

25P
ZIGZAG
THE ROCK MAGAZINE

Number 58 March 1976



Bob Dylan
Commander
Cody • Nick Kent
Blue Oyster Cult
Kaleidoscope
Barry Melton

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ZIGZAG 58

March 1976

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CONTENTS

THE RETURN OF THE GRIEVOUS ORGAN
(Number one in a field of one)

Yes indeed. . . . Zigzag is back with a snort, back home after a few years of hapless adventure, looking for the gold-paved streets of London - out with the truckers and the kickers and the cowboy angels. Back to start yet another phase of its buoyant existence - and I'm sure you don't need me to trot out the usual list of promises about regularity, editorial content, forgotten projects, etc. In actual fact, Zigzag has now been staggering along for nigh on 7 years, averaging 1 issue every 43 days or so. . . . which isn't too bad, I guess. Anyway, from now on it's monthly again!

The last few weeks have seen much behind-the-scenes activity. Despite spirited bidding on the publication market, good old Tony Stratton Smith (fawn fawn), in a delirious burst of pre-
cedented generosity, decided to return the magazine to its original owners - without debt and free of charge. Bless you, my good man. . . . I'll never say another rude word about you!

Lacking the wherewithall to proceed unaided, we began to cast around for a sympathetic publisher, and went into cahoots with the genial Graham Andrews of Reading.

The mag will now be run by an editorial board, a familiar bunch of loonies, as you'll see, and we'll be working out of sunny Bucks County once more. Naturally we welcome suggestions, articles, letters and abuse (please send s.a.e), but any correspondence relating to subscriptions and back issues should be sent to Sue at Prestagate Ltd, Kennet St, Reading.

Actually, this column is supposed to be about the contents, so let me run down them speedily. The reasons for the sniff-snaff on BOB DYLAN are threefold: we like the album, I was just knocked sideways by his show, and for blatant but necessary commercial considerations we had to have a famous face on the cover.

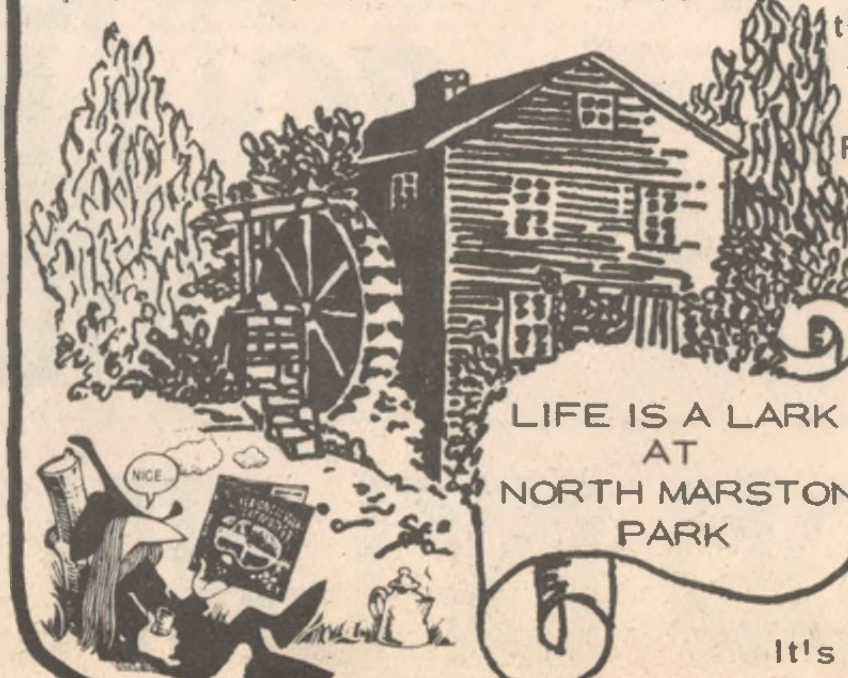
Andy says that when he featured a NICK KENT interview with Keith Richard in Zigzag 47, there was a spate of derisive letters of the "how dare you let that wanker write in Zigzag. . . cancel my subscription" type. Personally, I think that Nick Kent is just about the most interesting, thoughtful and readable of all the pop weekly pen-pushers, and I have no qualms about including the first part of Mac's interview with him.

Paul Kendall witnessed their long awaited British debut and talked to the BLUE OYSTER CULT (when they could get a word in between their manager's observations), before turning his full concentration on dynamic producer/manager/pioneer rock journalist SANDY PEARLMAN.

I rehashed a couple of family trees; one on STEVE MILLER, one on COMMANDER CODY and his shuffling band, but other than that, my contributions have been backstage. Tobler's contributions have been so far backstage as to have been non-existent. Not a solitary word! Mind you, he must have lost a few ounces rushing about rounding up all the advertising in this issue. (Support our advertisers, or Tobler will be subjected to monstrous tortures).

Happy go lucky BARRY MELTON toured with Cody, countered mixed enthusiasm, and released a solo album. Andy was inspired to transcribe a dusty cassette and beat it into suitable shape.

While the rest of us froze, the Famous Mac Garry, by fair means or foul (and I suspect they were as foul as he is), spent the New Year wallowing in California sunshine - and among the baggage he clutched on his return was a stack of tapes, which, to my utter astonishment, the normally inert loafer proceeded to convert into a massive KALEIDOSCOPE article, the first part of which appears in this issue.



Finally we have Over the Garden Wall and Blabber'n! Smoke, so what more could you want? Write and tell us, please.

1976 is going to be an ace year. . . . I feel it in my bones - and March is going to be a great month.

It's good to be back. Pete

There's nothing in the rock world that stirs anticipation and interest like a new Dylan album, and following the musical, emotional and (if we're going to make a Pseud's Corner entry of this) intellectual milestone that was **BLOOD ON THE TRACKS**, desire for **DESIRE** was even keener than usual. I've had the album for a couple of weeks now, and listened to it dozens of times, and I still don't know what to make of it. I don't like it as much as **BLOOD ON THE TRACKS**, and it doesn't move me in the same way, but then it would have been ludicrously optimistic to expect that it would. For a start it's more diffuse in its moods and settings, so one's reactions vary considerably from hearing to hearing, and in this it probably reflects the increasingly public, sociable life that Dylan seems to have been leading over the last couple of years. Moreover, to judge by a recent 'Rolling Stone' article, depicting Dylan being happily accompanied by wife and kids on the Rolling Thunder Revue, his personal life is less traumatic now, which obviously puts another **BLOOD ON THE TRACKS** out of the question.

'Isis', the second track on the album, is the standout for me at the moment. Dylan plays piano for the only time, it's reminiscent of 'Day Of The



DESIRE AND ROLLING THUNDER

BOB DYLAN'S WINTER

Paul Kendall,

show to indicate exactly who played what and when. Dylan was clever to include Neuwirth, Burnette and Soles, a real triumvirate of dorks who merely highlighted the excellence of everybody else. McGuinn was better than I've ever seen him, Joan Baez was stunning at times, Jack Elliott was enchanting, Joni Mitchell leaves me cold but she was pretty good, and the accompanying musicians were exceptional. Dylan was stupendous, but the real eye opener was Mick Ronson; his playing was out of this world! Pete

LOVE MINUS ZERO/NO LIMIT Dylan brings it all back home
SIMPLE TWIST OF FATE Only Song from 'Blood on the Tracks'
OH SISTER Dylan just breathtakingly charismatic! Aaaah!
HURRICANE "if anyone knows anyone who can help us get him out!
ONE MORE CUP OF COFFEE before I go to the valley below
SARA First time I heard it just knocked me flat on my arse!
JUST LIKE A WOMAN Dedicated to all those "who don't have answers
KNOCKIN ON HEAVEN'S DOOR one of rocks magic moments
THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND "one day this will be our national anthem



Looking elegantly wasted in an old skinny rib sweater and black toe-nail varnish (which later transpired to be mere grime), Nick Kent opened the door of his sumptuous penthouse suite high above the Charing Cross Road, where the fringes of Soho's back streets stagger out into the neon glare of theatre-land. Without giving me time to absorb the chic post-rock pluralist decor, which in itself would be basis for an article, Kent reclined languidly on the cushions of the delicately carved Japanese divan, snuggled against the neck of a bottle of Jack Daniels, and with a self-satisfied smile, spake thus:

NK: Just like many other kids, when I was about eleven I got totally besotted with rock music. This was about 1962, and I really got into the Beatles and the Stones... especially the Stones. I was lousy at sports, and it's one thing I've noticed with really intense music lovers - that in their teens there was a sharp division between kids who were good at sports and kids who were useless, like myself, who just got into listening to rock'n'roll and talking about it all the time... living for it, more or less, which I did. I was an only child, fairly good at school, led a fairly sheltered existence, very middle class and dull - and I just spent what ever money I had on records, going through phases of following different groups. I was fanatically into the Stones from '63 to '65, and then I got into the Byrds; the Byrds were the be all and end all of my existence. I recall living for every single and album they put out. Then in '67 I got into the West Coast groups very heavily; the Doors, the Jefferson Airplane, and so on... and I just cruised along.

ZZ: ...and you were presumably a devout reader of the pop press?

NK: Yes, I was very interested in the papers, because that was another branch of music appreciation, and I was vitally interested in becoming a rock writer... I was enchanted by the thought of getting some of my stuff published - it was a very big thing for me. I bought all the papers, always have done; got really into Rolling Stone when it first came out... I got a subscription when I was still at school, in the days before it was imported or published over here. I bought Zigzag too. In fact, I even wrote an article for Zigzag, a very home-made thing on Spirit, which I never sent in. At that time you'd never done anything on them, and I thought they were being neglected. Anyway, after school I went to university; first of all to Oxford. I don't know how I did it - it was sheer fluke; my A levels were very bad, but I pass-

ed the entrance exam - and at that point I was getting into academic studies and the idea of being a writer, that is, a novelist. I was very struck by the romantic image of being a writer, so I got down to studying English literature... but my university career was cut short after three months, because I got into drugs. I was caught dealing speed and got unceremoniously kicked out and disowned by my parents.

ZZ: Caught by the law, or the college authorities?

NK: The law... but they did a deal with the college to get me out of the area - it was a hush-hush number. A short time later I went to Bedford College, which is part of London University, but that only lasted six months; I got kicked out of there for not working... but by that time I'd started to write for Friendz - I'd just turned up there one day with a verbal recommendation of a friend of mine called Roger Hutchinson, who now writes for Time Out. I'd gone to stay with him, up in Barnsley where he lived and edited a local underground paper called Styng, after finding myself at a loose end following the Oxford incident. I'd never written professionally before, never had anything published except in school magazines, but Roger had a connection with Friendz and when I returned to London, to start at Bedford College, I went along to see them. Originally, Friendz had been started by the English staff of Rolling Stone as 'Friends of Rolling Stone', which became 'Friends' and later 'Friendz', which was when I came on the scene; the paper was really in its twilight year... it was dreadful. Everything was at a very low ebb, everyone was just freeloading manically, Hawkwind - for some Godforsaken reason - were subsidising it, no-one was doing any work, and I asked if I could write for them.

Rather grudgingly they said I could do something, so I wrote four album reviews: Laura Nyro's 'It's gonna take a miracle', a Quicksilver album, the Byrds' 'Farther Along', and '20 Granite Creek' by Moby Grape... I gave them all rave reviews. Because they had such a paucity of copy, they not only printed my reviews, they made me music editor! Their reaction was "Great, this guy actually puts pen to paper and doesn't just come round here to score Mandrax", which was what that paper was actually all about; everyone was into dope very heavily, just getting stupified. By that time, I'd said goodbye to drugs, apart from an occasional puff on a joint, and it was a very productive period for me - very energetic.

I was really excited by this, stunned that I'd been published, and although Friendz folded within six months of my joining, I'd established myself on the scene. Charlie (Shaar) Murray had established himself as the underground whizz-kid writer; he had sprung out of the schoolkids' Oz, and was writing for Creem and Ink. He was young, and a Mr Personality. I thought he was really good when he started - I liked his attitude, even though he was a bastard. He was obnoxious, and he won't mind me saying this. He's a sweet guy, is Charlie - he's got a heart of gold, to quote a cliché, but at that time he was very self conscious, and to make up for this, he'd become very brash and totally objectionable - very sort of Jewish obnoxious - with the result that no reasonable sensitive person, which is most of the population, could actually spend more than ten minutes talking to him. I just couldn't stand his company, even though I admired his writing... and Ian Macdonald had exactly the same thing when he met Charlie.

Charlie was really pumping it out, though he only received a pittance for his efforts; he was living off free albums I think. I was into the free album thing too, because I was only getting £2 every fortnight from Friendz - that was my salary as music editor. My first interview was going to be with Bowie; it was all set up, but Tony de Fries suddenly put his finger on it, because this was just before Ziggy Stardust, and he was all ready to spring into action... so the first real interview I did was with Wayne Kramer from the MC5. In retrospect, he gave me the biggest load of guff I've had the dubious privilege of hearing; it was pure rubbish - Detroit anarchy of the mind, post John Sinclair White Panther drivel... but at the time, I was very impressed. I was very naive and into the high energy thing - I empathised with the whole Detroit scene very strongly.

Then I met Iggy Pop through an ex-girlfriend of his from Detroit, and he made a profound impression on me... I idolised him. Now at this time, de Fries had put an embargo on interviewing MainMan artistes (like Bowie, Mott and Iggy), which was a source of annoyance to NME, who wanted to do a thing on Iggy, who was an in-vogue character because of his relationship with Bowie. So the NME phoned me to see if I would do a piece on him, because I was the only journalist they knew to have access to him... and that was the start of my life with the NME. Initially they wanted to make me a staff member, but I declined that because I was still in the final throes of college and also I realised that it was possible

NICK KENT

to make much more money by being a freelance writer for them. . . . I mean, when they told me how much they paid per thousand words, I almost had an orgasm.

ZZ: How much did they pay?

NK: At that time it was £15 a thousand, though it's around double that now. But at that time, the paper was just beginning to undergo a dramatic change of style; for years it had been run by complete buffers - fucking idiots who just didn't know. For instance, a typical example of their standard of ineptitude was an album review which Andy Gray, a previous editor, did: it started off "Duane Eddy is in as fine a voice as ever on his new record". Then things began to change; this guy Alan Smith had moved in, and he was a very sharp operator - had this intuitive thing going for him. IPC had given NME eight issues to recover their falling circulation from around 50 thousand up to a decent sales figure; they agreed to put in a certain sum of money to advertise the paper, and left it up to the staff to do the rest. Alan Smith tapped me on the head and said "write away. . . we give you carte blanche to write anything you want". They'd already got Charlie Murray in - so now they had two dynamic young underground writers - and then they got in Ian Macdonald, so they had 3 . . . and with these three as the nucleus of the new style NME, they attempted to conquer the world of British rock journalism - which they did; within months, the circulation had outstripped that of Melody Maker.

ZZ: Were you ever actually on the staff of NME?

NK: No. My name was in the staff box because my contributions were regular, but I was always paid strictly as a freelance. . . . and I was very lucky - NME treated me very well. I'm very untalented; I never bothered to learn how to type, so my contributions are always submitted in longhand, which hardly endears me to the typesetter, and I'd always turn in copy just at the very last minute - so there were a lot of drawbacks in using me. NME's position is now very invidious, if you ask me. . . . I think we've blown it in a way.

ZZ: It's certainly nothing like such vital reading as it was a year ago, say.

NK: You're right; something's been lost. Charlie still contributes a fuck of a lot, but he's become too prolific for his own good - he's got verbose.

ZZ: Why don't you write more?

NK: Various reasons. I got very disillusioned with writing; I got very untalented, very messed up, because I was just knocking it out, maybe an interview a week - this was back in '73 or '74 - and then I was sacked for gross irresponsibility; I became too much to handle. I was in a bad state, and was very unpleasant and obnoxious.

ZZ: I remember the stories of your sacking; people in the know said that you hadn't long to live. . . . there were strong rumours that you were about to snuff it.

NK: Actually, I was very flattered by those stories, being a secret rock casualty myself. I was going to do a book on rock casualties. . . . I'd already done the Syd Barrett thing by then, and I was about to do my Brian Wilson



marathon. It all came to a head when I was sacked, and there was a lot of bitterness between me and the paper - but anyway, I was reinstated, and I did the Wilson piece, after which I didn't want to write anymore. In fact, last week I signed a contract with Panther Books to write the full version of the Brian Wilson/Beach Boys thing.

ZZ: There was a time when your interviews were almost guaranteed to bring out any rancour in your subject.

NK: Oh, yeah. . . . it became a sort of set formula, and I always attempted to be both scurrilous and entertaining. I'd come in with all guns blazing and really attack Lou Reed or whoever it was, and make them out to be complete fools. . . . there was an awful lot of ego there.

ZZ: Were there ever repercussions from irate interviewees?

NK: Very few. Tony de Fries set a heavy Irishman on to me. I'd be given phone messages from "Paddy, a friend of Mr de Fries" to watch out! Whether it was in fact Tony de Fries or just some joker, I don't know - but I had bad-mouthed Bowie to hell and back. . . . I really went for him. I just didn't like what Bowie was into; I met him in '73 and just didn't like him. He was getting into his King of Decadence trip, and I didn't like it. . . . I got a bad feeling from him - he had this Nazi aura, very unfeeling and very inhuman. Also I felt he was ripping off a lot of people - he was a real plagiarist, and I felt people should be told about the originals he was stealing from. I felt he was an overrated figure and basically took a very arch stance against him.

ZZ: Do you regret it now?

NK: In a way, but not enough to say "I regret it" in public.

ZZ: What about your celebrated Lou Reed confrontation?

NK: He hates my guts, so I'm told. I was told that he was going to grant me an exclusive interview on his most recent European tour, that I would be the only journalist he'd speak to. . . . but I also heard that the interview would involve him locking the door on me and trying to beat me up. So I spent a really long time trying to work out how to deal with it. . . . I was going to take a knife in there. He'd thrown the gauntlet down and it was up to me. He's very thin, but he's got so much amphetamine in his blood, and those speedy characters can really lay you out, so I was a bit worried about that. . . . but it all came to nothing.

He's put me down in the press; he said in Australia that he was going to kick my nuts in, and he said I was a dishonest writer, which pissed me off a bit.

There have been other things that pissed me off. I did an interview with Mick Taylor just before he left the Stones, and he told me that he'd not been given composer's credit on certain Stones songs he'd had a hand in - and he later denied it, which pissed me off because it brought my credibility into disrepute. I saw Mick Taylor the other day for the first time since I did that interview, and we had this grand confrontation. . . . he said "ah, Nick Kent - you're the guy who was sacked from the NME for being too cynical". So I said "well, I don't know about that Mick - that's like saying you were thrown out of the Rolling Stones for being too insipid".

