

25P
ZIGZAG
THE ROCK MAGAZINE

Clover · Janis Ian · Procol Harum · Tom Waits
Doctor Feelgood · **Jethro Tull** · Bonnie Raitt
NUMBER 62 JULY 1976



AUTOMATIC MAN



It was in early 1975 when Michael Shrieve, Bayeté, Pat Thrall and Doni Harvey merged their creative forces to form Automatic Man. While Shrieve is the most famous of the four, each member is in the unique position of being a player, singer and performer with years of recording and concert experience. Their debut single on Island titled "My Pearl" has already generated a tremendous amount of excitement in the music press. But this is only the beginning. Automatic Man is an electric rock quartet using an original blend of mental and physical forces to project their music.

AUTOMATIC MAN

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KEITH HARWOOD



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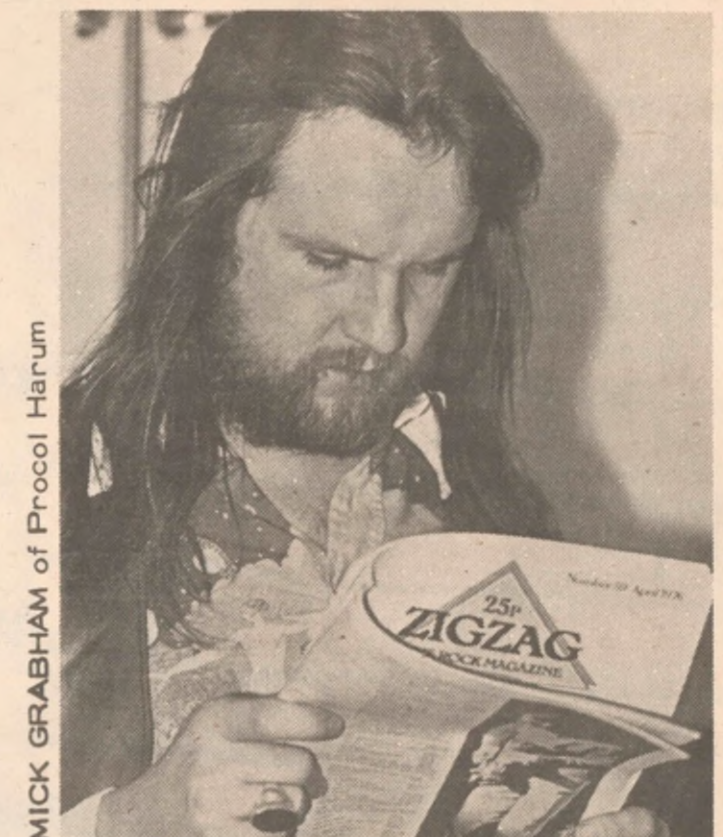
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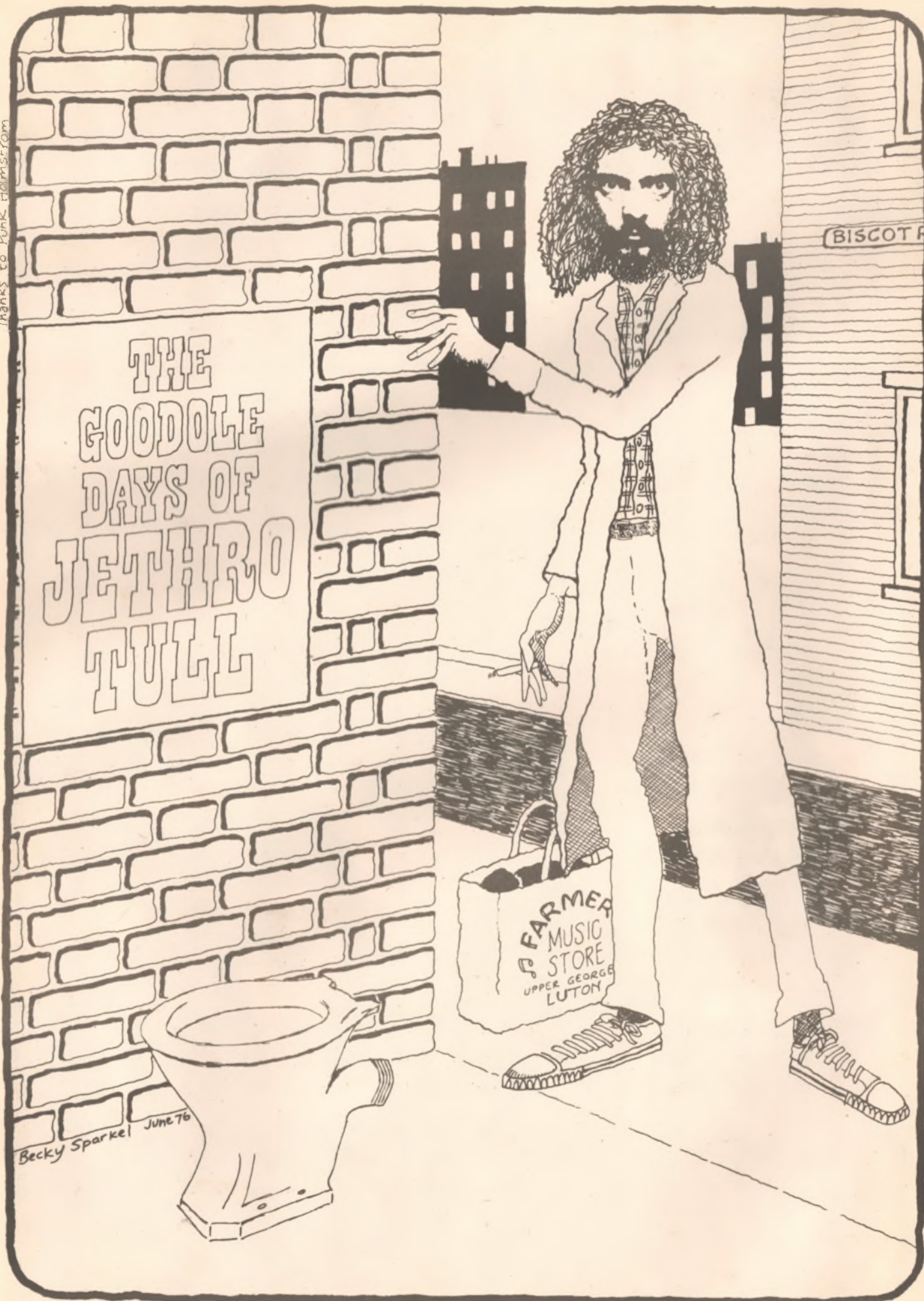
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MICK GRAHAM of Procol Harum

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SIXTY ONE...Dr. Feelgood/Procol Harum/Dillards/Bonnie Raitt/Ozark Mountain Daredevils/Solution/Reviews'n'charts'n'Mac.



Becky Sparkel June 76

And here I quote from their latest press release:

"Fortunately, the thrill hasn't gone for Jethro Tull. They may have ten consecutive gold albums, astronomical attendance figures, and the tax nightmares that signify you've made it several times over - but they never lose sight of their obligation to their audience, and they believe they still have a way to go in cultivating new followers. They entered the pop music arena as innovators, and it is purely by extending the limits of each successive stage show and album that they have kept that vital faith with their admirers. With International record sales in excess of 10 million, Ian Anderson still has to make it on his own terms. As he revealed to the Melody Maker: 'I'm probably one of the few musicians you'll ever meet who isn't jaded about music.... from a very personal point of view, I want to justify that place on my passport where it says that my occupation is 'musician'.

On page one of their solid gold catalogue we find their first album, 'THIS WAS' (released in 1968) - a collection ranging from acoustic ballads to explosive rockers - punctuated by Tull's trade mark... the magic flute.

During this period, Ian Anderson perfected a ragged and maniacal on-stage image that accentuated Tull's musical zest and originality. Hopping on one leg, in that tattered overcoat, while brandishing his silver flute, he was variously characterised as "a mad dog Fagin", "a deranged flamingo", "a demented dancing master" and "Toscannini on speed".... a journalist's dream, who would one day claim covers from Rolling Stone to Time"..... and one day, even, that supreme accolade - the cover of Zigzag.



Now frankly, I am no longer a Jethro Tull devotee.... for the simple reason that life's too short. I just don't have time to listen to their albums as Ian Anderson would like his audience to listen to them. To do Anderson full justice, you would have to spend hours and days and weeks getting to know something as complex as his "Passion Play" - it's not an album you listen to as you're typing articles, or cooking breakfast.

Back in the sixties, however, I used to think Jethro Tull was the greatest English band since the Rolling Stones - an opinion based on their image, music and attitude, bolstered up by my loyalty to Luton, that ghastly dump where I was born and schooled..... and among my favourite albums, still, are 'This Was' and 'Living in the Past'.

Anderson, being a new boy in town, was denied the honour of numbering himself among my friends, but I got to hear a lot about him through mutual mates - and I followed Jethro Tull's early career with avid interest. In fact, as British correspondent for a rotten and best-forgotten Dutch music rag called 'Rockarolla', one of my first stories was a piece on Jethro (an appalling load of ill-written pedantic hyperbole which actually reddened my face like a Baxiglow when I re-read it recently).

This then, is the story of Jethro Tull's inauspicious start in life - based on my talks with the various characters instrumental in their early days..... and I mean "instrumental"; the vocalist, that self-styled "one line joker in a public bar", Mr Anderson, refused to grant me audience in a public bar, a saloon bar, his house, our house, his record company's office, or any other place. And who can blame him? Certainly not me. He's been harassed half to death by reporters for years and years, so I guess he's entitled to a little



Who can blame him?

privacy now.

Nevertheless, I did probe Chrysalis for a chat. "I can but ask," said dashing press officer Christie Briggs, but I could sense the reluctance in his voice, even though I asked for a mere ten minutes of his time.

I heard no more, so I assume that Anderson has had his fill of base journalists such as my good self, and intends to confine his interviews to the highly intellectual Harry Doherty of the highly boring melody maker.... but that's his loss. (Men a good deal wealthier in terms of mettle, genius and sterling have derived untold benefit from conversing with me - and, blimey, he only lives down the road, not 20 minutes away.... our nearest superstar neighbour, not counting John Otway). It's his loss, but as I say, it is also his prerogative, and my respect for him isn't even remotely diminished by his stance. I mean, I can think of no other musician who must feel the futility of the artiste as much as he does - to be clapped and applauded as a circus clown or a vaudeville turn, rather than a modern day Constable or Dickens.... to see cretinous reviewers dismissing his recordings with dumb remarks like ".... but it will sell by the truckload, and that's what matters".

(Personally, I was very disheartened when he decided to sneak out of his much-publicised "retirement" to clamber down into the gutters of rock'n'roll again - it's not as if he'd spent all his millions on heroin and needed more fast bucks. I hoped that in his old age, he'd turn to a more graceful form of expression.... like I wonder just how much respect he has for his audience, his critics, the music industry, for the friends he's made over the last 8 years..... but we're getting too serious here, and that's not my style).



I still love Luton, even though it's a shit-house.... and it is a shit-house - anyone who's ever lived there will tell you that.... a town without heart or spirit. It's hardly an eyesore on the scale of Halifax, or some of those other northern monstrosities, of course, but you can stand at the top of Longcroft Hill and gaze upon acres and acres of high-density gloom; it's just like a giant bomb crater, blasted out of the Chilterns, and crammed with rubbish.

Like all big towns in the South east, the centre has been gutted and re-built to conform to '70's

requirements - big litter-strewn areas of concrete, and windswept tunnels, bordered by unlit shops, and embroidered with ornamental fountains that don't work.

Perversely known as the seat of the straw hat industry, Luton is dominated by Vauxhall Motors - and during what's known as "the Vauxhall fortnight", the place is like a ghost town.... everyone's at Clacton or Blackpool. Strange then, that in the dying weeks of 1967, a bunch of herberts from Blackpool should decide to move to Luton.

Original Jethro Tull bass-player Glenn Cornick (now fronting a new band called Paris, with ex Fleetwood Macker Bob Weston) explains: "After messing around with various local bands, I was asked to join JOHN EVAN'S SMASH - in terms of creativity, by far the best band in Blackpool. The line-up was IAN ANDERSON on vocals, JOHN EVAN on keyboards, BARRIE BARLOW on drums, me on bass, and a guy called CHICK MURRAY on guitar.... he was a mad Scotsman, who wore green all the time - couldn't stand anything that wasn't green! He didn't know what the control knobs on his guitar were for, so he had a different sound every night.... but he was quite an interesting guitarist".

"We also had two sax players; a tenor player called Ranger (because he looked like the Forest Ranger in Yogi Bear.... had a prominent blue beard line), who was a Jehovah's Witness, always trying to convert us, and a baritone player called Tony Wilkin, who was in a way the leader of the band, because his dad had more money to lend us than anyone else.... he got it together to buy the van and some equipment. He's working for his father's building firm now, I think."



It was patently evident that Blackpool was a musical cul-de-sac; at all venues within a 100 mile arc, soul music was imperative - and Anderson's brain began to wilt at the prospect of singing 'Hold On, I'm Coming' to mentally retarded teenagers for the rest of his life.... but one of the straws at which he clutched for survival happened to be a bright young booker called Chris Wright, who had got the band a few gigs when he was working for the Don Reid Agency in Manchester, and who was in the throes of setting up his own whizz-bang agency, the Ellis-Wright Agency (later to become Chrysalis), in London.

Cornick: "We phoned up Chris and told him we wanted to be a blues band. He already managed Ten Years After, who were doing extraordinarily well on the club circuit, and the blues boom, which threw up Fleetwood Mac, Chicken Shack and all that stuff, was starting to break nationally.... so he was interested in the idea, but told us we needed a blues guitarist before we could call ourselves a blues band. So we began to cast around for a suitable guy.... and all our thoughts on the matter seemed to point in the direction of MICK ABRAHAM, who we'd met on a gig at the Beachcomber discotheque down in Luton".

Mick Abraham's reputation as a "tasty guitarist" was not restricted to the Luton/Dunstable area, where he was regarded as a local hero; tales of his skill had even tentacled out as far north as Blackpool - probably as a result of his work with the Manchester based group, The Toggery Five.

The rollicking Abrahams, currently leading a new band playing good old blues stuff, beaten by the acid winds of time, had started his musical career during the "beat group boom" of 62/64 - as a member of a gang called The Hustlers ("I was the fat one in the middle with the Fender Telecaster"), before joining Neil Christian and the Crusaders.

