about it being "oh so nice getting high and making love". Maybe you need to have done it to understand, or perhaps it's just the fact that the British envy of California gets in the way? The second album is titled *New Improved Severin Browne* and it came out in 1974, again on Mowest, and just like the other one, it didn't get a shot here. As far as the adjectives before the name go, I'm not too sure, because that evenness has disappeared, and certain songs really stick out, to the detriment of others. One of the latter is 'Romance', the only non-Browne track, which, despite a leavening of steel drums and guirro, creating the obvious Caribbean feel, also has a mention of excreta which is somewhat unnecessary.

But the good ones are the ones to concentrate on, starting with 'Love Song', which I believe was issued here as a single, but got nowhere. It's not what you'd expect — you see, Severin loves Jeannine, who loves Joe, who loves Marie, who loves Paul, who is gay, "But she loves him more because he is that way", and Paul loves John, who loves Sarah Lee, who actually loves Severin. And all, I might add, in two minutes and forty-five seconds! Then there's the last track I'll mention, called 'Cooking School', where "I studied desserts made with cheese", and "soon we had classes together, sweet pastries and basic Chinese". A delightfully weird song.

So what are we left with? Well, two albums which you might see in your import shop, and which I'd recommend unheard if they're at the right price. The second album, which by the way is also produced by Larry Murray, and has a similar, but not identical, line-up, is a little flawed for my taste compared to its predecessor, but then that's probably because of its greater unevenness. Certainly, you should try to hear either of them, and I should also tell you that Severin is by no means unlikely to visit these shores. I think he was going to come earlier this year, but something went wrong. If there's any agent or promoter reading this who wants to make enquiries, I can put you in touch with Severin's manager, who also manages Flash Cadillac, and did the same for John Stewart when he played at the Roundhouse, although that arrangement no longer exists.

That's my contribution for now — I'd like to hear what some of you think.

□ JOHN TOBLER

Severin Browne — Mowest M774L
New Improved Severin Browne — Mowest M6-77951

THE RE-EMERGENCE OF



THE FLAMIN' GROOVIES

ONE OF the many bright ideas that the collective brains at *ZigZag* have come up with lately, is that of updating articles that appeared in the dim and distant past and trying to inform you of the whereabouts and activities of some of the people who have faded away or gone missing during the last few years.

The first article in this occasional series concerns the Flamin' Groovies, the eternal *garage* punk-rock band, outcasts from the San Francisco music scene of the late sixties, and in all probability one of the finest American rock'n'roll bands ever. Their slightly bizarre and erratic career was of course flamboyantly documented by Pete Frame in *ZigZag* 25, and that piece has succeeded in arousing a considerable amount of praise and interest ever since. The amount of letters we receive in the office each week asking for information on the Groovies and where their records are obtainable is quite astonishing. There was a very short article in *ZZ47* in which I outlined their retreat back to the States and mentioned some of their records, but more has happened since then, so we'll go back, pick up the story where Pete left off and bring it up to date.

YOU'LL REMEMBER that our heroes had settled down here in Chingford or some such place and were being looked after by United Artists. Andrew Lauder having been instrumental in bringing them over here. Apart from playing the odd gig here and there (Bickershaw Festival, Lyceum Ballroom in London . . . according to Greg Shaw in 'Who Put The Bomp' they played something like 250 dates all across the country, but somehow I can't believe that), they also set about recording an album down at Rockfield with Dave Edmunds producing. The original plan was apparently to make a string of sure-fire hit singles and build the band on the singles market rather

than relying on albums to do the business. As it worked out, only eight tracks were completed and even then only two singles eventually emerged from that: 'Slow Death'/'Tallahassee Lassie' (UP 35392), and 'Married Woman'/'Get A Shot Of Rhythm And Blues' (UP 35464), both classics. 'Slow Death', one of the most powerful songs in the whole Groovies' repertoire, was immediately banned by the BBC because of its mention of drugs (it is in fact an anti-drug song - everybody except those neurotic fools at the Beeb missed that out), but the record got to number one in Switzerland and sold in sizeable quantities throughout the rest of Europe, especially France where interest in them, to this day, borders on the fanatic. No real joy over here though, and the follow-up 'Married Woman' is rumoured to have been pressed in quantities of less than 400 which shows the sort of faith that U.A. must have had in them. In fact their relationship with that record company floundered quite dramatically thereafter resulting in a mutual agreement that the Groovies should leave U.A. and England, go back to America, shelve the album, sort themselves out, and then go and look for another deal. And that basically is exactly what they did, although it was never as simple or as easy as it sounds. For a start they were even less popular in the States than they were here and practically nobody wanted to know when they arrived home looking for someone to donate time, bread, and energy towards their cause. Subsequently they were forced to "suspend the activities of the band", look towards other forms of employment to make ends meet, and generally take a rest from the crucifying treadmill of trying "to smash the apathy and prolong the myth of excitement during those dead years of rock". They were not without their casualties however: drummer Danny Mihm left to be replaced for a short

while by a guy called Terry Rae (who himself left to join the Hollywood Stars). His replacement was the Groovies' present drummer, David Wright, a Nebraskan (if that's the right expression) and friend of the band's new manager Jeff Richardson.

A CONSIDERABLE amount of time between their departure back home and their re-emergence earlier this year was spent trying to secure a record deal in America but without an overwhelming amount of success. They got to serious negotiation stages with several major companies and even cut a demo of a song called 'Shake Some Action' which is supposed to be fantastic for Capitol. But nothing eventually materialised, no enticing offers were made, and the band were faced with the bleak prospect of having to struggle on without help or interest from anybody except those devoted few who tried to keep tabs on what they were doing. Also, the longer they were out of the public eye, the harder it would be to re-instate themselves when their time came, so it seemed a sensible idea to try and somehow get at least one record out even if it's just to show people that they still existed. So with the assistance of numero uno Groovie freak Greg Shaw and the influence of his fast-rising fanzine 'Who Put The Bomp', the band released a single on the Bomp label. The a-side was 'You Tore Me Down', another of the tracks that were recorded at Rockfield and one of the best tunes released this or any other year, and on the other side was 'Hum Or Me (What's It Gonna Be?)', an old Raiders' number done in typical Groovies fashion. Previous to this release there had also been another single and an LP issued on the Skydog label and includes live material apparently recorded in a garage somewhere in San Francisco! But the Bomp release really started the ball rolling. The band and Greg Shaw set about securing a record contract with renewed vigour and eventually signed with Sire Records, a subsidiary of Phonogram over here, who allowed them to pick up the pieces that they'd left straggling down in Rockfield and continue with their long overdue album. So back over they came, went down to Wales, finished the album in comparatively super-quick time with again Dave Edmunds producing, flew over to France to play a one-off gig in Paris for which no less a celebrity than E.J. from Pinner came over to introduce them, and which was an astounding success, and now they're back in the States, rehearsing like crazy, and hopefully unleashing their unique brand of rock'n'roll all over the West Coast. When I spoke to Jimmy Ferrell and Cyril Jordan while they were here they indicated quite adamantly that they want to come back again as soon as possible and do a tour here. Meanwhile, expect a single in the shops very soon and an album sometime around the beginning of the new year. If 1976 can start off with something as exciting as that, then there's no telling what might happen.

□ ANDY

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ALBUM AVAILABLE NOW ON ROCKET RECORDS

DR. FEELGOOD ON THE ROAD

MAXIMUM R'n'B



The dressing room is a scene of semi-chaos and ordered confusion... packets of half-eaten sandwiches, cans of lager, guitar cases, cigarette remains... the usual decor. The lead singer, taller than the others with a constant 'just got out of bed' look on his face has just donned what was once a white suit but is now a dishevelled, filthy stained garment that looks as though it could have belonged to some South American gun runner. The guitarist, sitting in the corner and dressed all in black as usual, is looking disconsolately into a bottle of orange juice. The drummer, a happy-go-lucky character, is in very good spirits despite having burnt his thumb with a book of matches the night before. One wonders how he'll manage to hold the sticks with that bandage on. And the bassist, as dry as ever, is spreadeagled over two rather uncomfortable looking chairs, smiling and enquiring as to the purpose of it all. The place is Birmingham Town Hall, the band is Dr. Feelgood, and we're three-quarters of the way through a British tour that is proving as successful as it is tiring. Support band G. T. Moore & The Reggae Guitars are due off stage at any time so the Feelgoods are preparing themselves, the slow process of geeing themselves up for the short period of time when they're proving that they're the best R'n'B band in the country. When DJ Andy Dunkley eventually gets up onstage and introduces them, they walk on briskly to be greeted by a couple of thousand screaming excited kids who've probably been waiting for that moment for weeks. A sell-out... like the vast majority of gigs on this tour. During the next hour the Feelgoods rip the place apart. They look mean, they sound even meaner and when the kids walk out at the end they're wasted, drained off all the excess energy that's been unleashed in a frenzied display of approval.

The tour has been a huge success for a number of reasons. Firstly and obviously, the band are now a major concert attraction in this country, capable of drawing crowds of two to three thousand without any trouble. Secondly they're playing better than ever, much better than on the old pub circuit days or on the Naughty Rhythms Tour, although of course a concert hall situation demands different tactics

and a more 'professional' approach, potential problems that the Feelgoods have mastered with economy and ease and without sacrificing their integrity or appeal one basic iota. And thirdly, the organisation has been practically faultless, an example in planning and diplomacy that only those actually on the tour could possibly appreciate. Which is a good cue for me to explain my position. I was on the whole tour primarily in a working role (remember the knackered-looking geezer selling programmes, posters and T-shirts at every gig... well that was me), and as such I was treated not as a member of the press but as one of the tour party. On the other hand it had always been my intention to try and write a piece about the tour and as a writer I found myself in a position and a frame of mind that few other journalists can ever encounter. I was able to see and indeed spent most of my time 'behind the scenes' as it were, with the people whose work never seems to end. On the road, I was travelling in the G. T. Moore truck along with their roadie and the unshakeable Andy Dunkley, a man of amazingly catholic taste in music and an ace DJ. We'd usually arrive at a gig sometime in the middle of the afternoon, a couple of hours after the Feelgoods roadies, and by about 6 o'clock both bands' equipment was set up and ready for any necessary soundchecks. When the gig finished at around 10.30/11.00, it took another two hours to dismantle everything with the possibility of another long drive to God-knows-where afterwards.

as well as the two regular Feelgoods roadies, the road crew was augmented by a lighting engineer, a Mr. Peter Clarke and his 'supermick' lights. Besides being deceptively good at his job he's also the main reason why the morale of the road crew was always so remarkably high... you'll never find a more insolent and irreverent paddy anywhere. Geoff Shaw and Fred Barker are the sort of reliable, efficient roadies that are needed for a tour of this duration and importance. They could probably erect and dismantle all the gear with their eyes closed by now. Fred is in charge of all the stage equipment and during the set he can be seen crouching at the side of the stage waiting, hawk-eyed, constantly

checking to see if everything is running OK. Geoff mixes the sound and usually does his work amidst a seething mass of sweaty bodies somewhere out in the middle of the hall. And then of course there are the organisers, manager Chris Fenwick and tour manager Jake, names and reputations that you're sure to be aware of by now. The amount of work that they put in can't really be measured, but suffice to say that the tour proceeded without a hitch and enjoyed the sort of planning that is usually reserved for military operations. When you have a working unit as good as that and a band of the Feelgoods quality success becomes a mere formality, a logical conclusion.

Another interesting phenomenon that one encounters on touring is the mental and physical upheaval that Robert Greenfield described so lucidly in his book 'A Journey Through America With The Rolling Stones' as making the whole thing seem so incredibly exciting and stupefyingly boring both at the same time. But as Lee remarked one evening: "You think Christ, what the f**k am I doing here, what's it all about? And then when you get home and sit down and think about it, it all comes into perspective. The tiredness and boredom of it all is mostly psychological".

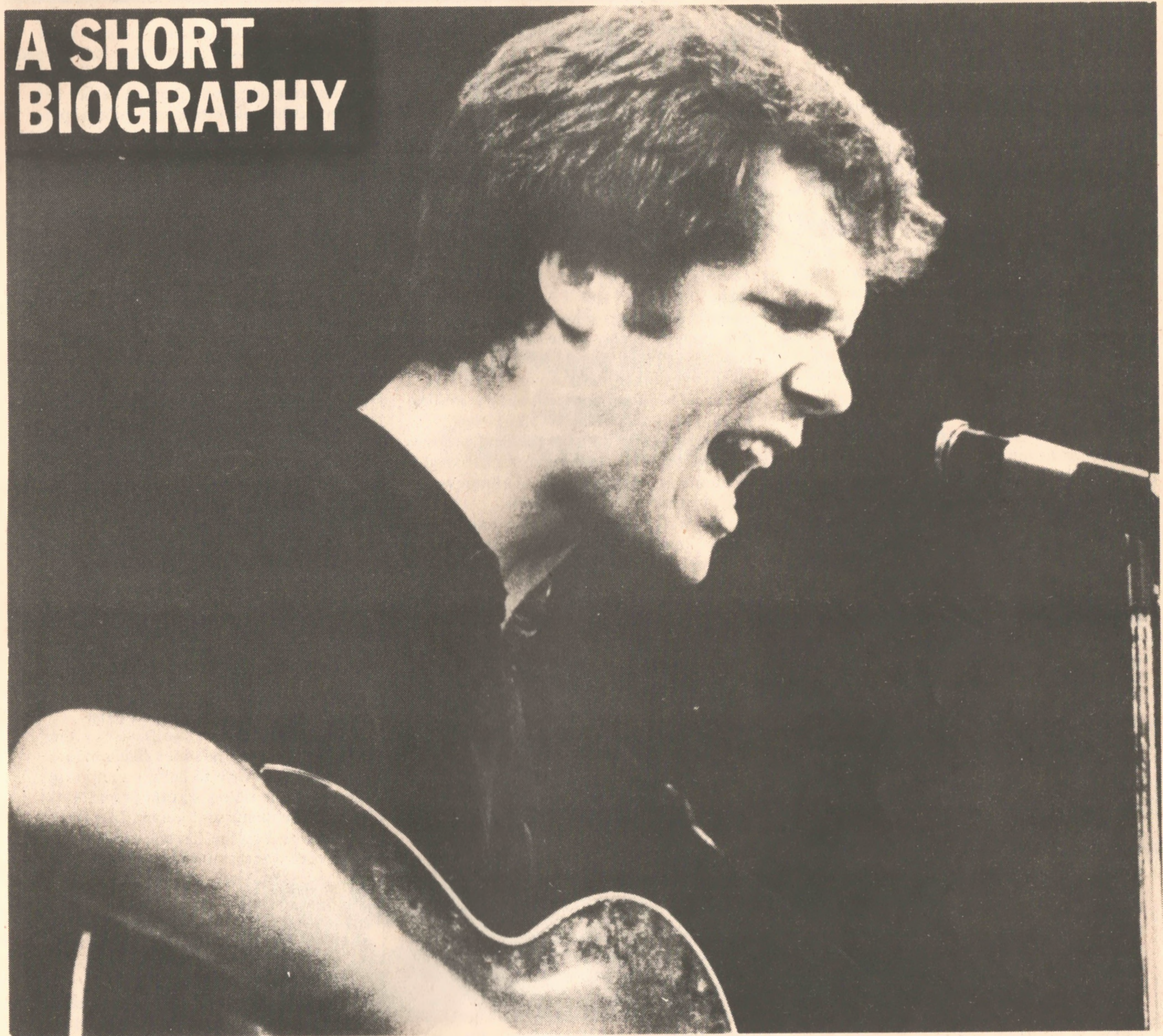
But the band alone are faced with a different set of pressures, more demanding than I think anyone could imagine. Besides the physical pressures there is the knowledge that you've got to get up there every night and operate at top gear, more of a strain for the Feelgoods, bearing in mind the nature of their act, and then afterwards sitting up half the night trying to unwind. Of course by now you'll know that it took its toll in the end, and the last, most prestigious gig of the tour at Hammersmith Odeon stumbled to an end when Wilco just flaked out towards the end of the set. A dramatic conclusion to a month of unqualified success during which their second album MALPRACTICE reached number 17 in the album charts.

So what's the next step now then? America? The World? At the moment I can't conceive of any foreseeable limit to the fame and adulation they're enjoying, and when Lee leans back, takes another slug of vodka and grins mischievously, you realise that he can't either.

Andy.

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY



*"See my lightning, hear my thunder
I am truth, I know the way..."*
(*'School Days'*)

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT's biggest paradox is his insistence that his values and life style are no different from any may in the street; but his eccentricities are something else.

He's been called the Charlie Chaplin of rock but the description he feels most comfortable with is a "post psychedelic aristocratic beatnik".

Born in North Carolina a direct descendant of Peter Stuyvesant, the one-legged governor of New York (so every biog states in its opening line) he explains that Loudon Wainwright I was an insurance salesman and Loudon Wainwright II "a mild mannered reporter for a great metropolitan magazine". When Loudon Wainwright III was old enough to realise what had happened he was determined that there would be no Loudon Wainwright IV. He

spent 26 years renouncing middle class mores and had an ambition fulfilled when his wife Kate McGarrigle dropped baby Rufus.

Earlier Loudon Wainwright had quit university in Pittsburgh and summed up his sentiments of the city beautifully in his 'Ode To A Pittsburgh' ("You were smoke-stacked, you were laid in cobble stone, you were trolley-car tracked. And for you the red skies shone").

This was one of the outstanding tracks on the first Loudon Wainwright album for Atlantic—"Black Uncle Remus" and "Bruno's Place" were other notables—that had the fickle American press hailing him as the new Dylan when it was released in 1971. But before he made a name for himself at the Gaslight and Gerde's in Greenwich Village he'd conveniently homed in on two fashionable meccas of the '60's—San Francisco just before the hippie community disseminated into the surrounding countryside, and Boston/Cambridge, Massachus-

settes, which continued to thrive on a somewhat lower plane even after the folk world had moved west. Via New York City Wainwright came to Europe, and Britain has become something of a semi-base for this frustrated musician ever since—not London, you understand, but somewhere in the remote parts of the Scottish highlands.

BECAUSE OF his unique talents, a perpetually changing countenance and the Dylan tag hanging around his neck, Loudon Wainwright has never fitted snugly into the categories that have been prepared for him. Nowadays he'll successfully play havoc with an audience's emotions by having them laugh at his contortions while he's in fact singing a tortured suicide ballad.

Quite why his initial British concerts were as support act to the Everly Bros (at the Albert Hall) and the Soft Machine, no one will ever know—but there wasn't too much sympathy for an unshaven wise guy

Loudon Wainwright

in drainpipe terylene trousers strumming erratically on an acoustic guitar. Those kind of situations make him as uncomfortable as recording studios, and that's a fear that seems to increase with each new album. It seems scarcely believable that since Clive Davis took Loudon from CBS to Arista the artist has apparently dried up and has been unable to find the ideal studio situation.

Last time he was in Britain he lamented the problem. He said he'd like to record in Britain yet but for a few folkie friends such as Richard Thompson he really didn't know how to begin getting a studio team together.

In the old days it was different. He and his manager/producer Milt Kramer would have nothing more than an acoustic guitar to contend with, and because of the oblique way he cameoed situations and wrote about city paranoia, drunks, babies, hotel rooms—and even analysing his own schizophrenia, his vista was both wide and intense, requiring nothing more than back-up guitar. Whilst womens libbers were reacting against 'Motel Blues' and 'Hostess', John Peel was playing the ass off 'Be Careful There's A Baby In The House'.

When he was dropped by Atlantic, Clive Davis promptly pledged his faith in the artist's talents, and next time he went into the studios it was to record a band album for Columbia. Thomas Jefferson Kaye was the producer and the band consisted largely of his own band, White Cloud. Loudon subsequently played some New York gigs with White Cloud at the Cafe A Go Go but claimed that he felt uncomfortable and that his role was nothing more than the singer in the band. When he tried a year later to put a band, together his endeavours were just as fruitless.