The only physical violence that I've been actively involved in was when John Bonham threw a drink over me in LA, because of my review of their 'Physical Graffiti', I think. I think Bonham was totally coked out actually; he was just trying to pick a fight with anybody. Led Zeppelin are very paranoid guys, but I must say that Jimmy Page is one of the few people in the business who is actually almost a friend, who I can phone up. On the whole, I firmly believe that rock journalists and rock stars are not meant to be mates.

ZZ: Do you find their attitude towards you changes as your star rises?

NK: They've become very suspicious of me, and there are very few of them that I would like to call mates, because I don't like them as human beings. . . . they're not particularly nice people.

ZZ: Is Page the only one you're close to?

NK: I was close to Keith Richard for a time. When I say close, he invited me up to his place and I stayed there for a couple of days. It was very pleasant, and a big thrill for me, because he's my hero - as is obvious to anyone who's read anything I've written on the Stones. I'm really a sycophant for them, and it was really an honour to be associated with them, because I really lived for the Stones when I was a lad.

ZZ: How do you get on with Jagger?

NK: Jagger really intrigues me, as a guy. I'd love to do just one more interview with Jagger, because I think I've sussed him. . . . almost. I've never yet read a piece that gets anywhere near to capturing Jagger, because he plays so many games. People get taken in because they're so in awe of him; they don't go beyond the image he puts out. He plays all these extravagant games with all journalists - he almost ingratiates himself. . . . it's very weird. Jagger really mystifies me; a guy in his position giving all those interviews. He's really second only to Dylan, and Dylan doesn't even talk to the press. But Jagger's a bland interviewee really; his interviews are never very good - he never says anything very vital or interesting, and he never gives any great insights.

There was a time when I went over to do an interview in Munich, at the time of the Mick Taylor break up, and he came on incredibly friendly towards me. . . . and then suddenly he'd change completely, and just ignore me.

Interview by Mac
Photographs by Pennie Smith
To be concluded next issue

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MARCH 14TH, THE ODEON, BIRMINGHAM.
MARCH 15TH, FREE TRADE HALL, MANCHESTER.
MARCH 17TH, THE TOP RANK, BRIGHTON.

THE STEVE MILLER STORY

Steve Miller Born 5th October 1943, the son of a doctor, in Dallas Texas. He was learning guitar by the time he was 5, and led his first group, The Marksmen Combo (which included his school friend William 'Boz' Scaggs) at 12. He reckons he's gigged as a professional musician almost every weekend since.

Later, when Miller and Scaggs were both students at the University of Wisconsin at Madison (from 1961-1963) they had a typical mid-sixties college band called 'The Ardells' - and clad in hairy suits, and ties, they played a raunchy combination of R&B and Motown imitations.

Though the local scene was fairly active, Madison was too restrictive and unfashionable to serve as a springboard to musical fame - so when they

left college, the group folded. Boz went to Copenhagen where he found his studies coming secondary to a very successful career as a folksinger, organist. Ben Sidran went to San Francisco, and Steve Miller went back to Texas where he began work on the body of material which later comprised side one of 'Children of the Future'.

After a further year of study (literature at the University of Copenhagen) he went to Chicago where he planned to concentrate on making a name for himself in the rock world. As well as playing and jamming with most of the well-known musicians in the city, he led his own band, The World War Three Blues Band which became the

Goldberg Miller Blues Band when ex-Butterfield sideman Parry Goldberg joined on keyboards. "That was a dynamic little band - we were offered eleven recording contracts after playing our first ever set there was nothing else happening - we were it!" Friction within the band culminated with Miller's leaving, however, and on the eve of their going in to cut an album for Epic he decided to head for greener pastures.

Hearing that things were happening in California, he struck out for San Francisco in Summer 1966 and found that the top local bands were somewhat short on musical skill. "The Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane barely knew how to tune up at that time - and they only knew about four songs. The big highlight was both

bands playing "in the midnight hour" out of tune for 45 minutes. I knew we couldn't miss, it took me no time to put together a band which could play 25 times in turn an evening. Back in Madison, the rival band had been Tim Davis and the Chordaires - so Miller called Davis and his guitar player Curley Cooke, who were playing in a lounge trio in Rockford Illinois, and they set about making a local impression.

It was a perfect case of being in the right place at the right time, within months the entire American rock scene seemed to be focussed on what was happening in San Francisco, and The Steve Miller Band had little trouble establishing themselves nationally.

After their first public appearance at the Matrix, a San Francisco club, at the end of 1966, they gigged at the Avalon & Fillmore. The SF State College Folk Festival of April 1967 was their first big success and this was followed by critical acclaim for their set at Monterey Festival in June 1967.

STEVE MILLER BAND #1

NOVEMBER 1966 TO APRIL 1967 Originally known as The Miller Band and later The Miller Blues Band, this line-up recorded 3 tracks for the film 'REVOLUTION' (Feb 1968 - US 5158)

JAMES (CURLEY) COOKE guitar/vocals
LONNIE TURNER bass/vocals
TIM DAVIS drums/vocals
STEVE MILLER guitar/vocals

Curley Cooke left the Miller Band in September 1967 ostensibly to form Curley Cooke's Hurdy Gurdy Band. He later joined San Francisco group A.B. Skyy, and played on their 'Rambling On' album, before becoming a studio musician. Among the albums he played on were 'Monterks' by Boz Scaggs, 'Pipedream' by Tim Davis, and 'Steve Miller Number 5'.

STEVE MILLER BAND #2

APRIL 1967 TO AUGUST 1968 After recording as Chuck Berry's back-up group on 'LIVE AT THE FILLMORE' (with Cooke & not Scaggs) (Sept 67 - Mercury SP 61138), they cut their first two Capitol albums 'CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE' (April 68 - ST 2020) & 'SAILOR' (November 1968 - ST 2084)

JIM PETERMAN organ/vocals
LONNIE TURNER bass/vocals
TIM DAVIS drums/vocals
STEVE MILLER guitar/vocals
BOZ SCAGGS guitar/vocals

Jim Peterman, who had been added to the band in April 1967, left to become a producer and was on the staff of Elektra Records for some time. He's now engaged in house construction in Washington.

STEVE MILLER BAND #3

AUG 1968 TO NOVEMBER 1969 Worked as a trio on the road, but enlisted friends to assist on next two albums: 'BRAVE NEW WORLD' (June 1969 - E-ST 184) and 'YOUR SAVING GRACE' (December 1969 - E-ST 331). As with the first two, Glyn Johns was producer.

LONNIE TURNER bass/vocals
TIM DAVIS drums/vocals
STEVE MILLER guitar/vocals
NICKY HOPKINS keyboards
BEN SIDRAN keyboards

The fifth album was produced by the band themselves. Miller "Glyn and I got into an epistolical trip... I felt he wasn't digging my music. I'd go into the studio and he would say 'all wrong! the feeling's just terrible!' That's like painting a picture and being told all the colours are wrong!"

STEVE MILLER BAND #4

NOVEMBER 1969 TO JULY 1970 Went to Nashville to record 'NUMBER 5' (July 1970 - E-ST 446) with friends and session men

BOB WINKELMAN bass/vocals
TIM DAVIS drums/vocals
STEVE MILLER guitar/vocals

Among the guests on 'Number 5' were Curley Cooke, Nicky Hopkins, Lee Michaels, Charlie McCoy, Ben Sidran, Wayne Moss and Bobby Thompson. The album was dedicated to "the people in our struggle to bring sanity to the world now" - including Paul McCartney, who had played on 'Brave New World' (as Paul Ramon).

Bobby Winkelman Tim Davis split in July 70 and cut two solo albums for Metromedia

STEVE MILLER BAND #5

AUG 1970 TO DECEMBER 1971 Recorded 'ROCK LOVE' (Oct 1971 - E-SW 748)

JACK KING drums/vocals
STEVE MILLER guitar/vocals
ROSS VALLORY bass/vocals

After the comparative lack of success of 'Rock Love' Miller decided to expand his trio by adding a second drummer and a keyboard player. Jack King, a jazz-rooted player was complemented by Clark, "a Memphis Rocker". New bassist Gerald Johnson, from Washington DC, was spotted by Miller playing in The Sweet Inspirations' backing band during an Elvis Presley spectacular being televised from Lake Tahoe, and keyboardist Dicky Thompson had come west from Texas.

STEVE MILLER BAND #6

JANUARY 1972 TO MARCH 1972 The band made their British performing debut at the Rainbow Theatre in February, where they previewed their 7th Capitol album 'RECALL THE BEGINNING... JOURNEY FROM EDEN' (April 1972 - EA-ST 11022). Following this gig, part of a short European tour, Miller returned to California and fell ill. It was 6 months before he resumed touring.

JACK KING replaced by JOHN KING drums
DICKY THOMPSON keyboards
STEVE MILLER guitar/vocals
GERALD JOHNSON bass/vocals
BEN SIDRAN keyboards/production (on album only)
ROGER CLARK drums

Returning to London to play gigs at the Rainbow in April 1973, Miller spoke of plans to record a studio concept album, but since then only 'The Joker' has been released. This he referred to as the 'Halloween' album, whilst the others involved a suite built around the mythology of the American Indian, an album of Christmas carols, and a Blues album with Nat and Cannonball Adderley.

STEVE MILLER BAND #7

OCTOBER 1972 TO MAY 1974 After recovering from hepatitis, the band embarked on a 50 city American tour, during which Lonnie Turner replaced the temporarily indisposed Gerald Johnson. Then came the most successful album: 'THE JOKER' (Oct 1973 - EA-ST 11235)

LONNIE TURNER bass/vocals
JOHN KING drums
DICKY THOMPSON keyboards
STEVE MILLER guitar/vocals
GERALD JOHNSON bass/vocals to Boz Scaggs' Band

STEVE MILLER BAND #8

JULY 1975 Miller's appearance at Knebworth was his first for 14 months. "I wanted to take some time off to think". He intends to record soon, and go back on the road next March.

LONNIE TURNER bass/vocals
DOUG CLIFFORD drums
LES BUDEK guitar/vocals
STEVE MILLER guitar/vocals

Though his albums regularly sell in excess of 250,000, the nearest Miller has to a hit single was back in 1968 when 'Livin' in the USA' reached the Top 40 - then, from out of the blue came 'The Joker' which topped the American charts in the last weeks of 1973.

Miller convened Band #8 especially for the Knebworth gig. Boz, from Florida, had played with the Allman Bros & Boz Scaggs and has his own album out soon. Clifford was drummer with the phenomenally successful Creedence Clearwater, and we know about Turner.

"Suddenly I found myself with a hit single and an album which had sold over a million copies. I got a really heavy dose of being number one - and it was pretty hard to take. I got tired of touring, tired of all the hotels... I'd been on the road so long that I just didn't have a home... so I took some time off to make one."

In addition to the personnel listed, Curley Cooke returned to the fold to play rhythm guitar in Band 7's last gigs. The only album not mentioned above is the double compilation 'ANTHOLOGY' (Dec 1972 - E-ST-SP 12)

As yet, Miller has recorded no follow-up to the phenomenally successful 'The Joker', though his mind is buzzing with ideas. "The next one will be different for sure... simplicity was the keynote for 'The Joker' it only took 19 days to record it, overdub it, mix it, master it, stop, re-mix and re-master. It was the first album I'd produced entirely by myself."

Family tree researched and drawn in July 1975 by Pete Frame. Thanks to Ian Groves, Mick Houghton, Boz and Steve. © Capitol Records For the Space Cowboy and Becky Sparkle XXX

Please note: only first 50 get the Dylan album. After that, we give previously offered

albums - such as Andy Fairweather Low, Nils Lofgren etc. Don't you feel an idiot, turning this magazine sideways and even upside down? Don't you think these graphics are cūte? All credit to Chris Morton.

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I THOUGHT HEAVY METAL WAS A LUMP OF IRON UNTIL I TASTED THE BLUE ÖYSTER CULT

What do you do when a band, whose records have long been a staple part of your musical diet, finally make it over here for some live work, only to leave you feeling let down and a little confused? Well, for a start, you make several attempts at writing an article about it before you come up with something which is even halfway acceptable.

Let's get things in perspective before we go any further though. The Blue Öyster Cult's performance at Hammersmith Odeon wasn't the aesthetic nightmare portrayed by some reviews, but on the other hand it wasn't the mind-wrenching experience that reliable witnesses in the States had promised us. Part of the fault lay with the Cult - the pacing of the show with the aural and visual climax coming after only four numbers in 'Harvester Of Eyes' and 'Flaming Telepaths' left something to be desired, and the persistent dissipation of energy in twiddling guitar solos (and I mean *solos*) gave the performance a constant feeling of coitus interruptus - but part of it, I felt, lay with the theatre itself. Rock'n'roll isn't meant to be taken sitting down anyway, and when you're perched in your comfy armchair halfway up the circle, it's difficult to get truly involved with what's happening far below you onstage. You tend automatically to lapse into an objective, critical frame of mind instead of letting yourself roll with the flow. From the point of view of the band - especially a physical band like the Cult - it's not easy to bridge the gap when faced with an enforcedly static audience.

Consequently, although the sound was OK and the musicianship solid, after the rather ropey first 2 numbers, and although the lighting and staging were effective, at times stunning, there was an automatic slickness to the whole show where I'd anticipated a somewhat higher speedo spontaneity quotient. Still, I got the impression that given an environment more conducive to honest-to-God rock'n'roll insanity - a nice, impersonal hockey

arena, let's say, or good ol' Friars Aylesbury, somewhere to really bring out the animal in an audience - then the Cult could be the definitive sonic assassins of which we'd been forewarned.

Not that the London audience weren't enthusiastic, but as Sandy Pearlman, the band's manager, producer, and manic guidance counsellor says: "I think there's something I like to call The Usual Hysterical Reaction, and then there's something which transcends that". Allen Lanier, Patti Smith's beau and an extremely tense person, continues: "At this point we don't even hear that, because we know it's going to be there. What wakes us up is the other moments - the moments that didn't happen the other day that happened here". Eric Bloom, aka 'The Rock King Of The Finger Lakes': "That's the only thing that keeps us sane about playing the same songs, the fact that the kids will react to certain parts of the set that they wouldn't ordinarily react to".

The impression we Limeys get of American audiences is of thousands of kids in their early teens, eyeless and gaga on qualudes and red wine, either gently nodding off or braining themselves against the stage in spasms of misguided ecstasy. This, the Cult are at pains to point out, is not their audience. "There's no relationship between the two audiences" says Sandy. "Black Sabbath's audiences are like dead morons, and the Cult's audience is usually hyper-active. They are violent, but towards themselves... they have rarely turned on the band". Eric Bloom expounds further: "No-one's pushing their way to the front to look at Daltrey's bare chest or Rod's crotch, but they are to watch guitar playing. Guys get off on guitar playing a lot more than girls do; that's where it's at. There's no obvious sex trip in our show - it's sexual but it's not somebody stuffing their pants with hot dogs".

In fact, from talking to the band, it's obvious that they've got a lot of respect and affection for the kids who come to see them and buy the records, and the invitation to write in for lyric

sheets that appears on the American sleeves has elicited a tremendous response. "There's a positive benefit from having them write in", quips Sandy, an impish grin creasing his punkish features. "Not only do we get to keep their stamps and have CBS send the letters back, so we make some income that way, but we also get to know exactly what they're thinking. Up to now about 40,000 letters have come in, and I've actually read them all. The kids actually understand the band a lot better than the critics do, which is a good sign".

The Cult's...err...wariness of critics and writers is understandable, since the early approval which they enjoyed has, in recent months, and particularly since the 'live' album, turned into some pretty heavy flak. Sandy, however, remains unperturbed: "This thing has followed an interesting dynamic. The Blue Öyster Cult is now a very big band in America, and over here apparently, and suddenly the critics are no longer on the boat, which is a dynamic I predicted; I told the boys it was going to happen. A lot of very funny things were said, but most writers proved that they have absolutely no sense of humour, and they didn't understand the humour behind it, and so the final build-up was Lester Bangs' statement about 'five Jewish kids who are Nazis' and they're not five Jewish kids, and they're not Nazis, but that was the final simplification of something that started out as a joke. So now we understand... unfortunately my friends in the writing game, people like Nick Tosches and Richard Meltzer, who are friends of the group, have great senses of humour, so we misjudged the fact that a lot of people we dealt with had none at all, and literally could not take a joke or understand a joke".

Sandy it was who more or less got the band together in 1967 in the heady, intellectual atmosphere of Stony Brook, and their early years, which were pretty involved as regards changes in personnel and names, are fully and colourfully documented in



Chalkie Davies

ZZ44 by Timothy Spaz, aka the ubiquitous Mr. Meltzer, someone who should know. In their early days the Cult were neither heavy metal supremos, nor pocket-size Nazi warlords, but were 'like the Grateful Dead or The Byrds. We had a West Coast sound at that time which was odd, because the big thing in the East was White Soul!" In this style, and calling themselves Stalk Forest, they made an album for Elektra which is modestly described as 'one of the two or three greatest psychedelic albums ever made', and although gathering dust in the vaults at the moment, it is quite likely to find itself thrust into the cruel light of day if the Cult get much bigger.

So... in the four years since the band signed with Columbia and released their first album to what may be euphemistically described as enthusiastic critical response 'album of the decade', 'Future of Rock'n'Roll', you know the stuff. there have been three more albums, each more successful than its predecessor, and the long hard slog of roadwork, which has really provided the key to their success, rather than any subjective record company hype or critical endorsement.

All the material for their first album was written in three weeks prior to recording, so perhaps it's surprising that it's their most varied, least highly-strung effort so far, although Pearlman's distinctive lyrical preoccupations are already much in evidence.

"Actually, we didn't have any gigs then", explains Albert Bouchard, the band's drummer and facial growth specialist. "We'd play clubs, but we'd be like a week in one place, and we had a lot of time to rehearse, and a lot of time just to sit around and think about the stuff. The subsequent albums were definitely motel rooms, written on the road, sometimes on days between gigs. We realise now that when we go to play 'live' it has to be solid and it has to be heavy, and we didn't realise it to that extent then. I think maybe our next album will be a little mellower also, because we're going

to try and make it a real studio album".

The second album, TYRANNY AND MUTATION, is more the Cult as they are now... aggressive, angular, and more obviously geared towards 'live' performance.

"The way it actually came out was an artificial, created-in-the-studio thing, but in our minds we were trying to be Mahavishnu with vocals. We played with Alice Cooper and Mahavishnu at that time, both were very successful at getting the audience off, and they influenced us".

The image was also intensifying and focusing down... the songs full of death, dope'n'devilment, the cover, like the music, metallic and unsettling, and the American inner sleeve boasting a stark black and white pic of the band in hot'n'nasty leather-clad action on one side, and dark mutterings about 'deep, black, brittle experiments which failed' and 'Lucifer The Light' on the other. No doubt you'll grasp the general impression the boys were driving at. Actually, the guy who devised the covers for the first two albums seems to have been a fairly integral part of the BOC set-up at this point.