"I worked on and off with Chris (Tidmarsh = Neil Christian) for six or seven months.....used to make about seven quid a night, which wasn't bad for those days. I remember seeing him with the original Crusaders, with Jimmy Page, and they were a really superb band - and Chris had this attraction too.....the chicks really went for him. He never felt the need for any form of rehearsal; it was amazing how he got away with it really. We used to wear orange shirts, black trousers, white high-heeled boots, waggle our bums, and play things like 'Lucille'.....then after about 6 numbers, Chris would come on and sing 'What'd I say'. It was a real scream, actually."

Through drummer Carlo Little, who'd also been in the Crusaders, Abrahams played in the Savages, behind screaming Lord Sutch, for a while, before reverting to a locally based group, Tensons Trolls, which had organist Jimmy Ledgerwood (now running Paiste Cymbals in Germany somewhere), Andy Fyle on bass, and Clive Bunker on drums.....and he stayed with them until the start of 1966, when he and Bunker moved to Manchester to join the Toggery Five, a bunch of exiled Lutonians who had a pretty strong following in the north and on the continent.

"We came back to Luton around Christmas 1966, when the Toggery Five fell to bits - as it had to, and started a new group with Pete Fensome on vocals, Andy Fyle on bass, Clive Bunker on drums, me on guitar.....that was McGregors Engine."

For most of 1967, McGregors Engine was the cat's whiskers in Luton, achieving huge local status as a result of their wild, solid-packed gigs at the Beachcomber at Chaul End, and the Purple Door in Upper George Street (formerly the Tudor Coffee Bar, which had housed one of Frame's legendary folk clubs 2 years earlier). "Looking back, I don't think we were any great shakes," says Abrahams, "but at least we were playing something original.....and I was playing what was regarded locally as pretty interesting guitar."

Indeed he was; hardly a week went by without the local newspaper, the Tuesday Pictorial, making some reference to Mick Abrahams or McGregors Engine.

Abrahams: "One night in October, I walked into the Beachcomber, as I often did, and had a look at the band - who happened to be John Evan's Smash. They were pretty good, and had this intriguing singer who peppered the set with bursts of flute playing.....and afterwards, we got into a long conversation which culminated in Ian asking me if I wanted to join the band. They'd heard about me, apparently, and reckoned I was the bloke they needed to help them break out of the circuit they'd become rutted into."

"I said I'd be happy to join, because McGregors Engine was beginning to run out of steam at that point, but I told them there was no way that I was going to move to Blackpool, or even to London - because I had a good job in Luton, and was

THE PURPLE DOOR CLUB
UPPER GEORGE STREET, LUTON
Always 7.45-11pm. Always 4s. admission
FRIDAY, 24th
Present Popswing Night with
McGregors Engine
MONDAY, 27th
BIG L NIGHT with
Pete Drummond
Programmes presented by
SUMMIT PROMOTIONS

Pictorial, February 21, 1967

not about to chuck it up to become a pop star.....I'd been all through that before."

The only alternative was obvious: if they wanted Abrahams, they would have to move to Luton.....which is what they did. Cornick: "We got back to Blackpool after that gig, Chick Murray left the band, and Ian got on the phone to Chris Wright.....told him we'd got this great new blues guitarist who leaps around, pulls faces and does all the other things - so Chris told us to move down and he said he'd try to get us some work."

"We did a few gigs, as a seven piece, but the money ran out almost immediately.....we simply couldn't make ends meet on our pitiful income - so we had a meeting, during which everything came to a head: Ranger decided to pack it in - partly because he was finding it such a drag to get back to his Jehovah's witness meetings, and the other sax player left too. John Evan decided he didn't want to stick around, and he opted to continue his studies - he'd always wanted to study physics, so he went off and did that.....he couldn't envisage the band ever making it. Neither could Barrie Barlow; he had a girl friend back home and he left the band too....."

By November 1967, two weeks after they'd set off on the road to stardom - they were down to 3: Ian Anderson, Glenn Cornick, and Mick Abrahams, who brought in his old mate Clive Bunker on drums.....whereupon they became an "out and out blues band, but with a distinctive style and sound because of Ian's flute." Abrahams points out:

The next few months were bleak: having nowhere else to go, Ian

managed to get himself invited to the Abrahams household for a spot of turkey and warmth - otherwise it would have been a miserable Christmas indeed (unlike the following year when Anderson cut a Christmas single, from which Abrahams was specifically excluded).

Unable to score any social security, Anderson was obliged to seek a job which might supplement his big income to the extent that he could just about eat and pay his rent - and unable to find openings in either brain surgery or nuclear physics, he was obliged to take employment as a lavatory cleaner at the Savoy Cinema, bang in the centre of town.....and thus he entered that state which most superstars are forced to endure at one time or another - a state known in the biz as "paying one's dues". Anderson, of course, was paying not only his dues, but those of his erstwhile cohorts who weren't prepared to endure such humiliation and deprivation, but were only too happy to roll back a few years later when Jethro were riding the charts.

The current manager of the Savoy (A.B.C.), which has now been converted to a 3-in-1 cinema to catch dwindling audiences, has no recollection of Anderson. Hardly surprising, since there must've been 2 or 3 changes of management in the interim - but one of the women who flogs sweets and hot-dogs reckons she remembers him. "He was batty," she says, ".....never took his work seriously - always fooling about. I wasn't at all surprised when he left.....you could tell he wasn't cut out for the work." I should bloody well think not, lady!!

of Anderson's exploits during his bog-cleaning days, two tales have entered the annals of local folklore - and you can find any number of glory seeking bullshitters who claim to have witnessed these spectacles.

The first involves his lurching out of the cinema with a tattered lampshade on his head, crossing George Street, making a bee-line for the lamp-shade counter and trying on about a dozen new models.....each time examining himself in a nearby mirror, and asking the sales girl if she thought it suited his complexion, or whether she could recommend one of a more suitable design.

Then we come to the day when, during routine replacement of leaking bogs, one of the new ones was found to be cracked - whereupon Anderson took it upon himself to parade it around town under his arm.....even taking it on the bus, according to one "eye witness".

His scruffy old overcoat, and paper bag of belongings became his trademarks - and people got used to seeing him loping along New Bedford Road in the direction of Studley Road, where he and Cornick shared a flat.

Studley Road is close to Moor Park and Wardown Park - Luton's two prime areas of public green-sward - but also close to Brook Street, which during my school days was the street of a dozen brothels....all of which have now been bulldozed to make way for modern, inelegant flats. A quiet residential road lined with those knobby trees the council insist on pruning into ugly shapes - Anderson and Cornick lived up



The first (startlingly laid-back) publicity photo of Jethro Tull: May 1968. Mick Abrahams - ankle deep and quite unconcerned; Clive Bunker - with his back to the camera!!; Ian Anderson with hooch; Glenn Cornick with bowler.

at the top end, in a big house, sub-divided into flats and bed-sitters. (The electoral register lists seven entirely unrelated occupants, so presumably it's still let off).

Glenn Cornick: "We used to live in the bottom flat, which was a dreadful place. I used to come in late and find paddies in my bed! They'd usually just come out of prison for not paying their rent, and moved straight back in.....they just broke the back door down and walked straight in. I didn't have any belongings, but if I had, I would never have kept them there. Most of my memories of that place revolve around trying to get unwanted paddies out of my room without getting my face bashed in."

And it was here that Ander-

son spent those boring months of Jethro Tull, living in a style between that of a prince and that of a pig.

Meanwhile, the gig situation began to improve. They'd started off by going out under a variety of names including Bag of Blues, Ian Anderson's Bag of Blues and even John Evan's Smash - though the northern management company who "owned" that name dissuaded them from using that one any more - and eventually they settled for Jethro Tull, though nobody can recall exactly who suggested the name.

Cornick: "To begin with, all the bookers in the office wanted to call us different names - and they booked us out as such. We never knew who we were from one gig to the next! Often it was a case of looking at the posters outside the gig to see

who we were supposed to be that night."

The Famous MAC GARRY

Hand-written by Pete Frame

Next month: How Jethro broke the percentage at the Nags Head in High Wycombe and came away with 3s quid instead of 30.....how Chrystalis got it together.....Jethro hit the charts.....Mick Abrahams gets kicked out on his arse.....Jimmy McCulloch fails the audition as his replacement.....Glenn Cornick gets kicked out on his arse.....Anderson's old mates start coming back.....Clive Bunker gets kicked out on his arse.....more of Anderson's old mates start coming back.....Mac Garry goes to visit Ian Anderson but gets kicked out on his arse.....Alvin Stardust joins Jethro Tull.....Ian Anderson gets kicked out on his arse.

BEACHCOMBER DISCOTHEQUE
SKIMPOT ROAD (off Deesdale Road) LUTON
TUESDAY, 17th OCTOBER
The Garden
WEDNESDAY, 18th OCTOBER
The Mead
THURSDAY, 19th OCTOBER
The Manchester Playboys
FRIDAY, 20th OCTOBER
The Shell Shock Show
SATURDAY, 21st OCTOBER
The John Evans Smash
SUNDAY, 22nd OCTOBER
Derrick Savage Foundation
MONDAY, 23rd OCTOBER
Max Bear and the Chicago Setback

Pictorial, October 17, 1967

READING BETWEEN THE LINES WITH JANIS IAN

I can well remember tuning in to the Old Grey Whistle Test a couple of years ago, as force of habit and Tuesday night tedium usually lead me to do, and being lucky enough to catch one of those rare moments when rock/folk/pop music on TV suddenly becomes a rivetting experience. You've no doubt got your own particular favourites; I think mine are that film of Don McLean doing 'American Pie' and 'Vincent' to an enraptured high school audience, the film of Bowie's 'farewell' concert that accompanied 'Life On Mars' on TOTP, and the sight of a tiny woman, after Lou Reed and Paul Kossoff probably the illest looking person ever to appear on the Whistle Test, with an acoustic guitar, performing a song called 'Stars' that was so agonisingly heartfelt that it was quite breathtaking.

Last month, I saw Janis Ian singing that song again at the end of an unexpectedly triumphant concert at the New Victoria. Though she's looking much healthier and happier now, its impact is undiminished, (in fact she rarely does the song because of its personal significance), only now, when she sings 'Stars, they come and go... They come fast and slow... They go like the last light of the sun, all in a blaze', she can change the 'They' to 'We', because in the intervening years between those two renditions, Janis Ian has transformed from a premature has-been into one of the most popular and best-respected artists in America.

Talking with Janis, however, especially at the end of a long, hot day, is unfortunately a less rewarding experience than seeing her in concert. She was unable, or unwilling to recall much about her pre-'Stars' life, so I'm afraid the preliminary details will have to come largely from my good self.

Janis was born in April 1951 as Janis Fink, the daughter of an artistically-inclined New York family. "My dad teaches music, but they didn't push it on me. I did classical piano when I was about three, but I think my parents would rather I had been a mathematician". When she was eleven Janis took up the guitar - which now seems to be her first instrument - and soon began writing songs, one of which, 'Hair Of Spun Gold', was submitted to and published by Broadside magazine in 1964. Presumably appreciating the commercial disadvantages of her surname, Janis borrowed her brother's middle name, and began working in clubs in New York and on the East Coast, and in 1966, a lawyer friend introduced her to Shadow Morton... (a producer of heroic proportions on account of his work with the Shangri Las, but now reduced to the level of the New York Dolls).

With Shadow, Janis recorded the

single 'Society's Child' which was first released in the autumn of '66, when its 'black boy meets white girl' theme caused quite a storm, with several radio stations refusing to play it, and one Louisiana DJ, who did, apparently getting beaten up for his trouble. Excellence will out, however, and in the summer of '67, this superb single was a Top Twenty hit nationwide, which was really the start of Janis' problems. She spent six months at the Manhattan School of Music and Art, then left; she did a lot of road work; she appeared on a Leonard Bernstein TV spectacular; she was hailed as a protegee, a child genius, a female Bob Dylan - you name it, she was hailed as it - she made three albums for Verve Folkways, who had taken her on after Elektra and Atlantic had passed, in less than two years... and eventually, cracked up under the strain.

"By the time I was 17 or 18, I was getting a little crazy, but it was so hip to be crazy at the time, that it all seemed kind of natural. I mean, everybody in the business was a bit crazy - crazy in that you start believing things that aren't real, and disbelieving things that are real. I was doing a lot of drugs and stuff. You get to the point where you can't deal emotionally with anything. I couldn't even decide what sock to put on - that was enough of a decision to screw up a whole day. I had to get away from everything, every kind of pressure".

In view of the pressures on her, it's not surprising that Janis' three Verve albums vary drastically in quality. 'JANIS IAN' (FTS 3017, re-released on Polydor PD 6058), the album with 'Society's Child' and 'Hair Of Spun Gold' on it, is really quite good; more so when you realise that its creator was still in her mid-teens. Basically in a folk-rock vein, some of the songs are a bit dated now with their overtly protest/generation gap lyrics, but Janis treats the themes far more sensitively than many of her elders did, and her voice is remarkably mature, as is her ability in arranging and playing.

"...FOR ALL THE SEASONS OF YOUR MIND" (FTS 3024) was made with Shadow again, and employed virtually the same musicians as the first one, but is, to be brutally frank, a pretty ghastly embarrassment to all concerned. The melodies are uninspired, the lyrics mostly awkward fifth form poesy, much of the singing and playing sounds suspiciously out of tune, and the whole deal has a feeling of great haste about it. Janis freaked out when she saw the record, appearing like a skeleton from some long-forgotten closet, and I can't say I blame her.

In 1968, 'WHO REALLY CARES' (MGS 1850/SVLP 6023) was done with a completely different bunch of New

York session men, including Al Kooper, Jerry Jemmott and Joe Farrell, and was produced by Charlie Calello. It's hardly memorable, but it is something of an improvement over its predecessor. The rhythm section is a bit wooden, and some of the arrangements are less than sympathetic, but at least the album is listenable.

"The difficulty is whether you have any control or not. The first one I had a lot of control over, but after you've had a hit, everyone wants their piece of you, and spends their time grabbing at you".