The saviour of *Album III* was probably the fact that 'Dead Skunk' became a hit—another fact that Loudon attributes to Clive Davis. But it was clear that many people missed the stark and dramatic reality of a voice and guitar record where the despair, the wry humour and the irony had been an utterly personal transmission. Loudon: "People ask why I didn't make another voice and guitar record. They wish I hadn't employed a band—but the thought of making another voice and guitar album was totally boring. At the same time I really enjoy hit singles and I see no reason why I shouldn't be able to make them."

IT IS CONCEIVABLE that Loudon Wainwright's records could never match up to his live performances because of the spontaneity and ad-libbing that he puts in. People who have seen him perform far more than I have—both drunk and sober—say that each show is totally different from the last. Thus the prospect of recording, to Loudon at least, is even more limiting. "I've always seen records as kind of the final exam—you make the record and then it's out there and there's nothing you can do about it and it haunts you for the rest of your life. Onstage if I fxxx up, it's over but as far as records go... I mean I've made five

albums and I still know nothing about those knobs and buttons."

Attempted Moustache was probably Loudon's best album and it coincided with a week long stint at Max's Kansas City in New York which underlined the hold he has over a packed, small club captive audience—particularly in his home town. You could have heard a pin drop when he played 'Red Guitar' on piano or delivered his ballad about 'The Man Who Couldn't Cry' or the unaccompanied 'Lisa'. The place broke up when he did 'Clockwork Chartreuse' and 'I Am The Way' and listened attentively when wife Kate joined him onstage to play some banjo. Yet when he wasn't at Max's he'd be wandering off on some drunken binge down in the Greenwich Village bars—in solitary confinement, very much alone. "I think New York has a lot to do with the kind of songs I wrote, whether paranoid or paradoxical," he admitted. Nevertheless the album was put together down in Nashville.

Yet Wainwright still doesn't enjoy the kind of mass appeal that his music deserves. Although his popularity in Britain and New York is immense he admits that he'd be hard pushed to fill a 400-seater hall in Chicago.

"I THINK MY FRUSTRATIONS ARE EXACTLY THE SAME AS ANYONE ELSE'S"

"I hear the early records now and I hate the way I sing; but on later records I hear the band and I wish certain songs had been done differently. But overall I think there are some very good songs on those first two records and I tend to wince less when I hear them. I mean 'Black Uncle Remus' and 'I Don't Care' could quite easily have a band behind them whereas 'Central Square Song' I've even started doing again onstage."

"In America they love me to do 'Dead Skunk' but to use a Euro-genital parallel it's down to how far you're willing to drop your pants."

THIS PAST YEAR'S been a particularly difficult one for Loudon. Playing the part of Captain Spaulding in the *M*A*S*H* series last Autumn was a welcome departure and he thoroughly enjoyed his first acting venture, wishing that it could have been extended. Secondly his wife Kate, who wrote 'Work Song' which appeared on the first Maria Muldaur album, started doing her own album. "It was never easy—but I didn't really get too involved on her record. She did record 'The Swimming Song' and I played guitar on one cut but they didn't use it."

A look of resignation... vacant eyes. Loudon apologises, admits that he's burned out from playing too many gigs. Then in answer to a question I'd asked earlier he again put his role into a very general perspective. "I think my frustrations are exactly the same as anyone else's—God, death, life, sex, success and failure."

He didn't exactly leave CBS in a blaze of glory although the company intensified their efforts to promote him once they realised there was a chance of him moving elsewhere. Loudon attributes whatever success he might have been at CBS directly to Clive Davis, and the new Arista boss in turn welcomed the gangling, dishevelled songwriter with open arms. As the press release said: "I couldn't be happier with the new signing. Loudon is a rare artist with a brilliant musical talent, a unique and novel lyrical ability and an imaginative sense of humour all his own. He is one of my special favourites and all of us at Arista will certainly treat his career with the considerable sensitivity he deserves."

Clive hits the nail on the head with the last part of that statement—for CBS are seldom willing to put backing into an artist until they have sold 'x' thousand units. That's why the Springsteen campaign has been so haphazard. But when you're dealing with an artist as esoteric and avant garde as Loudon you don't built up sales by pretending he doesn't exist.

In all probability Clive Davis is biting his nails down to the quick like a man waiting for his wife to deliver a child. In the meantime that gestation period looks like getting longer and longer. In a fit of desperation Loudon has announced: "I don't care whether I do the album in England, New York or Iowa as long as I have the musicians."

Loudon had felt somewhat overawed down in Nashville where he recorded *Attempted Moustache* and for his valedictory album he decided to vary his recording location. *Unrequited* was recorded in New York City, upstate New York, Sausalito on the west coast, and a complete side of live takes recorded during his performance at the Bitter End.

The track everyone picked up on was Loudon's celebration to the birth of his first son—aptly titled 'Rufus Is A Tit Man'.

But that was a year ago, and maybe the importance of that album can only be judged in the light of Loudon's next recording.

□ JERRY GILBERT

Ed's note: If you reckon Loudon's music deserves a more in depth analysis than we've allowed here, then we should point out that we're saving it to coincide with the next album or British tour. Since it could be a long time before either of these memorable events comes to pass, and being mindful of the large quantity of mail asking for an article, it was obvious that we couldn't neglect the talents of the man any longer.

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Poco Keep On Tryin' (AND WIND UP MAKING GOOD)

PROLOGUE

IT IS a truly heartrending tale that I have to unfold my friends, and one that will explain the slightly bizarre nature of the article to follow. On my journey to darkest Central London in search of Poco, or to be more specific Rusty Young, I had as my sole companion a cassette recorder that is one of the genuine museum pieces of rock 'n' roll history. This prototypal piece of equipment, a source of wonder and admiration in all who encounter it, belongs to no less a celebrity than Pete Frame and has been present at some of the great interviews of the age. However, possibly through nonchalance developed over years of associating with the great figures in

popular music, or possibly because of the rigours of advanced age, this magnificent machine has acquired a mind of its own—viz and to wit, it don't always work. Picture then, if you will: my horror when, on leaving after a most pleasant hour in the company of Mr Young, I discovered that this miserable mechanism had unilaterally censored the first ten or fifteen minutes of conversation, during which the circumstances surrounding Richie Furay's departure from the band had been the central topic.

Fortunately my memory banks are still functioning sufficiently well for me to have remembered the main gist of what was said, but you will have to excuse the lack of verbatim quotes from Rusty's

jewelled tongue during the first bit of this article. Now onward without further ado.

PART THE FIRST: CONSEQUENTLY SO LONG

ZIGZAG. IN the person of Jerry Gilbert, last interviewed Poco some two years ago, just about the time of Richie's not unexpected exit, and in that article (ZZ46) Jerry talked darkly of David Geffen's 'ulterior motives' behind his well-publicised takeover of Poco's affairs in early 1973. Not entirely fair to young David, that, according to Rusty. Apparently he had the utmost faith in Poco at first, and was sure he could add to his fast-growing prestige by taking

POCO

them on to superstardom where all previous efforts had failed, and only when all his efforts failed did he elect to save face by putting Richie in a surefire supergroup with J.D. Souther and Chris Hillman. It seems Richie was never too happy with this arrangement, and the success of the S.H.F. Band, claims Rusty, is illusory, for although the albums shipped gold to the dealers, which is where chart placings come in, the percentage of unsold returns was very high, and on tour they could hardly give tickets away, with 5000 seat venues only one tenth full. To lovers of justice this will come as good news, since S.H.F. were never noted for the quality of their recorded output, and apparently the band has now broken up, with Richie returning to Colorado to sort himself out and do some writing.

PART THE SECOND: PICKIN' UP THE PIECES (AGAIN)

IT'S A GREAT SHAME that Richie's talents should have lain fallow in recent years, but from Poco's point of view his departure seems to have resulted in nothing but good. When he was considering leaving, the rest of the band at first thought they'd go their separate ways in that eventuality, but when the time came they only took five minutes to decide to continue, and a bloody good job too, because to this pair of ears their music has gone from strength to strength ever since.

The first album as a four piece, *Seven*, admittedly sees them finding their feet without their staple source of material, and only Timmy Schmit's 'Skatin'' stands out, and Rusty agrees that it is a disappointing album, but the next one, and their last for Epic, *Cantamos*, is a bone-fide classic, contrary to popular opinion. With Rusty coming right to the forefront as a songwriter and Paul Cotton recapturing the quality of 'Bad Weather' particularly on 'Another Time Around', one of my all-time fave rare Poco tracks, the songs are uniformly excellent, and the band plays them with a spark and economy that haven't always been Poco trademarks. If Roy Plomley cast me ashore on a desert island with an electricity supply this is probably the Poco album I'd choose to take with me.

Anyway, Poco's contract with Epic was finally at an end, and, as they had never made any secret of their dissatisfaction at the way the company had handled them, it was interesting to see where they would turn in search of the new lease of life that a change in circumstances can often give a band.

PART THE THIRD: WORKIN' FOR ABC

SEVERAL COMPANIES, quite rightly, were considering the purchase of Poco's services and held talks with the band, but as Rusty says: "Talk is cheap. ABC was the only one who believed in us strongly enough to put their money where their mouth was." Apparently the main problem with Epic was that the size of their financial

commitment didn't require them to work overtime on the band in order to show a profit on their investment, so in negotiating a new deal the band were looking for a greater commitment to force the company to do more on their behalf. But that's not all: "The second commitment was personal. The president of ABC is a real close friend of ours, he's been in our corner for years, and when he is personally committed we know he means it. He's not some-guy we just met from New York whom we see once every six months or once a year, and who doesn't know us at all. Half the people at ABC are personal friends we have known for years, and when they back this up with financial commitment how can we lose?"

Well, I'm happy to say Poco haven't lost. The new album is easily their best-ever seller in the States, and the single 'Keep On Tryin'' is the hit they've been seeking for years. Their live performances, moreover, which have always been very popular, are now being received even better.

"For some reason in the States, on the last tour we did, we got a better reaction that we've had since the first year of Poco. The momentum is building, you can see it in the audiences, it's really exciting, and I have to put it down to the record company, which is interested in promotion and getting it out to the people, because you have to advertise. A lot of great bands never made it, and it's because people don't know about them, they're not properly advertised. I think that now, because ABC is doing a real good job, it's all going to come in line."

PART THE FOURTH: HEAD OVER HEELS

HOPEFULLY BY NOW most of you will have at least heard the new album, because it really is exceedingly good (as Mr Kipling would say). Not as consistent as *Cantamos* in my humble opinion, but well worthy to be the album that finally breaks Poco out. Rusty again gives much of the credit to good ol' ABC:

"We were all really jazzed when we went in to cut it," he said, as a heavily built record company man played nonchalantly with a blunt instrument, "It wasn't at all depressing like it had been on other albums with the Epic thing hanging over our heads. The record came out sounding much better than the other ones have, although we like our records. I'm not convinced that *Head Over Heels* is any better."

Apart from anything else the album marks Rusty's vocal debut on the exquisite 'Us', which is certainly one of the album's highlights, and raises the question why Rusty has never sung before:

"It was a real personal tune. Some of the other guys sang it; we worked it out in three-part harmony and it didn't sound right, and then they each sang it in turn and it didn't sound right, so I did it. I had a great time and it was a learning experience. I'd like to do more, maybe one on an album, but I have to do it well, if I can't then I won't do it. I was pleased with the way 'Us' came out."

One top priority in the making of the

album was a potential hit single, which is one reason why 'Dallas', a Becker-Fagen song previously done only by Thomas Jefferson Kaye, so far as I know, was included:

"We were definitely looking for a hit single, crass as that seems. You definitely have to have a hit single to survive. I wrote one song specifically to be Top 40 AM music, and the others felt that 'Dallas' was really typical Top 40 rock and could be a hit. I never would have expected 'Keep On Tryin'', that was a real surprise. The single was going to be 'Makin' Love', but they were both getting an equal amount of airplay, and I just felt there would be more momentum behind that other tune, so I called up ABC and asked them if they didn't think that 'Keep On Tryin'' would be better."

PART THE UMPTEENTH: DELIVERIN' THE GOODS

WHEN I WAS CONTEMPLATING Poco's illustrious history it struck me, in one of my lucid moments, that the high quality of the last two albums might have something to do with their decision to do their own production. So I put this to Rusty, and Rusty said:

"Well, when Jim produced our albums, he didn't actually produce them, we all did it. When we went into this thing we said 'We will give you production credit, and we'll obviously all do it', and one of the reasons he left the band was because he was getting credit and no money. So we produced ourselves at that point, but the record company felt that when Jim left we had to have a real producer, and they recommended Steve Cropper, so we tried Steve; then we got with Jack Richardson, who we felt made good sounding records. We were interested in finding someone who could put our music on vinyl and have it come back sounding the way we wanted it, not someone to interfere with the musical end of it, and that was the function that Jack fulfilled."

"However, the problem with a producer is that you have to work at his pace, and at times, our music didn't fit his pace, it was too hurried! I don't play well at 5 o'clock in the morning after I've been up for four days, but if he's got to rush off to do the next Alice Cooper album, he's got to get ours finished, so our quality would be sacrificed because of his schedule. I wasn't happy with that, none of us were, so we decided to look for a hot-shot engineer and hire him, and produce our records ourselves. We were recommended to Mark Harman, who has worked on some of Neil's albums, although they don't sound red hot, and the Band albums which sound real good. So we met three or four guys, and Mark was the one we liked and we felt could do the best job, because he was so into us and our music, and we cut *Cantamos* and had a good time, and definitely didn't need a producer."

It was Mark incidentally, who got Garth Hudson along to play on 'Head Over Heels', and the reason why all us Band buffs are being kept waiting for an album of new, original material is that Robbie Robertson (a) having trouble with the old songwrit-

POCO

ng inspiration, and (b) feels that a long wait will give an eventual release added importance. Well fair enough, fellas, but four years is one hell of a wait.

PART THE LAST: I'M HOLDIN' ON TIGHT, 'COS I KNOW WHEN IT'S RIGHT!

POCO INTERVIEWS down the years have always been dominated by a feeling of being passed by in terms of fame and adulation, so did Rusty begin to think their time would never come?

"I don't look at it that way exactly. I enjoy having the opportunity to make music, and it's not like we're an unsuccessful act, we sell a lot of albums, all along we have, and to have the opportunity to make music, to write, record and play, is reward enough. The only thing that a hit single or that little bit more success can bring you is playing in better halls and to have more people come, which is great. Money isn't the end all, because we all make real good money playing in Poco, and it isn't the financial thing at all, it's the chance to make good music."

But—picking up this fame and fortune aspect—doesn't Rusty fear that possible success on an extreme scale would see them disappearing into mansions in Beverly Hills, to leave their basement studios and silver coke spoons only once every so often to release a supercession solo album or do a quick tour of baseball stadia?

"There's so much to do, so many new musical frontiers, that success should have nothing to do with it, the tunes that we're working on for the next album would be there if it sold ten copies or ten million. You have these goals, musical goals, and the financial end of it should have nothing to do with that, at least I don't think it should."

It is highly probable we'll do solo albums, but everyone's goal at this point is to break Poco, and I don't think until that happens there'll be either the time or the right atmosphere for anyone to do something by themselves or with other people. Everyone put so much stock in Richie and how much Richie meant to Poco, and we're all determined to show that Poco was made up of five guys, and all the tunes and all the things that were Poco weren't just one person or any two persons, it was a total project done by all of us, all the way down the line. We're all really committed to proving that Poco can happen and be a supergroup."

The words 'commitment' and 'determination' kept on appearing in the course of the interview, and with that kind of attitude, with two fine albums in the last year and with a new record company solidly behind them, Poco's future has never looked more hopeful; and at a time when the overall quality of rock music is not inspiring, to put it mildly, that's about as good as news gets.

□ PAUL KENDALL

A REVIEW of just under an album's worth of Poco tracks recorded at RCA Studio A, Hollywood, California and produced by

Jack Richardson, circa June 1973. All other tracks recorded at this time became an album of very high quality entitled *Crazy Eyes*.

'So You Got A Lover' (Richie Furay). This song dates back to 1967 and the days when Richie Furay was the also-ran when it came to putting songs onto Buffalo Springfield albums. 'Sad Memory' on *Again* was only the third song he'd ever written. Paul Harris plays piano, the lead instrument. Tim Schmit compliments him perfectly. Richie sings in the style of 'Don't Let It Pass By' slow and dreamily creating an effect which very few vocalists can achieve. It happens to be one of his most literate love-songs.

'Nothing's Still The Same' (Tim Schmit). Fast moving, well-phrased country-ish work of art, good hook lines and one of Poco's best songs. Heavens above why was this never included on *Crazy Eyes*? Plodding bass-lines and well-constructed harmonies.

'Believe Me' (Richie Furay). Re-recorded by the infamous Souther Hillman Furay CSNY carbon-copy, which were short of potential on record but played incredible gigs, no mind who tells you any different. Paul Harris again plays piano similar to the SHF recording. Starts with the chorus as opposed to the SHF version. Although Al Perkins is a very good slide player and no more than competent steel player, his SHF work was a backbone for them. However his embellishment of this track is minimal compared to Rusty Young, who plays magnificently. A far better version, if only for Rusty Young. Chris Hillman plays barely audible mandolin.

'Faith In The Families' (Paul Cotton). Electric piano (Harris once more) led instrumental version of the track on *Seven*. This is perhaps one of the weakest cuts of that first album sans Furay and sounds like America on a bad day. This is pretty but although short seems to ramble on with no musical conclusion. This was most probably a rehearsal and not intended for release.

'Skunk Creek' (Rusty Young). Typical Poco instrumental workout along the fine examples of 'Grand Country' and 'Fool's Gold'. Dobro, steel double-tracked by Young, with snappy snare'n'cymbals by George Grantham. A truly fine example of country pickin' in the best Clarence White 'Black Mountain Rag' style.

'(All Of) Your Friends' (Richie Furay). Solo voice by Richie, strong bass line from Tim, and in-the-background guitar from Paul. That familiar banjo effect on steel from Rusty Young. THIS could have been the hit single that both Richie and George have hinted at in interviews. Hummed ending which fades quickly.

'Get In The Wind' (Paul Cotton). Brisk rocker with once-more astounding steel embellishment from Rusty. One of Paul's best vocals. A song which first appeared with a Cream-arrangement on the first Illinois Speed Press album. Nothing compared to this. Full of the exciting guitar that Paul plays at his melodic best. The bass actually reminds me of early Phil Lesh. ANOTHER possible hit single. Perhaps a

stronger song than anything from *Crazy Eyes* or *Seven*. Must find release one day.

'Passing Thru' (Tim Schmit). An unorchestrated and therefore superior version. Piano is probably good of Paul Harris. No sign of Furay. Once more no superlatives are credible enough to describe the eerie feelings which are generated by the simple yet complex steel guitar executed fills. Tim's songs tend to be of a more delicate and softer nature than those of Paul Cotton, who often shows roots of listening to bands such as Redbone. Although his output is not as high as Cotton, they are more in the Poco tradition of country-tinged melodic love songs.

PLUS:

'A Man Like Me' (Richie Furay). Not from the *Crazy Eyes* sessions, but from a session with Richie Polodori (who produced the first SHF Band album), recorded mid-1971 before (or possibly after) *From The Inside*, in Los Angeles. The song saw a previous life on the *Live* album, but it's so different it's not true. This track is really Poco at their best, and proves beyond any shadow of doubt that Richie's contention of Poco being 'just a country band, which is a misconception' was justified. It's the live version of 'Man Like Me' crossed with 'Railroad Days' and 'Settlin' Down'. Incredible powerful interplay between Paul and Rusty, with unusually heavy lead lines, similar to the rousing performance I was fortunate to catch twice in early February at the Rainbow. Three and four part harmonies take off where solo Richie subsides. Paul Cotton's harder blues-inspired guitar work is a universe apart from Jim Messina's sweeter, more country pickin', which sounds a little like Stephen Stills on his favourite Gretsch. If Neil Young had never joined CSNY and released 'Helpless' or 'Ohio', they would reach the status of this track. When some bod gets the job of putting out a Poco compilation with previously unreleased material (as they so often do, Christ known the Epic effort at the moment is lousy, lacking 'Magnolia', 'Ride The Country' and 'Anyway Bye Bye'... and you would think they would include the 'My Kind Of Love'/'Hard Luck' 45), this track should be included as a self-sufficient masterpiece, along with 'Believe Me' and 'Get In The Wind'.