"Well Gawlik is the guy who did the first two covers. The reason he didn't do the third one is that it took too much out of my life to get the second cover out of him", bemoans Sandy. "When we were making TYRANNY he came up to the studio one night when Murray and I were mixing, and he said: 'you know, this is the way you guys have got to make records in the future. You've got to lock this place, you can't allow food in here, you've got to turn the temperature way down, and I think when you make that record you ought to call it TYRANNY AND MUTATION'. That's really how it happened".

Bill Gawlik, 'certainly the most talented cab-driver in New York City', is also responsible for unearthing that strange inverted question mark/cross symbol that appears on all the album covers, and looms over the band onstage.

"It's the Greek symbol for chaos, it's the symbol in certain systems of

alchemy for lead, which is identified as the most chaotic and base of all metals, the opposite end of the spectrum from gold. In certain astrological symbols it represents Saturn, which casts the chaotic and destructive influence on life, and he didn't know it at all. He just picked it up and put it into an engineering drawing, and I looked at it and said: "Wait, this looks familiar", and I pulled out my books on alchemy, and there it was".

All this hokum was just the job of course; it fitted the 'evil heart of rock' pose perfectly, and appealed colossally to the band's sense of the humorous and the imaginative; even the record company dug it, chipping in with bogus stories of how the band and their supposedly neo-Fascist stance were getting violent reaction from Jewish Leagues and the like.

"All the second-generation criticism we received, it's funny how it ballooned. We sort of gave it a push and once it started rolling the whole thing blossomed of its own power and became more and more fantastic without our having anything to do with it really". It's Allen speaking, and of all the band members he's the one who reacts most to the treatment they've received from journalists.

"I'll tell you where critics are at. When you take a band like that Southern band Lynyrd Skynyrd, all the New York writers go out and write these stories about the romance of the Southern shit-kicker band, how Lynyrd Skynyrd are just a fantastic down-home bunch of country boys. The guy who writes all the songs, Ed King, he's from Chicago originally, he was in the Strawberry Alarm Clock, he's like an old line pop-rock musician just running around trying to find a spot to hit it and make it. Of course writers don't want to know about the facts, they think this guy Eddie King is real great, a Southern folk-hero legend, but it has nothing to do with the facts, it's not true".

But didn't they do the same thing in projecting the Cult as meet-your-macho devil worshippers? "No no", protests Sandy. "What happened is

that they got tired. If you go back and follow the sequence of the Lester Bangs romance with the Blue Oyster Cult you'll find he just got tired of the image he thought up, and instead of reproaching himself for it, he decided to reproach the band. But since he'd decided they were good guys, he decided to reproach me. But since they couldn't be entirely blameless, he said that they were whipped dogs who were being manipulated, which is essentially what he said, and I'm a cynical manipulator of youth, which I may be".

Obviously the thing that particularly annoys the Cult is the suggestion that because they're friendly and not a bit barbaric offstage, then their whole history is one of outrageous, cynical calculation with the sole aim of fattening up their bank balances. . . . mind you it's only recently, since the Cult have been a financial as well as critical success, that this theory has reared its ugly head.

"Those people are totally ignorant about how important the moment of being on stage is, and how subconscious that time is. They're totally ignorant about that, because you live life, it's a day to day process, but when you get on stage, it's used for something entirely different. You go someplace else, you use a different part of your mind, a different part of your personality at that time".

Cue for a classic Pearlman bon mot: "Alexander The Great did not spend every minute of every day devoting himself to the spread of Hellenistic culture beyond the Ganges River, it just looks like that now".

Allen takes up the idea: "That's the tyranny of time and history; people begin to believe that what people do is totally themselves, and that is true in the sense that my whole life revolves around the fact that I make music, and that I play rock'n'roll, and yet I delude it the rest of the day with mundane things. But when I get on stage, if I put on different clothes and I put on a different attitude, that's what the stage is for".

Nevertheless, if the Cult are beginning to find their image a bit of a burden, they're showing no signs of it. SECRET TREATIES carries on where TYRANNY left off, and ON YOUR FEET, OR ON YOUR KNEES, surely the 'live' album title of all time, just about took things to the limit, with a sleeve combining elements of Gothic Hammer horror and hints of satanism, sacrilege and despotism, containing four sides of ultimate extravagance that vary from the magnificent to the mediocre. The 'live' album had been mooted for a long time and recorded over two years from September 1972, but circumstances were often far from ideal.

"The Cult was touring with Slade, who at that time were almost happening in the States. . . . luckily the American people, in their wisdom, decided to ignore these hounds and they didn't happen. . . . so we were trying to record parts of the 'live' album, and Slade would do things like give us $\frac{3}{4}$ inch on the front of the stage and not allow us to set up a good monitor system or bring in a good PA, and not allow us to record or shit like that. We had a lot of trouble with English bands, they're really very charming on the road in America.

Jeff Beck. . . . we had this amazing show in Jacksonville recorded during a hurricane, and it was amazing, and about half an hour before the show Murray and I were meant to be recording both Beck, for a future 'live' album, and the Cult, and he said: 'you can't do this, this bothers me'. So an amazing show was lost to posterity".

So the Cult are not entirely happy with ON YOUR FEET, but Allen insists that they had to release it anyway: "You get into a situation where you've committed yourself, made multiple thousands of dollars investments, so even if you're not perfectly satisfied with what you've got, you've got to put out a product because you can't put \$40,000 into something and then say 'to hell with it' and throw it on the shelf. You've got to go ahead and do it, you've got to realise some return on what you've invested".

It appears though, that the Cult haven't been fully satisfied with any of the albums so far, even the very wonderful SECRET TREATIES, a veritable tour de force among heavy metal albums, which was originally to be called POWER IN THE HANDS OF FOOLS, until that title was deemed to be too defeatist, and was to have included a little number entitled 'Bormann The Chauffeur', which combined with Hitler's cameo appearance in 'ME 262' would probably have proved too much for those already waxing apoplectic over the Cult's line in wit and irony.

"It started getting serious", says Eric, "and we were banned from some magazines. I talked to one editor and he said 'yes, your design, that was on flags in Hitler's Germany. The five million who died don't think this is funny!', and I said 'I don't think it's funny either, you've had us banned from your paper for pure bullshit'".

"That whole idea is a movie that everybody's making these days", interjects Allen. "Altman's 'Nashville' is about it, 'Starfucker' is about it. The whole concept that everybody's dealing with these days is the idea of being a media star, and it just happens that Hitler was the first media star. Historically it was an unavoidable reference".

Eric concludes with a weary tone that suggests he wishes everyone would drop the subject: "Have you seen 'The Producers' or 'Dr. Strangelove'? That's about as close as we're coming. Everybody's going just a little overboard about it". Paul Kendall



Stepping right along, we now peruse the dynamic Mr Pearlman himself. . . . manager, producer and former pioneer of decent rock journalism. Here we go:

Sandy Pearlman is an unusual gentleman. Thinning blond hair, the pale, haggard features that come from long hours in air-conditioned halflight, and the anonymity of shades make him a forbidding interviewee, and his physical and mental restiveness are contagious. His conversation is punctuated by much sniffing and 'y'knows' to the extent that they nearly obscure the trenchant articulateness of his thought processes, so in the interest of brevity and readability the following dialogue has been slightly edited. . . . not that the incisive economy of my questioning needed any editing you understand. So now, on with the show. . . . :

ZZ: Firstly about your extra-Cultural activities. Do you actually look for other people to work with?

SP: All the time.

ZZ: And how did the Dictators come about?

SP: The Dictators are rock writers and friends of Richard Meltzer, and I also knew them, and they kept saying to Richard 'get Sandy up here, we've got a great band'. So I figured, well, they're nice guys, what have I got to lose? So I drove up to see them and they had amazing songs, and I thought that Ross 'The Boss' Funicello. . . his real name is Friedman but he changed it in homage to Annette Funicello. . . . was an epic-making guitarist, and it looked liked something up my alley, so I went to work with them.

ZZ: How much of a creative role did you play on that record?

SP: Not much, I just produced the record. I've got a lot less to do with them than with the Cult.

ZZ: How come Handsome Dick doesn't do much singing on the record? (Epic KE 33348, by the way, never released in this country).

SP: Because they began to write material specifically for him later on. We decided that he ought to be worked into the act more, it was a suggestion from Murray and myself. Most of the material that the Dictators have is about Handsome Dick; it's either biographical or autobiographical. A song like 'Two Tub Man' or 'The Next Big Thing' are literally about Handsome Dick.

ZZ: Is the album something of a spoof? I thought it was incredibly funny.

SP: It is. I think the Dictators are. . . maybe you'll see them next spring or summer.

ZZ: Is it true that Epic have dropped them?

SP: Yes, but somebody else will sign them. Epic didn't like them. . . . the person who signed them left the company, and the first act of his successor was to drop Orchestra Luna and the Dictators, and having rid themselves of the two avant garde groups that they had, they felt contented.

ZZ: Do the Dictators tour with the Cult in the States?

SP: No, they've only done two shows together.

What about Pavlov's Dog?

: I was out in St. Louis with the Cult, and their manager was the promoter of the show, and he said 'I manage a group which is the greatest group in America', but I've heard that before. (I really wasn't dying to see the Dictators because I thought they were a joke group, just a bunch of pals, and I was shocked.) So as a favour to this man I went to see them,



Sandy Pearlman a wizard, a true star

and the lead singer was probably the best I'd seen in my whole life.

ZZ: Is that his natural voice?

SP: Yes, nobody believes it but that is his natural voice. But we had to work very hard on the Pavlov's Dog record; we had a lot to do with the arrangements and stuff like that, whereas the Dictators were ready to roll, they just walked in and did it. Of all the records we've made, the Dictators' record went the most easily. I literally do not recall having made the record, it was only fun. The only thing I can remember is that Handsome Dick kept doing impressions of Lou Brock, who is a baseball player, the most valuable player in the National League; so he would give us impressions of Lou Brock sliding into second while we were recording. That's all I can remember, except him getting drunk and waking up in phonebooths.

ZZ: How come Pavlov's Dog's album has been out on Columbia and ABC?

SP: Because they were signed to ABC on a deal that was ludicrous. They had 24 royalty points when the average new group has 13 or 14, they had an advance which totalled \$750,000 for five records, and there was no way the record company could make any money on it; they would have had to

have a platinum record to make money. So the organisation of ABC changed, and the first thing they did was make the group feel very uncomfortable, they indicated that they wanted them to leave. So I offered the group to Columbia originally and the head of A&R gave me a reply saying everybody in the company wanted to sign them. Subsequently they fired the head of A&R, and Columbia had been offered the group at one half the ABC deal. They finally went to Columbia for a deal halfway between. The original deal made with ABC was probably one of the biggest deals ever made by a new group.

ZZ: Do they work 'live'?

SP: Yes, they might also come over here next summer; they played a lot of dates last year. They fired their drummer and their violin player in the recent past and Bill Bruford is drumming on the new record right now. This record is just amazing, they play much better than they did on the last record for various reasons.

ZZ: I thought the standard of musicianship on the first album was pretty high.

SP: Yes, but we had to work very hard to make them sound that good. Now we can work on making the record

sound good. There are certain choices you have when you make a record; if the group has certain capabilities, then you've got to sacrifice certain aspects of the record's potential if the group is limited in any way.

ZZ: Do you find now that you've made a name for yourselves as producers that you get people pestering you for your services?

SP: Yes, in the last year and a half Murray and I have turned down Aerosmith. We could have made GET YOUR WINGS - we should have made it just as a business decision, but it was Murray's decision. And we turned down the Tubes, which again was Murray's decision.

ZZ: Do you regret that?

SP: It gets me sick every time I hear the record. I regret it so much.

ZZ: Because you think you could have done the record that much better?

SP: I think the Tubes are very good, and I also think I could have made a better record, but that's not to take anything away from the Tubes. I think it would have been better with us because our forte is extracting and maximising material. With Pavlov's Dog we did that, and we also made

them play better than they thought they could. Bill Bruford helped them a lot, I'd really no idea he was that good a drummer. There was no leeway in Yes, you were rehearsed to the point of abstraction and there was very little spontaneity allowed to him. And in King Crimson he had no material except for the old material - the new stuff was nothing particular. With Pavlov's Dog he had excellent material to work with, and he wasn't rehearsed too much, in fact he refused to rehearse. I was pretty shocked by the playing he did for them.

ZZ: You obviously play a large creative role in the projects that you're involved with. Are you a frustrated musician, would you rather be in a performing situation?

SP: Sure, definitely. I got interested in rock'n'roll fairly late, I used to be interested in classical music, rock'n'roll was a joke to me. Then 1964 arrived and I looked at it in political terms, as some sort of revolution in consciousness, and I got swept up in the whole thing. To me the Rolling Stones and the Byrds were the quintessence, and then there was another generation. But I always wanted to be a writer, and I did that. Then I wanted to be a poet, and I did that. I'd love to be a lead guitarist, but I'm not.

ZZ: How great is your involvement with the Oyster Cult and what they're doing?

SP: I wrote a lot of the early lyrics, about 60% of them. I produce the records with Murray Krugman, and I prepare the material with the band, but it's not like Ted Templeman with the Doobie Brothers. In 1968/69 there were all these people, Stony Brook was like Berkeley, and all these really brilliant people were hanging out there. Some had emigrated there, some live there like Buck Dharma. Allen was working for a film company in New York and he was brought out there by a guy called John Wiesenath who taught Jackson Browne to both surf and play guitar, and he was introduced to the guys in the band. It was just that I had an idea for a band, and for a name, Soft White Underbelly, and I said 'I think you're great, and I think we could fuse our interests here'.

ZZ: I've never seen an explanation of the origins of the name Blue Oyster Cult.

SP: Probably because I've never offered one.

ZZ: Why... do you consider it too mundane? Does it have anything to do with the Pearl (man)/Oyster connection as Meltzer suggested, or is it from Oyster Bay? (A Long Island community a few miles from Stony Brook University).

SP: No, neither. The thing is... the story behind it is so ridiculous, you know, not at all consistent with the aura of the band. I don't know whether this is the right time....

ZZ: Oh come on... I'm sure our readers would be interested - we won't make a big thing of it.

SP: Well, okay. Here's how it was. You know all those previous names we used (The Cows, the Stalk Forrest Group, the Soft White Underbelly), well we weren't really happy with any of them, for various reasons... like The Soft White Underbelly was too vulnerable, and Stalk Forrest conjured up inappropriate images. Anyway, Richard Meltzer and I were in his apartment on Perry Street in Greenwich Village one evening, playing The Doors' 'Waiting

For The Sun' for the 83,000th time (it's the only record he's ever kept - he sold the rest), discussing the situation, trying to find some alternatives, but achieving nothing except a state of advanced inebriation. Richard is a very strange guy - as you'll know if you've ever read any of his stuff - drinks like a fish... but he's something of an expert on a wide variety of subjects ranging from boxing to beer. Now, at this particular time, he wouldn't drink canned beer, because someone in the industry had told him that the tin reacted with the brew and impaired the true flavour... so we were drinking this bottled stuff which he got from his local delicatessen on the corner of Hudson and Perry. Oh look, this is an absurd story... are you sure you want to go on?

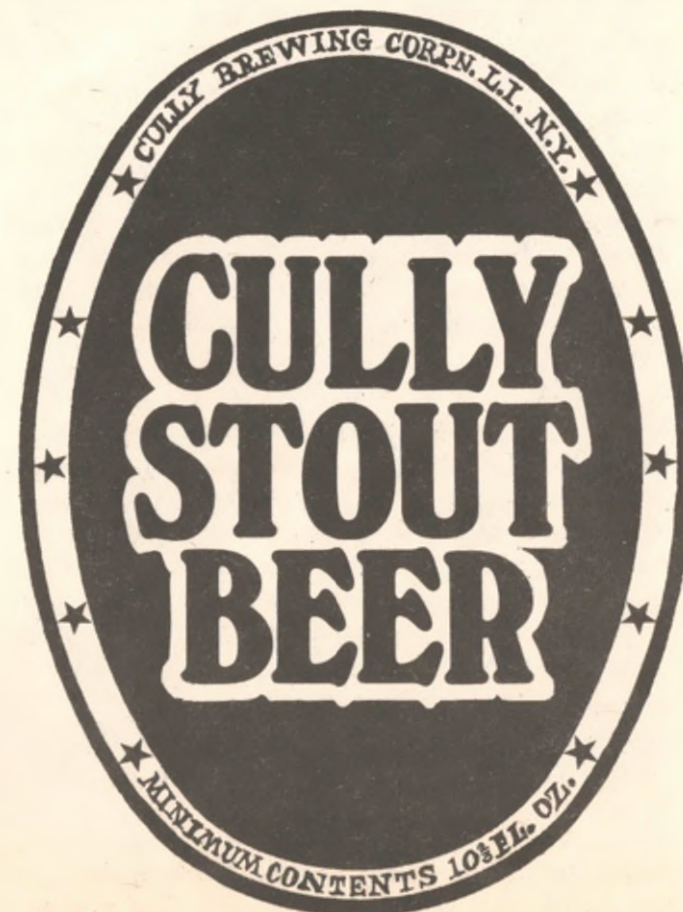
ZZ: Yeah... it's just getting interesting.

SP: Well, we were sitting there drinking this stuff, which is called Cully Stout... it's this sickly black flat beer - a sort of poor man's version of your Mackeson, I guess. Anyway, we were getting steadily boinked out of our brains, and Meltzer's glazed eyes had become riveted to the bottle in his hand - to the extent that I thought he'd lost consciousness... then he suddenly jumped up yelling "Trolleybus Cue". I thought 'Jesus, he's gone bananas - he's got the DTs already', you know, 'Quick, nurse, the screens!....' but he explained it was an anagram of Cully Stout Beer - he'd been staring at the label and shuffling the letters around in his head! A typical Meltzer brain exercise! So, in our drunken delirium, we wasted the next hour or so doing hundreds of permutations of Cully Stout Beer - coming up with all sorts of nonsense like Stout Belly Cure and, what was another... Trycolute Blues - and finally I came up with the words Blue Oyster Cult! There was something about the evening and the situation which told me that the words would fit the bill perfectly... we'd call the band Blue Oyster Cult!

ZZ: What an amazing story!

SP: Isn't it bizarre? Actually, having told you about it, I'd prefer that you didn't print it... it does tend to distract from the mysterioso of the band.

ZZ: Oh, come on... Zigzag is a sort of British continuation of Crawdaddy (when it was good, in the mid Sixties) - our readers would be fascinated by that story.



SP: Well, I guess the cat had to come out of the bag sooner or later. Look, I'll tell you what... you can have this for the Zigzag Archives if it's any use to you; I've been carrying it around for years and it's getting all crumpled up. (Produces carefully preserved beer label from his wallet - reproduced herewith - and we crack up in hysterical laughter). Come on, let's get back to more serious things... questions....