By the time 'Who Really Cares' was released, Janis had already stepped out of the showbiz ratrace, and had disappeared to Philadelphia in the company of photographer Peter Cunningham:

"I stopped doing everything for about a year. I didn't see anybody. I didn't see my parents or my manager. I was a hermit. I didn't even go out much. It was really good, because that was what I needed: a year or two to sit down and watch TV and not deal with anything".

While living in Philadelphia, Janis started writing again, and in 1971 an album called 'PRESENT COMPANY' slipped out, (now re-released on Capitol Vine VMP 1014).

"That whole album was something of an accident. I did it with Jerry Corbett, and it was remixed after I left. That was a terrible album, I really hate it. It's much worse than it was when I left the studio, the mixes really stink, but it was done according to someone else's taste".

The sound on the album certainly isn't anything to write home about, even though the production is simplicity itself, with Janis, either on piano or guitar, backed only by a basic rhythm section for the most part, but it's quite an interesting sequence of sixteen snippets of varying length all strung together, and some of the melodies are appealing. Peter Cunningham, by the way, helped out on three of the songs - the only time Janis has shared composition.

After making 'Present Company', Janis was on the move again, this time out to Los Angeles, where she spent most of the next two years living in her apartment, writing songs and teaching herself the art of orchestration, and living on borrowed money when she'd used up what the Internal Revenue had left her. It was here that she wrote 'Stars' in the space of six hours one evening, which was not only something of an exorcism of her past, but also a turning point for her writing:

"I was never one for singing what I really feel. Except tonight I'm singing everything I know that's real".



Tom Cheyenne

The version of the song that appeared two years later on the album is in fact a demo that she recorded in Los Angeles in March 1972, with just herself and a guitar, and quite rightly it was decided that it couldn't be improved upon.

The other important song, 'Jesse', written at about the same time, is significant because Roberta Flack took it and recorded it, giving Janis' confidence a much-needed boost.

"It was the first song I ever felt confident about. There wasn't a line in it that embarrassed me, not a line that made me think that if only I had another ten minutes I would have done it better. When Roberta Flack recorded the song, it was like saying to me 'OK, you can write'. But it still didn't mean anything to the industry, it just meant a lot to me. Actually, Jesse never really happened to me until after I wrote the song. 'Stars' was the first really autobiographical song. That was another breakthrough. It showed me I could deal with my own emotions in a song. It gave me confidence about dealing with my own experience".

By 1973, Janis felt ready to face the music business and the big bad world again, and, with the help of manager Jean Powell, she began looking for a record deal, but with little success, and finally - busted flat in Los Angeles and with romance on the wane - she moved back east to live with her mother.

Eventually, they found an Australian company (of all things!) called Festival Records, who apparently signed her on the strength of that 'Stars' demo, and financed the recording of an album at Brooks Arthur's studio in New York state, though even then it was a while before Janis signed with Columbia/CBS - who had passed on her twice during Clive Davis' reign.

'STARS' (CBS 80224) and 'BETWEEN

THE LINES' (CBS 80635) both came out in 1974, and I always tend to think of them together, not so much because they were both made in the same place with virtually the same people, but rather because their overtly autobiographical content more or less traces the progress of a relationship, so either album on its own tells an incomplete story. The songs on 'Stars' were written over two or three years, and so run across a wide range of emotions, but mostly they suggest a reaching out for a love that, apparently was slipping away; while 'Between The Lines' was composed after Janis' return to the East Coast, and is largely a reaction to the broken affair - sometimes lonely, sometimes self-pitying, sometimes desperate, sometimes tougher and more resilient, but always universal in the very accuracy of its specificity, which is probably the key to Janis' enormous appeal.

"I don't know if those subjects just appeal to me as a writer, or if they are part of my psychological make-up. It's probably a bit of both. But I'm not sure that it's that much different from a lot of writers. I really work hard at making other people feel what I feel. The audience comes for emotions; to be touched and, in a strange way, to be listened to. They feel that whatever I've said would be what they would say".

Having seen the London audience held rapt by Janis' songs, and several people even reduced to tears, I can only vouch for her success in the communication of feelings, but because of the intensely personal, introverted nature of her material, and its predominantly melancholy tenor, Janis, like Leonard Cohen, is frequently the butt of wisecracks along 'free razor blades with every album' lines. One writer, in fact, recently opened an interview with the question 'Why are

you so depressing?', which is not only startlingly crass and impolite, but also pretty damn ignorant, because Janis' discovery of love, hope, beauty... whatever... woven into life's generally tawdry tapestry is, by dint of its realism, infinitely less depressing than the Brotherhood of Man's witless bonhomie or the Black Oak Arkansas mentality, wherein all the world's a Holiday Inn, and all the men and women merely studs and groupies.

The unashamedly romantic aura of the albums is given a little variety with songs like 'Dance With Me', an unusual reminder of Janis' teenage preoccupations in its sarcastic anti-Vietnam theme, 'Thankyou!', a rather unexceptional song to her family, and of course 'At Seventeen', which must touch a chord in thousands of ugly duckling girls. This latter song was a number one hit single in the States last year, and in consequence 'Between The Lines' emulated it on the album charts, making an amazing fairytale success of Janis' return to the public gaze.

"I didn't think 'At Seventeen' would be as big a hit as it has been. I thought I was going to be lucky if it went Top 40. It's really strange. You see something you sweated over, you have four weeks of panic, thinking it's no good, but everybody says it is good. It's like you've been vindicated when you were all ready to be defensive about it".

Apart from the development in Janis' lyrical talent during her period of hibernation, she also had become a very accomplished musician and arranger, and it is really a combination of carefully crafted music and words that make her songs both very touching and an aesthetic delight. On 'Stars' she was helped on most of the arrangements by Ron Frangipane, and beautifully subdued, muted arrangements

they are too, for the most part. An exception is 'Applause', which was recorded live with a great big string and horn section, and which swings rather curiously between a big band style, and a delicate use of reeds that is reminiscent of Grieg. I'm not convinced it does a great deal for the song but it's certainly interesting.

On 'Between The Lines' the strings and horns are generally more prominent, and the arrangements a little more complex, though still supremely tasteful, but on both albums, the instrumental highlight, for me anyway, is the acoustic bass playing of Richard Davis - who you'll probably remember from his magnificent work on 'Astral Weeks', and who used to be a member of Janis' touring band.

While on the subject of Janis' band, it now consists of drummer Barry Lazarowitz, who's been with Janis ever since 'Stars', guitarist Jeff Layton - both of whom have played previously with Leonard Cohen - bassist Stu Woods, whose mellifluous lines were a feature of the concert, and vocalist Claire Bay, who met Janis in Los Angeles, and first sang on her publishing demos. It is Claire who provides visual appeal in the live act, as the three guys sit back in the shadows, and Janis herself remains either static with a guitar, or hidden behind a grand piano.

"She fulfills more of the female expectations of the audience than I do, at least, initially. I've always felt very uncomfortable in gowns and dresses. I'm not very good at that... I just stand there with the guitar... it's great... Laurel and Hardy".

Live, as on record, the instrumental backdrop to Janis' songs is unobtrusive but immaculate, and it is a tribute to the band that the orchestra on the records was hardly missed at all in the live renditions.

With the enormous success of 'At

Seventeen', (which won the 'Best Female Performance' Grammy last year), and the album, Janis' life obviously became more pressurised again, and ironically the problems that had plagued her after 'Society's Child' reared their ugly heads again last autumn when she came to record 'AFTERTONES', her third album for Columbia.

"'Aftertones' got strangled in the making. It was cut very fast under a lot of pressure to get it done in between tour schedules, and it doesn't work out, for me anyway. It didn't fulfill what it should have fulfilled. The songs worked out on stage, but we didn't capture it on record. There was a lot of nonsense with production companies and stuff going on, and it was done under a lot of strain. Musical strain is fine, but this was extraneous bullshit".

There was no way that 'Aftertones' could be less than a good album, but, lacking the emotional thread that held 'Stars' and 'Between The Lines' together, it also lacks the intensity of those albums. The subject matter is far more diverse - 'Roses' looks at divorce through the eyes of a mother concerned about its effect on her daughter; 'Belle Of The Blues', which is arranged by Jerry Ragavoy, is the lament of a singer past her prime; and 'Boy I Really Tied One On' and 'This Must Be Wrong' are both tales of one night stands, imbued with a dry humour that was conspicuous in its absence from Janis' early albums, just discernible on the two previous ones, and surfaces for the first time on 'Aftertones'.

The sense of insecurity that comes across from songs like 'Page Nine', 'At Seventeen' and 'The Come-On' is, I suppose, the natural result of being a 4'10" ugly duckling, but clearly Janis is coming to terms with it. 'Boy I Really Tied One On' is positively raunchy, with Janis taking the more aggressive, self-assured role, and 'I Would Like To Dance' sees the self-pitying wallflower of 'At Seven-

teen' viewing her dilemma with more of a rueful grin and a shrug.

Musically too, the album is more varied. In her years away from the business Janis listened as well as read a lot, (though she is less than specific when asked what she read and listened to). The early folk direction was strongly tinged with jazz and the classics on 'Stars' and 'Between The Lines', and several songs on 'Aftertones' are almost like cabaret torch songs, while 'I Would Like To Dance' is given a salsa treatment, courtesy of Larry Harlow, the founder of the Fania All Stars, and 'Hymn' is suitably gospel influenced, with Odetta, one of Janis' first idols, helping out on vocals.

It's all very sophisticated, very well played, and very well sung, (in fact Janis' voice has a versatility on 'Aftertones' that was only hinted at previously), but it doesn't really hang together, and the basic songs haven't got the spark of inspiration, either melodically or lyrically, that 'Jesse' or 'Watercolours' or any of a dozen songs off the other two albums have got.

Fortunately Janis herself seems very aware of the album's shortcomings, and she has promised to take several months off the road to prepare her next album, and not allow herself to be hustled into work that falls short of her own very high standards.

At least there's little danger of Success and wealth making Janis lazy, like some rich and famous performers one could think of. Despite living in a luxury Manhattan apartment where she does nearly all her writing - she can't compose while touring - and despite the sell-out concert tours and gold records, Janis is wearing success very casually this time around: "The only difference is I don't have to borrow to eat any more. Other than that, I'm doing the same things I've always done, if only for a little more money".

Paul Kendall

I met up with Tom Waits at 9 in the evening outside Ronnie Scott's. He looked just as you would imagine from the sleeve of Nighthawks, only tatterier. We tried a nearby corner pub. In one door, straight out of the other, into a different street. "Just passin' through", Tom growls at the non-plussed barman. We ended up in the corner of the pub opposite the old Zigzag offices in Old Compton Street. Strangely appropriate! Tom sits hunched over a pint of lager, endlessly rocking back and forth while we talk, restlessly turning a silver dollar over and over in his left hand. Much of what follows seemed, in retrospect, a rehearsal for his show that evening. Plenty more was a genuine response, particularly his very real concern about the artist, his songs and music. Oh yes, sometimes things come out better if you can read them aloud rather than silently. Try this in your best American, and make it guttural. Then you, too, can share the sore throat my Tom Waits' impersonations have left me with.

ZZ: OK. Now I'll tell you what I was hoping you would do then you can do what you'd like to after I've told you! I've never been to America, so I have this great fantasy picture of the country. Take me on a journey across America. Start where you like, finish where you like, take as many little side turns and blind alleys as you like.

TW: You gonna correct the spelling after I'm through? Shit, that's a real hard thing to do because actually I'm working right now on material for a new album called 'Pasties On A G-String'. I'm writing all the stuff out here on the road. Where do you want to start? You could start in Seattle or Portland or Cleveland or Phoenix or Albuquerque or Miami or St. Petersburg or Key West or Bangor, Maine or Bloomington, Illinois or Montana or South Dakota. You could start out in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh or New Orleans or East St. Louis or Cincinnati or Dayton or Ashland... you could go just about anywhere if you got the bus fare.

ZZ: Where would you go?

TW: If I had a ticket, you mean? I could go anywhere I want. I don't know, I might go to Phoenix. It's close to Los Angeles. I drive with a wild hare up my ass every night, giving the finger to the oncoming traffic and tossing out Miller High Life cans along the way. Drive to Phoenix in a 1954 black Cadillac four door sedan every now and then. One eyed jacks across the railroad track. Van Duren road is really the place to be in Phoenix. It's kind of called Hotel Road. There's more hotels than you can shake your dick at. There's a lot of bars. A place called Jenny's Bar. There's the Travel Lodge Motel. A lot of pavement princesses or women of the evening. You can get just about anything you want. You reach over and scratch your ass and six girls will stop and ask you if you want a date. It's cold in the winter, real cold in Phoenix. In fact I walked all the way from Phoenix to Goodyear one night, which is a 15 mile walk. Couldn't get a ride. I don't know what it was. I was well dressed and everything. I tried everything. Laying down in the road pretending I was dead. Nothing happened. I don't know. Depends where you are and what you're looking



**"WATCH OUT FOR
16 YEAR OLD GIRLS
WEARING BELL BOTTOMS
WHO ARE RUNNING AWAY
FROM HOME AND HAVE
A LOT OF BLUE OYSTER CULT
RECORDS UNDER THEIR ARM"**
says
TOM WAITS

ZIGZAG TOP THIRTY FOR JUNE

LAST MONTH	THIS MONTH	ALBUM TRACK (or single*)	ARTISTE	NUMBER	MONTHS ON CHART
1	1	L.A. Freeway	GUY CLARK	RCA APL 11303	3
-	2	Desperados Under The Eaves	WARREN ZEVON	Asylum K 53039	1
2	3	Memory Motel	ROLLING STONES	Rolling Stones COC 59106	2
8	4	Shake Some Action	FLAMIN GROOVIES	Phonogram/Sire 9103 251	2
3	5	Only Sixteen	DR HOOK	Capitol E-ST 11397	7
4	6	Cypress Avenue	VAN MORRISON	Warner Bros K 46024	87
7	7	Topanga	JOHN PHILLIPS	Dunhill DS 50077	74
5	8	Irene Wilde	IAN HUNTER	CBS 81310	2
10	9	Murder Man	JOHN OTWAY & BARRET'S PARROTS	Track 2094 III*	30
15	10	Man Of Constant Sorrow	KALEIDOSCOPE	Pacific Arts PAC 102	2
9	11	Rebecca	FLO and EDDIE	Columbia PC 33554	7
-	12	Don't Touch Me There	TUBES	A&M AMLH 64580	1
6	13	Me And My Uncle	MIKE WILHELM	Zigzag UA-ZZ 1	6
13	14	Past Present and Future	SHANGRI LAS	Phillips 6336 215	126
11	15	Amanda	WAYLON JENNINGS	RCA LSA 3196	5
12	16	Return Of The Grievous Angel	GRAM PARSONS	Reprise K 54018	31
14	17	Transient Friends	GENEVIEVE WALTE	Paramour PR 5088 SD	14
-	18	Roadrunner	JONATHAN RICHMAN	Beserkley UAS 29858	6
19	19	Twelve Thirty	MAMAS and PAPAS	Dunhill DS 50031	98
-	20	Clang Of The Yankee Reaper	VAN DYKE PARKS	Warner Bros K 56161	4
-	21	If Not You	Dr HOOK	Capitol E-ST 23795	1
-	22	September Gurls	BIG STAR	Ardent ADS 1501	19
18	23	Tangled Up In Blue	BOB DYLAN	CBS 69097	17
-	24	Gypsy Blood	GRAHAM PARKER	Vertigo 6360 129	1
28	25	These Days	JACKSON BROWNE	Asylum SYL 9013	31
-	26	Calvary Cross	RICHARD & LINDA THOMPSON	Island ICD 8	1
22	27	Dark End Of The Street	LINDA RONSTADT	Capitol ST 11358	19
17	28	Standing On The Moon	LOTHAR & the HAND PEOPLE	Capitol ST 247	69
23	29	Seventeen Years On The River	RANDY BURNS SKY DOG BAND	Mercury 6338 060	66
-	30	Happy Days	PRATT and McCLAIN	Reprise K 14435*	1

for. If you're looking for action, or are you looking for girls, do you want to buy a watch, do you want to buy some swamp land in Florida? You got the chump change, I got the time and I'll see you at the bottom of a bottle of scotch. I like bars. There's some good bars in Philadelphia, some great bars in New York City. There's a great bar in Denver, Colorado called the Sportsman; it's an after hours joint. It doesn't open until 4 in the morning and it's open till about dawn. That swings.