AND if one of my all-time favourite bands still want a fifth member, how about Rick Roberts, Herb Pederson, Dan Fogelberg or even ex-Cat Mother Bob Smith who wrote some gems such as 'I Must Be Dreaming' and 'The Last Thing That I Do'. Check those superbly pastoral Cat Mother albums out.

AND if Richie Furay wants to get another band together why not steal Bernie Leadon and Randy Meisner from the Eagles, who are on their way to becoming a top ten hit singles band. Or maybe get it together with Neil Young, Jimmy Messina, Stephen Stills and a hot-shot drummer who won't imitate Arthur Conley and play Sunset Strip. Geddit??

□ DAVID PROCKTER



ZIGZAG POLL —ACE CAT OF THE CENTURY

Pos.		Votes
1	Bob Dylan	528
2	Jerry Garcia	356
3	Jimi Hendrix	332
4	Neil Young	215
5	John Lennon	192
6	John Peel	175
7	Van Morrison	170
8	Jack Kerouac	157
9	Pete Townshend	149
10	Tim Buckley	133
	Roger McGuinn	-
12	Captain Beeshart	124
13	Jim Morrison	109
	Groucho Marx	-
15	Keith Richards	106
16	Joni Mitchell	101
17	Grace Slick	99
18	Frank Zappa	90
19	Gram Parsons	88
20	Salvador Dali	85
21	Dave Crosby	82
22	Denis Law (What????!)	80
23	Harpo Marx	77
24	Brian Wilson	74
	Marty Balin	-
26	Gurdjieff	72
27	John Cleese	69
28	Chuck Berry	68
29	John Cippolina	66
30	Kurt Vonnegut	65
	Richard Neville	-
32	Robert Hunter	64
33	Arthur Lee	61
	Bernie Leadon	-
35	Ken Kesey	60
36	Ian Anderson	57
	Nils Lofgren	-
38	Jean Paul Sartre	56
	Brian Jones	-
40	Lowell George (Wahoo!)	55
41	Ray Davies	53
	Todd Rundgren	-
43	Michael Moorcock	50
44	Phil Lesh	49
45	Karlheinz Stockhausen	45
46	Jackson Browne	43
47	Enoch Powell	42
	Robert Johnson	-
49	Neil Casady	40
	Richard Thompson	-
	W.B. Yeats	-
52	Glen Frey	38
53	Hunter S. Thompson	37
	Duane Allman	-
55	Pete Frame (Doghandler & Gourmet)	35
	T.S. Eliot	-
	George Orwell	-
58	Bertrand Russell	34
	W.C. Fields	-
	Jane Fonda	-
	Michael Nesmith	-

Well, dear friends, as you can see, the Ace Cat Category has made an unexpected re-appearance in our lives. Whether *ZigZag* distribution isn't all it used to be, or whether the Post Office's service has failed to keep pace with its charges I don't know; but, after last month's blurb had been whisked off to the presses, the votes simply poured in, and since some of them were for Hunter Thompson I decided, in my infinite wisdom, to put the poll in this month, and to have all future ones printed a month later, so that all possible nominations can be included. Anyway, I think it's an interesting list, once you've got past the rather predictable first half dozen, and it gives a pretty fair indication of the wide-ranging and excellent taste of *ZigZag* readers, and also of the all-important role that music plays in their lives.

Now on to those eagerly awaited monthly awards. Album of the month is the immaculate offering from the newly formed Beau Brummels. I always reckoned that one of Stoneground's few shortcomings was the fact that Sal Valentino didn't get to sing enough, so I'm in my seventh heaven with this one. Also essential listening is the new Poco waxing, which I've been incessantly plagued with while young Kendall prepared his effable grist on said group. Journalist of the month—wait for it—goes to CSM for his quite moving Hendrix memorial. It made a most pleasant change to see him putting the music first, and very eloquently too—top class, old chap.

I managed to lurch home from the Dark Lantern last night in time to see the Stone Dead Squirrel Test, and was disappointed to find that it's still the same old craperoo. Dull bands in an unnatural surround, album tracks accompanied by eyeball-searing films, and worthlessly skimpy interviews do not compulsive viewing make. Still, it's better than nowt, and the John Lennon thing last week was good.

Moving swiftly now as my fingers remember how to type, we come to this month's category which is KEYBOARD PLAYERS, which should be interesting as they are a breed that don't usually figure very prominently in these pages. Anyway, rush me your lists of ten nominations in order of preference to: The Famous Mac Garry, c/o Earth Records, 72a Friars Square, Aylesbury, and don't forget friends, it's your votes that count. That's it for now, I'll be spending the next month in a state of feverish anticipation at the prospect of seeing Bruce Springsteen, but doubtless I'll recover in time for the next issue. Take care of yourselves.

□ MAC

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 Joe Tex — I Gotcha: Spills The Beans
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 DILLARD & CLARK — Through The Morning Through The Night
 DILLARD & CLARK — The Fantastic Expedition
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THE CHEAPEST AND BEST IN SOUNDS AROUND!

A QUICK PEEK AT AMERICAN HISTORY

Alright, alright ... I can imagine millions of readers out there in *ZigZag*-land throwing up trembling hands, emitting strangled cries of horror, and keeling over into a shock induced coma at the thought of an article on America. I mean ... in the four years since that ridiculously successful first album these guys have been taboo; no one with the vaguest regard for their hip credibility would dream of saying a word in their favour, and the Press, from the early charges of CSNY impersonations to talk of 'three John Denvers' during their recent tour, has been unusually consistent in its attitude towards the group.

Quite rightly too, up to a point, 'cos their early albums suggest America to be pop music's answer to Reg Varney or Timothy Lea—very popular, but essentially lame examples of their chosen genre.

My surprise can be imagined, therefore, when a customer in the delightful little record shop that I run here in beautiful downtown Aylesbury demanded to hear 'Hearts', prior to buying it, and the record turned out to be good, very good even. It won't alter the course of Western civilisation or contribute greatly to the expansion of mass consciousness, but it's an eminently enjoyable album, and several light years ahead of America's previous efforts in all departments, which set me thinking. (Brace yourselves!)

When America cut that first album Dan Peek, the oldest member of the group, was only 19—young in other words to have chart-topping records on both sides of the Atlantic. It's the sort of age when most musicians (as opposed to the plastic front men who carry the flag for pop music on Thursday nights) are very much in the learning stages, still sifting their own style from whatever influences they might have, and probably still to set foot in a recording studio. Most of my heroes—and probably yours—had to wait until their late twenties or their thirties before they reached any kind of artistic peak, and—in some cases—the success to go with it.

Because America hit the bullseye very quickly and very young they've been labouring under a dual disadvantage—though obviously not a financial one. Firstly they've had to mature musically in the constant glare of publicity, rather than in the bars, small clubs and demo studios where that process is more usually achieved. Secondly, because their success was so sudden, and on such a lavish scale they incurred a lot of jealousy and scepticism, particularly among critics and 'thinking' fans, who tend to harbour a not entirely unjustified obsession with such things as 'dues' and 'pedigree'. The result, of course, is that a lot of people have always been a bit biased, which is a shame, because the new album demonstrates a strength and maturity that would probably catch them off guard. Anyway, to move on from this rambling prologue—which is really self-justification for writing the article in the first place—*Hearts* is good West Coast music, and since *ZigZag* has always had a penchant for good West Coast music, it



seemed about time America got a mention.

As everybody must know, America consist of Dan Peek, Gerry Beckley and Dewey Bunnell, who met over here in 1968 while at a high school for the children of US servicemen, and after a few months of working together under the kind auspices of one Jeff Dexter, they managed to obtain a record contract in rather fairytale circumstances, as Dan recounts:

"Through some contacts that Gerry had made at Morgan Studios we ended up playing to Martin White, Ian Ralfini and Ian Samwell, who all worked for Warner Bros. at that time, and we literally walked into the office with three guitars and played them our material. They were impressed, and right away committed to put us in the studio to do some demos. So we were knocked out and went to do some demos, and brought them back, and they liked them and said they'd put us in the studio to make an album."

So make an album they did, with production assistance from Ian Samwell and Jeff Dexter, and musical help from David Lindley, of Lindley Bros. fame, and Ray Cooper, currently plying his percussive talents with Elton John. Frankly, it's not an album that the passing of time has treated kindly. 'Sandman' brings back memories of listening to Bob Harris on hazy summer evenings, and 'I Need You' is pleasant enough, but the rest varies from the bland to the cringeworthy. Lyrics like 'Come on children get your heads back together' repeated many times might have been acceptable back in '71 (though I doubt it), but in '75, as the brink looms ever closer, there's no way they make it. Actually, I suspect Dan knows this as well as anybody, though he isn't about to come right out and say it:

"I would agree with you that as far as material goes we were very young and had absolutely no experience in the studio, but I think that if you have any idea of what you like in music, you're going to know what you'd like to hear come out of the studio and go on record. I think it was an honest record, honest emotions put forward in lyrics and music."

Whatever the album's merits, it was swept up the charts by a combination of good publicity, hard work by the band round Britain and the States, and timing that perfectly caught the crest of the acoustic wave. Their first single 'Horse With No Name' followed it, and sealed their fate as a poor man's Neil Young:

"After that song had been a number one smash here," Dan recalls, "I can actually remember going to the States and hearing a DJ play the song and say 'That was Neil Young', and I really think he was serious. But all those things really added to the mystique (!), and it didn't really matter how much people criticised, it was still a success. They could make fun of it all week, but we were crying all the way to the top of the charts."

Surprisingly 'Horse' wasn't on their second album, as that would have been an obvious sales-boosting move, but apparently it had been added to the American copy of the first album, and they forgot to put it on *Homecoming* for British consumption. By the time the second album was recorded, however, the group had left Britain, mainly for financial reasons, quitting Jeff Dexter for the fast-expanding Geffen-Roberts stable:

"Jeff was very unhappy; as a matter of fact we had signed a contract with him, but he eventually got a certain amount of reward for what he had done, but even before we went to the States he had approached us and said: 'Listen, I don't feel confident about doing the business in the States, I would like to do a co-management thing.' We were all really out of our depth, and he wanted to do a deal with Peter Asher, I believe. He had wired Peter and asked him to consider managing us, and got a sharp reply back saying no, and several months later, after we had a number one album and single, Peter sent a telegram saying, 'Gee, I guess I blew it'. We now know Peter very well, and he's a good friend."

As it turned out, though, Jeff wasn't the only one left behind in the move home to the States:

"We had told Ian that we didn't want him to produce the album, we wanted to do it ourselves. We knew what we were doing,

AMERICA

we were very confident in the studio, and we produced what we felt was a very fine album. It kind of summed up all the feeling of what it was like to be back in the USA."

One of the record's more interesting features was its inclusion of a John Martyn song, 'Head And Heart' from *Bless The Weather*, one of only two non-originals ever recorded by the group:

"John is a friend of ours that we met in the beginning. We had done several shows with him around the country and were really impressed by his music. I really think he's one of the unsung heroes of folk music. I think he was embarrassed when we picked that song, because he thought it was too commercial, but I also think he was flattered. It's fun to do other people's material, it's just a place to stand back and see how you can treat it and get an idea of what you're capable of doing. That song in particular is one of my favourites on the album, it's such a personal song."

Like its predecessor, *Homecoming* did colossal business; in fact it's their most successful release to date, in terms of sales, though not so much in Britain, where the acoustic boom had died down quicker. But suddenly the garden became much less rosey around the time of *Hat-trick*, which, as the title might suggest to the more perceptive among you, was their third effort:

"*Hat-trick* was a sad story. At this point it hasn't achieved nearly the success that the other albums have, and we were really very much into it. We thought it was our finest work to date, as you would always hope the next product is going to be better. But it came down to the old business trip, it was Elliott and David to some degree screwing us. They were only interested in setting up a deal for themselves, and then they dropped us like a hot potato. There was the facade of being managed by them, but we were being managed by a different guy every month, who was appointed by them to oversee what we were doing. It became a standing joke, we called it the 'Manager of the Month' club."

"At the time *Hat-trick* was made, Warner Bros. and Geffen-Roberts were engaged in a gigantic battle over renegotiation of our contract so that no one wanted to move on the release. It was timed very well for a period when there were no other albums around to compete with it, and had it gone out at that time I think it would have been a gigantic album."

By their own standards it wasn't a successful album, and neither was the single 'Muskkrat Love', although ostensibly it's no better or worse than *Homecoming*, so one is tempted to ask whether a fear that the bubble had burst didn't affect their confidence at this time:

"I would be lying if I said that it didn't. It was disappointing, combined with all the crazy business type of stuff that was happening, and we were pretty well out of balance by the end of that album—it had been excruciating to do. There's a song on it called 'That's Life', which is a hard song to interpret, but there's a line in it 'You don't get to heaven if they don't say

you do', which means that there's always someone out there who can put their thumb on you, and that's literally what was happening, we were being thumbed under by one or more people, just to show that they had the power."

Still, not everything was gloomy. Tours, backed by the rhythm section that's with them now, were 'going down a storm', and the group had moved under the managerial wing of John Hartmann and Harlan Goodman, who had also just parted company with Messrs Geffen-Roberts; but their most important step was to stop producing themselves:

"After *Hat-trick*," Dan confesses, "there were reasons we wanted to change our method of operation. It had taken so much out of us, that we just weren't really physically or mentally able to cope with producing another album, so consequently we needed a producer, and we needed an arranger, because we were starting to get into orchestral arrangements, and the only person that came to mind was George Martin."

Personally I think this move is largely responsible for the improvement to be found on *Hearts*. The early albums are very flat, both tonally and dynamically, and the introduction of an experienced producer-arranger would obviously help these failings. Anyway, America met Martin while he was visiting Los Angeles, and Dan remembers: "We were all a bit nervous at first, it was like meeting the King of England, this guy we had all revered for quite a while, but he put us completely at our ease." Wishing to take a complete break from the West Coast for a while, the group came over to London to record 'Holiday' at Air Studio in Oxford Street, Martin's home base, and according to Dan, things really clicked:

"We blew his mind because when we had approached him, Elliott Roberts who was still a puppet manager at that point, told George that we took a long time in the studio, which is not true, but I think George was a little bit apprehensive. In fact 'Holiday' was completed and mixed in fifteen days, which is pretty fast. We wanted to impress him, and we made sure that we were as together as possible before we went into the studio, but the fact that he is so good contributed to the fact that it was done quickly and done well."

Musically, *Holiday* is more interesting, but the two parties had clearly yet to blend satisfactorily, for Martin's arrangements and America's songs co-exist uneasily, and the album seems to be a bit of a patchwork of ideas yet to come together as a coherent whole. Commercially, however, it put America right back up in the big league, and the partnership with Martin continued and blossomed when he went to the West Coast to do the next one:

"It took one album with George for us all to get comfortable," Dan opines, "By *Hearts* it was just real natural, we knew how he worked, he knew how we worked. George Emerick is the engineer who has worked with George since *Sergeant Pepper*

and who worked on *Holiday*, and it's just like a team in the studio. *Hearts* was done in seventeen days, and it's even more complex an album, I think there's more depth than on *Holiday*, and it was still achieved in a relatively short space of time, just because the working format was down pretty well."

In all respects *Hearts* is a great improvement over the other America albums. The group's songs are melodically stronger and lyrically less inane, and Martin's arrangements are, as Dan says, "sympathetic to the degree that it's not the basic track and an arrangement, it's one unit together." Particularly relieving is the way he's resisted blue-rinsing everything with strings, and instead given the group a toughness of sound that was spectacularly absent previously. They're obviously pleased with the way things have turned out because they'll be working together again on the next album, and Martin is also going to remix early tracks for inclusion on a *History* compilation.

Unfortunately I missed the group's tour with Poco in September, but according to my spies their set builds to a frenzied heavy-metal finale (honestly, that's what I was told), and I wondered if this was a direction they'd been anxious to pursue, especially in view of their early experience in high school rock bands:

"In truth we've toned it down a bit. It was getting a little hairy when we were playing 'Cornwall Blank', 'Green Monkey' and some fairly hard, metallic-sounding songs, and we weren't really feeling comfortable with it. It does come across on the albums, but it's more apparent live just because of the volume of it."

America don't exactly fit one's idea of a typical working rock band, but they do tour a lot in the States—more so than most people in their income bracket—so do they enjoy it, or is it financially motivated?

"Touring is one of those things that you love and you hate. You love the adulation and people screaming their brains out, I can't help but get off on that, but the other things of being in a different hotel every night, and being a little out of it because you're travelling so much—those are the obvious drawbacks to it. As far as the performance side of it goes, the electric thing that happens when you meet your audience face to face is something I wouldn't ever want to miss."

Meeting Dan face to face he seems to be a very nice natural guy, despite his claim that after their initial success he "went through an incredible personality change", and even the mention of the heavy flak that they've always drawn from the Press found an equable response.

"It's flattering. The fact is that we've only been compared to people that were good. Recently we've been compared to CSN&Y, the Beach Boys and the Beatles, through our association with George. At least they compare us to people that we like and are influenced by."

□ PAUL KENDALL

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VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR

WHATEVER WOULD ROBERT HAVE SAID?

"BAND OF A MILLION YEARS" proclaims the decidedly Teutonic-looking poster that is being used to herald the reincarnation of Van Der Graaf Generator. Quite what it all means I wouldn't like to say, but it's certainly brash and imposing enough for what some people consider to be the reformation of the year.

Back in the very last days of the 1960's and throughout the beginning of 1970 a certain unspecified segment of the crumbling British 'underground' adopted Van Der Graaf Generator as being the torch-bearers for a new wave of British music that would sweep us light years away from the American-orientated rock that had influenced and dominated for a good two years before. Their second album, the first released in this country, was greeted in certain quarters with the same confused, amazed and excited reception that King Crimson's debut enjoyed... music that bore no resemblance to anything that anybody had heard before, totally underivative and very definitely British. But unfortunately, in the proverbial nutshell, that's as far as it really got. Their albums didn't sell in vast quantities, they were unable to secure work in this country for long periods of time, and eventually they broke up paradoxically enough at a time when it looked as though they might become in a big way.

A chronological summary of their career reads as follows:

- 1967 Robert J. Van Der Graaf, inventor of the Van Der Graaf Generator, dies. Van Der Graaf Generator born at Manchester University comprising Chris Smith (drums), Nick Pearne (organ, gtr), and Peter Hammill (gtr, vcls).
- 1968 Hugh Banton replaces Nick Pearne. Guy Evans joins. Chris Smith leaves. Keith Ellis joins. Band breaks up.
- 1969 Band re-forms to record **THE AEROSOL GREY MACHINE**. Line-up: Peter Hammill, Keith Ellis, Guy Evans, Hugh Banton. Nic Potter replaces Keith Ellis. Dave Jackson joins.
- 1970 (Feb): **THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS WAVE TO EACH OTHER** is released. (Dec): **H TO HE WHO AM THE ONLY ONE** released, and during its recording Nic Potter leaves.
- 1971 (July): Peter Hammill records solo album, **FOOL'S MATE**. (Oct): **PAWN HEARTS** released. Band breaks up.
- 1973 Peter Hammill releases four solo albums, all of them featuring one or more members of the old band.
- 1975 (Aug): Van Der Graaf Generator

play comeback concert in London. Well, they're the bare facts which obviously need some elaboration to be able to understand the whys and wherefors of all the changes. Without doubt the most dominant and influential personality in the band, Peter Hammill's early history and the birth of the original Van Der Graaf have been more than adequately covered in *ZigZag* 40 but to briefly re-cap: Hammill met Chris Smith and Nick Pearne, all of whom were studying at Manchester University, formed Van Der Graaf Generator Mark I and did very little except make a few tapes part of which materialised as a single 'The People You Were Going To'/'Firebrand' and came out on Polydor 56758 sometime in 1968. Then in a relatively short space of time Nick Pearne left to be replaced by Hugh Banton, and drummer Guy Evans joined, which is where we take up the story in a little more detail.