ZZ: Did you originally start out hoping to see the band that you, in a way, had formed, doing what you would have hoped to do had you been a performer?

SP: More so now. What they do, a lot of what they do, is what I imagine I would do if I were a performer. If I had a band it would probably be more sinister, even darker than this is, there would probably be no humour in it, but that's just where I'm at, so even the lyrics I do for them are not exactly what I would do were I on my own. I can't expect people to totally subscribe to my interests - I'd be most interested in a band called Azrael. Did you ever see a movie called 'The Phantom Of The Paradise'? The 45 minutes in the middle are beyond imagination, they are the absolute realisation of a certain image you have of rock'n'roll being dark and evil and sinister.

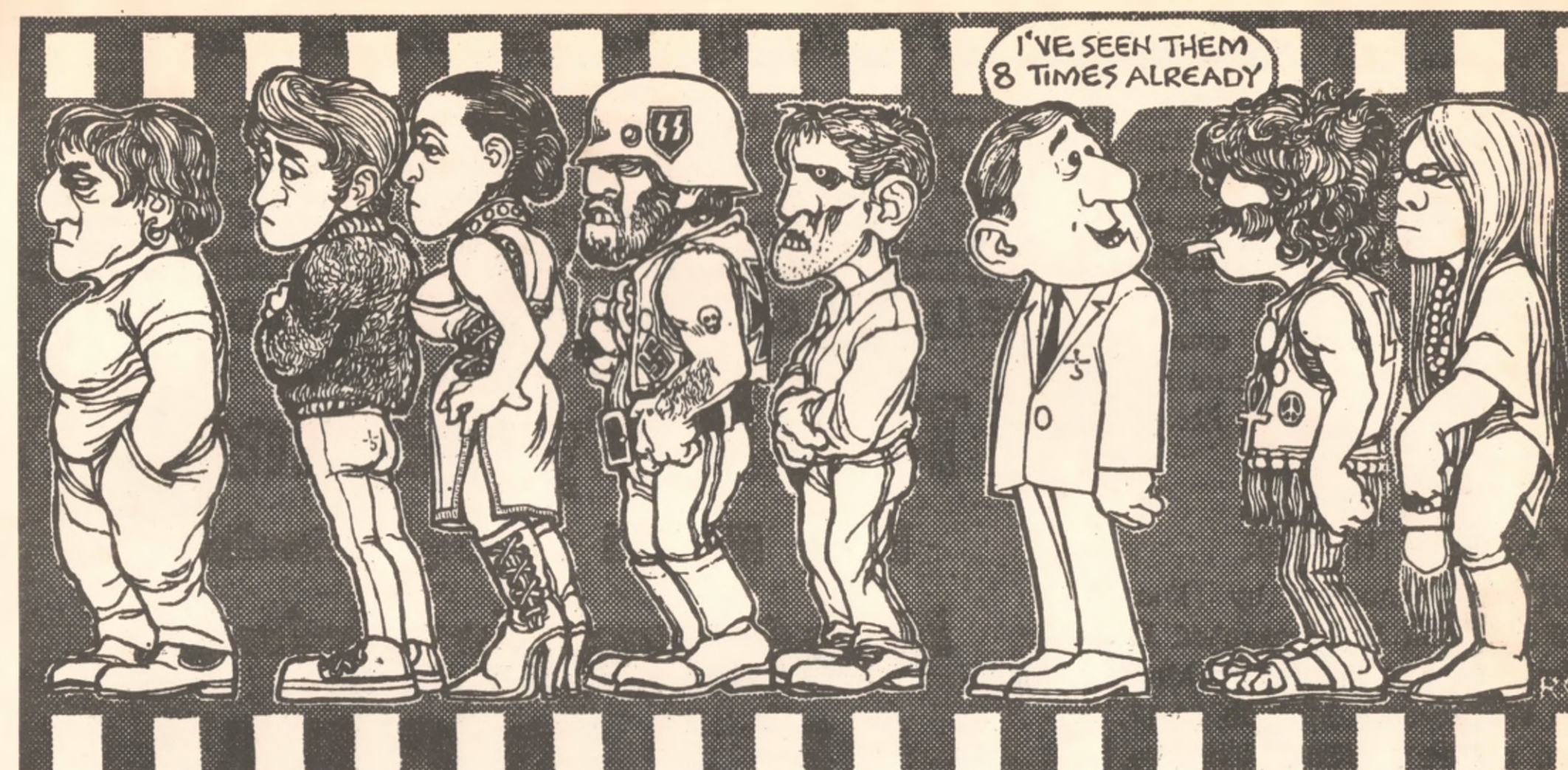
ZZ: So do you feel you're compromising what you'd like to do with what's expected?

SP: Well it was impossible to make a living as a rock writer, and it's very difficult to make a living as a poet... the best poet I know is Patti Smith and she couldn't make a living, and she's really a far greater poet than the academic poets. Most of those people have to work, get a Guggenheim grant here, teach at a University there, which seem like thoroughly disagreeable things to do, so I make a living as a rock'n'roll producer and manager, which is not a disagreeable way to make a living. Very many times you feel yourself slipping away into a 30s Hollywood script, which is a fine thing to do. I don't mean sex, women and dope or anything like that, I just mean you're sitting there and you've got this whole romantic creative atmosphere with your machines and your retainers, and it's a wonderful thing that anyone who has the opportunity should experience. It's not completely fulfilling, but I imagine I could make enough money doing this so I could stop for awhile and do something else, that's my plan. I was going to be a university professor, I had a Woodrow Wilson scholarship, which ten people a year get in the United States, it's one of the highest academic honours you can get, but I got into this because it seemed romantic. I've been lucky. I'm doing something I like, and I can make a lot of money. It's wonderful that I can come over here and travel around Europe.

ZZ: Is coming over here something that particularly interests you, because it seems that the Cult are a lot closer to European culture than your average American band?

SP: The Cult, following the way things are going, could be the biggest American band ever in Europe.

England is No. 3 in the scale of popularity for foreign countries.... they're more popular in Japan and France. They're not popular in Germany, because the company over



there has done nothing.

ZZ: Is that because they're reluctant?

SP: No, they're just stupid. To have something good and not do anything with it is a sign of stupidity in my opinion. It's just like they had Bruce Springsteen, and for a long time they didn't make him happen, then they did. When you have a company as powerful as Columbia Records, to make something happen is almost a decision, as they did with Springsteen and Aerosmith, and as they've just done with the Cult. It's a conscious decision to set all the wheels in motion. If they have something that's plausible they can make it happen. They couldn't make the Wombles happen, because the Wombles are implausible for the United States.

ZZ: Why do you think that most of the English Top Twenty bands over the last few years have died horrible deaths in America?

SP: Because they're parochial, they're not universal, that's what's wrong with them. A band like Slade is some kind of parody on English football culture.

ZZ: But they're living out their fantasy, just as Bruce Springsteen is living out his.

SP: But his is a New York street fantasy... I turn on the TV over here and all I see are old American movies. It's possible you could take a poll over here and James Dean would be voted one of the five most popular film actors of all time. Somebody at Columbia said to me 'we've got our Rolling Stones, that's Aerosmith, and we've got our James Dean, that's Bruce Springsteen'. It's universal, because the hustler, in the good sense of the word, the jive artist, the smart-ass kid is a universal quality, but football culture isn't. It's very hard to romanticise buffoonery, and Slade is buffoonery. Bruce Springsteen isn't, Aerosmith isn't. Aerosmith is sexuality, that's what Steven Tyler is, he's Mick Jagger. He's nothing more than that, the Rolling Stones were much greater. Keith Richard and the dead one were evil, they knew what evil was all about, all they had to do was stand onstage and smile in a certain way, and you knew they knew what the score was. Why should buffoonery be

exploitable in universal culture, it's just a parochial aberration. That's why Bruce Springsteen can make it everywhere, he can walk out in the streets of Paris and they'll know he's a hero. More so than in London in fact. He's the French Romantic Rebel. The Blue Oyster Cult are the French Intellectual Rebels, they have a very long history of that, that's why they went so far so fast in France, they are quintessentially French. They'll make it here because they're musicians; they'll make it in France because they're rebels.

ZZ: Do you think so? They'd struck me as different from the mass of American bands because they don't project a street outlaw image.

SP: No, but they project another one, a more intellectual image which is very popular in France, a country which is more self-consciously intellectual than most. When they play in Germany they'll be popular because they're violent. There's something there for everybody. They'll be Deep Purple in Germany, they'll be Melville in France, and they'll be the Byrds here, and they're all those things in America because the kids have picked up on them as a composite. They won't in France, because they don't understand the language or the tradition of rock'n'roll as well, but they understand romantic rebellion very well. 'Cities On Flame!', funny as it is, is very serious. I just said I would use less humour, it would be very stark if I was writing for myself, which I will.

ZZ: You envisage an actual Sandy Pearlman record?

SP: Oh yes. I think I'll use the Dictators, who are an amazing band. There are two new members - a bass player who is almost as good as John Wetton, Adny Shernoff plays keyboards now, and a new drummer. They always had two great guitarists, so now they have four good musicians, which is enough for anything.

ZZ: I'm surprised you say the Dictators, because the impression their album gives is very light-hearted and satirical.

SP: Right now they're the heaviest band I've ever seen. Before they didn't have this bass player and a

drummer who's in the top percent of English style drummers. The next record's going to be a lot different, and they're a great recording band. Ross the Boss is a maniac, and when he goes out there it's like he's shooting bolts of fire, which you can't get from the record.

ZZ: Why was that ill-fitting version of 'I Got You Babe' put on the record?

SP: It was a joke, but they're no longer a joke. They picked one road, which was a failure, it got virtually no airplay, but a terrific amount of critical success, and they were dropped by the record company. Murray and I have a much greater influence this time around, and they're going about it as an attempt to attack the audience and succeed as a 'live' killer rock band, which they can do. I think though that their record was the most perfect that Murray and I have ever made. We took a certain aesthetic viewpoint, most of it coming from the band, some of it from us.... for example the cover was our idea, and we executed it perfectly.

ZZ: Was it a very calculated record?

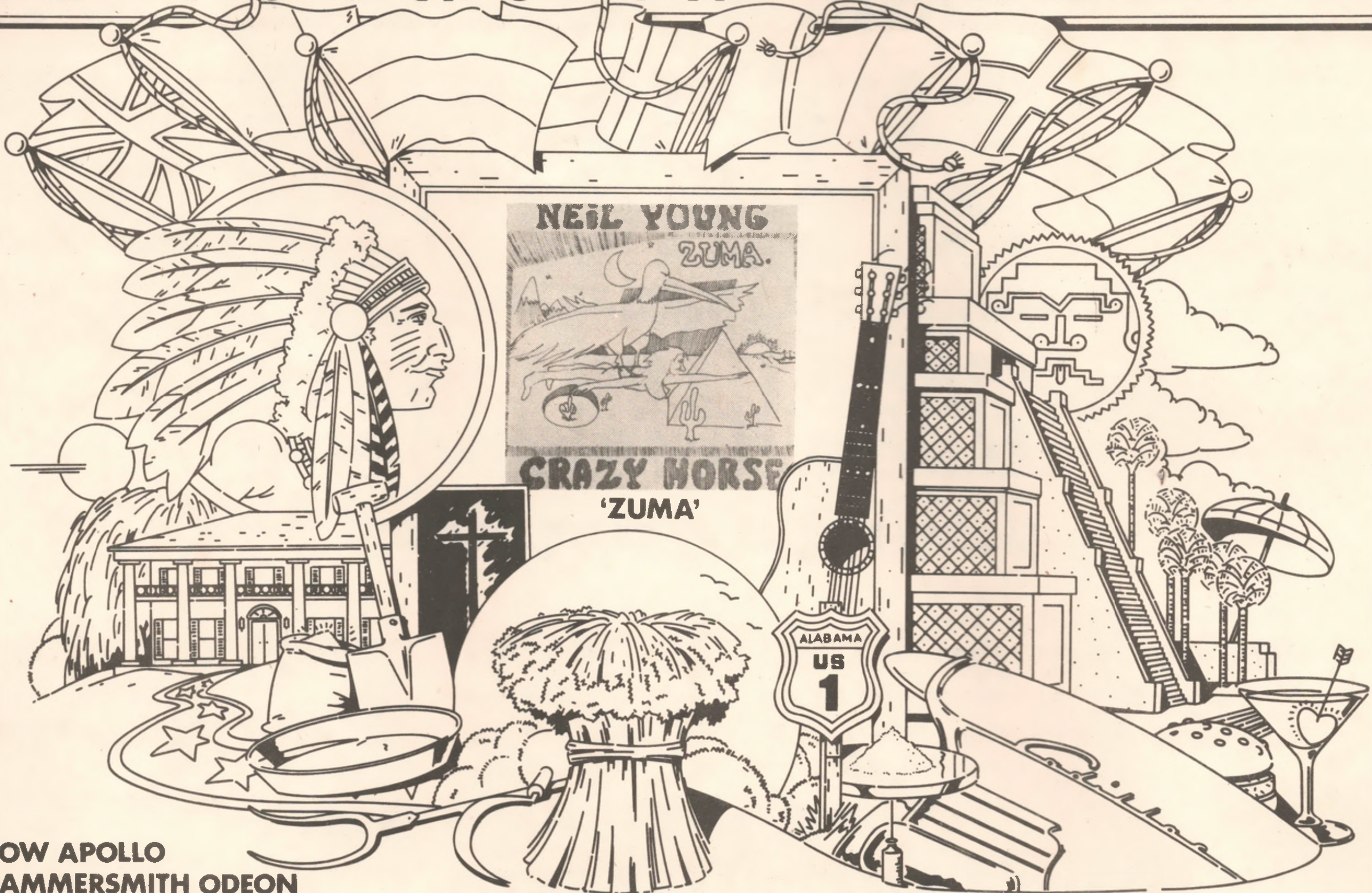
SP: No, it's a perfect expression of a certain consciousness - teenage American consciousness in 1973, when sopor taking reached its apex, and the main concerns in life were taking sopors, getting your father's car for the weekend, and getting laid.

ZZ: Knowing some of the band were writers, I'd thought maybe....

SP: Yes, but did you ever read what they wrote? That was what they wrote about, this is not Jon Landau or me. I like Herman Melville, but they wouldn't know him if he rode over them on Moby Dick. As an expression of where teenage America was at in 1973 it was perfect; I think it's a very great record. There are things lacking on it though. I think rock'n'roll has a heart of darkness, and there's very little darkness on that record, the new stuff has a lot more. That record is about life, not bigger than life, and I think records should be bigger than life, that's why I like the Blue Oyster Cult so much. You can be a sopor hound much easier than you can be Alexander The Great; you can get drunk a lot easier than you can move the destiny of hearts, minds and the world.

Paul Kendall.

NEIL YOUNG IN EUROPE '76



ON TOUR
MARCH
28th GLASGOW APOLLO
29th-31st HAMMERSMITH ODEON

HIS LATEST ALBUM 'ZUMA'

The third album was called 'COUNTRY CASANOVA' (SPFL 287) released in July 1973. Produced by the band and Stephen Jarvis at Wally Heider's in San Francisco. COUNTRY CASANOVA/SHALL WE MEET/ MY WINDOW FACES SOUTH/ ONE MAN'S MEAT/ EVERYBODY'S DOIN IT/ ROCK THAT BOOGIE/ RAVE ON/ SMOKE SMOKE SMOKE/ SISTER SUE/ HONEY SUCKLE HONEY. "After two hazy, we decided to use a 16 track studio and competent guys. Hang the coat, let's get a professional album. Stephen Jarvis, a hip young guy who works for Heider, had it all sewn up... it was easy to communicate what we wanted". (N.B. Watch my 38" replaces 'Everybody's Doin it' on English copies - because of a rude word).

Line-up number 4 also made the fourth album 'LIVE FROM DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS' (on SPFL 295). Recorded live at the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin, Texas, using the Wally Heider Mobile. Produced again by Stephen Jarvis. Released in September 1974. ARMADILLO STOMP/ GOOD ROCKIN' TONITE/ I'M COMING HOME/ SEEDS & STEMS/ SUNSET ON THE SAGE/ LITTLE SALLY WALKER/ GIT IT/ OH MOMMA MOMMA/ CRYIN' TIME/ DISGY LIGGY LO/ RIOT IN CELL BLOCK NO 9/ TOO MUCH FUN/ MEAN WOMAN BLUES. Another excellent album.

Album details continue below.

Billy Philadelphia and Seth bassplayer (Billy can't remember their names!) used to be in The Billy Phila- delphia Trio, and Don Margraff and Carol the Saxman were in a famous Berkeley bar band called The Crabs. Peter Helmuth, a Sam Lay protégé, was in the band - re- named Howling At The Moon (with Gil Thomas).	BILLY PHILADELPHIA piano	SETH bass	DON MARGRAFF lead guitar	CAROL saxophone	PETER HELMUTH drums	BILLY C. FARLOW vocals/guitar	ANDY STEIN fiddle/sax trombone	COMMANDER CODY vocals/piano	BOBBY BLACK pedal steel	BILL KIRCHEN guitar/vocals	BRUCE BARLOW bass/vocals	LANCE DICKERSON drums/vocals	NORTON BUFFALO harp/vocals/ trombone	KEVIN FARRELL vocals/guitar	RICK HIGGINBOTHAM rhythm guitar
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The Billy C Farlow Band

A splinter group formed by Billy C in December 1975. So far they've played 5 or 6 gigs, all in clubs around the Bay Area. Billy C: "I have a lot of fun in the Lost Planet Airmen but a lot of the music that I love and am capable of doing, just wouldn't fit into that band... so I put together a group to play R&B and stuff I was doing since... when we go back I have gigs lined up for The Lowbranch and the Keystone in Berkeley, and a new club in Fairfax called River City... but it's just a part-time fun thing".

Kevin Farrell (now in the Moonlighters -) is familiar to Cody freaks as the author of such classics for 6 or 7 years, but this is the first band he's ever been in. He used to come round to my house, or to Billy's, and sit and strum his songs - but we never really knew what his trip was... if he wanted to perform. And now he's developed into a good lead singer".

Album details, continued from above. Line-up number 5 cut one album - 'COMMANDER CODY AND HIS LOST PLANET AIRMEN' - released in Feb 1976 on Warner Bros Records K56108. "I'd just as soon forget that the album ever came out" says Cody. Tracks: SOUTHBOUND DON'T LET GO/ CALIFORNIA OKIE/ WILLIN/ THE BOOGIE MAN BOOGIE/ HAWAII BLUES/ HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS/ KEEP ON LOVIN' HER/ THE DEVIL AND ME/ FOUR OF FIVE TIMES/ THAT'S WHAT I LIKE A BOUT THE SOUTH. Produced by John Boylan at the Record Plant in Sausalito. "Warner's saw us as a slick, studio processed band like The Staples - whereas we're much more rough and ready than that. Anyway, we cut the album - under duress, I might add - and Boylan took the tapes to LA to mix them on the computer. We were out on the road, and had no time to attend the mix... and, as a result, the computer console neatly trimmed off all the highs and lows, all the excitement - leaving a sterile, mediocre thing like that. As I say, I'd just as soon forget about that album... even the 'Lukes' are pretty lame. Anyway, we learnt a lot from our experiences!"