This is very difficult for me to try to give a complete story about the United States. I can't do that. That's what I'm trying to do in my work right now, and I just can't do it sitting here talking into a microphone, 'cos it's really what I'm concerned about right now, and I just can't do it off the top of my head and make it educational as well as entertaining. It was a good idea, but I can't do it.

ZZ: When did you first start travelling around? You must have travelled a helluva lot...

TW: Yeah, I have. Worked on the road a long time. Not just travelling to play clubs, I drive a lot. I've had a million cars. The first car I had was when I was 14.....It's kind of an American tradition. Getting a license is kind of like a Bar-Mitzvah. It's nice to have a car, but in winter you gotta have a heater, especially when it's colder than an American Jewish princess on her honeymoon. I've always had cars. Had a '56 Ford Mercury and a '55 Buick Roadmaster, a '55 Special, a '55 Buick Century, a '58 Buick Super, a '54 Black Cadillac four door sedan, a '65 Thunderbird, '49 Plymouth, let's see, I think I had a '62 Comet. I dunno. Try to stay with Buicks myself.

ZZ: Are these convertibles?

TW: One of them was; it was a pain in the ass. It was busted, and the rain came in all the while, I won't have another convertible.

ZZ: Was it San Diego you came from?

TW: I lived in San Diego, went to high school in San Diego. I was born in LA at a very young age. I was born in the back seat of a yellow cab in Murphy Hospital parking lot. I had to pay a buck eighty five on the meter to move. I didn't have my trousers on yet and I left my money in my other pants. I lived around LA and moved around LA. My dad's a Spanish teacher, so we lived in Whittier, Pomona, LaVerne, North Hollywood, Silver Lake, metropolitan areas surrounding Los Angeles. I was working a lot of jobs during school. I didn't find much in school. I was just getting in a lot of trouble so I hung it up.

ZZ: America being so vast, I can quite understand you not being able to do what I hoped. How about California, vast though that is itself. If I was there, what should I visit, what should I look out for?

TW: Watch out for falling rocks and eighteen wheel vehicles. Watch out for the clap. Watch out for 16 year old girls wearing bell bottoms who are running away from home and have a lot of Blue Oyster Cult albums under their arm. Be careful of that. Watch out for the Casino Club. It's a real clip joint. The usual things. After a

while you know where to go, where you can't go. Don't go to the Compton drive-in on a Saturday night and announce over the loudspeaker that you are responsible for the death of Malcolm X. Stay out of that neighbourhood. If you go to the Tropicana Hotel, watch out for Chalky Weiss, 'cos he'll sell you a rat's asshole for a wedding ring. Watch out for Martin Mull. He'll punch line you to death.

ZZ: Even you?

TW: Actually, I'm only afraid of a few things. I'm afraid I'm gonna be walking along some day in Los Angeles and drop into a manhole, and down there's gonna be, like, 500 unemployed bossa nova musicians and they're gonna 'Girl From Ipanema' me to death. Hasn't happened to me yet. I tried to take out some Ipanema insurance, but they won't cover you. Actually, the only thing I'm afraid of over here in London is... I'm afraid when the moon is high and my hotel room is dark, that I'm gonna start sprouting cameras round my neck, and my trench coat is gonna turn into a flowered shirt, my black slacks are gonna turn into Bermuda shorts, I'm gonna grow some white socks and wing tips that look like old Pontiacs. Then, right next to me is going to sprout a wife, and she's going to be growing larger and larger till she's overweight and she's got bovine perspiration on her upper lip area, (And a glazed eye, eh, Tom?), and a see yourself shine on her forehead, and her feet hurt, she's trying to find a travel brochure and a cigarette, and she wants to sit down, and... that hasn't happened yet. Been pretty lucky.

ZZ: And careful.

TW: Yeah, careful. Course, like I told you before, I have been around the block. Slept with tigers and lions and Marilyn Monroe. I got drunk with Louis Armstrong, rolled craps in Las Vegas, been to the Kentucky Derby, seen the Brooklyn Dodgers play at the Ebbets Field, and I taught Mickey Mantle everything he knows.

ZZ: So what are the good things about California? You told me all the terrible things.

TW: Oh, those weren't terrible. That was nothing. Rush hour traffic on the Harbour Freeway on about the 3rd of August, and it's about 110 degrees outside, got no air-conditioning in your car. You got a cigarette, but you ain't got a match. You got haemorrhoids, need a shave and... that's fascinating. That can be fascinating.

ZZ: So you don't spend your time at the beach? You're not a surfer, that's for sure.

TW: No, I disavow any knowledge of the world of surfing. I say that without fear of contradiction. I don't know the first thing about surfboards. Which way you ride it, or what side is up, and I don't wanna learn.

ZZ: Do you ever go down to the beach.

TW: Yeah, I've been down there a couple of times. I got lost. Sure, I go to the beach. Last time I went, I got a tattoo. They told me it would wash off, though, but I've done been scrubbing on that sumbitch, but I'm not using the right soap. It's on my arm. Give me ten bucks and I'll let you see it.

ZZ: I understand you were a doorman

at a nightclub in Philadelphia!

TW: Yeah; I was a bouncer and a door-man, which meant I got bounced nightly. In the summer we'd get about 25 Hell's Angels coming into town, and I was, like, holding down the fort. They'd give me the arm of a chair to defend myself. It was like a toothpick to a Hell's Angel, so I had my moments. It was a real experiment in terror. Some nightly catastrophes, but I made it through by hook or by crook, come Hell or High Water. Under the circumstances, I managed to get out alive. But really it was a night club kind of fashioned after Gerdel's Folk City. They dealt mainly in traditional music. A lot of guitar players - blues and bluegrass mainly... I got bluegrass to death. I must admit that the only thing I... I don't mean to sound disdainful, but I guess the only thing I hate is bluegrass played poorly. I guess the only thing I hate more than that is bluegrass played well. That's what really gets me, is when they play it well. I like to see 'em funk it up. I like to see them with the drawers down. It's just got something about it, I don't like it.

ZZ: Is that when you started writing?

TW: I dunno when I started writing, really. I was, like, filling out applications and stuff real early. Last name first, first name last, sex... 'occasionally', stuff like that. Then I was writing letters, filling out forms, writing on bathroom walls. I saw some great graffiti in a bar in Cincinnati. No, it was East St. Louis at a place called The Dark Side Of The Moon. It's a club, I don't even know if it's there any more. Anyway, it said: 'Love is blind; God is love; Ray Charles is blind; therefore, Ray Charles must be God'. I knew right away I was in a college town! That the lights were on and somebody was home and... so... but... what was I talking about?

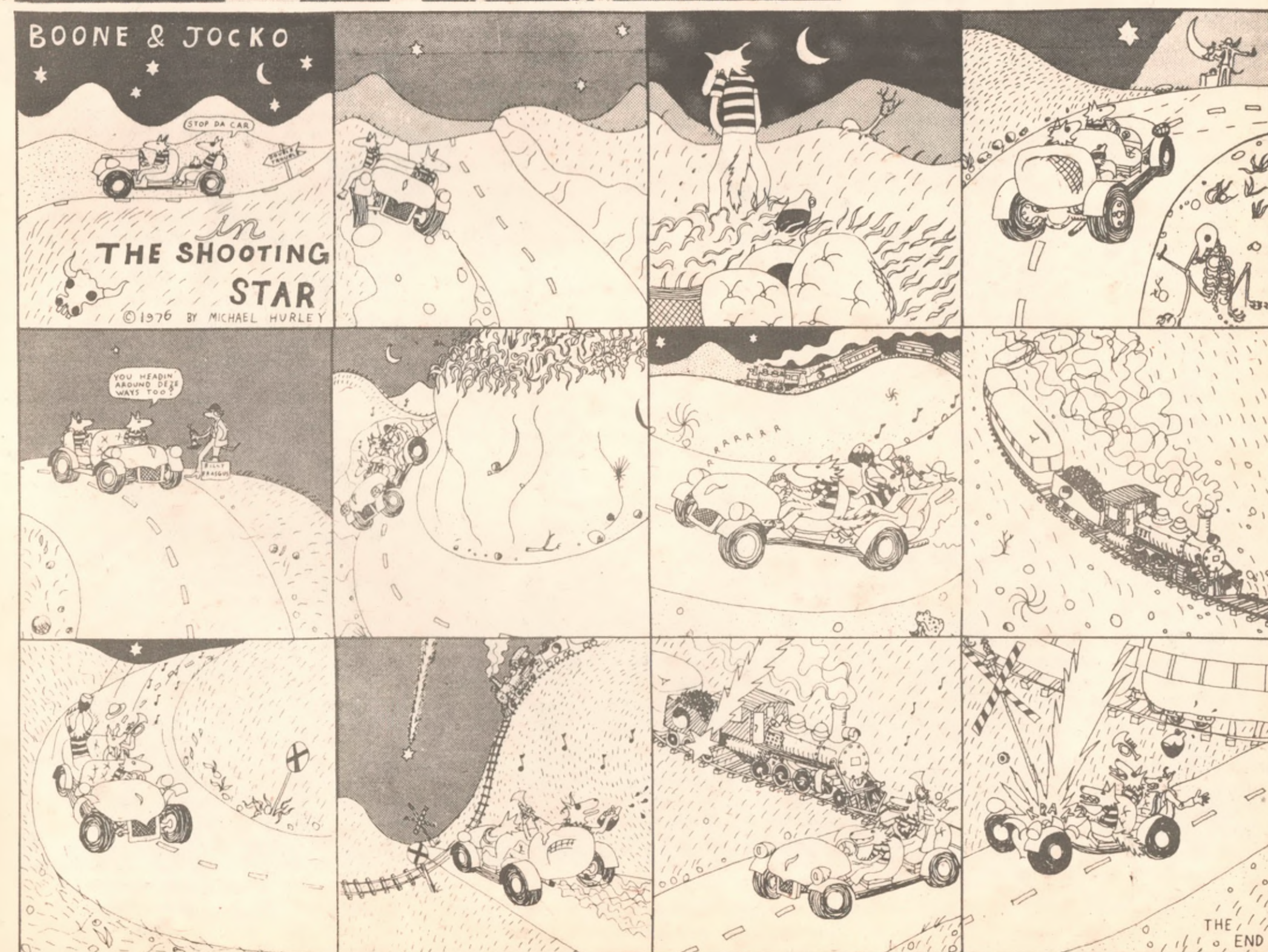
ZZ: I don't know. We were just... talking!

TW: (Belches loudly). Oh, excuse me... actually, I usually vomit. I'm sick all the time, I'm just used to it. I feel bad all the time now so it's... bad lungs, bad liver, broken heart, after a while you get used to it. I'm thinking about opening up a night club; you can go into the club and, like, the cigarette machine's busted, nobody speaks English, and you can't get change for a dollar. While you're in there, somebody's shitting your wife and stealing your car, and a big Sumo wrestler wants to break your neck. All the girls are carrying the disease, and they're really transvestites. The band are six winos that were selected at random and given electronic instruments. It's for people that really don't know how to have a bad time. And there's no cover charge. They don't charge anything to get in, but they charge 100 dollars just to get out.

ZZ: Is recording difficult? Does it come out sounding the way you want?

TW: I'm real awkward in the studio. Don't like it. It's really like pulling teeth. Everything is real fastidious. I dunno, I'm afraid of it. I'm afraid of it, and I'm just a nervous wreck the whole time, because you spend a lot of time working on this material, which is really the crux of it, where the real sweat is. Then you can have major surgery done to something you just busted your chops over. So it's

Chalkie Davies



real sensitive, and a lot of heated arguments, a lot of fist fights. I don't look forward to it.

ZZ: I have your three albums here in my bag...

TW: They're harmful to swallow. If rash develops, discontinue use and consult physician immediately.

ZZ: Has your writing changed in the way your albums have changed?

TW: Yeah, I really have changed. I've become a little more ambitious about it. For me it's also a craft. It's not something that drops out of the sky. It's not something where you sit at your picture window, and watch the sun glistening off the trees and a deer walks by and whispers in your ear. It's really a craft, and it's hard work. It's just a lot of discipline, and hopefully, you get better with each project.

I've just about worked out the stuff for my next album, so what I'm going to do when I get back to Los Angeles is get drunk as a skunk, and stay that way for about three days... then I'm going right into the studio.