Guy Evans: It goes back to the time when there was the early liaison with the Stratton-Smith empire, and that's how I heard about the band. I was at Warwick University doing various entertainment things... one of the things I was involved in was an Arts Festival. And someone who came up to cover it for *International Times* told me that Tony Stratton-Smith was involved with a new band who were looking for a drummer. I was a drummer who was thinking of playing for a while, so I rang up about it, came down to London, had an audition, failed it, thought the band was terrible, but somehow eventually joined. We then started rehearsals... Chris was in the band at this time and he was singing and playing ocarina and saxophone. We put together an act and were just about to go on the road and Chris left.

Peter Hammill: Last seen heading back down the Old Kent Road chasing after ocarinas that were falling out of the van on the way to rehearsals. It was just about the breaking point—he dropped his little box of ocarinas as he got into the van. And he pulled up outside this youth club where we were rehearsing and this spindly figure was to be seen chasing back down the Old Kent Road shouting 'me ocarinas!' He came back about three hours later with his ocarinas and left about two days after that, possibly because of the callousness with which everybody treated his philosophies of ocarinas. He was in fact fulfilling a function, later to be expanded and made his very own by Dave [Jackson]—the compassion, human understanding and tenderness with which sax players must be treated—and Chris was an early exponent of this art only with ocarinas.

Guy Evans: The band had solidified by then to Peter, Hugh, myself and Keith Ellis who joined us after the Koobas split up. We were on the road for seven or eight months—clubs mostly, and we finally did our first farewell gig at Notts County Football ground having had our gear ripped off a few days after we'd just bought it. It just became impossible to carry on and we decided to break up.

From there, Guy Evans joined the Misunderstood for a short period of time where he met bassist Nic Potter, and Peter Hammill set about recording a solo album for Mercury. Keith Ellis meanwhile joined Jucy Lucy, went to America for a while and is now in Boxer with Mike Patto and Ollie Halsall—a star band if ever there was one.

Guy Evans: The next thing that happened was that Peter was supposedly doing a solo album for Mercury, we ended up playing on it, and that really gave us the idea to get the band back together again. We decided we wanted another instrumentalist, we didn't know quite who, and we were on the verge of getting Nic Potter into the band. Chris Smith had meanwhile formed a band called Heebalob which had Dave Jackson in it. That was just about to break up as we were getting back together, so we asked Dave to join us.

So the re-formed Van Der Graaf, Peter Hammill (gtr, vcls), Hugh Banton (kbds), Nic Potter (bass, gtr), Guy Evans (drums), and David Jackson (saxes) eventually signed with Charisma Records and made their second album, **THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS WAVE TO EACH OTHER** (CAS 1007), which received this review in *International Times*:

'I have had this album in my possession for a few weeks now, but it seemed unfair to review it before getting to know it intimately. And it is the sort of album that takes a while to appreciate.'

'In purely mundane terms all one hears when listening to this album is a series of excellent songs written by vocalist Peter Hammill, sung by him with a profound sense of involvement, and complemented with some superb music from the rest of the group.'

'Side one of the album is by far the stronger of the two sides and its three tracks—'Darkness', 'Refugees' and 'White Hammer', are all very strongly influenced by Hammill's 'White Magic' theme which prevails throughout Van Der Graaf Generator's music.'

'Darkness' opens to the strains of distant winds and a pounding heavy sound similar to Principal Edwards' 'Pinky'. Hugh Banton

Van Der Graaf



provides organ work on this track that fluctuates between being superlative and merely excellent and David Jackson's sax screams powerfully throughout.

"Refugees" is without doubt one of the most emotive pieces of music ever recorded. It escalates from a patient opening through the vision of freedom the lyrics provide into a nostalgic finale that really is beautiful.

"Side two has a slightly less serious tempo within itself, and 'After The Flood' does not quite approach the same high level of music as the rest of the album. But these are only minor criticisms of a debut album that rates as the finest one I've heard since King Crimson gave us 'In The Court Of The Crimson King' a few months ago."

Thanks to a few reviews like that and a growing reputation for being quite formidable onstage, Van Der Graaf started to build a steady and enthusiastic following.

especially on the continent. Two more albums followed, my own personal favourite, *H TO HE WHO AM THE ONLY ONE*, and *PAWN HEARTS*, both maintaining the unique style that their predecessor established, although understandably perhaps neither hit home with quite the same dramatic impact.

The main feature of Van Der Graaf Generator has always been their startling, uncompromising intensity both musically and lyrically. Sometimes calm, brooding, almost wistful, and at other times furiously aggressive and unrelenting, the music comes across as a tumbling, unwieldy concoction of influences and styles... free-form jazz, straight rock'n'roll, classical... a whole melange of sound that complements Hammill's stark imaginative lyrics perfectly. Listen to 'Killer' on *H TO HE* for a suitable example.

It was this intensity in their music and stage performance that in part brought about their decision to break up again late in 1971. They'd recorded *PAWN HEARTS*, a work of near-cataclysmic power and strength, toured Germany in a state of exhaustion and disillusionment (read 'Audi' in Hammill's book *KILLERS, ANGELS, REFUGEES* to get a frightening idea of what it was like), and in the end decided to call it a day.

Peter Hammill: We really didn't tour that much here. The reason we broke up was really a combination of all sorts of things, but it was a long time ago now to remember the whys and wherefores. It sounds very dry really, but when it's happening it's very exciting but there's no way you can remember that. It just becomes a boring series of events... more like a Bombay Duck! Of course all the time it was happening it was vibrant in one way or another—in horror or enlightenment or joy, but it's so far back now. I don't think we look back on the break-up differently in terms of wishing it hadn't happened. The thing is I look back on it now as even more of a product of just going over the top. It just necessitated a change I think. I think we're in a better state now than we would have been had we stayed together and had whatever success was coming to us then. We were just about to be able to make it in a bigger way but I think we would have been quite mad. And I don't think it would have been a success for us... it would have been success in the absence of the band's collective consciousness—there is something that is Van Der Graaf which is more than the sum of the individual parts. You see that consciousness thing demanded a real change, and anyway breaking up and re-forming are not as finite as they sound... they're just words you use.

Guy Evans: Had we had the resources at some point before we decided to break up to say 'Right, we'll stop for six months' we may have been able to carry on and do as we wanted to, but I think even that would have been unlikely.

Now although Van Der Graaf ceased to function as a working band they more or less continued to record together on Peter Hammill's subsequent solo albums although naturally the emphasis is placed more on Hammill's words than the music which nevertheless retains a lot of Van Der Graaf's trademarks and distinctions. The furthest he got away from that sound was on his last solo outing, *NADIR'S BIG CHANCE*, a partially successful attempt at 'punk-rock' and an outlet for Hammill's less intense alter ego. While Hammill pursued a solo career with some degree of success, playing the occasional concert, the rest of the band kept themselves just as busy if with less attention from the press and public.

Guy Evans: We did an album with the three of us, me, Hugh and Dave, in a home studio—a put-together studio situation—a one-off album which is out only in Italy

Van Der Graaf

as far as I know. It's called *THE LONG HELLO*, it's all instrumental and it features other musicians as well. It's got Nic Potter on it and an Italian guitarist, the guitarist who used to be in Rare Bird. Apart from that, Hugh worked as an electronics engineer for various people, worked as a recording engineer and was in a band called Seventh Wave and did sessions and things.

Dave Jackson: I did a variety of things; I hung around for a long time and worked for a lot of different people which was interesting. I've worked on albums for people, Italian people, German people. Then I started driving for a living, then *THE LONG HELLO* came along and I went back to being a musician hoping that I'd stay a musician and that my driving days were over having spent six months at it. But it was not to be. Nothing happened so I went back to driving for a year, but in the middle of that I put my own band together with some friends and we did a few concerts but we couldn't get a deal together at all. It was called

Juggernaut, and included two guys from Skin Alley—Nick Graham, bass player and singer, and the drummer who's got two names, his stage name is Tony Knight. But we had personnel troubles anyway, and in the middle of all the personnel troubles the Van Der Graaf thing came together so it was either do that or start again with Juggernaut. As it happened I waited around for six months and Van Der Graaf came together.

Talks about getting the band back together actually started late in 1974 but it wasn't until this year that the project was able to come into effect. Which leads into the inevitable question I suppose: What is so different that Van Der Graaf are able to exist now whereas two years ago they couldn't? To which Hammill replies in the most reverently profound tones: "PENSO ERGO SUM!! I think therefore I am. One could say SUM ERGO SUM. As far as I'm concerned it's a sum ergo sum situation. It's all different otherwise it wouldn't be possible for it to exist. There are a set of circumstances to begin with—

there aren't many times when we could actually do it. Funnily enough it came about at a time when we were all doing something.

Guy Evans: I think it's very relevant that we were all in bands because it did mean that everybody had to make a commitment. It's a totally different thing to be sitting in the middle of nowhere doing nothing and somebody says 'Do you want to get Van Der Graaf Generator together?' and you say, 'Well I think I'll have a lie down and think about it'. But if you're playing, you're up against musical ideas and in musical situations where maybe you're a bit frustrated.

Though the band have only been playing regularly since the summer when they kicked off with a few select European dates, they've already completed quite a hectic and successful British tour and are now back over on the continent no doubt wooing the audiences in everywhere they go. And of course they have a new album out, *GODBLUFF*, which holds the proof that Van Der Graaf have matured musically, especially as individuals, during their two year absence. The essence of the band is still the same, the unique style is there, and they're still out there on the perimeter creating, pledging their own special brand of musical paranoia to an audience who could well be ready for it this time around.

Peter Hammill: I think it's a load of rubbish, a load of rubbish. No, we're very pleased with it. It's different of course now... it can't be the same. We can't ignore the two years, and we don't want to really.

□ **ANDY CHILDS**

DISCOGRAPHY:

Unreleased:

Shrine
Ferret And Featherbird

Albums:

The Aerosol Grey Machine (Mercury SR 61238) (Import only)
The Least We Can Do Is Wave To Each Other (Charisma CAS 1007)
H To He Who Am The Only One (Charisma CAS 1027)
Pawn Hearts (Charisma CAS 1051)
Godbluff (Charisma CAS 1109)
'68-'71 (Charisma Perspective CS2)

Singles:

The People You Were Going To/Firebrand (Polydor 56758)
Refugees/The Boat Of Millions Of Years (Charisma CB 122)
Theme One (Charisma CB 175)

Peter Hammill's Solo Albums:

Fool's Mate (Charisma CAS 1037)
Chameleon In The Shadow Of The Night (Charisma CAS 1067)
The Silent Corner And The Empty Stage (Charisma CAS 1083)
In Camera (Charisma CAS 1089)
Nadir's Big Chance (Charisma CAS 1099)

Loonies

KIM FOWLEY'S LAST HYPE

"THIS ONE is going to make me into the Brian Epstein/Colonel Tom Parker that my enemies have always been terrified I'd become," says arch hyper Kim Fowley—dragging me from my bed at 7 am... and the latest in a line of Fowley Foists is, wait for it... a girl rock group, The Runaways ("All real schoolgirls, aged 16-18").

"They're building up a following in the beach towns, like Huntington and Newport Beaches—just like Dick Dale and the Beach Boys did 15 years ago," shouts Range Rider Fowley, before handing the phone over to his All American sidekick Rodney Bingenheimer, who tells me that because the girls are "ever so handsome... all real sexy foxes", he's closed up his discotheque to concentrate on promoting them. (A black lie, of course, but it sounds good.)

Back to Kim: "They write good songs, sound a bit like the first Who album or the Andrew Loog Oldham Stones records—but they've got the heavy metal push of Kiss and Aerosmith," he adds hastily, hedging his bets and spreading the appeal.

"They look better than the Shangri-Las" proclaims the man who discovered Cockney Rebel, "... and you wanna be the first on your block to start dropping their name because within a month, it will all be happening: I'm sending out the photos and the story of how they came out of the gutters of California, and they're going into the studio to cut their first single. Both Rick Derringer and Bob Ezrin are interested in producing, and among the songs they might do are 'Flaming Schoolgirls' by Mars Bonfire and 'I'm A Star' which Ian Hunter and I wrote in London that afternoon before his 'Dairy' tour... that's a great

song that no-one's heard yet."

As if being involved with a notorious sex glutton like Fowley isn't bad enough for a bunch of 5-star prime virgins, they are "hanging out with" Elliott Ingber, the very same Winged Eel Fingerling, who is no doubt showing them a few licks.

By the law of averages, Fowley, a consistent coiner (he just got a gold record for his track on Alice Cooper's *Welcome To My Nightmare* and a platinum record for his contributions to *American Graffiti*—not to mention the illustrious past which I documented in *ZZ28*), has got to hit the jackpot soon. He was geared and set to smash the world with the Hollywood Stars, but thwarted by factors beyond his grasp he was forced to watch them wither and fade.

"That won't happen with the Runaways... these girls are my last hype, and they are going to be so huge..."

I've always had a soft spot for Fowley. A self-confessed bullshitter/con-man/exploiter, but friendly and honest about it, and one of the last great enthusiasts... he spreads excitement like fairy dust.

As for the Runaways, they may be awful rubbish, but at least my curiosity is aroused.

"Do you think they can knock off the Bay City Rollers?" asks Fowley.

Last word, I suppose, should go to Jonathan King, who's Hollywood equivalent Fowley reckons himself to be: "Has he never heard of the Angelettes? Typical Fowley: always five years behind the King!"

□ **MAC GARRY**

THE RESURFACING OF QUICKSILVER

1975

THE SAN FRANCISCO music scene these days is reminiscent of London in the sixties. Within a two-mile radius, in the first week of August, the Tubes, the Meters, Merl Saunders and Jerry Garcia, the Jerry Miller Band, Graham Central Station, George Duke, John Fahey, The Wailers, Jean-Luc Ponty, Freddie Hubbard and former Miles Davis sideman Dave Leibman were all playing to packed houses in the city's small night-clubs. At the Orphanage, residents Keith and Donna were taking some time off; Jamaican reggae outfit, The Inner Circle, were playing to some of their biggest audiences ever, and not just because Frisco is just latching on to Jamaican music. The newspapers had promised 'special guests', and when I phoned the club an efficient-sounding voice informed me that Garcia, David Brown, and John Cipollina were expected to sit in with the band that night.

I had first met Cipollina a few nights previous to his Orphanage appearance, when I drove down to San Jose for a Quicksilver concert, along with Dr Billy Davis and Ron Sanchez who, with KSN's Phil Charles, were responsible for engineering the Man/Cipollina get-together earlier this year. It had not occurred to any of us that Cipollina wouldn't actually be playing with his old band that night, so we were a little surprised to see him standing in the middle of the Civic Auditorium (a cavernous dance-hall rather like a scaled down Alexandra Palace) with his girlfriend, during the closing number of a tedious, badly-balanced and unintentionally hilarious set by The Chambers Brothers. The entire evening was in many ways suggestive of some grotesque time-warp, especially as only two or three hundred people had turned up for what, in England, would have been undoubtedly a highly publicised sell-out. There had been no public announcement of the concert, and it had been brought to my notice only because the hoardings were being erected as I left the building the night before, having witnessed amazing

sets by Blue Oyster Cult and Journey. That night the place was like a sauna, packed with bodies. The Quicksilver gig was as well-attended as Brighton beach at Christmas, and for a while the only sign of life was a few pimply youths (and their dates) echoing the Chambers' frenzied chants of "Time!"

In some parts of the Golden State, it is apparently not unusual for a Saturday night concert to be attended solely by kids who want somewhere to take their girl and smoke dope, irrespective of what band may be playing. The security men who had so carefully frisked us the night before, seemed indifferent to our unconcealed tape-recorders tonight, and even seemed mildly surprised at our interest in recording. We moved backstage without let or hindrance, and caught glimpses of Gary Duncan and Dino Valenti, who were busy preparing themselves for the stage, before spotting Cipollina and engaging him in conversation.

He is an amiable fellow, physically unchanged since the early days of the group, still with long hair and a slightly wired, nervous air about him, but extremely easy to talk to from the first moment we approach him. It's a night out for him, he explains, and the band doesn't know he's there. No, he probably won't play, as he's not strictly a member of the new Quicksilver, but he is recording with them in San Francisco's CBS studios. There's a new album contracted, possibly two, and the original group has reformed especially for the recording. He wasn't even planning to come along tonight, and had intended to go to the cinema instead.

Now Cipollina's alleged attitude to Dino Valenti, and the ways in which Quicksilver altered under his direction, have been well documented in the pages of *ZigZag*. It's interesting to study the reactions of any musicians to the front man, but particularly so in the case of a band like Quicksilver, who have changed so radically over the

years that were it not for the clear, piercing tone of Duncan's guitar, and Greg Elmore's relentless and distinctive drumming, they would be totally unrecognisable from their early days. Before Valenti was released from what he likes to refer to as "the penitentiaries of our nation", the band—Duncan, Cipollina, Elmore and David Freiberg, latterly of Jefferson Starship—was primarily inclined towards instrumentals of a loose, acid nature, compatible with the climate of those heady days in California. With Dino's arrival in their ranks, the group became a vehicle for his autobiographical songs and ditties on love and freedom. These tended to be rather cloying and too pretty, but not so much unpleasant as uncharacteristic for a group of what Cipollina described to me as "good guys trying to be bad guys; heavily into violence".

On stage, Freiberg has been replaced by an energetic bassist called Skip Lewis, and an effeminate young man in sparkly suit who looks like the result of an unlikely union between Freddie Mercury and Steve Tyler sits behind an organ and ARP synthesizer. They both play very well, especially the bassist who leaps forward for his solo spot, and proceeds to pummel his instrument into submission in a manner reminiscent of Larry Taylor. Gary Duncan takes all the guitar honours now, and really shines, particularly on 'Fresh Air' and 'Who Do You Love', which has gone through some changes since the legendary 25-minute version on *Happy Trails*. That song provides an opportunity for Duncan to sing, leaving Dino to bash out the chords on his Gibson and give his throat a rest. Valenti is Roy Rogers in the lead role in 'The Good Ship Lollipop'. He presents an anachronistic sight in his cowboy boots, tight pants and curly hair: small and chubby, he seems determined from the start to upstage the band. It's strange that Dino hasn't made it on his own by now, considering his obvious ability and the real style that he exhibits.



The Chambers' fans have all split to some car-park or drive-in, and the hundred or so of us who are left are standing at the foot of the stage, with a perfect view of Dino's tonsils as he belts out his pacons to the life of an outlaw. There's no denying that the man can sing; in fact, his voice is surprisingly strong for a guy of 38, and makes it easy for him to get away with some of the less successful lyrics. Quicksilver is now a strong rock band, closer in style to Moby Grape than the original line-up which recorded the *QMS* and *Happy Trails* albums, and clearly capable of making a few disillusioned West Coast devotees sit up and take notice.

Coinciding nicely with a resurgence of interest in Spirit, Jefferson Starship and Love, comes the new Quicksilver album, *Solid Silver*. Plans to reunite members of original aggregates often fall through, especially those which are brought to the notice of the public before that of the musicians in question. The reforming of Quicksilver, however, went almost unheralded in all but the most scrupulously-detailed trade papers in the States, but

nevertheless went ahead, as planned. The results place the band in the popular country-rock idiom prevalent in America today, but there are enough examples of Cipollina's rasping cobra-like licks to keep everybody happy. Their original producer, John Palladino (who also supervised Steve Miller's *The Joker* set) was called in, and old faithful Nicky Hopkins is present on a few of the 14 tracks from which the album will be selected. Freiberg, now 38 too, has returned from the commercial safety of the Starship to put down some bass tracks and to record background vocals with the ubiquitous Kathi McDonald. Pete Sears is also on hand to add bass and/or keyboards as, seemingly, Valenti sees fit. He's evidently in charge, swift to chide and slow to bless; the petulant perfectionist in leather duds.