Line-up N°6 made their sixth and latest release, 'TALES FROM THE OZONE', released in November 1975 (all these are American release dates, but the catalogue numbers are British to be sure), on Warner Bros K 56158. MINNIE THE MOOCHER/ ITS GONNA BE ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS/ CONNIE/ I'VE BEEN TO GEORGIA ON A FAST TRAIN/ HONKY TONK MUSIC/ LIGHTNIN' BAR BLUES/ PAID IN ADVANCE/ CAJON BABY/ TINA LOUISE/ THE SHADOW KNOWS/ ROLL YOUR OWN/ GYPSY FIDDLE. Produced and mixed by Hoyt Axton and John Stromach at the Record Plant in Sausalito. "We're quite pleased with this one... nice tunes, played well - but there are two criticisms; it sounds too slick, and there isn't enough stuff written by the band. The fact is, we were so busy out on the road during the months preceding that album that we simply didn't have time to write any original songs... see, I just can't write on the road - I need to sit down and think for awhile. We felt obligated to record this on 32 tracks". Thanks to Motown-Mixer Stromach, they have at last achieved exquisite clarity... but hands up all those who prefer the rough edges of 'Hot Licks' - made for 5000 dollars on a 4 track machine!

TO JOIN THIS TO THE REST OF THE CHART - CUT ALONG THIS LINE, MATCH IT & STICK IT!

Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen #7

January 1976 - still going strong. Undergoing a slight personnel re-shuffle, involving the disappearance of Tichy and the arrival of one Norton Buffalo, the band flew to England for their first European gigs since Autumn 1973. A 13 city tour of Britain (January 23 - Feb 6) is to be followed by work on the Continent. Two gigs (Aylesbury and Hammersmith) were recorded for a possible live album.

Latest recruit to the Airmen's ranks is Norton Buffalo - still a temporary member at this stage, though everyone in the band hopes he'll join on a permanent basis. Cody: "He came from the same place as the rest of us - straight out of the ozone... but I'll tell you one thing - he's the best fuckin' harmonica player in the world - and that's no hype; you'll hear him and you'll know! He sings great too, and he's got lots of original tunes which will just kill you".

The Moonlighters

A 7 piece offshoot band (8 piece when Cody plays too) formed in October 1975. Cody: "Going out as different bands under different names, means we can go back to all the small clubs we want to, and we can play anything we like, without the pressures of the commercial rock world. Gigs so far have been just great - including one where The Billy C Farlow Band opened for 'The Moonlighters' featuring Commander Cody... it was back to the good times... I mean YAHOOOOO!! It's so much better to play places like the Longbranch, rather than spend a month and a half touring around Wyoming in the bus. Norton is a friend of Billy's from Sonoma County; he does blues and country sessions and has been playing with Clover lately. In fact, that's how we first played with him: we were doing a gig with Clover in San Anselmo, and John McFee suggested we let Norton have a blow. So he and Andy Stein played 'Orange Blossom Special'... and it was sensational! He plays country, but he's got a tremendous blues feeling - possibly something to do with the fact that he was raised in Richmond California, which is predominantly black. Rick is our manager, of course; he took over from Joe Kerr last year, and he also played acoustic rhythm guitar on the live recordings we did here in England." For details of Kevin Farrell, see other side of page.



Very wisely, Cody & his crew intend to take life a little easier in 1976... The offshoot groups will do more gigs, and there will be more time to relax and write songs - thereby ensuring that the next studio album will be a real cracker. "Once Warner's have realised what we are, and how to sell us - everything will be fine" says Cody, who signed with Warner's after 4 unhappy years on Paramount. "ABC Records bought out Paramount, and we were part of the deal - and we were not exactly ecstatic about the arrangement... so we approached other companies. I'd signed my life away to Paramount, but Warner's were willing to pay \$100,000 to secure our release". 1976 will see Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen move into a new phase: good time swing, up arrangements, better new songs, and an action-packed, dynamic, fast-moving, spectacular stage act - and look out for their cameo appearance in 'The Starlets' a film set for release this year. Billy C sings 'Truckin', 'Everybody's Doin It', and Cody wrote a superbly schmaltzy laden, title song called 'Hello Hollywood'... "a totally disgusting and gross song".

"It was an unsavoury, rapid day in the Autumn of 1973 as the young air from the Oving Hills transubstantiated itself autologically into an ozone-like atmosphere". This family tree was originally put together for Zigzag 35, which has long since been sold out. Due to public outcry, it has been totally re-conceived and updated for Zigzag 38. Special thanks to Moira Bellas and Dave Walters at Warner Bros Records. Dedicated to Ed Ward (the Sultan of Sausalito), John Collis, Charlie Gillett, Roger Scott, Clive James, Sarah Gideon (not forgetting Julie and Lisbee at Antartex, Cambridge), and, of course, Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen. (© Mrs Wing). And I'm down to seeds and stems again too. Researched and drawn by MAC GARRY and PETE FRAME © February 1976

Would you bloody well believe it? We interviewed Cody and Billy C in London and Aylesbury, assembling all the information to update this chart, and then almost killed ourselves to finish it and have it photographically reduced in time to show the band at Oxford on February 2nd. "Here comes old Frame with his maps and charts" observed the slightly inebriated Cody, ushering us into the dressing room to participate in the pre-gig excesses, and when the band examined the family tree... it was revealed that it was already obsolete! Billy C Farlow, who seemed extremely uncomfortable at the Aylesbury gig (though he assured me that he saw a secure future with Cody and the Lost Planet Airmen), had packed his bags and returned to the States during the last week of January. Rick Higginbotham seems to have become permanent rhythm guitarist, and vocals are shared by Bill Kirchen, Snortin Norton Buffalo and Cody... I'll amend the chart again, one of these nights. On Farlow's departure, Cody's only words were "He's reet petite... and out!!" RF

Strange as it may seem to all of you who may imagine me as a contemporary of Frame and Tobler, when the early strains of the much-vaunted 'San Francisco Sound' began to reach these shores, I was still an innocent, youthful specimen, valiantly trying to pass my exams at school, and to all intents and purposes, totally unaware of the cultural halo that was to alter the course of my life so drastically. Little did I know that rock music would soon grip me with such feverish enthusiasm and that I would be thrown headlong on a collision course with a world full of strange, eccentric people, outrageous habits and customs, and esoteric and abnormal behaviour of every description.

Looking back, the months during which I first heard the Dead, the Airplane, Quicksilver, and Country Joe & The Fish were probably the most musically significant of my whole life. Not only was the music unlike anything heard before, but the possibilities of a whole new lifestyle were unleashed upon an unsuspecting world, and for one glorious summer San Francisco became the spiritual home for a whole generation of kids, thousands of whom actually made the pilgrimage there. Most of us though, like me, could only dream of what it was like, listen to all the relevant records a million times over, collect every conceivable scrap of information and reportage that emanated from the West Coast, and generally immerse ourselves, as far as it was possible being respectfully English, in the spirit of this exciting new culture.

It didn't take me long to familiarise myself with the personnel and history of the major San Franciscan bands, and after my initial investigations (aided invaluable by early 'Rolling Stones'), distinct personalities and heroes began to emerge above the mass of acid-pickled long-hairs who constituted the majority of San Francisco's several hundred rock bands. Grace Slick, Janis Joplin, and Marty Balin were singled out as outstanding vocalists, and Jerry Garcia, John Cippolina, Jorma Kaukonen, and Barry Melton became the guitar heroes of the day. Garcia's work I knew best and was closest to my heart as my introduction to West Coast rock had been through the Grateful Dead; Cippolina, for the comparative scarcity of his brilliance on record, made an indelible scratch across my brain with HAPPY TRAILS; and Kaukonen... well he just seemed to get better and better, peaking, I rather think, on VOLUNTEERS. And so what about Barry Melton? Well due to reasons I can't quite clearly recall, Country Joe & The Fish were one of the last of the first generation of West Coast bands to attract my attention, but when I finally got round to them it was Barry Melton's guitar work that made sure I'd never forget them. Like the aforementioned guitarists, he struck me as being a true original, and like Garcia he has beautiful melodic sense and the rare ability to make his notes ring with a sharp crystal clear tone, which at that time showed up the multitude of would-be Eric Clapton imitators in this country as the blundering ten-thumbed sloths that they were. (Author, now becoming marginally more excited than he has for some time when writing in this most revered of journals, rushes off

BARRY MELTON



the tale of a fish

to fetch a copy of C. J. FISH so that he can play 'Silver And Gold' to reassure himself that what he has just proclaimed is the gospel truth).

The action now cuts to January 1975, some seven or eight years after the events outlined above, to a time when the magic, spontaneity and vibrancy in rock has generally been replaced by the methodical, predictable, and altogether mediocre. As editor of Zigzag I am becoming increasingly concerned with the lack of new interesting material worth bothering about, and for one ludicrous moment it seemed the only answer was to bury our heads in the sand and pretend it was still 1967. But what has honestly captured my imagination so intensely and altered my concepts about music so completely since those thrill-packed halcyon days? Hardly anything, that's what. So as I brood dejectedly over the languishing state of rock music on this typical afternoon in January, the telephone rings. Barry Melton is coming over to this country and would I care to interview him?, enquires the familiar voice of publicist Keith Goodwin on the other end. My mind immediately wanders back to those scorching summer days when the sultry sounds of The Fish would drift aimlessly and lazily across Sunday afternoons spent stretched out under the warm sun. How could I possibly refuse such an invitation? So

the interview is arranged for the following week, and at the appointed time I arrive at KG's luxurious offices in the heart of Tin Pan Alley. It's freezing cold, pouring with rain, and when I meet him, Barry Melton is huddled around two electric fires and wearing a thick woollen sweater. Obviously not the sort of conditions he is used to, but nevertheless he succeeds in making himself feel more at home by indulging in the good weed.

Now the entire history of Country Joe & The Fish has been documented splendidly in Pete's chart in Zigzag 54, so for the sake of pointless repetition I've edited the 1½ hour interview down to include a more detailed look at Barry's own personal career and his musical interests. Needless to say he is one of the most fascinating, intelligent, and entertaining guys I've ever interviewed, and every bit the legendary hero I thought he would be.

ZZ: What was your musical background prior to Country Joe & The Fish?

BM: I was born in New York City; took up the guitar at the age of six. My parents were involved in The Movement in New York - we'll call it The Movement for lack of specific nomenclature. At any rate, as one of my early influences I went to a dancing school run by somebody named Marge Guthrie - the wife of Woody Guthrie. Jack Elliott hung around - we were neighbours; the Ash family - Trudi Asch and Moe Asch - owner of Folkways Records in the United States. Paul Robeson was also involved in that scene. My parents were part of The Movement and those people were the singers of that movement at that time... the McCarthy era. One thing that Country Joe and I have in common is that both our fathers were harassed to death by the McCarthy era for their activities; which were really rather innocuous in perspective. I don't mean to play down their role but it was more one-dimensional than some of the things that people were into.

ZZ: So you must have been politically conscious from a very early age?

BM: Yeah. I delivered Daily Workers in New York City when I was 5 years old with my brother who was 11. And so that was the music I grew up with - songs from the Spanish Civil War, American folk music with a left-leaning angle. People like Woody Guthrie were neighbours, and Joe Hill; that kind of music - Movement music. But I have another kind of musical background that comes from guitar lessons and that's mixed in there too. But I guess somehow my dream was always to synthesize music and politics. As an adult standing here today, I want to get me and my music together, and if it's political sometimes that's cool. But when I was a kid I was very idealistic and didn't quite understand it all. And so I guess my earliest repertoire consisted of protest songs. My mother just sent me a poem I wrote about Adlai Stevenson when I was six years old about how they should throw Eisenhower out of the presidency. But anyway, I started playing guitar at a very young age and that was the sort of material I leaned towards. And then I hit a new gang musically probably when I was about 14 or 15 and that was the playing part. In other words I

discovered that there were places you could go and play with people... fiddle festivals, bluegrass festivals, blues festivals - music festivals. And me being 14, when I played with other 14 year olds I'd been playing 8 years already. I stopped my formal training when I was about 11... that was classical stuff and a smattering of all sorts of things.

ZZ: When did you move out to the West Coast?

BM: I came to Los Angeles with my parents when I was 8 years old and moved up to San Francisco when I was 16. I went to school for awhile but I wasn't very serious about that - I always did want to be a musician. And the type of musician I wanted to be was not really taught in schools so I had to go out and experience things. I hitchhiked across the country. I read 'On The Road' by Jack Kerouac and 'Bound For Glory' by Woody Guthrie in the same week, and the next week I was gone! It all sounded great, y'know 16 years old, the life of the road, I was off, guitar in hand.

ZZ: How did you meet Joe?

BM: We met once. Malvina Reynolds was playing at this folk festival in Berkeley... Joe and I actually played together before we really got to know each other. Malvina was playing guitar and Joe was playing jug with her, and I think I just walked in and started jamming on harmonica. In the Bay Area before the whole rock'n'roll thing started there was a folk music scene going on that was very loose, very gregarious, and very friendly. Everybody played together, and Joe and I played together as folk musicians before we played together as rock musicians. We had a club called The Jabberwock which we shared with 8 or 10 other musicians. But of course pop music eventually made the thing a commercial entity. Joe and I were in The Instant Action Jug Band together. We were part of a scene that hung around this coffee house. In a way, we set about forming The Fish as a band to work on that was just going to be fun. Then we found out that rock bands actually got paid money and further than that we found out that somebody wanted to record us, and further than that even we started to sell our records, so we stayed together. But you see I wonder how many groups would stay together if they didn't chance on success? Because otherwise I think they'd just keep moving on.

ZZ: Is there a story of how The Fish got together?

BM: Well basically I had a lot to do with that I guess. Bruce Barthol went to high school with me. Joe called me up... he was cutting these songs for the first Vietnam teach-ins in Berkeley - the first major protest launch against the war in Vietnam. He was making this record and he'd heard about this 'great guitar player' so he called me, I went over there and we realised that we'd played together some place before. We did this record for Chris Strachwitz who owns Arhoolie Records - making the record specifically for the Vietnam teach-ins. Joe had two songs, one called 'Super Bird' which was about Lyndon Johnson, and the other was 'I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin-To-Die Rag'. So we cut this record and I guess I didn't hear anymore from him for a week or two. Then he called me up and told me they were selling the record at the teach-

BARRY MELTON



the tale of a fish

in and I wandered down there... I was going to donate a pint of blood to the International Red Cross. We were doing all kinds of weird stuff at that time; they were very dynamic times I feel, looking back in perspective. I'm sure they're going on somewhere now. We were launching a ship, y'know, an anti-juggernaut juggernaut. ZZ: Both Joe and yourself were politically orientated and The Fish were generally known as a 'political' rock band.

BM: What happened was when we grew up, when we shed some of the layers of dogma that had been laid on us and started really examining things for ourselves, I personally didn't find myself as politically dogmatic as when I was young. Because that's a young man's trip to be very passionate about this and that. I'm not an old man by any means, don't get me wrong, I'm not even thirty yet. But it's students and young people that keep us aware and awake.

ZZ: How important was the drug scene?

BM: Maybe LSD had a lot to do with it, maybe it didn't, because there was a lot of other stuff going on. I mean Berkeley was exploding at the time and that's just right across the Bay. San Francisco was also just going out of its brain, but both places had distinct characters. I'm a mixture of the two myself... I lived in San

Francisco for awhile.

ZZ: How did the Fish get signed up to Vanguard?

BM: We were signed by Samuel Charters who was an old friend of our manager Ed Denson... both of them were blues collectors. Ed, as co-owner of Takoma Records with John Fahey, had gone to the south and re-discovered people like Bukka White and Mississippi John Hurt. At any rate Sam had this job of producing music for Vanguard Records basically to do his blues recordings, but they felt they needed something less esoteric. And we were young white punks who looked like Indians to everybody and were suitably weird. And it wasn't just a band of weird people - there was a whole city full of them and we were just the band. We were more like the house musicians for a loony scene.

ZZ: You were one of the first West Coast bands to be signed up, right?

BM: Yeah. Actually we were the first of that whole genre of bands to put out a record and it was on our own label Rag Baby Records... it was 'I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin-To-Die Rag'. Then we produced the second record of our own which had 'Section 43' which was an instrumental, a thing called 'Love' which was a song by me, and 'Bass Strings' which was a song by Joe. We were quite successful on a local level with our records - we sold several thousand EPs which we had pressed in LA, paid for the expense ourselves and distributed them in bookstores and places like that... a real 'underground' operation. Actually, because Ed had been involved in Takoma Records we had all these esoteric channels to distribute records in. And then Vanguard became interested - we were actually selling records at that time. So Vanguard gave us the grand sum of \$2500 advance which was respectable in those times, and we made a record. And that record stayed in the American charts for the better part of a year, so we became 'a band'.

ZZ: It seems to be generally accepted that once all the San Francisco bands had signed for record companies a lot of the fun went out of the whole scene.

BM: Not right away. But it certainly did when it became a business. The music business, as businesses go, is not run on a very high standard... there are a lot of quick-buck people, a lot of shady fly-by-night people. Any business where people can almost double their money overnight in investment terms attracts these sort of people. But we were very unself-conscious at that time as a band, and I was myself as a person.

ZZ: Why, after all the personnel changes, did the band eventually break up?

BM: For whatever reasons bands break up. We spent a lot of years doing that and we'd grown to a whole new place. And also the band was run by consensus y'know. They tell me that one of the problems with the American Indian is that they govern themselves by consensus. If everyone doesn't agree on something it just doesn't get done. You pretty much have to get everyone to agree on something and that's the law; which is really high by the way. It's one of the things that makes the American Indian a really high culture spiritually speaking. So running a band by consensus is sometimes very difficult

but it's also very high. So if you want to make high music, you have to make the music that everybody wants to make, not that one guy wants to make and everybody else is paid to do - the less people the easier it is of course. And what happened is like I imagine with any other band, one guy wanted to be in Hawaii, one guy wanted to be in Europe, one guy wanted to be in the ocean, and one guy wanted to be in the air, and all at different times.

ZZ: What did you do when the band broke up?

BM: I immediately finished off work that I was doing on my own - a movie soundtrack, and then I went fishing for about a year, a year and a half. It was fascinating. . . . I got tuned into the ocean for the first time in my life. You know if you've never been out in the ocean before, you've been missing two thirds of the world. It taught me to listen.