Peter O'Brien

Discography:

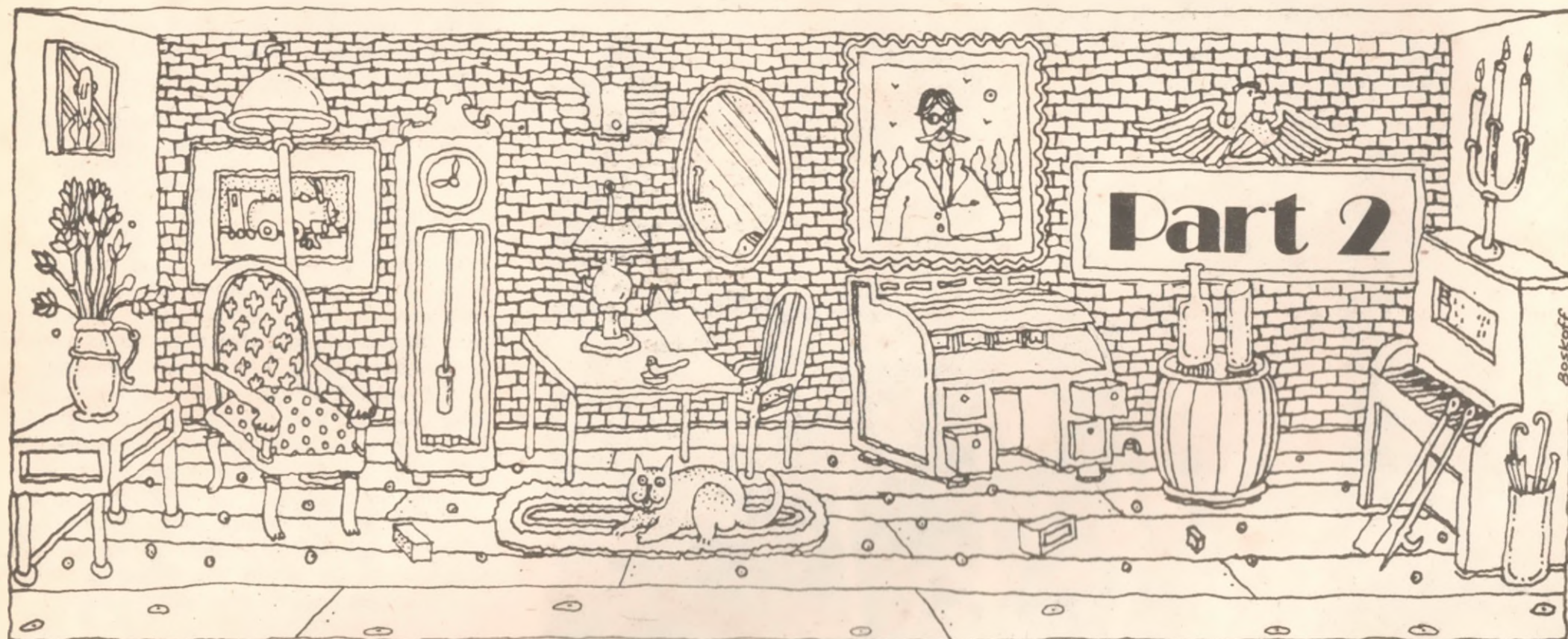
'Closing Time' Asylum K53030 (9/73)

'The Heart Of Saturday Night' Asylum K53035 (11/74)

'Nighthawks At The Diner' Asylum K63002 (10/75)

Note: The foregoing was edited from a much longer and uniformly interesting transcript. No doubt the remainder will appear in a forthcoming issue of Peter's excellent magazine, 'Omaha Rainbow'.

AT HOME WITH



BONNIE RAITT

So, we finally arrive at her second album, 'Give It Up' (Warner Bros. K46189), which was actually the first Bonnie Raitt record I either heard or owned, and we find that it bears a sleeve note by Michael Cuscuna, (credited as producer, but in fact as much an administrator, as Bonnie will reveal), giving some information about some of the many 'names' involved in the sessions. More of them later, but a little bit of chat first.

ZZ: This album comes off as something of a supersession, doesn't it?

BR: Yes, it does rather, but it was just that those people happened to be around. Since then, people have asked if I was aware of it, but it wasn't anything like that... each musician was just asked to come along and add whatever he could. I didn't even know that Amos Garrett could play the trombone, or that Peter Ecklund could play several instruments with equal skill.

ZZ: Did all these people live in Woodstock, (where the album was made), at the time?

BR: No, some of them are friends of mine. Jack Viertel (a National Steel player) is an old friend of mine - a blues freak; Lou Terriciano's a blind piano player from Cambridge - a brilliant singer and blues pianist; Chris Parker was playing in Better Days (as in Paul Butterfield); John Payne is from Cambridge and now leads his own jazz group. I was living in Cambridge at the time, but came to Woodstock because Michael Cuscuna had worked in the Bearsville studios, and we also got a discount because we were on Warner Brothers. Dave Holland is English, of course, and we had to pay his session fees in cash, because he didn't have any papers. T.J. Tindall and Mark Jordan are old friends of Freebo's from Edison Electric Band on Atlantic, which was a terrific band. T.J. Tindall's on most of the Sigma Sound

albums from Philadelphia, and also a group called Duke Williams and the Extremes. Orleans had all moved up to Woodstock, and Wells (Kelly) was real cute - so I said sure he could play drums. I didn't care what he played like if he looked like that.

ZZ: Can you tell us something about Eric Kaz - because he has quite a keen cult following over here.

BR: Well, Michael Cuscuna introduced me to Eric, who is a brilliant writer. He's had two albums out in the States, on Atlantic, and both produced by Michael Cuscuna, but they didn't sell a whole lot of copies.

ZZ: He's written some great songs. 'Love has no pride, for instance, is just fabulous...

BR: Yeah - and I recorded it first, I'm happy to say. I go out of my way to record songs that my peers haven't already had a go at... but over the next few years, loads of people recorded 'Love Has No Pride', which I found both absurd and irritating, because that song's been associated with me for a real long time. I wouldn't mind so much if it wasn't the song that everyone likes to hear me do.

ZZ: What about Joel Zoss?

BR: He's got his own LP out on Arista, just out in the States. The people whose songs I do, Joel and Eric, they're not what you call singers, but I happen to love them. An acquired taste, like Chris Smither, I suppose. I can't speak about them really, because they're close friends of mine, and I love them a lot.

ZZ: Do you know a record called 'The Circle Game' by Tom Rush, which was the first time that Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne and James Taylor had songs recorded? This is the same sort of thing, I think, but five years later.

BR: I think we were influenced by the same people. I never knew Tom Rush did that until somebody told me about

it after my album came out. As I say, I go out of my way to find songs other people haven't done, and usually they are written by people I know personally... it isn't a decision to find the most obscure guy possible.

Let's just wrap up the personnel angle on 'Give It Up': additional name checks go to Jackie Lomax, a trio of Fabulous Rhinestones (Marty Grebb, Terry Eaton and Kal David), and Paul Butterfield. It's worth noting that Mark Jordan has played on record with Van Morrison and Dave Mason, and that John Payne was on 'Astral Weeks', that Amos Garrett, Chris Parker and Merl Saunders, who I forgot to mention, were all in Better Days, and that Peter Ecklund, an amazing multi-instrumentalist, who came over here last year with David Bromberg, was in a Bearsville band called Hungry Chuck, about which I know nothing, other than that they made an album called 'Hungry Chuck' for Bearsville (BR 2071) in 1972. (Mac's monster Cambridge to Woodstock in the Sixties article, currently in preparation, will no doubt reveal all).

The songs are something else. Although I'm very fond of the blues, I suppose I prefer the type of thing produced by such people as those we've mentioned, four of whom have excellent songs on this album. We'll return to them in a moment after a brief resume of the other tracks.

As Max Bell once noted in NME, Bonnie isn't exactly a prolific writer, and this album, where she has three songs, marks her widest songwriting exposure so far. Of these songs, 'Nothing Seems To Matter' is very James Taylorish in form (which I suppose most people find a trifle passé now, unfortunately), whilst the title track and 'You Told Me Baby' are raunchier, boogie-down jobs. 'Give It Up' features a full blown trad band, sounding rather like an idol of my past,

Lou Watters and the Yerba Buena Jazz Band, and it's very interesting how a small portion of trad can sound really refreshing, whereas a whole album of it becomes soporific. Here several gentlemen who I presume are not regular traddies play some lovely variations, while on 'You Told Me Baby', a saxophone trio and John Hall blow up a storm which is wonderful to behold.

What else have we got? Well, there's a Sippie Wallace vaudeville-type song, indicating that Bonnie's voice is appropriate to this type of material, and two oldies in 'I Know', which the writer Barbara George took at rather a faster pace, and 'If You Gotta Make A Fool Of Somebody', which is inevitably and enormously superior to the version by Freddie and the Dreamers, a version which I expect will be more familiar, regrettably.

Now to the meat. Joel Zoss's song is 'Stayed too long at the fair', which is ludicrously good. How such a writer can remain relatively unknown I have no idea, and the same goes for 'Love Has No Pride', written by Eric Kaz and Libby Titus, who I assume to be his lady. A third member of this exclusive group is Chris Smither; his songs are less immediate in that they are bluesier, but they do provide a totally appropriate vehicle for Bonnie's voice. Finally we come to the unbelievable Jackson Browne, for my money probably the best songwriter to have emerged from the Southern California scene. His track here is 'Under The Falling Sky', which is given a roaring treatment, helped along by the harp of the once great, and now sadly declined Mr. Butterfield. The song comes from his first Asylum album, called 'Jackson Browne'

(but known to many as 'Saturate Before Using'), and while we're on the subject, Bonnie recalled that at Paxton Lodge, when the Koerner and Murphy Elektra album was being made, another artist who was just getting his name around was Jackson, who cut an album's worth of demos at the lodge, which was used as a kind of 'get it together in the country' place by Elektra for a while. These demos predate anything else that Jackson has recorded as a solo artist. Right-four excellent songwriters who you should be aware of. Now some chat about some of them.

ZZ: Tell me about Chris Smither - he seems as if he's a less well known version of you...

BR: He's a fantastic guitar player, and we lived about four blocks from each other in Cambridge for a good five years. He's got two albums out, and he's a terrific songwriter, but mostly known in Cambridge. When I first moved there, he was playing at a local club called the Turk's Head in Charles Street, which was a local folkie hangout. I've never been a fan or able to play in coffee houses, because I don't like folk music that much. When I first got into music, I liked Spider John Koerner and Taj Mahal, whose first album was the epitome, and I liked early Canned Heat, but I just had no interest in John Denver and esoteric folksy, woodsy stuff, although when you mention some English groups, I like the Chieftains and the Fairport Convention. A lot of the Cambridge coffee houses had really earnest audiences; 25 people looking at you and drinking coffee, and I wanted to be able to play in a beer place, because I was into a more good timey thing, even though my voice is pretty folksy. But Chris

was on that circuit, and has continued to play folk clubs, without achieving any degree of commercial acceptance. Same with Joel Zoss - he grew up in Martha's Vineyard with Carly and James and was in the Flying Machine for a while, so his genealogy goes way back.

ZZ: And now, what about this list of people who get thanked on the back of the sleeve?

BR: Paul Siebel had a song on the first album; he lives in either Woodstock or New York now, everyone is always asking me about where he is, and I don't have any idea, but I sure hope he keeps writing, because he's wonderful. Flo was the waitress at Deeny's restaurant who served us every night, Roebuck is the Cuscuna's dog, Prune was my dog who got run over, after travelling with me for years, and Cain is Michael Dobo (the photographer who took the sleeve photos on several of the albums)'s dog. We all lived together in this fleabag house we rented, and it rained every day. Mr. Boskoff - I just got a letter, which one day it would be funny to print, from this guy called Alexander Boskoff, who's a lawyer in Washington. His daughter is a fan of mine, and showed the sleeve to him. He wrote me a letter c/o Warner Brothers: "Dear Miss Raitt, my daughter has brought it to my attention that you have said 'Bless you, Mr. Boskoff'. We wondered whether this man is any relation to us, because being the Boskoffs, blah, blah.", and what it is, it's a code reference to grass. Mr. Boskoff is dope, like 'I've got to see Mr. Boskoff' means when I'm sitting in my dressing room before the show, and we're all tuning up, and Freebo's got any sort of alien thing that he wants to put in my head, he says "Bonnie, Mr. Boskoff

Chalkie Davies



Tobler (nattily attired as ever): How about coming round to my place and showing me how to play C, F and G? Bonnie: I'm awfully sorry, but I promised Mac Garry I'd go out to Yeoman Cottage to hear his collection of Thirteenth Floor Elevator albums.

is in the other room, and wants to see us".

To step out of strict chronological sequence for a moment, let me just prise out some information on Bonnie's current road band.

ZZ: Dennis Whitted, who's still your drummer - did you come across him when you were making 'Give It Up' in Bearsville?

BR: No, it was before that when he was in Paul Butterfield's (last) Blues Band - but I didn't get my live band until after 'Takin' My Time', although I've always had Freebo, who I met at the Second Fret in Philadelphia when I was hanging out with Dick Waterman. I was 19, and he was in the Edison Electric Band. When they split up, we became friends around a sort of Philadelphia folk scene. (Note: Freebo's real name is Daniel Frienberg, and he's great). Little Feat and I did a brief tour together before, but Warners wouldn't let me go in the studio with Lowell to cut 'Takin' My Time' until Little Feat had promoted Dixie Chicken, so we went out on the road yet again, after I had already just been out for two months, in order to get them promoted a little bit. We came back and went in the studio, and of course Lowell and I lasted three days. But I hadn't played live with a drummer until that tour with Little Feat, when they would come out and do their set, and then me and Freebo came out as headliners, and then they would trickle out on stage. Then I did 'Takin' My Time', and at that point was making enough money to expand - I didn't add each person to my band until I was making enough money from my live gigs. Dennis has been with me since then. Alan Hand, the piano player, used to play with Van Morrison and John Prine, by the way. Literally, in the five years I've been doing this, never has anyone asked me about any of the musicians other than the obvious people. If someone even knew who Junior Wells was, it was amazing, let alone knowing that Lowell George or John Hall were from a good group, let alone the other people. I can't believe it - you win the prize!

ZZ: Thank you... just as long as it isn't a Budgie album.