There's a businesslike atmosphere in the control room of the studio despite Kathi's insistence on some clams; she's starving and she's got another recording session to do when this one finishes at 11 pm. Greg Elmore pops out for an order of clams while the rest stand around listening to a

playback of a new Valenti ballad, 'The Letter'. Miss McD, whose voice has never been one of my favourite sounds, is finding it hard to reach and sustain a note at the end of one of her vocal passages (where she sings in effective counterpoint with Dino) and the playback is punctuated by his exasperated shouts of 'Wrong note, baby'. When the unfortunate lady finally makes the note, it's a tad too long, and the engineer, obviously thinking of his wife and kids waiting patiently at home, inadvertently erases part of the next section. Do it again, fellers.

John Cipollina is pleased with the way things are going: "We're working together just fine, with a lot of enthusiasm after all the time apart. I've been writing some songs, but not necessarily with this band in mind. One of them, 'Rock'n'Roll Jekyll And Hyde' "we played with Terry and the Pirates. They're basically just a bunch of punks. " " " "e'd have a good time. I don't think I record with them . . . not sure if I want to do that. The company wasn't interested in signing Terry Dolan anyway, but it was his group. We had Sid Page on

QUICKSILVER

violin, and Dave Hayes (who played bass and virtually commandeered Van Morrison's Caledonia Soul Orchestra), and I played guitar. Mostly, though, I played steel or Hawaiian guitar, 'cause our lead guitarist is so fast. Really kept me on my toes."

Dino Valenti has contributed at least half the prospective selections for the album, including 'Cowboy On The Run', an introspective, attractive ballad, which brings to mind 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue', at least in melody, while the lyrics are rather like, well, a few other songs about cowboys. Overall, the album displays more attention to harmony singing than usual. "Everybody sings but me," said John, laughing. "I'm not a singer at all, but sometimes I'll put in a little, you know."

Here in the studio, Cipollina speaks in a manner indicative less of a legendary guitar-hero than of an enthusiastic, little-known musician, eager to oblige anyone interested in what he has to say, at the same time faintly surprised that the interest exists at all. An unassuming character, whose manner belies his experience and eclecticism, qualities which appear in his playing, whether as the ubiquitous, gaunt figure at the back of the Orphanage's small stage, or the menacing, brooding leader of Quicksilver. "Do you dig violence, man? I mean, when we were on stage, we used to love to scare the audience. I'd move right to the front of the stage, turn my amp up and turn on 'em. And they'd be standing there, and we'd be staring at 'em, and playing, man, and you should see their faces! We'd be lined up like a firing squad. You wanna hear about my guns? I got a few new guns now. Even more guns than guitars!"

Rather hesitant was John Cipollina, legendary West Coast guitarist, as he played his rosewood Telecaster (one of only 44 made) onstage with the Inner Circle. The band were into their third set, and were not an unfamiliar sight at the Orphanage. Riding into town on the wake of a triumphant visit by The Wailers, they found they had insufficient funds to return to their homeland, and had to play further gigs to raise the fare. Merl Saunders had just left the stage in rather undignified fashion, having been introduced as 'Earl Saunders' and invited to play 'Puppet On A String', a feat to which he was definitely unequal. JC slunk onto the platform, plugged in discreetly and picked his way through a couple of undistinguished songs, before stepping out in fine style on 'I Shot The Sheriff'. Although his reputation has taken something of a drubbing since his variously received performances as a member of the Man band, Cipollina is one of those musicians with the charisma, individuality, and enthusiasm (which manifests itself, more often than not, in youthful idealism) to be able to live up to any of the reports you've ever heard of his unquestionable ability. Sitting in his '65 Volvo, we listened to tapes of Terry And The Pirates—good, solid energetic stuff. Recent tapes in my possession of that band in rehearsal bear witness to a newly reborn power and con-

fidence in his playing. Frail enough to have gone under long ago, he has shown that he has the staying power and inventiveness to be a positive force in any band, and in today's rock music as a whole.

□ STEVE SAMUELS

SOLID SILVER

Quicksilver Messenger Service

Capitol ST-11462 (Import—available from Virgin Records)

WELL, THE GREAT name of Quicksilver Messenger Service is resurrected yet again, this time with perhaps more credibility than on previous occasions. A sticker on the cover of this new album proclaims "A brand new recording by the original Quicksilver Messenger Service" which isn't exactly true. If you consult the family tree in your copy of ZZ26 you'll see that this particular line-up (Gary Duncan, John Cipollina, David Freiberg, Greg Elmore and Dino Valente) was in fact the fourth version of the band, and even then Nicky Hopkins was more or less a full-time member. Also to further invalidate their credentials, the only other albums that this line-up recorded were *Just For Love* and *What About Me*... not, I suspect, the two albums that most Quicksilver freaks would pick as their favourites.

To be perfectly honest, I stopped taking an interest in the band as soon as Dino Valente joined them. I can't think of any other personality so gross and overpowering as his, that could transform a band of Quicksilver's initial quality into such a seething morass of sickly nondescript tunes and putrid lyrics with such an almighty fell swoop. I always make it my business to try and hear every new Quicksilver album in the same way that I go to Arsenal every fortnight in the hope of seeing some good football, but invariably I'm disappointed. The only Quicksilver albums I own are the first two, and this latest one which I would have undoubtedly been brought down by if I didn't already have a rough idea of what to expect.

It's a patchy album to say the least, with moments of brilliance, patches of tedium, and portions of dreck. The most noticeable aspect of the whole thing though is that listening to it all way through, it doesn't even sound like a band. The fairly evenly distributed songwriting credits and the order in which the tracks are sequenced give it the character of some sort of sampler by the ex-members of a once-great band who are all now involved in their own solo projects and are using each other to play on their songs. I suppose we should be thankful that Valente no longer claims it to be his band, but the trouble is it appears to be nobody's band... all five members are together but not part of Quicksilver if you see my meaning.

Valente has written four of the ten tracks and co-written another two with

Gary Duncan and John Cipollina, and fortunately none of them exist on the same level as some of his previous efforts. In fact two of them, 'Cowboy On The Run' and 'The Letter' are quite good and register abnormally low on the old wincometer. Of his other songs, 'Worryin' Shoes' illustrates the worst traits in Valente's vocals (perhaps his main attribute). 'Witches' Moon' is nothing but a boring, stereotyped instrumental which exhibits precious little of the band's considerable instrumental prowess, 'Flames' which happily sees Cipollina as the main influence... lots of tasty licks, and 'Bittersweet Love' which portends to be something of a rocker but somehow stumbles along rather half-heartedly. It's saving grace is the guitar work of Gary Duncan who it could be said is also the saving grace of the album itself as he has written what is undoubtedly the best track and, to my ecstatic joy, one of the best things I've heard from any West Coast band this year. The song in question opens the album and it's called 'Gypsy Lights'... when I first played it I thought that my dreams had come true and Quicksilver were about to scale the heights again, such is the exuberance it generates. But Duncan's other composition, 'They Don't Know', and the rest of the album pale in comparison.

And what of our old friend John Cipollina? Well his guitar work is everything you'd expect it to be and as his songwriting contribution is primarily designed to display that particular skill, I don't think we can complain too much on that count. David Freiberg, the only member who's been anywhere near active in the recording studio since originally leaving the band, has come forward with one song, co-written with Robert Hunter, called 'I Heard You Singing' which is as messy and undistinguished as most of the other songs he's ever written, but his bass playing is beyond reproach—a feature that was strangely neglected amongst the plethora of superlatives surrounding those first two albums.

So what does it all add up to? Well nothing to get too excited about I'm afraid, and nothing I suspect that will last too long. This album emanates a feeling of non-permanence in the way that most of these 'reunions' do. They seem to be done with no eye to the future and very little respect for the past, and the results are more often than not inadequate to fulfil everybody's rather optimistic expectations. And so it is with *Solid Silver*. I can't honestly claim to know the answers to their failings... I'm not even sure that kicking Valente out would make much difference now. I think we'll just have to admit that although they're the same people with the same talents, they're not the same kind as the one we all loved and the one we wish would descend upon us again. Quicksilver 1975 is an average-to-good American rock band with the potential to be a very good one. Only time will tell if they've got the inclination to realise that potential.

□ ANDY



SUTHERLAND BROTHERS NOT FORGETTING QUIVER



I'm sure most of you are aware of the Sutherland Brothers' existence, in fact you've probably even been at one of their many gigs up and down the country and thoroughly enjoyed their rockingly original set. You may even possess at least one of the four albums they have released so far... in which case, why aren't they enjoying the success or even that knowledgeable buzz that accompanies bands like the Feelgoods, the Kursaals and Starry Eyed and Laughing (in any of whose company they could certainly match them musically). While being unable to explain this lack of acceptance, I hope this article will throw some light on their life and (fairly) hard times so far.

LIKE ALL ZigZag bands, the Sutherlands have a past which is worth exploring. The brothers moved to England at an early age from their native Scotland and picked up on music from their father who had been a bandleader. This led to the usual round of school and garage bands before Iain, the elder of the two, decided to pack up his studies at Manchester University and become a professional musician at the age of 18 in 1966. The group was whimsically called the New Generation and soon

after, Gavin Sutherland followed in his brother's footsteps and joined up. The band gigged around Staffordshire and the Midlands with some success, as Iain recalls: "We had a keyboard player, who's now a music teacher. I started out with him, a guy called Chris Kemp and we formed the New Generation. We both wrote songs and we used to do a lot of harmony stuff together and he was a very talented guy, a good songwriter, a good keyboard player, pretty good, but for various reasons... you sometimes find guys like that who are good musicians, but have no ambition to make it professionally. He writes lots of things, symphonies even, and gets the school orchestra to play them. Maybe someday though he'll get something organised."

The band were sufficiently good at that stage to get themselves signed up by Spark Records and Iain also got tied up to a writing contract with Southern Music. Apparently the band recorded quite a lot of stuff for Spark which resulted in two little known singles being released around '67/'68, one of which was called 'She's A Soldier Boy' but the other one escaped me. Iain again, "Actually, there's a lot of good songs there, that Southern Music have still got, sitting on a shelf up there. We've always written lots more stuff than we

actually ever use anyway. There's no point in going back to older stuff, it's just a drag that at the time they didn't get the exposure, we could've made a good album then, in 1968 or whenever."

One of the songs that Iain says Spark didn't use actually came out in America on Imperial. It's a good rock'n'roll type song called 'Heartbreaker' and credited to a group called UK Baby which Gavin reckons was just their tape under a different name. However, Gavin continues: "After a couple of years slogging around, and having the singles out, nothing ever came of it and the band split up and Iain and I came down to London to try for something better."

WHEN THEY ARRIVED in London, times were still pretty hard; apparently they saw little or no money from Spark and were pretty broke themselves but they stuck at it. "We worked at the old Derry and Toms in Kensington High Street (which eventually became Biba's and is now closed) for about three months, just like the Christmas thing. We got a couple of quid together which enabled us to sit on our behinds for the next three months and just play music and write. We'd done some demos, through Wayne Bardell, who we'd met at Southern Music. He had a few contacts, and managed



to get the tape about to various people. We got the elbow from, I think, a couple of companies (actually, Warners was the only company they tried before getting to Island). Then we went to Island and it all came together. What happened at Warners was, there was a guy called Martin Wyatt, he's now involved with Anchor Records. He really liked the demo and really liked the songs. And he had Gavin and I come down and do another session, but I think he was under the impression that it was a band and maybe he was a bit floored when it was just two guys. So we did this demo, and started building up on a couple of songs. We didn't really have it together at all, like we had to carry our drumkit up the stairs ourselves. We were knackered, it took us about two hours to set up—we did 'The Pie' actually, just me playing acoustic guitar and Gavin playing drums, then we put on a bass, and I put on an organ track, then the vocals, but we never really got it finished, it was insane, it finished up as probably less than impressive." Exit Warner Brothers.

Over at Island however, Muff Winwood took an instant liking to the demo and signed them up. Muff would also produce their records and helped fix them up with a band, namely Kim Ludman on bass and Neil

Hopwood on drums: "Neil was from Staffordshire, he'd been playing in lots of local blues bands, he's back there now in fact, that was his thing really, plus a bit of folk too, like Dave Mattacks is his big hero. He played in Dr Strangely Strange before us, but we never actually knew him. Kim Ludman well, ... we just auditioned for a bassist and he turned up. We haven't seen him since."

Into the studios very quickly after this, the band produced a superb debut set which appeared in February 1972 simply called *The Sutherland Brothers Band*. It's an absolute gem of a record, full of great songs and fine playing. Due to Iain's still being involved with Southern Music, he only contributed one song to the album, the opening number, a beautiful acoustic ballad called 'The Pie' which was also their first single and should have been a hit but wasn't. Gavin wrote the other ten songs and all are very strong indeed being roughly divided between straight love songs and more questioning issues like civil rights, poverty, Vietnam. Not that they are blatant sloganeering for the sake of it, not at all, they stand as songs in their own right too. As Gavin explains: "We're both socially conscious I guess, most people are these days and if there's anything you feel

that you want to say, it's a great way to be able to do it (in song). There's two ways of doing it: there are the guys who want to change the world, who are just basically shouting at people, but I think, the kind of stuff that we've been doing is more like just expressing opinions. They're protest songs sure... people try to say the age of the protest song is past, but it's been proved that they don't do anything to change... like Dylan's stuff. Most folk songs are protest songs, there are the love ballads and the ones complaining about the state of things."

WITH AN excellent album and single out, the band had to go on the road and promote it, but that wasn't without its problems either, as Iain continues: "We went out as the Sutherland Brothers band, with Neil and Kim, and did a lot of work, including a load of free gigs and benefits. It was a very inexperienced thing, Kim hadn't been on the road before and we hadn't either since the New Generation days a couple of years back. It was all sort of cheapo-cheapo productions, road-crew-wise and everything else. Like we went to Island with absolutely nothing. We didn't have rich management or anything and what we had was coming from Island bread-wise; we were going around in

SUTHERLAND BROTHERS

an old Transit with, like, one roadie, it was a bit hard to handle. It was all very happy, we probably still are—but it was worse then. The gigs that we did with Neil and Kim, it just didn't look like there was a lot of future in it. It just wasn't the right vehicle for us. We didn't feel the band was quite strong enough. Gavin and I are fairly limited as guitar players (you wouldn't think so from the album!), and we were finding it a lot of pressure to be handling the vocals and guitars as well. So we finished up going out as just the two of us which we had to do, from a purely bread-and-butter point of view. We became like an acoustic folk act, which is immediately the bag people put you in and you start getting folk gigs and stuff. Ridiculous. I mean that wasn't where we were at all, we just wanted to get a band together."

With a lot of critical praise ringing in their ears, but without the sales to confirm it, Gavin and Iain started work on a second album. (About this time people were putting the band in a Byrds/Band/Beatle-type bag, lofty praise indeed, but which was slightly upsetting to Iain. "It got to be a bit of a pain-in-the-arse, all that Byrds thing. It's a natural thing that people categorise you and we're not complaining about comparisons with the Byrds etc. I suppose people describe it as that 'cos it's straightforward songs as opposed to extended guitar solos. The reason there aren't any extended guitar solos is because neither of us are capable of playing them.")

THE SECOND ALBUM: "There was just the two of us then and during the first few months we'd been at Island we met a few of the guys. There was a bit of a 'family' sort of thing at that time as regards sessions. We were lucky to get guys of that ability (Rabbit, Stevie Winwood, John Hawken); that was partly due to Muff as well, he obviously knew a lot of them and knew how to get hold of them. We finished up doing most of the songs as live takes, there's very little overdubbing, the odd guitar part excepted, but it finished up with whoever was singing the vocal. Gavin and I would be there with our acoustics and there would always be a keyboard player there and it did become a very keyboard-orientated album. Obviously, as you say, when we got out on the road again, it was a bit difficult to put over. There was a lot of the stuff, what we considered the best songs, that we just couldn't put over with just two acoustics or at least come out sounding completely different. Songs like 'Space Hymn' for example. We used to do 'em, mind you, you can do 'em, any song can be adapted, but it sounds completely different. 'Real Love' for instance, we couldn't really play, never even attempted to. That's why we were knocked out when we got together with Quiver, because we got people that could really help us do those kind of numbers."

Again the album was released to great critical acclaim but again it didn't sell so well, despite being of as good, if not better quality than the first. A tour with Free

should've helped but the real cruncher came in the shape of 'Sailing', along with 'The Pie', the Brothers' most famous song. It didn't make it onto the album and was released as a separate single. Despite good airplay, it again failed. "It was done later, cut as a single. The album was finished before 'Sailing' and it was too late to include it. Gav and I did it ourselves. I played harmonium with Gav on drums, then we overdubbed the vocals. It would've fitted on the *Lifeboat* album, the seafaring metaphor and whatever it went on the US version of *Lifeboat*. It possibly should've been on the album here thinking back. From a sales point of view it would've been a help."

Lifeboat was released in November 1972 and it was a month later that the historic and crucial meeting with Quiver took place. (Due to lack of space it proved impossible to do a Quiver history to that point although, loyal ZigZaggers will have all the relevant gist in ZZs 13 and 18—or I hope you do. My apologies to Tim Renwick and Willie Watson, but I had enough taped for a 9-page article before being curtly informed that a 3 or 4 pager was all that was required! Check out those back issues!) Iain recalls the meeting and subsequent events: "Our manager then was Wayne Bardell. Quiver were basically running themselves, after John Curd and Steve O'Rourke, arranging their own gigs and were back to a real grassroots level, doing colleges and the like. They'd realised that Cal Batchelor (their main songwriter) was on the verge of leaving and they were basically looking for a singer/songwriter. Cal was with us initially, he's on 'You Got Me Anyway'. I think we did a couple of gigs with him, but that was about all. Iain and myself were doing the same sorta thing, we were still involved with the 'underground' at that time, still on the benefits and free concert scene. We had a similar background to Quiver, although I'd never met them or seen them play (Quiver for their part only knew of the SBs through hearing them on radio). We had actually done a gig with them, an open-air job, but left before they had arrived. Our first gig, that was at the Marquee, Gav and I had that booked as a New Year sort of thing, we were gonna do it anyway, and we had met them a few weeks earlier. It was Wayne's idea really, he had suggested that we get together with them. So, at the Marquee we did about half a set, just the two of us, then Quiver came on and we did a couple of Everly Brothers numbers, a couple of rock'n'roll things. We also did 'You Got Me Anyway', 'Real Love', 'Space Hymn' and a couple more off the *Lifeboat* album. It was a great evening, we went down really well, did a couple of encores. It was a bit of a drunken evening. We felt great and it was great to feel the power of the band behind you."

YOU GOT ME Anyway" was recorded in January and was nearly a hit, it got a lot of airplay, but ended up selling a lot less than

'Sailing', which did about 40,000.

The early months of 1973 saw the band gigging steadily and beginning to work on their first joint album, when out of the blue came their biggest break to date: the offer of support band on Elton John's US tour. Elton had just broken big Stateside and the tour was an absolute sell-out, various house records were broken, including the Stones previous record in Mobile. Capitol, who still distributed Island product in the States were only too keen to promote the band being as they were in such illustrious company. The result was that 'You Got Me Anyway' was a Top 20 hit and the album, *Lifeboat*, issued under the band's joint names (and including 'Sailing' as well as a few of the first SB&Q songs written so far) made the charts too. The band were pleasantly surprised to know that they had a following Stateside, mainly due to good reviews in *Phonograph Record Magazine*, a well known Anglophile paper which ran features on the band by such writers as Bud Scoppa, Ken Barnes and Alan Betrock. Also, lots of record stores were carrying import copies of the first two albums which was another unexpected bonus.

Back in Britain again however it was down to trying to consolidate their position at home. They put the finishing touches to the album, to be called *Dream Kid* which was released while they were still in the States. Like the previous two it's a fine album: again a tactical slip seems to be the non-inclusion of 'You Got Me Anyway' which, I'm sure, would've made this a killer album. There are compensations in 'I Hear Thunder', 'Champion The Underdog' and 'Dream Kid' (also the follow-up single to 'You Got Me') which are typical Sutherland's boogie with marvellous harmonies. Throughout the album there is a power not evident on the previous two sets: Tim Renwick is a really tasteful guitarist and Pete Woods provides a wide range of keyboard sounds. The only criticism that can be levelled is that the album is a bit too clean-sounding but that was due to its being done at AIR London, George Martin's studio, which while being about the best studio in Britain is also a bit cold and clinical. "They've got a uniformed doorman, that sort of scene," said Gavin.