ZZ: Had you become disillusioned with music and the music business at all?

BM: Oh I've been disillusioned with the music business many times, but I don't think I've ever been disillusioned with music. The music business is pretty crazy.

ZZ: You've done work on Mickey Hart and Robert Hunter's albums, is there anything else you've played on?

BM: I played on Otis Spann's last sessions. . . . Otis Spann was the piano player for the Chess house band during the great prolific period that they had. I did an album of my own with a band called Melton Levy & The Dey Brothers for Columbia but when the album came out I was into something else and I never toured. I guess that alienated some business men, because what I did was spend a lot of speculative money and not go on tour. I couldn't go on tour, it would have been tragic - it wouldn't have done anyone any good the way I felt. I believe you should only go onstage in a place where you feel good. At any rate Melton Levy and The Dey Bros. stopped happening for me, but we made an album produced by Michael Bloomfield and Norman Dayron, and I'm very proud of it. I think it's one of the most uptown albums I've ever done. But because I didn't go on tour the album didn't receive any real push. Besides I got swept into an entirely different thing musically. . . . I started to realise that I didn't know all the stuff I wanted to know to be able to do my masterpiece (laughs). I wanted to know about the studio and find out how the recording process affects music. If you're dealing with a medium called records you should find out what happens afterwards, because after it goes through all that miles of wire don't imagine it's the same thing as you played. . . . it's an entirely different thing. I realised that a lot of aesthetic decisions were left up to technicians in the recording studio, and I firmly believe that that's still true. What's lacking at the moment are people with a combination of both possessing the technical knowledge to understand how to make records, and the aesthetic qualities of a musician.

ZZ: That's usually the producer's role surely, to be a bridge between the engineer and the group or artist?

BM: That's supposed to be his function, but usually they lean towards one side or another and they're not truly both. And of course that produces

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various permutations on the music that we hear. But I wanted to know for myself the technical side of things. See, talking about The Fish again, I'll tell you this much, I think The Fish were a very great 'live' performing band, far greater than the records ever showed. We used to be billed up there with the best bands in the world, but partly I feel, because of a semi-competent record company, we were not on a par with those bands in the record game. I always felt that in the framework of what we were doing a lot of technical knowhow was missing. We had our 'live' act pretty together, but we didn't have the technical understanding to make good records. We tried different producers. . . . Sam was our guiding light in the beginning but in a way we outgrew Sam and Sam outgrew us. Myself, I find it very difficult to get that spark in the studio that you get in front of an audience. . . . I like to come up to the energy level of an audience and then go up with them. And that's what I do best. And to summon up that feeling in the studio artificially is always very difficult.

ZZ: So what have you been doing from that time up until now?

BM: I was in the studio for a year, year and a half. I was sort of half living at Mickey Hart's house in Novato and during that time I did a few sessions - Mickey's album, and

Robert Hunter did an album TALES OF THE GREAT RUMRUNNERS. And I did a tape during that period, and Mickey did a tape which was really fine. But you see we became such good friends that we forgot all about business and just played, so what we did may lack some commerciality. But I hope some day to get it released. . . . if not the tapes then the material because some of it's quite good.

ZZ: Can you tell us something about the electronic music that Mickey Hart and Phil Lesh were making?

BM: Oh yeah, that was Warp 10. That was a gas. . . . Ned Lagin was also involved. Yeah, they used to drive all the horses away. . . . it was very intense. I sat in with those guys, but what was happening while I was there was that Mickey was playing bass too. And Mickey has a very unique style of bass playing, being a drummer. And Phil and Mickey would play bass together with ring modulators and stuff. And Ned played this instrument that he'd built. . . . he started building it at MIT. Ned's head is in the zone, but he and I have got some things in common, like in the last couple of years I've really gotten into the occult and the significance of music and metaphysically what music is. There's a book called 'The Metaphysics Of Music' that I was reading for quite some time. . . . the significance of 12-tone scales, and 22-note Indian scales. You know music can possibly have much higher implications than we mere mortals assume. . . . such as music that could make this chair disappear. I don't know, if you played the right notes, because it's only vibrations. I mean even the police are working on vibration equipment to immobilise a crowd for a radius of 2 miles or something like that. . . . sonic warfare. Vibrations are very powerful things and you can control them.

Music is the science of vibrations, I would hope, approached from a scientific point of view. There are some other people. . . . there's the famous German physicist who wrote 'On The Sensations Of Tone' - Helmholtz. He was one of the last renaissance men. . . . he did everything from soup to nuts; he invented medical equipment and studied music and at the end of his life he sent up weather balloons. I mean he did a hundred things in his life all of which were important in the field he did them in. And he wrote this book called 'On The Sensations Of Tone' which dealt with the physical properties of tone; tone affects living cells. One of the obvious results of his work is playing music to cornfields to see how it affects the growth of corn. And music affects people - it affects their living cells. Helmholtz did experiments on cells suspended in petri dishes. . . . you know if you play them Mozart they live for 14 days, and if you play them the Beatles they live for. . . . well I won't say. It's all rather fascinating. Vibrations are very powerful, they can shatter glass and maybe tear down the walls of Jericho. I don't know what tune Joshua was playing but I would get out my hammer and nails if I heard he was playing trumpet down the block!

ZZ: What did you do then after living at Mickey's house?

BM: Well then I moved to the city and decided I was going to start playing in public. I got tired of being in a studio, it got claustrophobic and I wanted to

escape. I got tired of looking at music through a microscope. . . . I just wanted to do it. Looking at music through a microscope for too long makes you lose your perspective. At any rate I decided to go out and perform although I didn't exactly know how I was going to do it. So I played for a month and put together this band with my friend Snooky Flowers - Snooky Flowers And The Headhunters - he played sax in Janis Joplin's Cosmic Blues Band; he's from Louisiana, a psychedelic soul musician. No, I don't want to label Snooky, he's too far out to label (laughs). He's a good cat. A whole lot of people were in the band depending on what time you caught us. We only played about 2 or 3 dates. Taj Mahal played with us on one of the dates. But at any rate while that was going on I was also doing a solo thing because I'd more or less decided to come back as a solo acoustic performer. I figured it was the most stable thing I could do. . . . when I could play with other people just for the enjoyment of it and just have myself to depend on on a dependance level. . . . I'm much happier that way. It's much better to be self-sufficient, rather like being self-employed as opposed to working for somebody. I teamed up with Joe from February until June. . . he'd called me up and told me about his financial problems. He'd laid a whole load of money on the All Star Band, which was a great band, to do PARIS SESSIONS, and due, again I think, to the record company, he landed in trouble. . . . he used more money than he had. So I went along to help out and it was really a lot of fun because we hadn't played together in years and we re-discovered why we'd played together all those years before. We liked each other. . . . a very natural reason. The bullshit only came later actually.

ZZ: Do you intend to keep playing with Joe whenever possible?

BM: Joe's my friend; I hope to play with him periodically for a long long time, whether it be in private or public.

Well, since that interview took place, Barry Melton has been a busy man musically; he finally made the album that he threatened to do for so long, and he played a series of gigs over here - both solo and with a back up band. Also, as promised in his concluding answer, he has definite plans to play with Country Joe McDonald again, both of them having decided to re-form the Fish, along with original member Bruce Barthol on bass, and new recruits John Blakeley (guitar), Ted Ashford (piano) and Peter Milio (drums).

But first the album. You'll remember that somewhere in the interview Barry talked about a tape he made at Mickey Hart's place. Well, it was a fairly straightforward set of songs played by a band consisting of a selection of West Coast luminaries brave enough to venture up to the wild backwoods of Novato but the common feeling was that it was a trifle too self-indulgent for commercial release. So Barry decided to remove himself from his native environment and come over here to re-record the songs. Rockfield Studios in Wales was chosen, and under the experienced eyes of Dave Charles and Kingsley and Country Joe - and another one at the

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Fish!, which came out in January on the Rockfield label (now distributed by United Artists), number UAS 29908.

I was lucky enough to be present at some of the recording sessions and had the distinct privilege of seeing Barry lay down some of his blistering guitar work over the basic backing tracks provided by Tommy Eyre (keyboards), Ray Martinez (slide and rhythm guitar), and the good old Help Yourself duo of Ken Whaley (bass) and Dave Charles (drums). The resultant album is very fine indeed, even though I feel a little more pruning and editing might have been in order. There are, however, four really excellent songs: 'Stranger', 'Mountains in Dreamland', 'Karma' and 'California Seacoast', plus a healthy smattering of the Melton guitar virtuosity. . . beautiful stuff. The low points on the LP, and there are two of them, are a bit disappointing though. They are both live tracks, 'Marshmellow Road' and 'Ice Cream Man', taken from one of Barry's solo performances at the Roundhouse last May (supporting Man), and they come over as little more than tiresome, witless throwaway songs with minimal musical merit. Dispense with these two aberrations, however, and you have an album of quality and great promise.

Besides the three Roundhouse dates, he did one legendary gig at Dingwalls with Country Joe - and another one at the

same place with a backing band identical to the one on the album (minus Tommy Eyre). Now Barry has just returned to the States after another flying visit - this time to tour the country with good old Commander Cody & His Lost Planet Airmen. I saw him (with his Rockfield band again) at the Hammersmith Odeon and thought he was great. He reacted against the largely apathetic audience with his customary eccentricity, but when he actually got down to playing some music, he was fabulous - as was his band, with Charles and Whaley providing the sort of rhythm section that most front men only dream about.

But for one reason or another, Barry Melton still isn't as famous as he should be. To my mind, he ought to be in everybody's Top Ten Guitarists of All Time, and his concepts of music are so interesting and so far advanced as to make the general standard of intelligence and experimentation in rock music seem thoroughly ordinary and pedestrian.

No doubt we'll see him (and The Fish) over here again soon, and I just hope that the masses will sit up, take notice, and recognise a rejuvenated and as yet underrated talent.

Andy (who, it must be recorded, had nothing at all to do with the dreadful layout of this article. . . what a bodge up job!)

Never mind. . . this gives us a bit of space for a few plugs:

OMAHA RAINBOW have a new issue out around now - send 30p (inc post and packing) to Peter O'Brien, 10 Lesley Court, Harcourt Road, Wallington, Surrey SM6 8AZ. They also have a POCO special out now - 40p (inc p&p). Send off today, folks.

HOT WACKS number 10 is out soon - send 30p (inc p&p) to Bert Muirhead 16 Almondbank Terrace Edinburgh EH11 1SS. They also have a special on VAN DYKE PARKS (the Tobler interview) for 30p (inc p&p)

HOT WACKS also operate what has to be the cheapest record shop in Scotland. Here's the scam: "Our first lists included albums by Mike Nesmith, the Turtles, Moby Grape, Johnny Rivers, the Association, Big Star, Brinsley Schwarz, Redwing, the Animals, Ian Matthews, Emmitt Rhodes, Stories and hundreds more. . . all at £1 or less! How can you resist?" For future lists send SAE to above address.

JOHN TOBLER is handling distribution of records on Michael Nesmith's new label Pacific Arts. Look out for a brand new album by the re-formed KALEIDOSCOPE sometime this Spring but meanwhile feast your senses on the current release

Michael Nesmith

THE PERSON

a book with a sound track

Send £4.70 (inc p&p) to Pacific Arts Corporation (UK) Ltd, 6 Chobham Rd Knaphill Woking Surrey GU21 2SU. Retail enquiries are also welcomed.



SCRIBE'S FORMAL OBJECTION:
Only in the interests of cramming it into the smallest possible space did I consent to write out this ghastly and interminable tripe - containing, as it does, some scurrilous allegations and allusions which are, I can assure you, without a shred of truth. Since I promised to make no alterations to the text, I have failed to correct any of the sadly-ignorant author's mistakes but, for the benefit of the reader, I have added several footnotes in order to amplify certain matters outside his limited sphere of knowledge.

CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA
JANUARY 3rd 1976
It only was the waitress extremely desirable, but the coffee in Johnny's was more than palatable; exactly as I like it - good and strong. Just the job after a taxing haul along freeways and highways weaving in and out of inter-sections designed to drive people loopy. My shapes (physical and mental) were not all that could be desired anyway; paunchy balding and 28, a heart sick with love, a brain rotting out from chemical abuse, and a body so out of condition as to make a wreck like Frame positively Herculean by comparison.

He was the root of all this trouble - sending me off in search of Darrow. Since losing all the notes and cassettes of his own Darrow interview, he'd lost all reason when the subject of Kaleidoscope was so much as raised. Knowing that I planned to nurse my hurt in Los Angeles, staying in a state of drug-induced coma at the house of my good friend Sankey Phillips until my yearnings for the fair and tender Alice Bodine (and my murderous feeling towards that unscrupulous circus barker Jerry Bezant) had subsided to a bearable level, he "instructed" me to make the 30 mile trek to this god forsaken neck of America just to find Chris Darrow - a person whose music I find little more than tolerable at the best of times - especially that ear-rending dreck he used to pump out with Kaleidoscope.

If Mick Houghton, famed Kaleidoscope chronicler, is reading this, I imagine my bald-faced abuse has brought a little colour to his anaemic cheeks. He'd rush out of a 'Let it Rock' creditors meeting just to catch a fleeting glimpse of Maxwell Buda - and as for John Tobler, who recently paid no less than £21 for a copy of 'Side Trips' - well, I should think that his fury at my use of the word "drek" has brought on permanent cardiac disturbance. Not that he should worry - £21 quid is cheap when you consider that some guy was killed in a shoot-out at a warehouse in Mexico City after he'd followed up a lead about a cache of 13th Floor Elevator and Kaleidoscope albums. And I even have a friend who keeps the first 2 Kaleidoscope albums in a bank vault.

Anyway, here I was stranded in Claremont, with an out-of-date address (the house was tenanted by an old couple to whom the name Darrow meant nothing), an ex-directory name, and only a vague idea of how to track the fellow down. Like I could ask the waitress, I suppose. "Excuse me, Miss McCall..." "McCall, Ellen McCall" said this thing of beauty, this comely wench who, I subsequently discovered, had somehow "temporarily" ended up in Claremont after coming west "to get into the movies". She really was a most pleasant girl - she looked slightly hammered, had nice shading below her eyes, and you could tell that beneath her resigned smile was a sparkle just waiting to climb out. If I'd been Kubrick, I'd.....

"I am looking for someone, Miss McCall..... I am searching for a man named Darrow, Chris Darrow - have you any idea how....." "That guy over there." I examined the fellow she was indicating and saw a lean and callow youth who patently bore not the slightest resemblance to the gentleman I was seeking. "That most certainly is not Darrow" I countered without hesitation. "I am aware of that," Ellen replied, "but he can help you. His name is Perry..... hey, Perry, come here a moment." I was able to establish that this chap Perry had had some involvement, on an artistic level, with Darrow.

1. This ridiculous statement can only reveal, to the perspicacious reader, the alarming extent of Garry's aforementioned brain damage.

"I used to be in a band called Maxfield Parrish.... he produced an album for us". This I took with a pinch of salt, for nowhere was it mentioned in the notes Frame had prepared for me, and I was completely unaware of its existence myself. I omitted to tell the bloke that I was disinclined to believe his story, but it became clear that he did indeed know something of Darrow, who, I soon discovered, was some kind of celebrity in these parts.

(His fame, however, did have limits. My natural love for womankind prevents me from being too scathing about the dim-witted baggage working the till in Frank's Health Foods, where I'd made my first enquiry. She had heard of neither Darrow nor Kaleidoscope - and nor had Mr. Johnston (who I assumed was Frank), though he was able to boast that Claremont was universally known as "the citrus warehouse of the world" because the town's main industry was packing and shipping oranges grown in the surrounding orchards flanking the San Gabriel Mountains).

Darrow, it transpired, had moved away from Claremont some months before and was now living near the ocean, out in Newport Beach - but, by some strange and simple twist of fate, he was coming to Claremont to rehearse "his new band" on Monday, 2 days away - and Perry (whose name, I found out, was in fact Perrin Muir) kindly offered to put me up until such time as my interview was completed.

So, over the next two days, not only did I spend further hours in the company of Ms McCall (late of Madison, Ohio), but I was able to take in some of the flavour of the locale. Perry filled me in on Claremont: "All sorts of rock people came from this area.... Chris lived here until recently, as you know, and David Lindley, who's married to Chris's sister, still lives here - and did you know that Zappa started out from here? He's from Ontario, just east of here.... in fact Darrow was at school with his brother Bob Zappa. John Stewart is from Pamona, just along the road, Ed Beardsley the sleeve designer, Dick Barber, Zappa's long time road manager, Vic Mortenson too.... they're all local people."

"Vic Mortenson?" I asked. "He was Captain Beefheart's very first drummer; Beefheart and Zappa used to hang out a lot together at their studio in Kookamonga."

One lives and one learns.

ENTER FENRUS EPP!

JANUARY 4th 1976
I was sitting in Johnny's having a spot of midday breakfast when Perry, grinning furiously, walked in with a stout accompanist. "This is Robert Armstrong" he said, "..... though you may know him as Chester Crill..... or maybe, Fenrus Epp". Epp obviously noticed that my lower jaw had collapsed and that my face had now assumed the gape of a village idiot.

Could this ordinary human I saw before me be the same weird and wonderful Fenrus Epp, otherwise known as Maxwell Buda, Chester Crill or Connie Crill? The man whose musical genius had caused aspirant imitators to cut their wrists? How many pseudonyms does he have, I wondered? Can he be real? (For, astonishing as it may sound, I had actually heard of imposters: Mick Houghton was approached by an obvious Welshperson who swore blind that he was Fenrus Epp, and last Spring, Frame was entirely duped by a bogus Max Buda who spent 6 days at Yeoman Cottage draining his hospitality and supplies).

"In that case, what is your real name?" I blurted, going a trifle puce around the jewels, but determined to tear off the shroud of mystery which has enveloped the man this past nine years.

"That is something I am not prepared to disclose to an ill-kempt wretch such as yourself", he replied with counter-

2. There is indeed a Maxfield Parrish album, recorded on the local Curran label (CML 721), in 1972. The group ("children of the Byrds" was the way Darrow described them) was augmented by John Ware, John London, Bernie Leaden and David Lindley, among others.

feit indignation, "..... you look like Orson Welles on a bad day". "I've been ill" I stammered - at which point his cavalier smile burst into a huge guffaw.... and I noticed the gold star inlaid in the enamel of his front tooth - and I knew that he was indeed the bona-fide certified Epp. Within the Zigzag file (containing press cuttings, Frame's jottings, and other info), which I'd had the foresight to bring along and peruse at length before hitching down to Claremont, was a clipping from the September 1968 issue of Hullabaloo Magazine which made great play of the famous Epp tooth.