Looks like we've made it to the third album, (which rates second in order of preference in my book, where 'Give It Up' rates third). 'Takin' My Time' (K46261) is the one that Bonnie started with Lowell George, and finished with John Hall. Among the other players on the record is the fairly stable team of Freebo on bass, Bill Payne on piano, John Hall on guitar, and Earl Palmer on drums, the latter being the man who made so many sit up when he came over recently with Maria Muldaur. With Bonnie in front, this bunch play on 'I Gave My Love A Candle', (another delicious Joel Zoss song); with the addition of Taj Mahal they do Mose Allison's 'Everybody's Cryin' Mercy', (which seems to me to be one of those rather ordinary songs which only breathes because of the people playing it), and with Taj and Sam Clayton of Little Feat, they produce one of the finest tracks I've ever heard in 'Cry Like A Rainstorm', another masterpiece by Eric Kaz. Without Taj, but with



Clayton, they nearly equal that magnificence on 'I Thought I Was A Child', another dynamite Jackson B. song from 'For Everyman', and with Lowell replacing John Hall, produce a beautifully moody Chris Smither song called 'I Feel The Same'. Quite exceptionally excellent, and the rest of the tracks don't come much below. A Motown song, 'You've Been In Love Too Long' and 'Let Me In' are up-tempo soul tracks, there's a Fred McDowell medley on which Bonnie plays some good bottleneck (part of which is 'Kokomo Blues'), a Randy Newman from 'Good Old Boys' in 'Guilty' (obviously great), and even the dread Van Dyke Parks gets involved on a calypso called 'Wah She Go Do!'. He's credited with transcribing the horn arrangements from one Calypso Rose, and they come out very tastily indeed. That's inevitably what we started talking about.

ZZ: How do you explain Van Dyke talking you into letting him transcribe these horn arrangements?

BR: The arrangements were so perfect on that track that there was no way to improve on them. I've always been into calypso music, and I was hanging out with Lowell and Van Dyke... We ended up all living in Laurel Canyon at the time; Lowell and Van Dyke are very good friends, and I was a big fan. Warner Bros. has a whole mafia, I'm sure you're aware, and when I moved

from Cambridge to LA, I became ensconced in it, personally and professionally. I went round to Van Dyke's house one night, looking for material, and he played me this song, hardly any of which I understood, so Van Dyke gave me the words, and I said 'Let's do it, but if we do, you're going to have to over see it'. He's very bizarre, but I love him dearly. He lives above Freebo now, as a matter of fact. How's that for a household? Freebo lives in a street called Hayworth in LA, which is in Hollywood in the flats area. Martin Kibbee, who co-wrote 'Dixie Chicken' with Lowell, lives along the street, and they've written a new song - I just saw Lowell. We're doing some benefits for Tom Hayden, one of the Chicago defendants, who's now running for the senate in California, and we're heading up the campaign to get him elected, getting people to do the concerts. Lowell and John Hall were my guitarists on one of the gigs, and Martin Kibbee, who was working with Lowell, mentioned this bunch of new songs that Little Feat are going to be doing. I can't remember any of the new titles, but they're very bizarre and Little Feat's new album is going to be called 'Nigger Rich' - very tasteful! So Van Dyke lives above Freebo, across from Martin Kibbee, across from Tom Reynolds, who works for Warners, and Nina, who works for Stan Cornyn at WB, and upstairs is my light man. (Note: a street to either visit or avoid, depending on your point of view. I'll be in the former party). Van Dyke did a debut showing of 'Yankee Reaper' at the Coconut Grove, which has recently opened up as a club. It's where Sippie Wallace and Roosevelt Sykes and I are going to play, and they're making a documentary movie on me called 'Woman Be Wise', if we ever get the money. Anyway, Van Dyke did this private showing, and he vowed to the band that he wasn't going to speak, not get into one of his raps! I guess it was a very memorable evening... He hasn't surfaced since then, but any amount of time you can spend with him will be worth it, when people decide to make sense of him. We should just put him in a time capsule and lock him away until we get time to figure him out. (Note: Apart from agreeing strenuously about the time spent with VDP being worthwhile, I now insert a horribly shameless plug for my lengthy interview with him, available from MacBertbat at 16 Almonbank Terrace, Edinburgh EH11 1SS. Only 800 of you have got it, and there's plenty left).

ZZ: Taj's harp playing is amazing...

BR: He came down and helped, and it's amazing, because he hadn't played that much harp at that point; He'd just learned to play stand-up bass, which he plays on 'Let Me In', and he hadn't been playing harp since those first two albums, which were the epitome of funk for me, and he had since dropped back into playing acoustic instruments and folk music. Wait till you see his band - you'll die!

Hey - that wasn't so long - must be losing my grip! Well, it seems that we've arrived at 'Streetsights'. (Ed: Oh no it doesn't... we'll call a halt there and wrap it up next month).

John Tobler

An Album This Good Takes Time....

The story so far... Ian Matthews was thinking about calling his first album for CBS "A Legend In His Own Mind" - he's too modest by far. Ten years in the music business, continually an innovator, has gleaned for Ian the kind of following that many of the flash in the pan heroes of this week would give their advance for.

FAIRPORT ET AL

Consider first that Ian was part of Fairport Convention during the period when they first attracted attention. He was a full time member of the group after their first two albums, and contributed to their third. Then it was solo album time under the name of Matthews Southern Comfort, followed by the formation of a group with the same name. The result of that alliance was a number one single with Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock" and a couple of superior and popular albums (a rare combination).

ACCLAIM TWICE OVER

Then two more acclaimed solo albums, boasting support from various ex Fairports and Tim and Willie of the excellent Sutherland Brothers & Quiver. Next the forma-

tion of the highly innovative Plainsong, a group undoubtedly destined to huge fame, had internal conflicts not pulled it apart.

CALIFORNIA

Feeling the need to explore the possibilities presented by living and working in America, Ian settled his affairs here and went to California to work with Michael Nesmith, once a Monkee and later a masterful and charismatic musician and producer. The results again delighted a large audience, and two subsequent solo albums continued to feed the legend.

... THAT BRINGS US TO NOW

In 1976, Ian Matthews presents his first LP for CBS "Go For Broke" Made in Nashville, produced by Norbert Putnam and Glen Spreen,

and featuring the famed pickers from the country music capital of the world, the album mixes Ian's always excellent songs with quality oldies like Van Morrison's "Brown Eyed Girl", (aversion so strong as to make itself the choice as a single) "The Rascals" "Groovin'", Doris Troy's "Just One Look", and the Youngbloods' "Darkness, Darkness".

END OF LONG WAIT

The continuing career of Ian Matthews has been a delight to many. "Go for Broke" will not only mark the end of a long wait for those people, but will surely increase the awareness among the general record buying public of an artist who continually strives to better what he has produced in the past. Like the Man Says - "Go For Broke". It's in the shops now.

IAN MATTHEWS

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EVERYDAY LIFE IN RURAL CALIFORNIA..... CLOVER GET AN UNEXPECTED VISIT FROM THE DOCTORDR. FEELGOOD THAT IS! FEATURING SPECIAL GUEST STAR NICK LOWE, AND CAMEO APPEARANCES BY MARTYN SMITH & PETE THOMAS

Editor's preface: due to space problems (mostly caused by that ridiculous heading!), I have taken the liberty of chopping the first part of this account considerably - particularly Cal's lengthy description of the Feelgood's set, (with which British readers are no doubt familiar), and their much publicised brawl with the hotel authorities - but I've tried to retain the flavour of the piece as much as possible. Starting where we left off last month, you'll recall that the curtains were about to part to reveal Dr. Feelgood making their American debut at the CBS Sales Convention in San Diego, when an over-enthusiastic Showco roadie rushed across the stage, tripped over Lee's slide guitar lead, and smashed the neck clean off ...OK, Cal, take it away.

Festering Jupiter... that's all we needed! My heart plummeted into my stomach, sick with fear, and Wilko's face began to register dismay and alarm... I mean, if you fxxx up in front of this audience, you might as well kiss America goodbye. Lee, however, cool as a cucumber, merely whipped his song list from his hip pocket, struck off the two songs which featured his guitar... "We'll knock those on the head, then", he said, completely unconcerned by the mishap.

John McEuan (who was guesting with the Michael Murphey band), seeing what had happened, offered to lend Lee a Stratocaster he wasn't using, but it was a lovely guitar - light gauge strings, really low action - and Lee has his Guild strung with great fat strings, and the action inches off the frets... I mean, he's a masher - really rams that bottleneck up and down with a vengeance! So he respectfully declined the kind offer, and they went straight on.

Considering the audience was a bunch of sales reps, the reception was staggering - they were even up on their chairs whooping. The Feelgoods just tore the place apart with a short (25 minutes) sharp set built around 'Malpractice', which was to be their first American release.

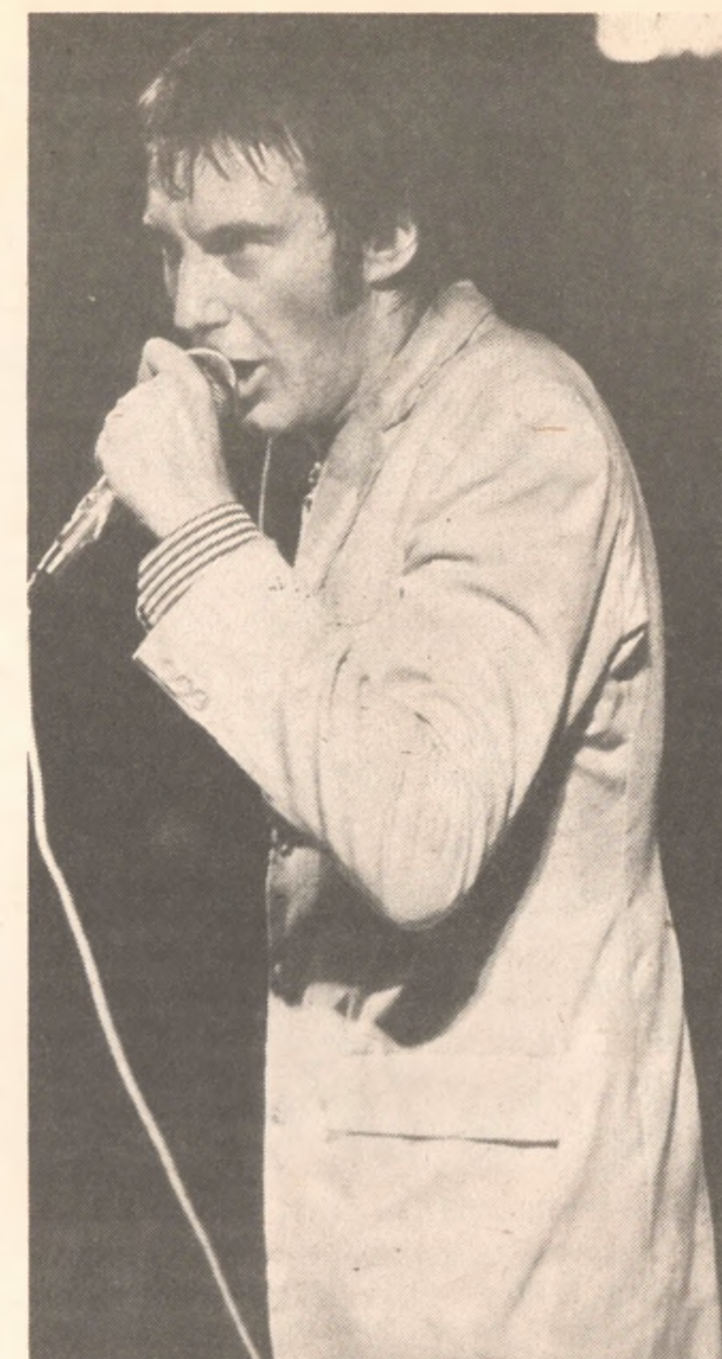
The set was by far the best-received of the convention; the execs, who get used to tapping their feet and displaying other outward signs of being tuned in to the magnificent CBS music flowing off the stage (no matter how bad it might be), were lapping it up with genuine pleasure, and Dan Loggins, the A&R guy from England who had been instrumental in getting the band onto the label, leaned back in his chair, cigar clenched in teeth, clapping proudly - the hugest grin of triumph pasted across his face. He was almost as happy as I was.

The party afterwards was outrageous. Bacchus would've been proud. All the pleasures of the mind and body were at hand - right down to CBS shipping in 20 hookers from LA. It was a wing dinger, I'm telling you.

"That was a great show, Wilko... a great show", bubbled some pissed exec.

"All our shows are great, mate... some of them are bad, but they're all great".

Everyone, it seemed, was babbling excitedly about the band... "Hey, didja see that guy Brilleaux... the way he grabbed his mike... it was like an eagle swooping down on its prey"...



"Hey, tell me about that Wilko Johnson... he's far out!"

Martyn Smith, an old friend of the band, who'd somehow got himself invited to the festivities, was explaining to a whole circle of enraptured execs that Wilko's eccentricity was the result of 'centuries of inbreeding, isolation and boredom on Canvey Island... a forgotten settlement 15 miles off the coast of Essex'.

"You don't say", they gasped, utterly spellbound.

They'd obviously passed the test... the word COMMERCIAL had glowed above the stage in capital letters, and the audience hadn't been slow to see it. Nick Lowe was amused: "In England, people go to Feelgoods concerts and cheer manically... they just wait for their celebrated effects and stage manoeuvres... the finer points of their performance are usually drowned in



Sparko, the bog-wrecker

the applause and audience reaction they provoke. This is the first time that I've actually heard them for ages".

We milled around in the kind of infectious delirium that can only be induced by a thousand bottles - and I fear that Martyn (apparently a noted debauchee) and Sparko overdid it.

Now I've seen quite a few drunken rock stars in my time, but Sparko is the only one I've ever seen who gets literally blind drunk... drinks so much that his eyesight goes. He staggers about - can't even focus on his watch. So he was lurching about, doing Dalek impersonations, answering questions like "What do you think of Californian girls, Sparky?" with "We peel them with our metal knives...". Nobody had a clue what he was talking about, but he was having a great time.

Anyway, Sparko and Martyn got diabolically out of it, locked themselves in the lavatories, and destroyed every fixture and fitting in the place.

They emerged grinning and spluttering, to find a long queue of execs dying for a piss - and they fell about as these poor unfortunates were obliged to pee into broken pipes, projecting out of the floor!