But however good the albums are, the band are really at their best on stage, a situation which Iain is not altogether pleased with: "A lot of people have said that, and it's something we feel ourselves, that we've always been happiest with our music onstage. We've never been as pleased with the records, which is a bad situation, but one we're hoping to put right with the CBS album. We're hoping we can get the best out of the songs in the studio."

The summer's success in the States proved about the only bright spot in the months that were to follow: first of all bassist Bruce Thomas was asked to leave: "We went for a two week European tour with Traffic in Germany and Holland, the one that produced their live album, and that brought it to a head. There was a

& QUIVER

bit of friction on the Elton tour. It was a bit of a personality clash between Bruce and me (Iain), but also with one or two of the others. It got to the stage where it was causing everybody too much pain. It was affecting everything... we put it to Bruce actually, that we thought it would be best if he left. He was a bit upset at that, 'cos he was as much part of the band as anyone, but he was just upsetting us all. I've seen him recently and we still regard him as a mate."

Interesting to note that Bruce was asked to leave Village in much the same way—ZZ18—however it's nice to note that he's happy in Moonrider, see ZZ55.)

TEX COMER of Ace stepped in to help them out temporarily, including a Rainbow concert with the Brinsleys, their biggest British gig to date. However, it wasn't a permanent move: "We thought Tex might join us, and we put it to him, but he sorta said 'as much as I'd like to, I'd rather stick with Ace', you know, same old thing as us, been together a long time and we didn't want to upset them, as they were in quite a precarious situation about the time they were getting their deal together."

Gavin took over on bass, and after a few warm-up gigs around Britain it was off to the States again for their second tour, although not before laying down some tracks for their next album. "We'd done a lot of the album before we went to the States, much the same as *Dream Kid*, with Tex playing bass. In the meantime, we rehearsed Gav on bass, so he'd been playing a couple of months before we cut the album."

The States tour was as big a disaster as the first one was a success. "We did about three weeks of gigs, but there were three more that should have materialised but didn't. Of the fifteen or so gigs that we played, about four were worth doing."

For an American band they'd have been OK, little clubs and such like, but you could do that for a million years and for a British band to go over there, you've only got a set time to spread the word. They were useless, pretty disappointing. Wayne took quite a lot of the responsibility for that. He felt that he'd taken the decision to do it in the first place, and we in the end washed our hands of it, and decided to come back home. There was a certain amount of weirdness about it, a lack of communication with Island. We had no complaints about *Lifeboat*, that was easy. Obviously with an Elton John tour, it's so much easier to get promotion exposure. It's a promotion man's dream, but *Dream Kid* was the last Island album released through Capitol before they went independent and Capitol didn't really push it."

ALL WAS NOT WELL at home either, and relations with Island began to suffer. "It was a comfortable relationship with Island, it was, you could say, a groovy one. We were happy with them and they with us. It was a different company then, but since

they've started with Roxy, Sparks, the Bryan Ferry thing, the whole set-up has changed and we thought it best to be out of that situation. So we asked them and they agreed to let us go."

No sooner had they released their second joint album, when early in '75 Pete Woods up and left. "That's the kinda thing that happens when a band's been to America, Pete's definitely the kind of guy who's got about fifteen hundred ideas of his own, for overdubs for organ or synthesizer, string synthesizer, marimbas, you name it. When things ground to a halt with Island, Pete for better or worse decided to get out of the band. Oh yeah, things were still OK on stage, we always enjoyed ourselves on stage. It was probably because Pete wasn't an original member of Quiver (he'd been in Ardvaark and Vigraas & Osborne before Quiver, he'd also done lots of sessions—including more recently the Starry Eyed's albums. Best of luck to him anyway, 'cos anyone who lists *Ry Cooder* as his fave album, Van Dyke Parks as his favourite musician and Van Morrison as his main singer, then he deserves to go far on taste alone).

The album, *Beat Of The Street* was up to the standard of the previous three, definitely more keyboard-slanted than *Dream Kid*, but maybe that was to keep Pete happy. Island chose 'Saviour In The Rain' as the single but there are at least six better choices for a single release; any one of 'World In Action', 'Devil Are You Satisfied', 'Beat Of The Street', 'Laid Back In Anger', 'Hi Life Music' or 'Annie' are all potential singles—that's how good this album is. Iain concludes: "'Saviour In The Rain' came out, again it was Island's choice, actually it was touch and go, whether it came out on Island at all, our relationship had deteriorated that much. 'Saviour' seemed to us the least likely choice of the lot. Their reasons for that were that 'Lifeboat' and 'You Got Me Anyway' were kind of 'poppy' numbers and that they would try something different. We had lots of hassles with the album, even down to the sleeve, they just slapped on that bloody photograph... it didn't project anything about us or what we were or where we were at."

So what happens now? "Obviously the immediate reaction after the split, after Pete left, was to replace him but we decided not to. There wasn't anybody around, and we decided that we'd had enough of shifting and personnel changes... the nucleus of the band, in spirit that is, is Gavin, myself, Willie and Tim. There'll be keyboards on the albums and there may be keyboard on stage with us sometimes. We like it as a four-piece now, it's back to rock'n'roll, it's like the original Quiver, except it's us two instead of the other guys. It's the kind of band we've been after and the kind of band that Willie and Tim have been after and it's like, we've been a couple of years finding it. It's been a gradual process working to where we are now, we're very happy with it. We've been through so many hard times, traumas,

etc... that sort of thing binds you together. We've got a lot of common experience behind us which we didn't have before."

HOPEFULLY, that's all their hard times behind them now. They've signed with CBS, which has given them a bit of fresh impetus—they appeared at the CBS Convention in London, spent most of September in the studios doing an album titled *Reach For The Sky*. Gig-wise, they appeared with Dave Mason at his recent London gig, October and November saw them continuing their round of the nation's colleges and polytechnics, and they've just finished the Lynyrd Skynyrd tour, which can do them nothing but good. Finally, of course, there is Rod Stewart's recent recording of 'Sailing', which should certainly spread their name around as songwriters: "Rod's always been interested in our songs... yeah, he was at our first gig as SB&Q and was impressed. He was always going to do some of our numbers, 'Sailing' and 'The Pie' were the two that most impressed him. It's good that he covered 'Sailing', not that it does much for the band, although it will help us pay back some of what we owe Island."

What about the threat of an Island compilation to cash in: "A compilation album, with 'Sailing' and 'You Got Me Anyway'... we don't mind, in fact I hope it sells a million, that'll help a lot too..."

So that's the Sutherland Brothers & Quiver up to date, look out for the album, as Iain says, they've had a year to write and choose the songs. They're certainly pleased with it, in the band's new format the songs all sound and feel fresh.

Let's close with a quote from Iain in *Sounds* from April 1974 which I think still holds good today. "I feel the band has all the scope in the world but we have to get it all sorted out and learn to use all the good things to the best advantage. You can't do that overnight." I for one feel that the band have finally got all their problems ironed out and can look forward to a bright future. Let's hope so.

□ BERT MUIRHEAD

Discography:

Quiver:

Quiver—Warners K46089

Gone In The Morning—Warners K46153

Sutherland Brothers: (all on Island):

Singles: 'The Pie'/'Long Long Day' WIP 6120

'Sailing'/'Who's Crying Now' WIP 6136

'Lady Like You'/'Annie' WIP 6147

Albums: *The Sutherland Brothers Band*—ILPS 9181

Lifeboat—ILPS 9212

Sutherland Brothers & Quiver:

Singles: 'You Got Me Anyway'/'Not Fade Away' WIP 6157

'Dream Kid'/'Don't Mess Up' WIP 6182

'Ain't Too Proud'/'Mad Trail' CBS 3769

Albums: *Lifeboat* (compilation) US only

Dream Kid—ILPS 9259

Beat Of The Street—ILPS 9288

Reach For The Sky—CBS 69191

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ELTON JOHN
ROCK OF THE WESTIES
DJM DJLPH 464

IT DOESN'T SEEM long since the last EJ album, and in fact, it isn't, which I suppose is more fuel for the fire that says this album is just a pale imitation and a quick way of getting out of the DJM contract. Which incidentally reminds me that DJM so far don't seem to have found a replacement for the departing EJ, the only other serious contender, Phillip Goodhand Tait, having been dropped at the beginning of this year.

So the situation is that several reviews have numbered this album on the grounds that it's not well thought out, rushed, sub-standard and various other uncomplimentary things. I wonder, I really wonder, if those people really listened to the album, or instead prepared a review on non-aural evidence, because I have to tell you that I do indeed like this album, and in fact I like it better on a similar number of hearings than I liked *Captain Fantastic*. Additionally, it's certainly a bunch better than *Caribou*, the first Elton epic recorded chez Guercio, so I like it better than anything since *Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road*. And if you also think that *Yellow Brick Road* was released in late '73, *Caribou* was the only Elton LP in '74, and that plus *Captain Fantastic* only makes three albums in two years, I don't think accusations of hurrying can hold any water that madmen might like to cross. If you refer back to some of those interviews we did with Elton, I seem to recall him saying that he nearly always had finished his next album at about the same time that the one that was current came out. If that's still the case, it was just a question of using what was already there, but a little faster than usual. Anyway, there's talk of another chat with Elton before too long, so we'll find out then.

Reverting to the music, I'm pretty well grabbed entirely by side one, with particular reference to 'Dan Dare', which was nearly a single, but was injunctioned, if that's the word, because Dan and Digby didn't digby it. Also 'Grow Some Funk Of Your Own' is extremely good, and maybe a future single, if my feet don't deceive me. Side two is a bit more mournful in content, as if Mr Taupin was having a bit of bother with the Mrs, which I hope he isn't, but that can't include 'Street Kids', with its obvious

parallels to 'Saturday Night' of the past. The new band, about which there were inevitable question marks after Wembley, show here just why they were chosen. Even my most persistent doubt concerning the necessity for two guitar players is answered—they're definitely complementary, and Ray Cooper is, as usual, quite magnifique throughout.

Right, that's all you're getting. Just don't believe the doubters, check it out with your own ears. In the case of an obscure record, a review is often the only way to find out what's what, but where someone of the stature of Elton is concerned, you owe it to yourself to find out for yourself. Go on, before they're sold out.

□ **JOHN TOBLER**



THE OUTLAWS
THE OUTLAWS
Arista ARTY 115

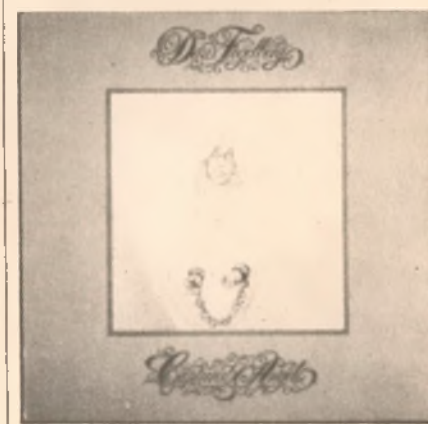
EVERY SO OFTEN a group comes along and causes such a transatlantic stir that, with no appreciable past or track record (cf J. Geils Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd, etc) they are shot to immediate word-of-mouth stardom. Such is the case with the Outlaws that I'm sure they've sold more import copies of this album than with the British version. However, in the case of the J. Geils guys or the Skynyrd who justified all the commotion: the Outlaws do not. Despite grand claims on their behalf they tend to come over as blatant Eagles copyists: 'Song In The Breeze' is approximately 'Already Gone' while 'If It Follows Your Heart' (complete with a J.D. Souther guest vocal) is very similar to 'You Never Cry Like A Lover Should' and so on throughout the album. In fairness, they are an otherwise proficient group—employing a good twin lead guitar line-up. One of the two, either Hughie Thomasson or Billy Jones (not specified unfortunately) is particularly fluid and fairly good on the flash level. The album's opening notes are a positive joy (on 'There Goes Another Love Song') but they peter out in an otherwise undistinguished cut. 'Waterhole' is a pleasant instrumental with a neat guitar duel, but then it's quickly back to the Eagles soundalikes, which is a shame because I'm sure they have it in them to rise above this derivative fare. I mean, if you want an Eagles album

you buy one instead of this approximation. The closing track, a nine minute plus 'Green Grass And High Tides' (the connection of which eludes me, but see next para) is about five minutes too long and is more in the Lynyrd Skynyrd 'Free Bird' type vein with more promising guitar work.

I'll look forward to their second album as they do have something going for them if they can overcome the tendency to rewrite the Eagles songbook. For the moment let's just put it down to first album nerves, playing it safe, trying too hard, looking for a market or any of the other initial problems with getting a record out. Interestingly, the album was recorded at Elektra Sound by Paul Rothchild (who has been mentioned as much as anybody ever has in *ZigZag*) with Fritz Richmond doing the engineering (Fritz is probably better known as the string bassist on Ry Cooder's albums but he's all but retired from session-playing to concentrate on the more technical side of studio work). The Rolling Stones are somehow implicated, via the song title mentioned and by the fact that their tour manager Pete Rudge initially pointed them in the direction of Arista, curiously enough.

John Tobler has just pointed out that it may not be the band's fault entirely, he reckons Paul Rothchild has lost his touch a bit and doesn't realise fully the benefits of originality. So let's just leave it at that and wait for the second album.

□ **BERT MUIRHEAD**



CAPTURED ANGEL
Dan Fogelberg
Epic EPC 69189

SO THERE'S this guy, making some bread doing coffee house gigs, playing guitar and writing a few mediocre songs, which just about keep the drunken rednecks at bay. Then one day he gets a contract, and he goes off to the studios. Now the Nashville guys are pretty at this particular moment, so that's bound to sell a few copies. Well the album sells some, probably to kids still high on Woodstock. Come the second album and he wants to branch out, sell a few more copies, and Nashville ain't so hot now. Try L.A.—the Eagles, CSN&Y are resurfacing so there should be no trouble there. Get Don Henley, Glenn Frey, Graham Nash and some other guys to do

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background vocals which is bound to boost sales. While he's stealing America's harmonies he might as well use Gerry Beckley as well. By this time his record company can hardly drop him—I mean he must be pretty good for all those superstars to come and help him out on his albums. So he comes to his third album, better break new ground otherwise people will find out what he's really at. Why not play all the instruments himself? Now that leaves a problem for the fourth album. I mean he must be running out of cons pretty soon. Well I would be very surprised if there is a fourth album. *Captured Angel* is Dan Fogelberg's third album, and another in the long line of country rock albums that have submerged us over the last few years. For every brilliant one, we have to put up with dozens like this. Not that this is a bad album, there are some nice moments, but this has been done over and over—there's nothing new here. It's the same old ideas—acoustic guitar thrashing away throughout every number, the same drum pattern, tremulous three-part harmony in triads, electric guitar breaks that are usually termed 'tasty', which more than likely means that they last no more than five seconds probably because the guy can't play them. Then there are the pat lyrics, which of course mention an American place name ('... And I hear you're in San Francisco/Living with your sister who's a mother to be/And her husband's in Georgia/And I'm still in old Tennessee ...'). Before I upset Fogelberg fans any further, let me say that it just so happened that when I felt need to give this diatribe, this was on the turntable and seemed particularly relevant. As we immerse ourselves further into the whole country/folk/rock mystique on which we thrive, we must not lose sight of its true values. How many really innovative contributors are there in this field, and how many are really developing—the Eagles certainly are, we haven't heard from Nesmith in a while; Jackson Browne's last album was his weakest; Crosby Stills Nash and Young can't seem to get anything together, solo or otherwise; John Stewart took an enormous step back with *Wingless Angels*; and there have been a succession of singer/songwriter albums to fall asleep to—Sam Neely, John David Souther, Ned Doheny, Rod Taylor and many more that have probably never even reached these shores. There's very little I can say about the album itself. If it has nothing to offer, you can't really expect me to offer anything. For those who don't mind listening to the predictable, it's worth a purchase I would have thought, but while you're at it why not delve into the past and buy the real McCoy. I must say I can't understand why he's printed the lyrics on all three albums. If I wrote such inane stuff I'd keep quiet about it. I would be delighted for Fogelberg to make a fourth album that is quite brilliant, and make me take back everything I've said. We shall have to wait and see. Now Andrew Gold is something else altogether.

□ **DAVID ANDERSEN**

ANDREW GOLD (ASYLUM 7E-1047)

IF YOU'RE partial to a bit of Linda Ronstadt, the name Andrew Gold won't be new to you. He's the son of a film composer Ernest Gold, who won an Oscar for his *Exodus* score, and Marni Nixon, who dubbed the singing voices of Audrey Hepburn in *My Fair Lady*, Natalie Wood in *West Side Story* and Deborah Kerr in *The King And I* amongst others. Up until now he's been a session musician, helping out on Carly Simon's *Playing Possum*, and making major contributions to Linda Ronstadt's *Heart Like A Wheel* and *Prisoner In Disguise* LPs and Garfunkel's *Breakaway*. (He's the entire rhythm section on 'I Only Have Eyes For You'.) This is his first solo attempt, and excellent it is too. The album opens with 'That's Why I Love You', already released as a single in the US, and it's one of those infectious ditties you can't stop humming. Gold plays all the instruments, as he does on most tracks, and is helped out with some nifty harmonies from Don Francisco, former Stone Pony Kenny Edwards, and co-writer Gene Garfin. Listen out for some great percussion. Linda Ronstadt returns the favour with some gutsy vocals on 'Heartaches In Heartaches', which would do the Eagles proud, and there's some nice drumming from Mike Botts. 'Love Hurts' could well be the follow-up single; it's not the Boudleaux Bryant classic which Jim Capaldi has recently ruined. He certainly has his influences—and they are surprisingly British orientated, but where others are prone to borrow because they don't have the ideas themselves, Gold obviously cherishes his roots and is happy to write his songs in the same style. 'Resting In Your Arms' is the most glorious Beatles pastiche, even down to the guitar solo. In fact I was quite upset when he didn't finish the song with the 'Hard Day's Night' chord when it was crying out for it. 'I'm Coming Home' has a touch of Liverpool about it, with its Searchers type guitar intro. 'Endless Flight' which I thought was going to be Terry Melcher's 'Beverly Hills', bears more than a passing resemblance to Elton John's 'We All Fall In Love Sometimes' especially the middle eight section. Another potential single is 'Hang My Picture Straight' which is a cross between the Arbors (remember them?) and Gary Lewis and the Playboys, and before you cringe at the mere mention of their name may I remind you that Leon Russell was their writer and producer. There are a couple of dud tracks—'A Note From You' which is saved by the horn playing of Bobby Keyes and former Butterfield Blues man Trevor Lawrence, and 'I'm A Gambler' which is just a little too ordinary, by these standards. The strength of the album lies with its utter simplicity. Most of the ten songs are around three minutes, and they're simple, catchy, and most of them hit the mark. While there is a tendency for everyone to overdo things these days, Gold has kept his own playing to a minimum. The rhythm section lays the foundation, which is all it's supposed to do, and any additional

instrumental parts are just right—Dan Dugmore's pedal steel in 'Endless Flight' being a case in point. The production by Charles Plotkin, whose last credit was the sadly-neglected Orleans album, is superb. David Campbell has a couple of telling string and woodwind arrangements, which leads me to the one song I haven't mentioned—'Ten Years Behind Me'. I can't really find the right words to describe it, except to say that it's one of the most beautiful songs I've ever heard; with Campbell's sensitive arrangement in every way matching Gold's own stunning vocal harmonies. Andrew Gold is going to be a star, and don't forget you read it here first. The album isn't out here until January, but make sure you buy it with the record token you get from Auntie this Christmas.