This rotund little eccentric turned out to be extremely friendly and jovial, though at this stage he was prepared to reveal little about his days in Kaleidoscope and the exact nature of his present activities - though I was able to establish that current rumours of a re-formed Kaleidoscope are not entirely without foundation.

"Wait till Chris comes.... he'll tell you all about it" he promised, with a twinkle glinting through his specs, disturbing the soporific tranquility of what I (mistakenly) assumed to be his usual expression.

DARROW ARRIVES

JANUARY 5th 1976
Darrow wasn't expected until around noon, so on Perry's advice, I dropped into a friendly little place called The Folk Music Centre - a surprisingly authoritative Collects - Suite Shop, oddly situated in the heart of Claremont, which I hardly considered the most accessible focal point for folk enthusiasts. The shop, run by a walking encyclopaedia called Charles Chase, had a little room in the back where customers (and passers-by, it appeared) could go and play guitar - all day long if they wanted.

Chase knew Darrow well: "He's been coming in here for years, ever since.... it must have been around 1962 or 3. May even have been earlier - God knows, it seems like I've known him ever since I moved here and opened the store."

"I know he had a guitar around the time of the so-called folk boom, because his reaction to all that Chubby Checker/Frankie Avalon stuff that used to fill the radio was the same as that of most of the other thinking teenagers of the time.... he'd just as soon forget it and start looking for some real music."

"The folk boom was a strictly commercial fad really, and only a few ever got below its superficial skin, but in Chris's case it was merely a jumping board; the 'fad' stimulated a deep interest in folk cultures. He spent half his life in here, just playing instruments, browsing through the literature and listening to records". "He was mainly interested in old blues recordings, which reflected the Country's musical heritage - but then I turned him on to bluegrass; I played him a record by Earl Taylor. We often joke about it, so I remember it very well.... it changed his life, he reckons."

"That's right, Earl Taylor and his Stony Mountain Boys..... an album on United Artists, I've still got it - and even now it's one of the best bluegrass records ever". The speaker was Chris Darrow. He'd just breezed in from the west in his battered Chevy Station Wagon, and was now sipping wine in Epp's music room, the walls of which were covered with Kaleidoscope posters from the golden age - from the San Francisco dancehall jobs to silk-screened masterpieces advertising gigs in such remote venues as the Nicholas Murray Hall, Lancaster High School.

I'd explained how Zigzag had reverted to Frame's ownership and how he was anxious to feature the long promised Darrow/Kaleidoscope legend - and we had a good laugh about what an incredibly stupid cunt he must be to have lost his interview tapes. "It's funny" said Darrow, "..... he never struck me as being a twirp".

3. At the end of 1975, Tony Stratton Smith - in a unprecedented burst of generosity - gave me back Zigzag.

The "rehearsals" had been postponed until Tuesday because a certain "key member" (that's all he would say, apart from "you'll just have to wait and see") was still out of town - so Chris said he'd be happy to devote the rest of the day to giving me all the dope I needed. Fenrus went out for more wine, and we got on with it.

I suggested he resume where he'd left off - talking about Chase's folk emporium, and its influence.

"Well, that little shop really fanned the flames in my heart - and that Earl Taylor record just knocked me on my arse."

(Apparently, Taylor, who I had never heard of, was from Baltimore, and had what Darrow called "a red hot band").

"That band sent me into outer space - especially the mandolin sound, which just tinkled my brain..... that record opened up my musical horizons and started me on the road to learning about and playing other instruments".

Up until then, he'd discreetly fingered a plain and simple guitar.

"I got it when I was 14. I'd been a clarinet player at school, but only began to take an interest in music when I heard the Kingston Trio.... the guys who popularised folk music - they made me consider the possibilities of playing, rather than just listening.

"My father was a jazz musician - he played clarinet and saxophone - and he was an avid record collector..... so I grew up surrounded by jazz, to the extent that by my early teens I had a pretty thorough knowledge of the styles of jazz and its precedents, dating back to around the turn of the century.

"Besides this jazz environment, I was also into rock'n'roll and pop music - though I didn't play it. I listened to the radio a lot, and also had my own television - my grandfather bought it for me when I was 5 years old..... so I have been media conscious, in a sort of way, for a long time - without really realising it.

"I was listening to a lot of black stations, and a lot of Mexican orientated stations in Southern California: they played stuff by people like Don Julian & the Meadowlarks..... the El Monte sound - on which Frank Zappa is probably the world's greatest expert and opponent.

"Then came the 'folk-ers', and all sorts of people I knew were getting into folk music. Whether or not they were all influenced by the Kingston Trio, I don't know - but they were having a huge effect on the population on a national scale - instigating an interest in folk, which was the logical alternative to pop that a lot of people wanted: it was pure, straightforward and appealing.

"I started playing locally with my best friend, a real good guy called ROGER PALOS, who was a Mexican from my neighbourhood (which was basically Mexican); we used to sing and play guitar together at parties and so on..... and I wrote my first songs - teenage heart-throb things, you know..... real meaningful songs about my girlfriends - like one called 'On Linda', I remember.

"But after a year or so, I realised that I could play guitar as well as most of the people on the folk scene - and most of my enthusiasm for commercial folk music dried up real fast, and I fell in love with the blues. That's when I started spending most of my spare time in the shop, just listening to records by Big Bill Broonzy, Brownie and Sonny, anything I could get my hands on until Chas played me that Earl Taylor track, and I was hooked. Bluegrass music took over my whole life."

Impelled by Mr. Chase's startling revelations, Darrow proceeded to squander his entire wealth on a mandolin and, having amassed a rudimentary working knowledge of the instrument and its uses, formed a bluegrass group with ROGER PALOS on guitar, and one PETE MADLEM, who had been one year below Darrow at school, on banjo. Plundering the pitiful wit of the ethnic folkie, they tried on various names, finally agreeing that THE RE-ORGANISED DRY CITY PLAYERS fit them best.

Gorbimely - what a mouthful - and not so much as a mention in Frame's notes (the useless sod). "Ah yes, the er, the bluegrass trio". I bungled on.

"Well, it was only a trio to begin with; after a while we got in a bass player - a guy called BILL STAMPS, who was the only person I knew who was into bluegrass and rock'n'roll at the same time

..... he'd been in a group called Rosie and the Originals".

Stamps was replaced by PETE FULLERTON, and Madlem, eccentric about time-keeping, was ultimately replaced too. When admonished for missing a gig, he'd draw himself up with such injured truculence that his accusers usually withdrew in confusion. For this reason, rather than being fired, he rotated with his eventual permanent successor, who turned out to be none other than ROBERT WARFORD.

"Bob Warford and I were going to school together - a private boys' school in Claremont called Webbs, which I attended for about a couple of years. Richard Greene was there at the time too, and Robert Mitchum's son was in my class. It was basically a school for rich kids, but I was getting my tuition free, because my father taught art there..... and I'd wanted to transfer there because I was really into athletics and they started inter-school athletics a year earlier at Webbs."

Darrow's was not the only ensemble operating in the area, but of all local bluegrass groups, only one was held in equal esteem: THE MAD MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS, who Darrow used to see at a club called The Cats Pyjamas.

Obscure as it was, I was already familiar with this place: Roger Bush, from Country Gazette, who was living at El Monte at the time, had told me all about "the teenage bluegrass scene" as we packed a pleasant hour on the steps of the CBS caravan, eating cheese and drinking tins of Tartan, at the Cambridge Folk Festival in July.

"There was this club called The Cats Pyjamas" he'd told me. "It was in a place called Arcadia, which is an approximate mid-point between El Monte, Claremont, Los Angeles and Pasadena..... it wasn't any place as such, but it was a centre, if you understand."

"You didn't have to pay to get in, and you could buy hot cider and pizza. Every weekend they presented music; Jim Kweskin would come - looking for people to join his jugband, guys would come from Pasadena, and the Claremont crew would also venture over..... it was like a testing ground, and a showcase rolled into one."

That is where David Lindley walked into my life - at The Cats Pyjamas", Darrow recalled. "I was doing a guest set with a guy called Charles Zetterberg - and as I was packing away my mandolin and fiddle, this guy came up and asked me if I was into melting my Dry City Re-organised Players into his band. Well, despite the fact that he'd got the name of my band round the wrong way, which kind of incensed me furiously enough, I could see what he was getting at..... in effect, a local bluegrass supergroup. The guy was David Lindley, and his group was the Mad Mountain Ramblers."

The existing Ramblers comprised Lindley, Steve Cahill, Dick Hargreaves and Philip Cleveland. Out went Hargreaves, and with the promise of gigs which would actually bring in cash and "do them some good", in came Messrs Darrow and Warford. Retaining the name THE MAD MOUNTAIN RAMBLERS, they lined up as follows: DAVID LINDLEY on fiddle and banjo, CHRIS DARROW on lead vocals/mandolin/second fiddle, STEVE CAHILL on lead vocals and guitar, BOB WARFORD on dobro/second banjo, and PHIL CLEVELAND on bass - and they drove their wild at The Cats Pyjamas in Arcadia, The Ice House in

4. Rosie and the Originals had one (and one only) huge American hit single in the early sixties..... 'Angel Baby'. On the basis of this, and its even better b-side, the group has remained a solid favourite of such rock connoisseurs as John Lennon, John Tobler and Robert Plant (who even mentioned them on the inner sleeve of 'Houses of the Holy').

5. Pete Fullerton later played bass in We Five, another local group - led by Michael Stewart, who had a big hit with 'You were on my mind'. Michael Stewart (brother of John) had previously been in the Ridge Runners - a Kingston Trio copy group.... even down to clothes, patter and songs. He later formed West (on Epic Records) and is now a producer of some repute.

6. Robert Warford later became a member of Michael Nesmith's CountrySide band, as well as doing some incredible stuff at a session man. He was a pupil of Clarence White, who reckoned that Warford was better than he was.

7. Charles Zetterburg, now a lawyer, was also in the Grand Old 26 String Band.

Glendale, and Disneyland at weekends. Against stiff competition for the thin supply of gigs, they lasted about a year.

The Kentucky Colonels, working out of Los Angeles, were popular enough to get booked not only at the Ash Grove in Hollywood but at major folk venues across the country - and groups like San Diego's Scottsville Squirrel Barkers (with Chris Hillman), Sandy Mosley's Crown Junction Stompers from Pasadena, and The Mad Mountain Ramblers were not considered serious rivals in terms of national popularity.

"Our favourite group at the time was The Country Gentlemen" says Darrow. "They were one of the few bluegrass groups with a style of their own rather than one based on a pastiche of Bill Monroe, or Flatt & Scruggs. We were getting into some pretty avant garde stuff ourselves, so we thought..... hot bluegrass with old timey music thrown in."

"Needless to say, we couldn't hold it together; we felt we'd exhausted that particular personnel configuration, and the group split. We all went our own way..... I was still going to junior college, but I spent a lot of time surfing."

The frustrations of inactivity soon led David and me to form another group, based in the same musical area, to be called THE DRY CITY SCAT BAND, which was intended to be a quartet. B. At the first rehearsal, Lindley appeared with RICHARD GREENE, so he was rolled in too - and they were five: CHRIS DARROW, DAVID LINDLEY, RICHARD GREENE, STEVE CAHILL, and the aforementioned PETE MADLEM.

"David was a consistent winner of the 'professional banjo' category of the annual Topanga Canyon Banjo/Fiddle Contest..... he won it 6 years running, and I also won my division of banjo/fiddle a couple of times. We always used to go up there, and it was at Topanga that year that I met Richard Greene again. I barely remembered him from school, apart from the fact that he used to get real good grades - but he said he was playing fiddle in a duo doing old-timey stuff, as well as selling real estate in L.A. A few days later, he walked in with David - fiddle case in hand - and we were a quintet."

"In common with the later Kaleidoscope, the DCSB was a very rewarding but also very frustrating band..... and my increasing discomfort culminated in my leaving. I think the tide turned for me when Richard started hanging out with a fiddler called Scott Stoneman; he met Scott and it was as if the devil had possessed him. And whereas previously he'd only been interested in a lachrymistic way, he suddenly began to think of nothing but musical recognition and success.

"Richard is probably the best living all round violinist in the world today - I'd have to say that - but in the Scat Band, I felt he was overstepping his role. All of us were pretty tense, and we had one or two conflicts as a result of our all being very anxious to play and do those things we individually felt were most worthwhile. Richard had a very strong will and personality, which eventually caused me to split."

"I have really happy memories of that band too, but if things don't ride along smoothly, it's always better to pull out - even if it's painful at the time - so I left the Scat Band, and the group fell apart a very short time later..... which invites the observation that I might possibly have been the catalyst which held the group together."

The Elektra recordings¹⁰, 2 tracks on 'String Band Project' (EKL 292), were cut two weeks after Darrow's leaving, as were 4 or 5 tracks recorded by local bluegrass authority John Delgatto.

Darrow continued: "Richard subsequently went off to play with the best Bill Monroe band I ever saw - with Pete Rowan and Bill Keith..... that was a

8. This obsession with references to Dry City stems from the fact that until as late as 1971, because of the many colleges and schools, there were no bars or stores in Claremont selling alcohol.

9. The duo was, I believe, called The Orange Coast Ramblers. See Zigzag 38 for the full Richard Greene history.

10. The two Dry City Scat Band tracks were 'Bald headed end of a broom' and only old Tobler knows the other: 'Jealous'.

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superb band, and he began to make a mark, playing on things like a Red Allen album (on County 100, produced by David Grisman). Cahill went off and recorded some stuff for the Ash Grove label, Madmen continued his adventures (more of which later), and I lost touch with Lindley."

Before we leave the Dry City State Band, it may be interesting to examine a phenomenon known as The Pepsi Hootenanny. Darrow explains: "During my last days with the State Band, we were managed by a guy called Tom Campbell, who wrote 'Darcy Farrow'. He was also head of booking entertainment at Disneyland... and he was hiring all sorts of interesting people - including us. Disneyland was really great around that time... you had people like John McEwan from the Dirt Band working in the music shop, Steve Martin was working in the magic shop, Benny Brooks was working at Coke corner, and also competing the concerts, or hootenannies, as they called them. These hoots were basically to advertise Pepsi Cola, but they used to attract about 3 or 4000 people, because the bills were always very strong: you'd have, say, The Modern Folk Quartet, Joe and Eddie, Sam Minton, the Clara Ward Gospel Group, Steve Gillette, and the Ry Cooder/Pamela Pollard Duo."

"Tom got together with this guy from Pepsi Cola and put a touring Hootenanny on the road - playing colleges to publicise Pepsi. We were all getting 100 dollars a week - which was actually the first time we made any money."

"There were a bunch of really good people involved with that scene... like Steve Mann, who was a legendary guitarist. He used to play with Hoyt Axton (who wrote 'Snowblind Friend' about him), but he died a few years back... just too sensitive and fragile to survive, some say. He took the part of a guitar playing clown in the show. Steve Gillette was working with this chick as a duo, and Mike Post, who later did a lot of TV work in Los Angeles, worked with a couple of really beautiful tall girls (about 6'2", dressed up in space suits) as The Wellington Singers. Then there was Albert and Shannon... Linda Albert co-wrote '210 Train'... and I remember Roger McGuinn being around too. He had longish hair and those funny glasses - and he wore Beate boots before they were fashionable, and was going on about this 'great new group from England called the Beatles'."

"After a short time the Pepsi scene fell apart - mainly to do with the lack of commercial success. Everyone split off and went their own ways... it was the end, and the beginning in a lot of ways."

Meanwhile, I decided to curtail my bluegrass career in favour of continuing college and starting a part-time rock group called THE FLOGGS - that being a reference to a totally worthless person, a vagrant layabout... a typical college-type term of abuse meaning you were OK, but you were useless, you know?"

Once more, Darrow called on stalwarts Bill STAMPS (lead guitar) and ROGER PALOS (bass), brought in a local guy called TOMMY SALISBURY on drums, and fronted the group as lead vocalist/rhythm guitarist - singing hot classics from the Animals/Rolling Stones/Them catalogues.

"We did folk-rock stuff too, and we were sounding really good, though our early gigs were never bigger than local clubs and parties - but we decided to lift our horizons and brought in HUGH KOLA, from Texas, on keyboards. Then we began to introduce original and traditional material into the set - including songs like 'If the Night' and 'Hesitation Blues', which found their way onto the first Kaleidoscope album some 1½ years later."

"The transition to electric instruments demanded an almost total re-thinking of my musical education, and I had to work up a rock'n'roll point of view

after years of being a bluegrass freak... and it was a period of growing up for a lot of us - 1964/5. Suddenly, pop music was good again, in fact it was better than ever - and we all wanted to be part of it. Up in Pasadena, Lindley was apparently doing the same - spending hours practising electric guitar and fiddle, and trying out ideas with different permutations of people."

(He was also, I subsequently discovered, deriving income from the spluttering tail end of the folk boom - contributing to a 5 string banjo 'ampler' album on Horizon Records, turning down a lucrative offer to join the New Christy Minstrels after enduring a trial gig with them, and working odd short lived accompanist gigs.)

"In many respects, the Floggs were pioneers: we were doing bluegrass tunes electrically, we were singing country harmonies, Bill Stamps was using finger picks on electric guitar, and nobody really knew how to take us - because we didn't sound like any well-known group we could relate to. Nevertheless, we often tried to adopt a Top 40 formula so we could play at dances; we did a lot of popular stuff, and favourites like 'Gloria', but we always ended up sounding like ourselves."

At this point, the interview was interrupted by a turbulent phone call. "On no, you're not driving all the way up here, are you?" I heard Farrow whining in desperation, before replacing the receiver and returning with anxiety written on his face. "The stupid sod's broken down in Ensenada (Mexico) and doesn't expect to get here before tomorrow night," he told Darrow, whereupon they shook their heads in disbelief and began muttering abuse. "Do you know who that was?" asked Farrow, anticipating my ignorance. "..... it was Solomon Feldthouse."

"Is he coming here?" I asked. "That appears to be in the lap of the gods," Darrow said, getting back to the Floggs as if nothing had happened.

"We had a respectable following, especially among other musicians in the area, but the record companies successfully concealed any excitement they may have felt when they heard our demo tapes."

Roger Palos had left by this time to support his family with more secure employment, and we'd trimmed down to a quartet again - with me switching to bass. We cut 7 tunes (including Dylan's 'Walking down the line' - the only non-original) in a two track studio in Pomona, but Peter Stark (the son of Broadway show producer Ray Stark), who attended Claremont Mens College with me, had no success when he tried to sell us to A&R men.

"It eventually got to the point where I thought that I was the only one in the band who really wanted to make it musically... you know, people were coming to rehearsals late and so forth - a lot of niggly little things which, when added together, influenced me to pack it in."

"My plan, at that stage, was to concentrate on getting my degree - whereupon I could devote all my energies to music in the secure knowledge that I had something tangible to fall back on if necessary."