Well, we thought it was curtains... expected all manner of retributions, but next morning all these guys kept coming up, saying things like "Hey, wasn't that great fun last night? What's your bass player's name? Sparky? Boy, he was great! He really got loose last night!"

They thought it was great! The authentication of the event! Rock stars smashing the bathroom suite to smithereens! They loved it!

Showco were apologetic about Lee's guitar, but wouldn't pay for its repair. They probably took one look at it and thought it was a write-off... I mean, it's a one pick-up Guild, about the cheapest you can buy... but Lee was fond of it, so Chris had it repaired by a guy called Valdez, on Santa Monica Blvd. He makes guitars for Clapton and Jose Feliciano, and he inlaid the word LEE on the fretboard in mother of pearl. Looks great. Ought to - it cost more than the guitar did! Like doing a Rolls Royce paint job on an old Volkswagen.

(Incidentally, as well as getting his guitar customised, Lee bought loads of albums - really obscure stuff that I'd never heard of... on labels like Cobra, Jin and Jewel - but Wilko only bought one. Apparently, he's only got about twenty albums altogether... "Dylan, Morrison, Taylor... don't listen to too much".)

Before we leave the convention, and move our scenario north to LA, and even further north to Mill Valley, I would just like to say a word of thanks to some of my new friends at CBS. Now, three months later, as I finally get this story re-written (from the version I wrote for the Culver City Star), it's just a memory; we've done 10,000 miles, been in 15 states - so my recollection is hazy... be sides which, I shook more hands than the average clergyman does in a year. But my special thanks to Rebecca Denny of the Atlanta office and Dave Demurs of the Hartford office, both of whom went out of their way to make us feel welcome.

At lunchtime, be draggled and debilitated by an excess of fare, we pulled out - heading north for Los Angeles, where manager Chris rented Skip Battin's old house in Laurel Canyon ("real old...built in 1948"), re-christening it Feelgood House, LA.

So there we were, holed up in this timber bungalow, precariously erected on a ledge jutting high over the Canyon, with time on our hands - 2 weeks before the start of the tour proper...time for these limeys to engage in a spot of rubber-necking.

Obviously, I could cram many pages with accounts of the wild scenes which ensued, but knowing that your editors were interested in my writing up the 'Clover Episode', I'll leave all that stuff for some other time, and confine the remainder of this article to that sadly under-rated mass of talent.

It was Nick Lowe, still travelling with us, who instigated the search for Clover - a group I had never even heard of, to be quite honest. Nick was flabbergasted at my ignorance, insisting that they ranked alongside the Band and the Brinslies as pinnacles in the historical scheme of things - in fact, the way he kept babbling on, I wouldn't have been surprised if his admiration of them had extended to drinking their bathwater...and when he finally met them, he was as coy and speechless as a schoolboy meeting the President. Like John Tobler meeting Jim Morrison, or Mac meeting John Phillips.

Brinsley Schwarz, it appeared, had always been well into Clover's music, which in Britain had gone out under the same label - Liberty/United Artists. "We got their first album as soon as it was released", says Nick,

"and it just bowled us over like nine-pins. Then their second (and last) album came out, and put us on our backs - we played it on our old stereo up at Rickmansworth until it was literally worn out...till there was more surface noise than music. In fact, the Brinslies did a lot of Clover songs on the boards; we did 'Harvest' for quite a while, and 'Love Is Gone' was in the set for about two years".

By some pre-destined quirk, the Clover/Feelgoods/Lowe jigsaw was conveniently put together by the arrival of one Pete Thomas, formerly drummer with Chilli Willi and the Red Hot Peppers (and a great friend of both the Feelgoods and Nick Lowe), and for the past year a member of John Stewart's band. Before his recent move to Malibu, Stewart had been living in Mill Valley, where Clover are based, and Pete had been jamming and partying with them ever since he'd come to California...so it was he who led the expedition to the Palomino in North Hollywood, where Clover were booked for two nights running.

"That can't be them!" exclaimed Nick, as the band came on stage - the lead singer wearing a white suit. (Nick later explained that they all looked much fatter than their sleeve photos, and they'd also expanded and switched their personnel, which threw him completely)...but as soon as they started playing, he turned to me with a look of jubilation on his face, saying "It fxxxing well is them!"

Everyone in the party was ecstatic about Clover's musical prowess - and I have to say that they grabbed hold of my uninitiated ears and just burned them, until I was grinning along with the rest. Alex Call's voice has to be

one of the most distinctive and beautiful voices in rock, and their playing was just brilliant...the kind of telepathic tightness that comes only after years of playing together.

For people in a glamorous profession, they are not overly imposing to look at, but can they play? Can they play! I mean, some of the stuff John McFee was palyng...well, I just couldn't believe my ears and eyes...and here they were, playing to an audience of about a dozen!

Pete introduced Nick, who went through his big ("This is really an honour to meet you guys...I can't tell you what an honour it is...I've been looking forward to this moment for years, and it really is an honour") hero-meeting number - even though the band mean absolutely jack shit in Los Angeles, or any other part of America for that matter. In terms of international status, they must be on a par with some of your pub-rock bands - but Nick made them feel like the Rolling Stones!

The second set was fantastic: Nick and Pete joined them on stage, and got them playing songs they'd almost forgotten...things like 'No Vacancy', 'Love Is Gone', 'Keep On Trying', 'Stealing', 'Harvest', 'Forty Niner'...and they just had their minds blown apart.

To find that two 'blokes' from London were so familiar with their music freaked Clover completely - to the point that they began to imagine that they must be well-known in Britain - little realising that their albums sold less than a thousand each.

(Edit, edit...scissors come out, and large lumps of second night details flutter into bin, so as to leave room for 'The Trip To San Francisco').



Dr. Feelgood and his coterie rip it up at Niagara Falls (and bloody cold it was too).

Chris, Lee, Sparko, Nick and I had been planning to shoot up to San Francisco for a few days, just to have a look around - so they invited us to call them when we got there...which is exactly what we did.

We'd booked into this Japanese hotel in Frisco - a real uptown place which had been recommended to us as 'a bit of a laugh'. All of the rooms were done up Jap style, with paintings, paper screens, two baths (I don't know what that was all about), and it was really expensive - but it was obvious the staff didn't like us one bit - so we moved out the next day, and into the Howard Johnson's in Mill Valley...an ordinary motel, but perfect for our requirements. And Clover were just great...so welcoming and helpful, it was untrue. They showed us around, took us to the beach, drove us around San Francisco, took us to Mount Tamalpais - they were so friendly, and funny too...a brand of humour closer to an English band than any other bunch of Americans I've met.

Next night, Clover had a gig down in Palo Alto, at the south of the bay, a three hour drive away...a private party affair - so we tagged along. We didn't even know if we'd be able to get in, but we thought it'd be worth a try, and we travelled in convoy.

Hughie (the harp player) took Sparko and Lee in his pick-up truck, and since he knew the way, he went first.

I'd pulled this boiler, who had a nice old Buick, so I went with her; then there was the Lincoln that we'd rented for the purpose of grooving about, and finally Clover's estate wagon...and we rolled down there in a line - stopping a couple of times for refreshment.

We were all juiced up when we got there - and we encountered no problems gaining entry. It was a sort of cowboy party; it was this chick's birthday, and her folks obviously had 'a few bob' (as Chris put it), because they'd rented this saloon/bar for the night, and the place was loaded with funsters, dancing and drinking and having a good time.

So Clover set up and played, and everybody grooved along and consumed more liquor, and Nicky got up and played a few numbers, then Sparko joined them for a while...and they wanted Lee to get up and sing with them.

It was obvious that the Clovers really dug Lee, but he was still something of a mystery man; here was this mild-mannered, almost self-effacing, soft-spoken, quiet gentleman...with short hair, a tie, and a suit. I mean, nobody under 50 wears a tie in the whole of Marin County, and cheap suits with thin lapels are not the most commonly worn outfits in Mill Valley this spring...so they really didn't know quite what to make of him. They had never heard him sing, either live or on record, and I think they were rather dubious that such a polite, quiet guy could handle any kind of up-tempo material.

They were about to find out.

Finishing a song, Alex stepped to the mike and said "We're gonna ask another friend of ours from England to come up on stage...Mr. Lee Brilleaux, the singer with Dr. Feelgood".

Lee, standing at the bar with his back to the stage, was obviously unsure how to handle the situation, so he pretended he hadn't heard the invitation - and we had to prod and cajole him to respond..."Oh...er, I see...me?...oh, yes...".

They decided to attack an old R&B classic called 'Checkin' Up On My Baby', which happens to be common to the repertoires of both the Feelgoods and Clover...and with the mike in one hand and a harmonica in the other, he waited for the band to strike up.

Well, fxxx me, I just wish I'd had a camera to catch their faces! As soon as the music started, Mr. Modesty became a WILD ANIMAL! Unaided by flasks of drug, this quiet fellow suddenly did a Jekyll and Hyde, and turned into a bulging-eyed, pumping-fisted, wild man - blowing the back off his harmonica and bawling his lungs out.

Sinews and veins are sticking out all over his sweating, contorted, snarling face, and he's snorting and bellowing and roaring and blowing...and the band cannot believe it. They can NOT believe it! But their initial shock has now settled into shit-eating grins - they're all looking at each other as if to say "Hey, this cat really can sing after all!"

So they're playing along, rollicking away behind this frenetic fireball, who's flailing and cleaving the air with that flying piston fist...and people have stopped dancing and drinking, and are clustering round the stage to take full stock of this mad man. They have never seen anything like it in Palo Alto. "Golly, Molly...won't you look at that guy!"

Lee literally had everybody's blood pumping faster - all eyes are on him, watching his every move - and the band are grooving along...when suddenly, Lee turns round and really gives the drummer a number: "COME ON, YOU FXXKER...GIVE IT A BIT OF FXXING STICK", he bellows...and the drummer, totally unprepared for such an outburst, just snaps into gear instinctively - almost a reflex action - and speeds up until the band is just rocking like a fxxxing mule!

Well, the partygoers went berserk - they were hooting and cheering...it was fantastic...and Clover just fell in love with Lee after that - they were all over him.

The song ended, and Lee reverted to Mr. Modesty..."Er, thanks a lot, fellers...that was very nice...thanks a lot".

Nick reckons that of all his nights in America, that was the one he enjoyed most..."A real primo night, man...the best!"

God knows how we all got home in one piece, but we managed...and, before returning to LA to conserve our strength for the rigours of the coming tour, we partied on for a few days in Mill Valley.

Cal Worthington

Next month: The Clover Story - interview and photos.



Special guest star Nick Lowe hams it up on the verandah of our Laurel Canyon home.

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PROCOL HARUM

BRINGING HOME THE BACON

In 1970, after what had been, as far as Britain was concerned, three fairly fruitless years, Procol's contract with Regal Zonophone expired, and it must have seemed to the group that the weight of the world had been lifted off their shoulders, leaving them free to move forward with a little more support behind them. As the group had been without management in this country since Tony Secunda's departure in December 1967, they had to make alternative arrangements themselves, and they eventually plumped for Chrysalis, a very new company, but already a very successful one, with Jethro Tull at their peak in Britain. In fact, it was as support band to Tull that Procol did their first proper British tour in early '71, (four years after they started off so sensationally... incredible, isn't it?), an event about which they were naturally sceptical:

"To be basic, probably the only reason we were on that tour was because there was nobody else around. If there'd been somebody else around like the Kinks, we probably wouldn't have done it. People said we should do it, that it would do us good. I said I didn't believe that it would, but we were convinced we should try it, and it didn't do us much good, because people went to see Jethro Tull, and they were aware Jethro Tull did a tour, but even though we went down really well, it didn't mean anything".

Still, it was a start at getting through to the great British Public, and it was followed up in the summer by Procol's first album for Chrysalis, 'BROKEN BARRICADES' (ILPS 9158), which was accompanied by more press coverage and promotional activity than all the group's prior work put together. I love the album, especially the title track, which I seem to recall

being nominated as 'song of the year', either by John Peel or Bomber Bob, but Gary waxes less than enthusiastic about it:

"For 'Barricades', I didn't have any songs, and had to work most of it out in the studio as I went along, and I think it shows. I mean the album had a very good production - a good sound - but the songs aren't all I would have liked. Most people say they like it least; the people that like 'Broken Barricades' are normally Trower fans".

You can see what he means. The album, like 'Home', was recorded with the four-piece line-up, and Robin comes out of his shell even more, contributing three of the eight songs, and making his guitar a more dominant element in the group sound; but whereas his previous compositions for the group, like 'Juicy John Pink' or 'Whisky Train', had been much too uninteresting blues pastiches, completely out of context with the rest of what the group was doing, his songs on 'Broken Barricades' are of an entirely different calibre, and 'Song For A Dreamer', probably the best thing he's ever written, turned out to be the turning point of his career:

"I was writing a piece of music in one room, and Keith happened to be writing lyrics in another. So he comes in and says, 'I've got these lyrics, and they're sort of Hendrix, and maybe we should do a sort of tribute to him, then I said, 'Hey, that's funny, I've got this music, and...'. You see, 'Song For A Dreamer' was the first song where I'd done it all. I sang it, I wrote it, I played just about everything on it, and it was the first time I realised that I could do something. After that there was no question that I had to go out on my own".

Gary agrees completely:

"Trower didn't leave because he was being pushed into the background, because he was being pushed forward more all the time. There's no organ in 'Broken Barricades', and it's almost completely guitar dominated. This is the reason why he left, because he got to the point where he realised, within the group, all these possibilities. He reached the stage where he had to do something else, to go some place else to satisfy himself. I mean, if he had been kept in the background on 'Broken Barricades', he might still be in the group, because he wouldn't have gotten to the point where he'd discovered what direction he was going in, and what he was capable of".

When Robin left Procol, his first move was to get together with Frankie Miller, Clive Bunker and Jimmy Dewar in the short-lived and ill-fated Jude, before embarking on the trio format which he has pursued, with considerable success, to this very day. Yet, although he's an enormous attraction all over the world now, I still don't think his music has reached the peak that it attained on 'Broken Barricades', where his burgeoning writing and playing wedded happily with the subtle power of Procol's arrangements to create something that sounds as fresh today as it did four years ago.

From Procol's point of view, it is perhaps a slightly odd album out, being much more overtly rhythmic than is usually the case, but as anybody who has seen them live can testify, Procol will rock out with the best when the mood takes them, and anyway, nobody will convince me that the horn and string arrangements on 'Simple Sister', or the whole of the title track are not classic Procol Harum music.