□ **DAVID ANDERSEN**



YVONNE ELLIMAN
RISEING SUN
RSO 2394 149

WELL, IF YOU'RE expecting some kind of Claptonian continuation, you'll very likely be somewhat disappointed in this, the third Elliman album, each, I might add, on a different label. 1972 saw *I Don't Know How To Love Him* on Polydor, obviously a follow-up to the enormous success of 'Jesus Christ Superstar', and produced by that show's writers, Messrs Rice and Lloyd Webber. Yvonne's voice was pretty good then, as it is now, but the array of songs she was peddling were maybe a bit heavy, with writers like Mason, Capaldi, Kongos, Winwood, Stills, Gilbert O'Sullivan and even Marc Benno. Another of the writers was David Spinozza, who was playing on the record along with some other New York sessioners like Hugh McCracken, Stu Woods and Rick Marotta. It was a record that I've found to be worth keeping, although I don't recall playing it within the last two years.

Then in 1973 came *Food Of Love*, which is the only record I possess on the Purple label. How Yvonne got involved with the scrap metal merchants, I don't know, but it may have something to do with the fact that Rupert Hine, who made at least one album for Purple, produced the album. He also wrote six of the eleven songs with someone who presumably was

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his mate, a Mr Maciver. In fact, were there not a certain Mr Townshend present, playing on his own masterwork, 'I Can't Explain', and some nice backups by various past, present and future Hookfeet, Roxy Musics and Quatermasses, the record would not have been worth much. So here we are in 1975, and the third producer, Steve Cropper, who makes a better job of it than his predecessors, and also uses Ardent Studios in Memphis where much good music is played and recorded.

If he was responsible for choosing the songs, he gets a team point as well, for here can be found 'Best Of My Love', Paul Cotton's 'Bad Weather', 'Walk Right In', the much covered 'Somewhere In The Night', the excellent 'Small Town Talk', which Bert introduced me to in the original Bobby Charles version, and even an Andy Childs placater, 'Sweeter Memories' by Todd thingummy.

Backing musicians include the Memphis Horns, at certain points augmented by Jim Horn, which is something to be heard, and a promising guitarist, previously unknown to me, named Michael Toles. When he and Cropper are playing together, there's really something going on which doesn't seem to happen at other times. I suppose that a guitarist/producer should be pretty good at producing guitars. Also, Ms Elliman's voice has got to be a much more potent vehicle than it was in those early days, and can now cope with the depth of the material.

So what does that leave us with? Difficult to be precise, but certainly not an unpleasant album, nor a hugely outstanding one. I have to confess to a penchant for lady singers, ranging from the Helen Reddy/Anne Murray side to the Dolly Parton/Linda Ronstadt tasty confectionery. I suppose Yvonne's around the middle of that spectrum, inclining more to the former camp, and I wish she was closer to the other side. After all, singing with F.C. is quite some distinction—perhaps she should borrow his band for the next time.

□ JOHN TOBLER

HOWARD WERTH AND THE MOONBEAMS
KING BRILLIANT
Charisma CAS 1104

I WONDER how many of you would understand if I said that this record was a fun record? I could use somewhat glib adjectives like 'Light-hearted' and 'Tongue-in-cheek', and I rather feel that would be the end of it for all of us—a forgotten LP, already out of sight and mind, and not out of the record shops. That would be a shame, because it isn't at all what I'd mean, so let's try it another way.

Howard Werth used to be the lead singer of Audience, a band who constantly remained around the middle of Division Two. Solid and dependable, but with too few flashes per record or per show to really go up or down. When Audience folded a couple of years ago, Howard

started thinking about this album, and while it seems to have taken him rather too long to produce such a non epic as this (a compliment, by the way), perhaps he wanted to rid his mind of complexity, and return to simpler, happier days. If such was the case, he has succeeded very well in six and a half tracks out of ten, which is a good pass.



The album sounds sort of old fashioned, and as I'm suffering from what I think Howard's suffering from, it's therefore fresh and a goodie, although that antique-y sound may prevent the success deserved from coming as quickly as it might were this a more complicated effort. The overall effect, on at least half the album, and I don't know whether this will be clear to anyone anywhere, is of Kevin Coyne singing Clifford T. Ward's songs in a slightly Cockney accent. A bizarre concept, I'll grant you, but one which becomes more and more apparent with each listening. Both 'A Human Note' and 'Midnight Flyer' (not the Eagles) have vocal backing lines of beloved memory, the sort which Kevin will use when he does his oldies album, which by the way is long overdue, and 'Cocktail Shake' is a dance craze number, a genre beloved even more than the vocal backings. The lyrics are the main item which would indicate to the 21st century schizoid man that this is seventies stuff rather than from the turn of the fifties into the sixties. They're surreal, but without the embarrassment often engendered by words which endeavour to be super clever like the last two lines. (Or even three.)

Sorry about that. I don't mean to indicate that the sound coming out of the speakers is of lesser quality than we are used to, but that the ideas used variously by Howard (use of stylophone), Richard Hewson's arrangements (interestingly tagged on 'Got To Unwind'), and Gus Dudgeon's usual peerless production all hark back to pleasanter times of greater simplicity. Before I go, the other two tracks of which I wholly approve are 'The Embezzler' and 'Roulette', and I half like 'Dear Joan' for the Duane Eddy yells and the sax solo. The rest of it was, for me, too complex to be good enough for the album.

What does it all mean, they ask? Well, it's the middle of the night, you see, and I've just played the album, which relaxed me enough to be able to type this out. Not relaxing as in soporific, thankfully, nor the earnest protestations of a bunch of new wonder boys. Just a groovy walk in the warm country by an unpolluted river, or a cricket match with just the right amount of action, or a concert where everyone leaves after the right number of encores. Nice.

□ JOHN TOBLER

THE ROWAN BROTHERS
THE ROWANS
Asylum 71-1038

THE ROWAN BROS. have variously been described as the greatest thing since the Beatles (J. Garcia in *Rolling Stone*) and Clive Davis's Biggest Mistake. A consensus of opinion would probably favour the latter although after hearing their first album for Columbia I was quite willing to opt for the former. The thing with the poor old Rowans, was that the odds were always heavily stacked against them. They scooped a gigantic advance from Columbia, spent a fortune in Wally Heider Studios and when their album was released Jerry Garcia provided the paramount endorsement with his famous best-since-the-Beatles quote.

At which point the Rowans took to the road and the critics tore in. They were under-rehearsed, and because their boyish good looks were in perfect harmony with their delicate, pretty melodies, lotsa people took the piss. They thought Garcia was losing his marbles. Dates down to the Pacific coastline were a big disappointment. The machinery had failed. CBS dropped Chris and Lorin after that first 1972 album and the brothers returned to their house on Stinson Beach (Mill Valley) to ponder their future. Was there a rightful place for them in the Mill Valley clique?

Eighteen months ago they signed with that haven for west coast lost souls, Elektra Asylum and cut an album with Richard Podolor who made a better job than David Diadem and Bill Wolf, who took care of the first. Instead of a session team that included Bonus, Keltner, Kreutzmann, Emmmons, Garcia and Richard Greene, they settled for a nice little studio combo of David Hayes, Russ Kunkel and Jack Bonus.

The catalyst was probably the arrival of third and eldest brother Peter, who has always enjoyed a somewhat larger following than Chris and Lorin, notably as a member of Sea Train. His presence gives the album depth and the music spontaneity—credibility even. For whilst there's a whole bunch of pretty toons on the first album they have been handled too preciously and too carefully. There could never have been a 'Thunder On The Mountain' or 'Beggars In Blue Jeans' first time around or even a 'Midnight Moonlight'. At the same time these P. Rowan compositions are complemented neatly by Lorin's fine 'Take It As It Comes', a fairly obvious choice as a single, and 'Old Silver' with the same

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instant appeal. Just how the ganga boom boom, the rolmo and the ghanta add to the overall tapestry is open to debate. Monty at Asylum is equally perplexed so we'll just assume that without these modally tuned Oriental instruments of torture we'd have been listening to all that lush pedal steel again.

I don't think this album is going to win the Rowans Mark Two any great hordes of fans but it sure won't do them any harm either. It's a good listening album, very much in the Californian mould and the identifying factor is that Chris and Lorin's vocals are still shrill and boyish—without the matured sophistication of, say, the Eagles, and that minus very much in their favour.

□ JERRY GILBERT



STEVE GOODMAN
JESSIE'S JIG AND OTHER FAVOURITES
Asylum 71-1037 (Import—available from Virgin Records)

I HAVE an uncomfortable feeling that this is almost exactly the sort of record that the great majority of the critics on the weeklies have begun to dismiss. That's a shame, not only because I strenuously disagree with them, but also because our mate Monty has been telling us for a long time that he's never had a review for one of his Elektra Asylum records in *ZigZag*, and isn't it about time, etc. So we seem to have started reviewing his records with one that we (or at least I) like, but which, going on past performance, no one will buy.

Reverting to the point, this is Steve Goodman's third album, the first for three years, and the first for him on star-studded Asylum. As on the previous albums, Steve has only written around half the songs, leading one to believe that he is not a prolific writer, or else a man whose standards are higher than most. Publishing royalties do not seem to affect his judgement, for which he gets a team mark. Another one is awarded for his choice of backing musicians, several of whom are unfamiliar even to this inveterate reader of personnel listings. Even those I have noted before are obscure, such as Steve Burgh and Hugh McDonald from the David Bromberg bands, or Rann MacKinnon, previously connected with McKendree Spring, or Bonnie Koloe, who had a couple

of low selling albums a few years ago.

In fact, mention of D. Bromberg is appropriate at this time, because the nearest thing to this album that I've recently heard is the Bromberg band. The mixture of country rock, honky tonk, bluegrass, Chicago blues and soul certainly indicates eclecticism of a similar type, and in certain cases, induces a good deal of pleasure.

Specifically, I like four-fifths of the first side, and I'm not keen on a similar percentage of the second side. Where the song is what one has come to expect from an Asylum record, as in the Goodman/Jimmy Buffett song 'Door Number Three', or Mike Smith's 'Spoon River', I am greatly impressed and such tracks will be played for those who want to hear an example of Steve Goodman's work, along with John Prine's 'Blue Umbrella' and inevitably 'City Of New Orleans' from the first Goodman album.

As far as the rest of the album goes, there's some neat picking on 'Jessie's Jig' and 'It's A Sin To Tell A Lie', although I regard the latter as a little self-indulgent, a fault it shares with the final track, 'Mama Don't Allow It', which is the same song that became the 'When The Saints' substitute for skiffers. 'I Can't Sleep' has an interesting hybrid of country lady backing vocals and soul saxophone, which is at least interesting, although I'm not too sure of its lasting quality, and the other three tracks, in particular the seemingly endless 'Moby Book', are not very much to my taste at all.

While reiterating that I'm basically much in favour of Steve Goodman, I have to question his apparent desire to appeal to too many markets. Were he to restrict himself to maybe half the forms he uses here, the album would be a treasure. As it is, I won't sell it, and I shall remember some of it with gratitude. A final word to Saul Broudy, who plays several styles of harmonica equally well, and to the lady pedal steel player, Winnie Winston, who does not compare badly with her many male counterparts. Curates and eggs though, I think.

□ JOHN TOBLER

SYLVIA TYSON
WOMAN'S WORLD
Capitol EST 11434

TO MY KNOWLEDGE, this is the first solo album by Sylvia Tyson, although I possess at least half a dozen albums, on several different labels, by Ian and Sylvia, the latter half of which Mrs Tyson is. Her old man is there, by the way, producing, arranging and playing guitar, so perhaps this is some kind of effort at diversification.

Sylvia has written a few songs in her time, not least 'You Were On My Mind' as murdered by Crispian St Peters, but this time, there seems to have been a concerted move towards using only her own songs, with no co-compositions. At least one of the songs, the title track in fact, has appeared before, on an MGM album by the duet called Full Circle, and there are three songs



written in 1972, but the other six are all of this year's vintage. Basically, the record divides into two types of song, by far the greater number resembling something like a Judy Collins record from about four years ago. Ms Collins, of course, recorded both 'Someday Soon' and 'Four Strong Winds', songs for which the Tysons are justifiably famous, and a bit of reciprocal feel is definitely noticeable in what we have here. Check out 'Sleep On My Shoulder' next to 'Someday Soon' by Judy, or 'Regine' next to Judy's 'My Father' and I hope you'll get my point. It's only a few steps away from the two Tyson tracks to several more on this album, notably 'Patience Is A Solitary Game', the really fine 'Bluebird Cafe' and 'There Is A Fountain', and a couple of others, while the other style seems to me to be that of, incongruously enough, the night club singer, as evidenced by 'Time For A Change' and 'Whatever Became Of Me', where the Julie London paraphernalia of solo piano, sax solo and acoustic guitar are variously on show.

On these latter tracks, the voice is strong, but on the more reflective songs from the other side of the schizophrenia, a quaver is introduced which again vanishes when a rise in tempo occurs. Very strange, but by no means detracting from the fact that this is a very nice low key sort of album. The only negative points are the result of occasional over-orchestration which gets intrusive here and there, but apart from that, I'm very happy to know that this record is available in England, because the Tysons haven't exactly been over-exposed here in the past, and always with a plethora of non-publicity. So good on you, Capitol, and let's have the next one as well, 'cos I like this.

□ JOHN TOBLER

THE LOST GONZO BAND
MCA MCF 2727

THE LOST GONZO BAND will doubtless be a name unfamiliar to you unless you read the credits on Jerry Jeff Walker's albums, in which case you'll recognise them as his backing band. They come from Texas and this is their first album as a band in their own right.

Unlike most backing bands who make albums that end up sounding undistinguished and innocuous, this lot have come

AVERAGE WHITE BAND



FROM EGYPT TO STONEHAVEN
THE SCENES HAVE BEEN AMAZING

— Jim Wilkie

A RECENT ARTICLE by Edward Jones in *Melody Maker* attempted to investigate the reasons for the current success of Scottish artists and groups. Entitled 'Scotch On The Rock!', it began by saying that 1975 was going to be Scotland's year, and concluded with the pronouncement that "in our increasingly homogenised, pastured, disinfected, shrink-wrapped world, Scotland remains pungently, grittily REAL." As one member of a long-suffering rock fraternity which has tried to live and work in Scotland, I can only say "Thanks for tellin' us, pal", and remain insecure in the knowledge that the only thing which is really past-your-eyes and shrink-wrapped is Tin Pan Alley, which today flourishes more than ever as a multi-million pound industry and rents office space to the bulk of the rock

music press.

This should in no way, however, detract from the long-awaited and much-deserved success of artists such as Alex Harvey, Billy Connolly or the AVERAGE WHITE BAND, whose singular achievement has been such a breakthrough and whose history in many ways exemplifies the problems faced by musicians in the regions and, to an extent, the problems which the regions themselves face in a nation dominated by big business, centred in London. What I have attempted to do is outline the reasons why this background in part enabled the AWB to do what no group, British or American, had until then managed to do: break through musical prejudice, both black and white, and at the same time

achieve what I feared no Scottish group would ever achieve—commercial success on their own terms.

Contrary to popular mythology, the AWB as such, did not originate in Dundee, although four of the members (pre-*errone*) came from the Tayside region, and its prime mover Alan Gorrie, learned his trade in and around the town. There he had led a group called the VIKINGS (1964-67 approx) and gradually came into contact with fellow players Mollie Duncan, Roger Ball and the late Robbie MacIntosh. The Vikings were one of the area's better groups at the time, but the number one position belonged to four unlikely characters called first Johnny Hudson and the Teenbeats, then the Johnny Hudson Hi-Bour, and finally the

POOR SOULS, all of whom were great players, but whose bass-player/vocalist in particular, Dougie Martin, was a tremendous influence on Gorrie (as he was to the whole gamut of Dundee musicians) and who, for my money, would at least have been as successful as, say, Eric Burdon 'given the breaks'. Anyway, as their (third) name suggests, the music was black (1964) and as every Mod knows, it helped pave the way for what proved to be a soul 'boom' from 1965 onwards. Having been shown the way by Ray Charles, Sam Cooke and others, Otis Redding et al swept not only this nation, but everywhere else as well, culminating in his 'election' as the world's number one vocalist (whatever that meant), in 1967.

Dundee, however, was fortunate in another respect. It had an agent who had WORK, and although his gigs never, repeat never, paid more than a few bob, they at least stretched all over the country, and kept the bands playing. The gentleman in question was one, ANDY LOTHIAN, whose father owned the local PALAIS where the number one east coast gig, the Top Ten Club was convened every Sunday. (The Beatles were once scheduled to appear in 1963, before removing to the much larger Caird Hall [capacity 3,000], which they filled twice in one night.)

So there was a good scene north of the border: loads of gigs (including clubs), loads of bands, and loads of talent. Unfortunately, however, the 'business' had only recently become aware of the existence of Liverpool and the prospect of Scotland where cannibalism was still thought to be rife, did not even bear thinking about. One Glasgow group, the Poets, were taken on by Andrew Loog Oldham, who was 'hot' at the time and contrived to get one single to number 30 in the charts. This was considered to be a fantastic achievement, and even today a whole generation of Scots remembers 'Now We're Thru' with some affection.

Germany was another outlet, but an extremely punishing one which not everyone managed to survive, although it did prove to be of some value for the likes of Stone the Crows.

But what of our heroes? With the growing popularity of soul, Stax and Motown copyist groups began to proliferate in the country, but the gigs were beginning to degenerate into brawls, and having long ago moved ahead of this scene musically, the Vikings (Gorrie [bass], Drew Latt [vocals], Donny Coutts [drums], Dougie Wightman [bass] and Mike Fraser [keyboards]) now moved physically to the Big Smoke. There, however, inadequate management, the usual problems of living and working together, and a general failure to follow up what promise there was in things like good gigs at the Marquee, finally brought about the demise. At one point they changed their name to Lancelot, but even this masterstroke (so) was in vain. I, for one, was very sorry.

But all was not lost. Mike Fraser, the

keyboards player, now teamed up with Robbie MacIntosh in a (soul) group called the Senate, en route for Italy, and Alan Gorrie stayed in London with the Scots of St James's (later Hopscotch and Forever More) wherein he met guitarist Onnie MacIntyre. Now this, to my mind, was where a real crunch came for the AWB—remembering that we are approximately three years in advance of its formation—and it is a period which is usually either conveniently forgotten about by the 'trade' papers or glossed over via the 'Affinity theory' (Jones 1975).

This academic tour de force miraculously connects Scotland with the blues, by virtue of urban similarities in terms of poor social conditions, combined with a meeting of the cultures, musically (use of Irons etc). My complaint lies not with the validity of these postulations; but with the fact that they do not go far enough. For in their voracious demand for 'copy', papers like *Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express* are content to define everything loosely, and carefully, avoid getting to the roots of any given issue, be it musical, political or whatever. "Still, it's 164 pages this week folks"—163 advertising and an article on Robert Plant's 17 farms, 23½ curs etc, etc.

I believe that the ability of the AWB members to grow with American musical forms (some of which themselves, of course, derive from Europe), was the crucial factor, and this before we even touch upon the individual elements which comprise the band. Picture it if yis will, if yis can. ** Gorrie had in the words of another Scotsman, Neil Young, "hit the city and lost his hand". At the time (post-psychedelic), none of the good bands who were beginning to hit it off, Traffic, Family, Jethro, even Free were really committed to American music, preferring instead (and justifiably) to try and establish an 'English sound'. Even the more successful American groups, Airplane, Doors, etc, looked towards Europe in many ways. So the lads (or at least the London contingent), simply had to content themselves with Aretha on the Dansette, and try to get work wherever they could. Luckily one group (and ironically a white group) managed to provide something of a diversion. The BAND, with its traditional roots and emphasis on the back beat helped Forever More, at least to keep a sense of perspective and one of the latter's albums—*Words On Black Plastic*—contains an interesting attempt to combine Scottish traditional and American country rock forms.

MacIntyre and Gorrie, however, had to return to black music, and when MacIntosh finished a stint with Brian Auger, the classic AWB rhythm section fell into place. Horns were the next priority, and the obvious choice were Ball and Duncan, two former art college associates of Gorrie, who had come to London to join a group called Mogul Thrash. The venture had been short-lived (one album), but as a brass section (with trumpeter Mike Rosen), they attracted the attention of quite a few

people, and went out under the joke pseudonym, the 'Dundee Horns'. Both had been jazz freaks (and probably still are) but they quickly found a soul groove, and when Rosen dropped out, another Glaswegian came in.