"Of course, theoretically the idea was sound enough - but in reality it led to total depression. I was at graduate school, working on a masters degree in painting, as well as teaching art and art history at a girls school a couple of days a week. On top of that I was giving guitar lessons in the evenings - so I had 3 or 4 scenes going at once... and it suddenly dawned on me that satisfaction was slipping through my fingers, that music had gone from my life... I can remember that terrible feeling of despair."

It only took a phone call to pull him out of it.

Like a bolt from the blue, David Lindley called me... he said he was in a group called KALEIDOSCOPE, which had a record deal with Epic. 'We need you' he said, '...can you come and play?'

"Instinctively and instantaneously, I told him 'I'd be right over'."

Next issue: Face to face with Feldthouse, Lindley and the re-formed Kaleidoscope!

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58 COMMANDER CODY • BARRY
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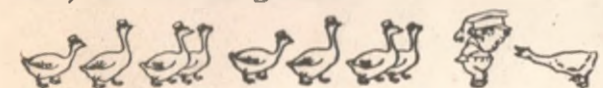
They are—
Soon, Soon, Soon
Singing a Song in the Morning
Gemini Child
Puis-je?
Butterfly Dance
Stars
Stranger in Blue Suede Shoes
Jolie Madame
Lady Rachel
Connie on a Rubber Band
Fake Mexican Tourist Blues
Don't Sing no more Sad Songs
Take Me to Tahiti
Caribbean Moon

Thank you Kevin Ayers for recording odd ditties of a wit and singularity which most composers would impale themselves on their tuning forks to achieve.

11. Bill Stamps is now teaching in Vancouver. (what trivial information!!!).

OVER the GARDEN WALL

Then there was the bad weather. And a very good morning to you, my fine feathered friends... here we are, back again with the New Improved Family Size Over The Garden Wall. Since last time, I have been variously to Paris France and California, from where I am hotfoot back after spending the 3½ weeks surrounding Christmas on roasting beaches! I understand the inclement weather in the mother country has caused some discomfort to you unfortunates whose brothers do not hold low ranking positions in a famous airline whose name must remain cloaked in secrecy for obvious reasons. Now all I can think about is getting away from this bone-chilling cold, and back to the sun. Fat chance of that... but it's a good dream. At least I did some interviewing and hard graft while I was in the Americas... which is more than some people I could mention. And now, a line of geese.



Goodness knows when this will see the light of publication, but I like to keep up to date, which is why I'm tapping this out in late January - even though there is only a smattering of optimism about a new issue appearing before Spring. However, too many times have I witnessed the buffoon Frame falling into the trap of leaving his columns to the last minute... working into the dark night, staring at the walls and sucking his pen as copy date steals past.

Speaking of Frame, allow me to reproduce this rather interesting snippet taken from an article by Giovanni Daddomo in a recent Sounds:

I am informed by reliable sources that 'Zig Zag' co-founder Peter Frame once got so fed up with people ripping off his information without any credit that he eventually began inserting small, shall we say, 'fictions' into his features. I'm reluctant to swallow the 'poem' theory as to the origins of the Cody species.



This is true; he does introduce the odd 'fiction' into some of his works... although the poem referred to (about the good Commander Cody) is of course excerpted from a real poem. On the other hand, when the Sunday Times, in their recent survey of rock, said that Crosby and Nash were "reported to be doing social work", they stole the information from an ace Frame lie, inserted into his Stills family tree in a vain attempt to prick the consciences of that pair of lazy bozos. Well done Sunday Times... you bunch of wankers!



Poll time approacheth, and as there's been such a long gap since the last issue that all nominations have apparently come in, and since that epitome of optimism, the Laughing Cavalier of Bucks County, assures me that the

ould mag will henceforth be run along lines of startling efficiency and punctuality, I have decided, in my ineffable omniscience to make a clean (or even clean) start and publish both the last two polls side by side. As you can see!

There you have it then; two lists admirably demonstrating the good taste of Zigzag readers. It's heartwarming indeed to see Gram Parsons and Emmylou Harris predominant among the vocalists (though not so heartwarming to see that young puppy Kendall cavorting ecstatically at the news), and a most pleasant change to have a keyboard poll uncontaminated by technoflash wizards of the ivories. So now for this month's poll, which is guaranteed to set the mongoose among the cobras. Nominations are to be divided into two lots of five: the five finest rock writers of all time, and the five cruddiest. Your choices can be from any periodical or journal, though they don't necessarily have to be writing now... they needn't even be alive for all I care (so you can vote for Tobler), but make sure you mark your lists clearly so I don't get the good guys and the scumbags mixed up. I'll put the address to send 'em at the end of the column. Meanwhile, here are some more irrelevant pictures.



So 'Let It Rock' folded up. Can't say that I'm going to lose any sleep over its demise, but tough shit all the same, chaps. All these self-righteous obituaries missed the point; the reason it failed was obvious - they made so many snide remarks about the vastly superior Zigzag, that The Great Cosmic Duck In The Sky decided it was time to end their malarky. Two minutes of silence (plus three pigs and an idiot) for a dead rag.



Against everybody else's advice and wishes, I've insisted on laying out these two pages myself - which is why it looks a bit of a mess... but isn't that what Zigzag is all about, I ask myself. I much prefer a parochial approach, which is why I also insist on discussing the local scene in my column. Not only do three of us live up here, it's also a bloody sight more interesting than that festering poxhole London, where the only new group to excite Tobler are Plummet Airline... "fantastic little band" he says, and with Help Yourself's Malcolm Morley tickling the ivories, he may well be right... I might even voyage up there and check them out. But now, for your edification, are the poll results, which I've forced my scribe to write out neatly.

VOCALISTS		
pos	artiste	votes
1	GRAM PARSONS	416
2	PAUL RODGERS	353
3	EMMYLOU HARRIS	348
4	NEIL YOUNG	320
5	ROGER DALTRY	313
6	JOE COCKER	273
7	BOB DYLAN	272
8	TIM BUCKLEY	256
9	JONI MITCHELL	243
10	IAN MATTHEWS	238
11	ROD STEWART	205
12	JOHN LENNON	202
13	JIM MORRISON	200
14	LINDA RONSTADT	199
=	DON HENLEY	199
16	JACKSON BROWNE	188
17	VAN MORRISON	182
18	MICK JAGGER	171
19	SANDY DENNY	160
20	CAPT BEEFHEART	159
21	GRACE SLICK	147
22	PETER GABRIEL	135
23	JOHN STEWART	120
24	MICHAEL NESMITH	117
25	DAVID CROSBY	116
26	MAGGIE BELL	108
27	FRANKIE MILLER	103
28	TIMOTHY B. SCHMIT	96
29	BOZ SCAGGS	95
30	RICK ROBERTS	94
31	KEVIN AYERS	92
=	ARTHUR LEE	92
33	JIMI HENDRIX	85
34	ROBERT PLANT	80
35	JACK BRUCE	79
36	ROGER CHAPMAN	75
37	STEVE WINWOOD	74
38	ROBERT WYATT	73
39	BUDDY HOLLY	71
=	GENE CLARK	71
=	JON ANDERSON	71
42	ELTON JOHN	68
43	TERRY REID	66
44	RICHIE FURAY	65
45	ELVIS PRESLEY	62
46	JANIS JOPLIN	60
47	LOWELL GEORGE	57
48	MARTY BALIN	56
49	DONALD FAGEN	52
50	RAY DAVIES	50
51	ARETHA FRANKLIN	47
=	ROGER MCGUINN	47
53	GLENN FREY	41
54	DAVID BOWIE	39
55	MARVIN GAYE	36
56	LITTLE RICHARD	35
57	STEVE MILLER	32
58	ELMORE JAMES	31
59	EDDIE COCHRAN	29
=	PAUL COTTON	29

KEYBOARD PLAYERS		
pos	artiste	votes
1	NICKY HOPKINS	430
2	BILL PAYNE	339
3	STEVE WINWOOD	319
4	BOB ANDREWS	300
5	DAVE SINCLAIR	267
6	GARTH HUDSON	261
7	RABBIT BUNDRICK	215
8	GLEN D. HARDIN	202
9	BARRY BECKETT	176
10	DAVE STEWART	174
11	RAY MANZAREK	169
=	KEITH GODCHAWX	169
13	CHUCK LEAVELL	150
14	RICHARD MANUEL	143
15	DE JOHN	137
=	LEON RUSSELL	137
17	PHIL RYAN	134
=	SETH JUSTMAN	134
19	DONALD FAGEN	124
20	KEITH EMERSON	111
21	MICK WEAVER	105
22	IRMIN SCHMIDT	98
23	AL KOOPER	93
24	PAUL HARRIS	91
25	TOMMY EYRE	90
=	IAN STEWART	90
27	BILLY PRESTON	86
28	NILS LOFGREN	85
29	CHICK COREA	82
30	MAX MIDDLETON	72
31	MARK JORDAN	65
32	TONY BANKS	63
=	MIKE GARSON	63
34	LOREN NEWKIRK	62
35	JERRY LEE LEWIS	61
=	MIKE RATLEDGE	61
37	PATRICK MORAZ	59
38	CARLA BLEY	58
=	COMMANDER CODY	58
40	GRACE SLICK	56
41	RICK WRIGHT	55
=	DAVID COHEN	55
43	IAN UNDERWOOD	54
44	ROY BITTAN	52
45	JAN HAMMER	51
=	DAVE LAWSON	51
=	MARK NAFTALIN	51
48	PETER WOODS	50
=	JOHN LENNON	50
50	JOHN LOCKE	49
51	RICK WAKEMAN	47
52	JONI MITCHELL	46
53	DON PRESTON	44
=	DAVE GREENSLADE	44
55	ALLEN TOUSSAINT	43
56	PETE TOWNSHEND	41
=	JACK NIETZSCHE	41
58	HUEY SMITH	39
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Our combined failure to muster an issue in December deprived us of the chance to list our fave rave records of the year at the appropriate time - but that doesn't deter me. Here now are Tobler's albums of the year: Tried & True: Elton John - 'Rock of the Westies' Eric Clapton - 'EC was here' Led Zeppelin - 'Physical Graffiti' New discoveries: Barry Mann - 'Survivor' Lost Gonzo Band Andrew Gold Re-emergents: Bob Dylan - 'Basement Tapes' SB&Q - 'Reach for the Sky' Re-issues & compilations: Elvis Presley - 'The Sun Collection' Buddy Holly The Crickets - 'Chirping Crickets' Beach Boys - 'Spirit of America' Everly Brothers - 'Walk right back' Tony Joe White - 'The best of' The American Dream - both volumes Great songs but poor production: Kursaal Flyers - 'Chocs Away' Gor blimey, there's some weird old stuff there - I reckon Tobler may be losing his marbles, poor fellow - but now, a parade. I love parades!

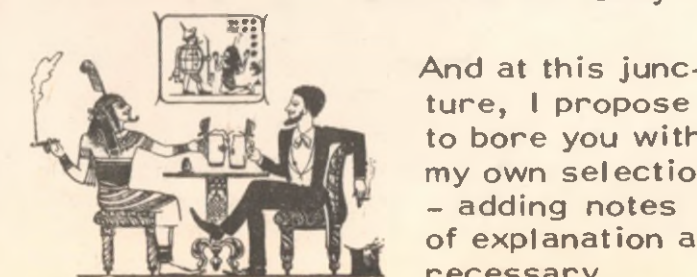


Let's see if Kendall can do any better, as we present his most played platters of 1975 "in no special order": 'Blood on the tracks' / Nils Lofgren / 'Pieces of the sky' / Piano Man / 'The last record album' / 'Physical Graffiti' / 'The hissing of summer lawns' / 'Born to run' / 'Pour down like silver' / 'Beau Brummels' / 'Natty Dread'. Kendall also supplied me with a poem to accompany his list:

Oh, all right, I know
They're predictable
But if you think
I'm going to
Suggest
Some obscure old bozos
Just to demonstrate
My erudition and
Individuality
You're mistaken.



Andy Childs will no doubt print his pick in 'Blabber n Smoke', and Frame refuses to prepare any such listing, but Max Bell, promising new teenage journalist, sent me his - so here tis: "Max Bell's definitive red hot top ten": (scrawled, I might add, on the back of a defaced photograph of Melanie): Bob Dylan - 'Blood on the tracks' Pavlov's Dog - 'Pampered Menial' Blue Oyster Cult - 'On your feet' Waiters - 'Natty Dread' Gene Clark - 'No Other' Patti Smith - 'Horses' Nils Lofgren David Bowie - 'Young Americans' The Tubes Curtis Mayfield - 'There's no place like America today!'



And at this juncture, I propose to bore you with my own selection - adding notes of explanation as necessary.

My favourite albums: surprisingly (some may think) I have only 2; 'Blood on the tracks' and 'Pieces of the sky', which still never fail to liven up these nights, filled as they are with open mouthed eagerness, the torment of Tantalus, and this god-awful freezing weather (and this jar of so-called Mixed Pickles with which I am toying appears to contain at least 70% tough skinned onions). Famed Friars boss Dave Stopps revealed, in an unguarded moment, that Dylan actually wrote the songs for 'Blood on the tracks' in Aylesbury. When pressed, he fell silent and refused to discuss the subject more. He also says that the sleeve of 'Desire', almost exactly identical to that of John Phillips' classic 1970 solo album, was done like that on purpose! Next month, I shall drone on about my "almost favourite" albums of 1975 and my favourite odd tracks (as if anyone is the least bit interested).



My Journalist of the Month award must be shared by two contributors to Street Life, which has perked up a lot since the unremitting boredom of its early issues. Pete Brown did a smashing piece on poor old Graham Bond, which almost had me in tears. A beautiful piece of work. Also, full marks to their movie critic, Monty Smith. Monty used to be Press Officer at Elektra, and anyone who knows him will tell you that it's not an uncommon sight to see Smith sitting splay-legged at lunchtime, softening what's left of his brain with alcohol, wearing an egg-stained T shirt imprinted with the likeness of Marie Osmond, and swearing that he is Sir Donald Wolfitt! In this condition, he is incapable of any coherent speech. We take it in turns to read out Monty's reviews as he would speak them whilst lying pissed on the floor of the Pillars of Hercules. Today it was Kendall's turn to stand before Frame and myself, assume a Smithesque stance and posture, and intone the review of Barry Lyndon. Despite never having met Smith, he managed a classic performance based on my own superb impersonation!



Oh tragedy. I appear to have run out of space. No time for my projected photo-caption competition (though it may well appear elsewhere if room permits), or to explain 'The Mince Pie Incident' which caused us to change our allegiance from the Dark Lantern to The Six Grapes, or to divulge the full details of Pete ('Our relationship dissolved like the dirty snow of an evil autumn') Frame's split with Starry Eyed. Maybe next time.



I am back and I am proud but, for one reason and another, I am still without permanent residence in the UK. For this reason, I must ask you to send all poll, competition, fan/hate, and other mail to The Famous Mac Garry, c/o Yeoman Cottage, North Marston, Buckingham MK18 3PH. Thank you for the enthusiasm of your response.

Until the next issue, I remain your humble servant.....Mac

With Mac sprawling himself over two pages, and Tobler getting last minute adverts, I've been squeezed into half a page this issue, so I'd better waste no time in getting down to it.

Firstly, my favourite albums of last year (in no particular order): John Martyn - 'Sundays Child' / Joe Walsh - 'So What' / Bob Dylan - 'Blood on the Tracks' / Nils Lofgren / Poco - 'Head over heels' / Neil Young - 'Zuma' and 'Tonights the night' / Michael Nesmith - 'The Prison' / Little Feat - 'The last record album' / The Who - 'By numbers' / Bruce Springsteen - 'Born to run'... plus another 18 or so that I played constantly and derived a great deal of pleasure from. Not a bad year at all, I think. And if some of the releases this year are a pointer, then 1976 won't be a totally forgettable one either. Albums I've found most impressive over the last couple of months or so are Be Bop Deluxe's 'Sunburst finish', The Band's 'Northern Cross', Idle Race's 'Birthday Party', the Kursaal Flyers' 'The Great Artist', Jerry Garcia's new solo album 'Reflections', 'American Graffiti Vol 3', and Speedy Keen's 'Y'know wot I mean'. Check em out.

Interesting fanzines not mentioned elsewhere in this issue are Liquorice number 4, concentrating on British rock and containing things on Peter Hammill, John Martyn (a slightly disturbing interview), Mike Heron and the Kilburns. Send 30p to 7-34 Victoria Centre, Nottingham. Nostalgia, an up and coming mag with stuff on Carla Bley and Traffic, among others, is 25p from 38 Bedford Square Brighton.

Also, the legendary Fat Angel is about to be unleashed for the fourteenth time. We've been plotting its re-emer-



gence with increased enthusiasm over the past few months, and when it finally appears it will contain definitive material on Buzzy Linhart, Idle Race, Autosalvage, Big Star, Andy Roberts and David Ackles. Watch this space for further details.

It seems that the dedicated followers of that pioneering outfit Chilli Willi & the Red Hot Peppers are loath to forget the memorable music they used to create; loads of people keep enquiring as to their whereabouts, so to satisfy your curiosity, here's a progress report. As the majority of you will probably know, when the Willis broke up, Pete Thomas whizzed out to join John Stewart's band; he'd received a standing invitation from Stewart after his exemplary drumming at the Zigzag Roundhouse concert. He now resides in some balmy coastal hide-out in Santa Monica from where he sends me sporadic communications - the most recent of which notes that Stewart's longtime bassist had been fired from the band after being 'caught in a motel room with a naked midget and a Dober-

man Pinscher'!! The activities of the other ex-Willis have been less spectacular, though far from interesting. Martin Stone formed The Ageing Blues Hounds with Ron Watts (of Brewers Droop fame), which later evolved into The Jive Bombers, a spirited blues combo with a consistently floating personnel. Although Stoney is never going to be the massively popular guitar hero that he deserves to be (and I don't suppose he wants to be), his playing just gets better and better as the years roll by. I saw him jamming with the Feelgoods on their last tour, and he was just superb... one devastating solo after another. Paul Riley, after a period of indecision and experimentation, formed what is shaping up to be London's hottest band of the moment. Their name is Roogalator, and several pundits have already noted them down for a promising future. Lead guitarist Danny Adler provides a most unusual and entertaining brand of American mid-western imagery and unorthodox playing, and the band as a whole is certainly worth investigating. Much less is known of the adventures of the remaining two Willis. Phil Lithman apparently sailed off to foreign parts and is now on the West Coast with Pete Thomas - where he auditioned for role of lead guitarist in John Stewart's band... and failed. Of Paul Bailey, virtually nothing is known. I've seen him once or twice, but know nothing about his current activities. How are you, old mate? Then of course, there's Jake, their mercurial manager. He's now tour manager for Dr Feelgood and a very important part of their plans to conquer the world. There seems to be no limit to his abilities. More news on these esteemed gentlemen as and when it happens.

Fraid that's all this month. Andy

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