Hamish Stuart (whose Christian name must be unique on the files of Atlantic Records) had formerly been the guitarist with Scots groups Dream Police and Berserk Cocodiles, but it was his vocal abilities and in particular his falsetto singing which had really captured everyone's imagination (see *Rolling Stone*). Both of his groups had enjoyed moderate success in London, with Marquee residencies and so on, but again there had been little or no follow-up by management, so when the opportunity came to join up with the AWB, he seized it with both hands.

Now came the real sickening bit. Although the band was functioning by early 1972; although it was the hottest thing at the Marquee for a period of months; (1) the number of articles which appeared on them between 1972 and 1975 in all the major muzak papers combined could be counted on one hand; and (2) the group was in the Top Ten of both American singles and albums charts before anyone did a major article (excluding Andrew Tyler's excellent piece on Robbie MacIntosh's death for *NME*).

So once again the business did not want to know. And, of course by virtue of the all powerful mass media, the inevitable result of that is that nowhere else wants to know either. Even in gritty, pungent Scotland, the average punter was completely unaware of the band's existence and when the group played in Strathclyde University (cap. 1,000) they attracted 25 and 200 people, in March '73 and '74 respectively.

My conclusions would therefore appear to be of the following order. In the first place the AWB are neither blessed with an insight into an alien musical idiom, nor an alien culture. They are time-served professionals who, given little encouragement, individually mastered the superficial aspects of soul—vocal and instrumental inflections, rhythmic, harmonic and lyrical techniques—then managed to transcend their own (musical) culture to realise what virtually amounts to another 'self'. John Lombardi of *Rolling Stone* once described the process in relation to another good white group, the Rascals, as 'the discovery of a kind of funky alchemy'—but how much more pertinent that statement is when applied to the AWB, and their record sales to the black public prove that they found the formula. Secondly, they were lucky enough to find each other. Thirdly, they are only one band which the music press has done very badly by in the past. And no amount of post-dated pseudo-intellectualisations can make up for this.

□ JIM WILKIE

* 'Back In '67' from *Show Your Hand*
** John McGrath, Cheviot, Stag and Black Black Oil

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up with a surprising and enterprising mixture of material that draws on various styles of music, and they play it all with the verve and enthusiasm that suggests they could be quite a treat to see 'live'. As musicians they are all competent in the extreme and that competence is nearly matched by their songwriting ability which wavers once or twice but in general is of a pleasantly high quality. Gary Nunn in particular, who has contributed partly or wholly to five of the tracks, seems to be a composer and lyricist of some promise.



For a band that have in the past been pigeon-holed with that most vague and convenient of terms 'laid-back', they certainly rock along on the opening cut, 'Loose And On My Way' and 'Desperadoes' which was partly written by Nunn and the excellent Michael Murphey, and illustrates their not inconsiderable vocal abilities. Of the other tracks that can be tagged to any one style, 'People Will Dance' is a soul-type dance number (naturally) in the AWB/Kokomo mould, 'Railroad Man' is a slow country ballad (one of my favourites), 'Take Advantage Of Your Chances' features some good old Texas country banjo-pickin', and 'Fool For A Tender Touch' is, believe it or not, a reggae number. A band from Texas playing reggae! Well it's true and it so happens they do it rather well.

Surprisingly, maybe, the tracks that can't be effectively categorised are the weakest. 'Love Drops' and 'Reality' are hardly memorable, and 'Those Were The Days' is quite abysmal with its boring melody and jibberish lyrics about 'getting stoned' and living in California.

A minor and brief flaw though in an album that is otherwise extremely pleasant and at best excellent.

□ ANDY

THE Dudes
WE'RE NO ANGELS
Columbia PC 33577 Import

ONE OF the major mysteries of the early seventies was the non-happening of the Wackers, one of the finest Liverpool influenced American groups ever. Since their subsequent demise in early '74 after four years hard gigging and three albums, *Wackering Heights*, *Hot Wacks* (so that's where the fanzine got its name) and the dis-

appointing *Shredder*, the remnants of the group, Bob Segarini, Wayne Cullen and Kootch Trochim have been holed up in Montreal - where the Wackers spent their final months - getting together the Dudes (originally know as All The Young Dudes and, interestingly, managed by Ian Hunter's mainman, Fred Heller). The Dudes are an awe-inspiring sight (and sound) on stage featuring two drummers and four guitarists.

The band are still Anglophiles to a man, but the influences have been updated, advanced if you like. The old Wacker standbys, the Beatles, Hollies and Searchers are still retained, but the incoming song-writers, David Henman and Brian Greenway have brought in Roy Wood and some Bowie-esque vocals. Talking of vocals, all six members sing on the album which makes for some outstanding harmonies.

Despite the harmonies, the neat tunes etc, the Dudes (like the Wackers) are about rock'n'roll with a vengeance: dig the titles, 'Dancin' Shoes', 'I Just Wanna Dance', 'Fuel Injection', 'Rock'n'Roll Debutante' and the title track all point to some spirited rocking.



After years of setbacks, disappointments and false starts, it's good to see the group fixed up with positive management and record deals. When the Wackers were with Electra, they shared the same management as the Doors and invariably came off worse all round. Then the vinyl squeeze of last year saw the band hanging around for almost a year before they were eventually signed by CBS. Take it from me, there have been few finer all round talents to emerge in the seventies than Bob Segarini. Definitely an A-1 *ZigZag* band of the old school. What finer accolade is needed? If you only check out one new American album this winter, let this be the one. Don't let the crime of the Wackers happen again, this band's too good to neglect.

□ BERT MUIRHEAD

THE PRISON
MICHAEL NESMITH
Pacific Arts PAC-101

WITH ALL its elaborate packaging and what some people might call a pretentious concept, Michael Nesmith's new album *The Prison* is undoubtedly in for some harsh criticism.

THE PRISON



For a start it costs something like £5, and the single album comes in a box along with a lavish, illustrated book written, for some reason, both in French and English. The idea is that you read the book while listening to the album in the hope that the two might complement each other... like reading the script of a film and listening to the soundtrack at the same time.

Basically, to cut a long story short and to save your enjoyment of it until you read it yourself, the book tells the story of a man in prison who escapes physically into a world of beauty and peace, and spiritually into a state of mind whereby he views things in a completely different light, seeing the prison itself for instance as a place without walls or confines in which people are able, if they can realise it, of coming and going wherever and whenever they please. Freedom you see is all in the mind, and everyone apparently is capable of banishing all limitations and restrictions simply by believing completely that they only exist in one's mind. Which is where of course the

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doubters and sceptics will start calling it pretentious and pompous. But the principles on which this story is based and on which Nesmith seems to base his lifestyle are far from revolutionary or innovative; there is more than a nod towards Franz Kafka in the way the story is written and its subject matter, and not surprisingly that excellent TV series *The Prisoner* carried a similar if slightly more ambiguous message. Also the calm and spiritually contented personality that Nesmith projects reminds me in a way of, believe it or not, the 'Kung Fu' character Caine, although instead of reciting proverbs and beating people up in slow motion as David Carradine does, Nesmith writes, and sings his songs.

And very good songs they are too. Most of the songs on *The Prison* are quite similar in style to those on his previous albums, but as a fair amount of the music is essentially soundtrack in nature, there are a few lengthy instrumental passages which are nevertheless interesting at least. Those of you who saw the man in concert earlier in the year will recognise 'Dance Between The Raindrops' and 'Elusive Ragings' as the two memorable closing numbers from that amazing show, and although they've been removed from just the simple guitar/voice format, they retain their beauty and simplicity with stunning effect.

One point that I think is probably relevant: after you've read the book once you're not really going to want to read it too many times after that, after all the story is quite simple and easy to remember, and I for one wanted to listen to the record on its own the second time around having felt I missed a lot on the first hearing. Which of course I did, but Nesmith's point is explained in his introduction to the book in which he says: "I have found that attending to two simultaneously occurring ideas takes some getting used to. At first it seems that I would attend to one and let the other figure as ambience and then the next time reverse the roles. Until finally after three or four listenings/readings I was able to see both occurring distinctly and equally. It was that state of consciousness that provided thought with a new vista."

So there you have it... a new concept in mixed media entertainment and a project that I personally find not only immensely enjoyable but provocative and reassuring as well. It is of course essential listening (and reading) for all Nesmith freaks, but I rather fear that its grandiose appearance and excessive price will inhibit its availability to those who have yet to appreciate the man's talents.

□ ANDY

OTHER RECOMMENDED ALBUMS

ROLLED GOLD - The Very Best of The Rolling Stones (Decca ROST 112)
JOHN FOGERTY - John Fogerty (Fantasy FT 526)

BEST OF TONY JOE WHITE (Warners K56149)
WALK RIGHT BACK WITH THE EVERLYS: 20 GOLDEN HITS (Warners K56168)
SHAVED FISH - John Lennon (Apple PCS 7173)
BESERKLEY CHARTBUSTERS VOL. I: HOME OF THE HITS - various (United Artists UAS 29858)
THE LAST RECORD ALBUM - Little Feat (Warners K56156)
ANOTHER GREEN WORLD - Eno (Island ILPS 9351)
THE WHO BY NUMBERS - The Who (Polydor 2490 129)
REACH FOR THE SKY - Sutherland Brothers & Quiver (CBS 69191)
GREATEST HITS - Leonard Cohen (CBS 69161)
THE AMERICAN DREAM: THE CAMEO-PARKWAY STORY 1957-1962 - Various (London DREAM-U 3/4)
THE AMERICAN DREAM: THE LONDON AMERICAN LEGEND - Various (London DREAM-R1/2)
SANTA BARBARA HONEYMOON - Bert Jansch (Charisma CAS 1107)
STACKED DECK - Amazing Rhythm Aces (ABC ABCL 5152)
THE NASHVILLE SESSIONS - Buddy Holly (MCA CDLM 8038)
STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS - Paul Simon (CBS 86001)
PAMPERED MENIAL - Pavlov's Dog (CBS 80872)

OTHER RELEASES

ALL AROUND MY HAT - Steeleye Span (Chrysalis CHR 1091)
SUNSET AND OTHER BEGINNINGS - Melanie (Neighbourhood NBH 69168)
SO FINE - Loggins & Messina (CBS 69169)
PHOENIX - Labelle (Epic EPC 69167)
HAPPY - Labi Siffre (EMI EMC 3098)
WIN, LOSE OR DRAW - The Allman Brothers Band (Capricorn 2476 116)
NUMBERS - Cat Stevens (Island ILPS 9370)
SEA SUN - Secret Oyster (CBS 80489)
STEALIN' HOME - Babe Ruth (Capitol E-ST 11451)
SPLIT COCONUT - Dave Mason (CBS 69163)
EXTRA TEXTURE - George Harrison (PAS 10009)
99 MILES FROM L.A. - Albert Hammond (Epic EPC 80961)
THE ROCK - The Frankie Miller Band (Chrysalis CHR 1088)
BREAKAWAY - Art Garfunkel (CBS 86002)
RUPERT HOLMES - Rupert Holmes (Epic EPC 80942)
ROCK'N'ROLL MOON - Billy Swan (Monument MNT 69162)
GLADYS KNIGHT AND THE PIPS - (DJM DJLMD 8010)
OMMADAWN - Mike Oldfield (Virgin V2043)
FIRST CUCKOO - Deodato (MCA MCF 2728)
ALLEY CAT - Nucleus (Vertigo 6360 124)
WHO'S TO BLESS... - Kris Kristofferson (Monument MNT 69158)
NO REGRETS - The Walker Brothers (GTO GTLP 007)
ALL THEM BLUES - Memphis Slim (DJM DJLMD 8012)
ALL STAR SESSION - Eddie Condon (DJM DJML 065)
CUT ME WHILE I'M HOT - Dr John (DJM DJSLM 2019)
THE FIRST SEVEN DAYS - Jan Hammer (Nemperor NE 432 0698)
CITY OF ANGELS - The Miracles (Tamla Motown STML 12010)
TIME FOR ANOTHER - Ace (Anchor ANCL 2013)
RUFUS FEATURING CHAKA KHAN (ABC ABCL 5151)
HELP ME MAKE IT (TO MY ROCKIN' CHAIR) - B.J. Thomas (ABC ABCL 5146)
THE HISTORY OF THE HOLLIES (EMI EMSP 650)
ALL STAR SESSION - Earl Hines (DJM DJML 066)
PURE MONK - Thelonious Monk (DJM DJSLM 2017)
COUNTRY COMFORT - Tennessee Singers (DJM DJSL 067)
GREATEST HITS - Nazareth (Mountain TOPS 108)
REACH FOR THE SKY - Sutherland Brothers & Quiver (CBS 69191)
THE LEGEND - Steve Miller (Capitol Vine Series VMP 1008)
SPIRIT OF AMERICA - The Beach Boys (Capitol Vine Series VMP 1007)
LUCILLE TALKS BACK - B.B. King (ABC ABCL 5149)
MANDALABAND (Chrysalis CHR 1095)
PICK-UP - Brian Protheroe (Chrysalis CHR 1090)
PLASTIC PEOPLE - Birth Control (CBS 80921)
OUT OF PAYNE COMES LOVE - Freda Payne (ABC ABCL 5141)
DO YOU WONDER - Shawn Phillips (A&M AMLH 64539)
NOMADNESS - Strawbs (A&M AMLH 68331)
HARDER TO LIVE - Splinter (Dark Horse AMLH 22006)
SALSA! - Various (Help 20)
X RATED - Black Oak Arkansas (MCA MCF 2734)
TAILS OF ILLUSION - Fox (GTO GTLP 006)
AGAINST THE GRAIN - Rory Gallagher (Chrysalis CHR 1098)
HEADLINES - Hookfoot (re-issue) (DJM DJLMD 8013)
GEOFF MULDAUR IS HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME (Warners K 54046)
ABRACADABRA - Claire Hamill (Konk 104)
GLYDER (Warners K 56167)
SPEEDY RETURN - Steve Ashley (Gull GULP 1012)
LET IT OUT - Kraan (Gull GULP 1013)
SIREN - Roxy Music (Island ILPS 9344)
THE EDDIE HOWELL GRAMOPHONE RECORD - Eddie Howell (Warners K 56154)

BLABBER'N SMOKE

Greetings loyal zigzaggers, and here we are again with another issue of the magazine that just doesn't seem to know when to pack up. It would take me ages to explain all the intrigue and top-level decision making that has brought about our rejuvenation and I'm sure you're not really interested, so I'll just tell you that Zigzag, the true Zigzag you love and cherish so much, is well and truly back on the road. As from the New Year, i.e. next issue, we're going to revert back to being a totally independent organisation. Good news, eh. This means that we're going to have to budget our already meagre funds (no more slap-up dinners and trips to LA), but it also means that we'll be able to bring you a magazine that will pay precious little lip service to commercial considerations and instead concentrate on the people we like, whoever they are. As soon as Frame drags himself away from Woodstock where he is at present ensconced with the Starry Eyed, we'll be able to put all these exciting new plans into operation. So the next Zigzag could well be the best for donkeys years.

This last month has probably been the most confused and inefficient month in the whole history of Zigzag. First of all Cheryl left us to take up a more responsible position at Polydor Records, and with nobody else around to lend a hand it was up to me to do everything. Which is why a lot of you must be very angry at the non-appearance of your back issues. I'm an idle so-and-so at the best of times, but I've been working like a dog to try and keep up with things and still I'm about a month behind. So please if you could be patient for just a little longer, I'm doing me best, and I haven't forgotten you I promise.

Right now, there are lots of magazines to mention this month so here goes: LIQUORICE No. 3 with Andy Mackay, Fairports, Nick Drake, Pink Floyd. 25p from 7-34 Victoria Centre, Nottingham.

OMAHA RAINBOW No. 7 with Chris Bell, Starry Eyed And Laughing, Craig Fuller, Gene Parsons, and the Burritos. 20p from Peter O'Brien, 10 Lesley Court, Harcourt Rd, Wallington, Surrey SM6 8AZ.

DARK STAR No. 1 with the Dead, Youngbloods, Roger McGuinn, Jefferson Starship. A new mag, predominantly West Coast in content (and layout) and very good too. 37p from Dark Star Publishing, 64 A tbara Road, Teddington Middlesex.

HOT WACKS No. 8 is also out now but as somebody with a good deal of taste but very few ethics has nicked my copy I can't give you any details. Most annoying. Nevertheless you can obtain a copy yourself (by more honest means) by sending away to Bert at the usual address. Also available now is the Hot Wacks Van Dyke Parks Special, an interview conducted by Tobler which is as obscure as it is interesting.

And last but not least congratulations to STREET LIFE on a most auspicious debut. Issue one was excellent, especially Penny Valentine's piece on the Who (Penny was always a cut or three above yer average rock

writer... how are you anyway Miss Valentine, long time no see).

Oh and before I forget, Bob Fisher asks me to ask you to wait awhile before you send him any more orders for WHO PUT THE BOMP.... he's been inundated and he hasn't even



DECEMBER 1975

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got any copies himself yet.

As I'm typing all this out, the new Neil Young album ZUMA is blasting out of the stereo and severely distracting my attention. A brilliant album (again) and an ideal Xmas present. Listen to anything on side one or 'Cortez The Killer' on side two for proof. And talking of albums and Xmas presents, how about asking Auntie to buy you the Michael Nesmith album? At five quid a throw I should imagine that's the only way a lot of people will be able to get one.

Many thanks to all of you who put their names down for a Michael Wilhelm album. Originally we were aiming for a November release date but as the pressing plant is fully booked up until January, we're thinking about February or March. Never fear though, it'll happen, and if you still haven't ordered a copy and would like to, it's not too late; just write to me and tell me how many you want.

The never-ending stream of great gigs has turned up a few more surprises during the last month. Nils Lofgren was, believe it or not, a trifle disappointing when I saw him. The songs (mostly off his solo album) were great, his band were great, and the sound was great, but Lofgren insisted either during the middle or at the end of each number on showing us that he could play like Jimi Hendrix and Keith Richard rolled into one. All that excessive guitar play was unnecessary, and I'd have enjoyed it more if he'd played more songs in the 3-4 minute style he's mastered on album. And what about Bruce Springsteen? Well despite (or maybe because of) all the ridiculously overblown hype in the press I went along to see him expecting very little. The fact that I got more than I bargained for made it an excellent gig, but Springsteen is nothing more than very very good in my eyes. He played a total of about two and three quarter hours when I saw him, and about an hour of that was taken up with old classics like 'Oh Carol' and 'Little Queenie', so if that's the future of rock'n'roll it looks as though we're going to end up back at the beginning again. That's something to think about I suppose. Of the other gigs I've seen, the Who were quite stupendous (you can read all about that elsewhere), Emmylou Harris and her band were magnificent... you should have seen old Tobler dancing in the aisles and singing along - well maybe not. Todd Rundgren was great, especially when he played 'Do Ya' one of the all-time great rock songs, and Dr. Hook was, well, Dr. Hook I suppose... completely mental and very funny. Unfortunately I missed Captain Beefheart and The Blue Oyster Cult although I must have been one of the only people to see Dr. Feelgood 25 times in a month.

Next month in the new, streamlined, fun-packed issue of Zigzag you should be able to find a mammoth Neil Young interview by our mate in the US of A. Cameron Crowe, and hopefully Pete will have brought back a sackful of fascinating stuff from the backwoods of New York. So this is it dear reader, the last Zigzag to crawl out of dreaded Soho. Wahoo! Andy.

7AN DER GRAAF GENERATOR



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CHRISTMAS PARTY TOUR

DECEMBER

- 10 Halifax, Tiffany's
- 12 North Staffs Polytechnic, Stafford
- 13 Barnet College
- 15 Eastbourne, Winter Gardens
- 16 Felixstowe, Pier Pavilion
- 17 Barnsley, Goldthorpe Leisure Centre
- 18 Maidstone Technical College
- 20 Wakefield Technical College
- 21 Redcar, Coatham Bowl



JANUARY

- 1 Olympia London, Great British Music Festival

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO CAME TO THE 1st NATIONAL TOUR
HOPE TO SEE YOU ON THIS ONE!



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