With Robin leaving in July 1971, before the album had even come out, the group had to go through the tiresome procedure of finding and working in a new member in time for their autumn tour of the States and Canada, and, perhaps deciding to kill two birds with one stone, they also added a fifth member, with Chris Copping moving to a permanent role as organist, while Alan Cartwright, a friend of B.J.'s who had previously been with Brian Davison's Every Which Way, took over as bassist. Unfortunately, finding a guitarist proved to be less straightforward, as the traditional MM small ad produced more problems than solutions:

"There were about 80 applicants for the guitarist job, and I suppose out of the thirty or forty we listened to, there was only about two who had heard our records, or were the remotest bit interested in the group. Only the couple of people that came over from America wanted to be in the group for its own sake. We had one bloke who couldn't play a note. I should imagine he goes to all the auditions; he came along and said 'Whatya want?.. Jazz?.. Blues?..', and he didn't have a clue".

Eventually they decided on Dave Ball, who had come down from Birmingham, where he'd been in various groups:

"He was the best of the bunch. He didn't stay for a great length of time. It wouldn't be fair to him to say we took him out of desperation, but we did. He's not a bad player at all, actually, and the group survived because he joined - we'd have stopped otherwise. The group never seemed to have a lot of contacts with outside people. Most groups who need a replacement probably know half a dozen good people playing in groups, but we never seem to have had that contact, so we had to put ads in MM. 'Top Group Needs Guitarist' - it might have been a good idea to put our name on, but at the same time, it would seem bad to admit that you were in such a pile of shit that you couldn't even think of one person".

Dave Ball joined in September '71, and he and Alan Cartwright were really thrown in at the deep end, because the North American tour, which had been booked before there was even a Procol Harum to do it, included a concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and a twenty voice choir, which was being recorded with a view to a live album. No doubt everybody is familiar with the story of the gig; how Gary was furiously writing arrangements in the plane to the concert; how rehearsal time was desperately short and hampered by union men; how nerves were so rife that Chris Copping made a hash of his opening solo piece, Albinoni's Adagio, and how triumph was finally snatched from the jaws of disaster:

"I couldn't say how bad it was preparing for it. Shortage of time was the main problem, because somebody had to pay all these people to rehearse, and nobody can afford to provide two weeks rehearsal, so if you're lucky you get to run through everything properly once. We were pleased with the way the record worked out. With a big sound like that, if it gets on tape, you're onto a winner, and it also turned out like a 'Best Of' album".

A winner they certainly were onto, in every sense. The album itself is great - five of Procol's most dramatic pieces, (though there are things I'd have preferred to 'All This And More'), all of which maximise the potential latent in the earlier versions.

Gary Brooker had already demonstrated his ability with orchestral arrangements, particularly on 'A Salty Dog', but I never ceased to be amazed, listening to 'LIVE! (CHR 1004)' that somebody with absolutely no training should come up with scores that combine such majesty with such delicacy and sureness of touch. All of the pieces used on the album readily lend themselves to orchestral expansion, but - as is far from usually the case when rock performers bring in string sections, choirs, etc. - the arrangements are always an integral part of that piece, never tacked on for effect.

The album also brought Procol back into the public eye - maybe it fulfilled everybody's idea of what they are all about - aided by a hit single, their first for four and a half years, in the shape of 'Conquistador', which leaves the version on the first album for dead. People in Britain, at least, have tended to think of Procol Harum as a) a classical-rock group, and b) an organ-led group, and though the first assumption has never really been true, (Gary reckons Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis have been bigger influences than the classics), and the latter was only true in their early days, the live album brought them as close to that image as they'd ever been. With Robin gone, and Chris Copping concentrating on the organ, the group sound on the live album is much nearer to the original concept with which Procol was started, and an obvious pointer to the future.

Hardly had they begun recording the next album, however, when Dave Ball left the ranks, almost exactly a year after his arrival:

"We started recording, and it was not coming along at all - it was ghastly. Dave wasn't happy, he knew it wasn't going well, so one day he said he was leaving. This time we were lucky, we had two or three names mentioned to us, and as we had the studio time already booked, we got the people to come along. Somebody who is in a big group now - he's American, I think - came along, and turned out to be a nutter, then Mick Grabham came along, and played a guitar solo on 'A Salty Dog', and I'd never heard anybody do that before".

Like his predecessor, Mick was pitched right into the thick of things, making his debut at the Rainbow on September 22nd in a concert with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and then going back into the studio to complete work on 'GRAND HOTEL' (CHR 1037), which eventually saw the light of day in the following March. No doubt Mick took it all in his stride though, being a man of considerable experience having played with The Plastic Penny, who had a big hit with 'Everything I Am' in early '68, and the excellent Cochise, and made his own album earlier in 1972, ('Mick The Lad' - UAS 29341), as well as doing various session work to keep the wolf from the door:

"It wasn't much fun, but it was very good money. For a jingle session,

you get paid the same rate for an hour's work that you do for three hours of ordinary work. I was getting a bit cheesed off with all that silly stuff, though, and just at that time, when I was thinking of getting my own band together, I got a call to go and have a blow with Procol.

I was pretty flabbergasted, I can tell you. I'd never had an offer to play with a 'name' band before - although quite ironically, just as I was leaving the house to have my second blow with Procol, Andy Fraser rang and asked me to join his band. That was a bit of a dilemma, after having done practically nothing for a year! But I'd been buying Procol's albums since the very first one, and I've always rated them very highly, so it was a pleasure to join them".

The 'Grand Hotel' album gives Mick a somewhat erratic role, presumably because he joined the group midway through its making. On 'Bringing Home The Bacon', he is very prominent, and the track has a similar feel to the stuff on 'Broken Baricades', but on most of the other songs, he is all but lost amidst a sea of swirling organs, soaring strings, and heavenly choirs.

Reaction to the album was varied. Those who had always labelled Procol as a bit pompous, ponderous and pos-faced, came tumbling out of their closets, with plenty of fuel for their arguments in what is certainly Procol's most grandiose production. Those, on the other hand, who like their Harum majestic used adjectives like 'grand', 'stimulating' and 'powerful'.

Three years on I still haven't made up my mind about it. The extravagant arrangements work superbly on the opening title track, which achieves a rare fusion of lyrical and musical feel, but too many of the other pieces are like Falstaff - plenty of bluster and wit, but overweight, slow-moving and a bit superficial.

I'm not too sure about the lyrical content either. Gone is the provocative and emotive obliqueness of the earlier albums, and instead Keith seems to be offering autobiographical snippets, written in rather flat, uninspiring rhyming couplets.

This new simplicity proved to be a drawback in more ways than one, as it turned out, because 'Souvenirs Of London' is so blatantly about diseases of the naughty bits, that even the BBC realised, and banned it when it came out as a single. To be fair to Keith, though, the fact that 'Grand Hotel' was the first Procol album to have all the lyrics printed with it reduces their mysterious element, and when he talked in ZZ30, shortly before its release, he was perfectly happy with it:

"That's the strength or weakness of the relationship, you know. The better the music and words come together, the more perfect the marriage, the better the song; the most successful songs we do are the best marriages of words and music. With, for example, 'Grand Hotel', every song's like that to me.

I just originally thought 'Grand Hotel' would be a great title for an album, and it immediately gave me an idea for a song. Actually, I had the title before I wrote the song. The thing is, it isn't a concept album, it was just that for the first time we



Procol Harum today: MICK GRABHAM/CHRIS COPPING/KEITH REID/ALAN CARTWRIGHT/BARRIE WILSON/GARY BROOKER.plus interloper Frankie Miller.

echoed the particular song in the artwork and everything, and I guess in the promotion of the album in relationship to the song".

The happiest aspect of 'Grand Hotel' is that, apart from further strengthening Procol's position in this country and in Europe, (they calculated that every record-player owner in Portugal bought the album), it gave rise to what has proved to be their first truly settled line-up since the upheavals that followed 'Salty Dog' in 1969. The benefits of this are immediately apparent on their next hot waxing, 'EXOTIC BIRDS AND FRUIT' (CHR 1058), which came out in April '74, and which demonstrates

perhaps the most fully integrated group sound that Procol have ever achieved, with the trimmings of 'Grand Hotel' stripped away, leaving the emphasis firmly on the basic material and the group's performance of it.

From all points of view, it's a very strong album, as demonstrated, I think, by the fact that it makes a very major contribution to their current live act, although it didn't meet with everybody's approval at the time. 'Rolling Stone', in fact, pilloried the album in a quite extraordinary manner. I quote:

"'Exotic Birds and Fruit' is another slab of false majesty for which this

band has become noted; elephantine, grandiose production, pretentious, empty lyrics, and the sort of artistic posturing that would embarrass Ted Baxter... Procol Harum is a perfect example of a band that has outlived its usefulness, and even staunch fans will undoubtedly be disappointed with this latest effort."

I suppose the trouble is that by now most people have become so set in their attitude towards Procol, that their reaction to any new album is 50% pre-conditioned. The above comments might have been understandable if directed at 'Grand Hotel', but 'Exotic Birds', so far from being the work of 'a band that has out-lived its usefulness', is evidence of a band

that has acquired a new vitality.

Such vitality, however, is dependent on external stimuli as well as the internal situation of a group, so it seems to have been a desire for new faces and places as much as anything that prompted Procol to part company with producer Chris Thomas, after five years of recording in the same studio with the same technicians.

To take his place, they enlisted the services of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller – a surprising choice, as although they are two of the truly great figures in the history of popular music, one doesn't normally think of them working with musicians as individual and outside the pop mainstream as Procol Harum. Still, both sides must have been pleased with proceedings, because at the time of talking, the partnership was going to be continued for the next album, after 'PROCOL'S NINTH' (CHR 1080) took the group to another commercial peak in this country, and went straight to the top of several continental charts.

Not surprisingly, in view of Leiber and Stoller's remarkable hit-making record, the album gave Procol the latest in a very irregular series of chart successes with 'Pandora's Box', and as a whole it has far more overtly 'commercial' appeal than their first eight releases. All the songs are economical and snappy, around the three and a half to four minute mark, and the production is very clean and poppy, with the rhythm section pushing through much more sharply than before.

The arrangements, even when using outside horn and string sections, have an immediacy about them that suggests a concentration on group playing, rather than a 'Grand Hotel' job, and although the overall production and the use of riffing horns are not in the traditional Procol mould, they are

very effective. Not so effective, I'm afraid, is the other big break from tradition in using material from outside the group. Leiber and Stoller's 'I Keep Forgetting' was presumably some sort of obligatory inclusion, but it is hardly one of their best songs, while Lennon and McCartney's 'Eight Days A Week' is fun as a concert number, but makes a strange ending to a Procol Harum album, especially when they throw it away in disinterested style. Moreover, both are love songs pure and simple, which is something Keith Reid has never written, so they sit rather uneasily alongside his songs, which, as on 'Grand Hotel', are straightforward outpourings of personal trials and tribulations – or at least they seem to be.

Again, it could be that the efficacy of the words is impaired by having them in print before you, but I can't help but compare Keith's recent lyrical efforts unfavourably with his work on, say, 'Broken Barricades' or 'Shine On Brightly'. Nothing's better left unsaid, but its impact depends largely on how you say it. I can't imagine anybody writing a thesis on the words of 'Procol's Ninth'.

Since that album was recorded in the spring of last year, Procol have been involved in several unusual adventures. They became the first European band ever to play a concert in Mexico City, at the special request of the President himself; they have contributed a version of the 'Blue Danube' – a delightful moment in their concert performances – to an album commemorating the 150th anniversary of Strauss's birth; and they undertook a very successful tour of Poland at the start of this year.

No doubt similarly eccentric

Paul Kendall

activities will continue to crop up in the future, because throughout their history, Procol Harum have always trodden a path away from the vast majority of their contemporaries in rock music, exploring new worlds and going where no man has gone before. Maybe it has worked to their detriment in terms of achieving superstardom and untold riches, but I suspect Procol aren't especially interested in that sort of success anyway. What's undeniable is that in the course of nearly a decade, Procol Harum have made much great music – erratically, of course, no artist or group of artists can maintain a creative peak over that length of time – and that they will probably continue to do so for the next decade, because in a world where shooting stars are the norm, and where superficial or transitory factors are often put before basics, Procol Harum will last and grow, because they have the talent and they have the style.

The last time I saw Procol Harum play was in March, shortly before I spoke to them, and I was a little apprehensive at the prospect, because everything I'd heard and read suggested that they might be getting past it – running out of inspiration and motivation. Nothing could have been further from the truth. They played for over two hours, drawing on every album they've made as well as the general Golden Oldies bag, and they did everything, old and new, with tremendous verve and sincerity. Finally, for about their fourth encore, they did 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale', treating it as a welcome old friend rather than a skeleton in the cupboard, and it was as magical then as it had been back in the halcyon days of 1967. Glimpses of Nirvana indeed... long may they recur.

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Reviews editor: Paul Kendall

**'Young And Rich'
THE TUBES
A&M AMLH 64580**

After all the initial hype that had them looking like just the latest fleeting example of ultimate outrage in rock, the Tubes' first album turned out to be one of last year's most pleasant surprises, proving that beyond doubt they had ample musical savoir faire to go with the expensive and extravagant gimmickry. The influences were manifold and fairly upfront, but, like Aerosmith, the Tubes manage to turn that situation to their own advantage, combining the immediacy of familiarity with the spice of originality.

'Young and Rich' furthers the Tubes' campaign for world dominance using pretty much the same weaponry. The songs are roughly 50% Steely Danish compositions that take a bit of time to grow, and 50% pieces that have obviously been written with the stage show very much in mind, but which still work on record, simply because the Tubes write songs with strong melodies and/or hooks, and proceed to arrange and play them very well.

Whereas the first album saw these two facets divided into the two sides, 'Young and Rich' has them integrated, which means that initially the subtler songs like 'Pimp' tend to get overlooked, but makes for a more satisfactory programme in the long run, I think. If anything, there's probably more variety on 'Young and Rich': 'Don't Touch Me There' is a self-confessed Phil Spector impersonation, and a hilarious gem of a track; 'Proud To Be An American' is an old-style rockabilly paean to everything that has made America what it is today, though I think they did more or less the same thing better on the coda to 'What Do You Want From Life'; 'Slipped My Disco', however, is a mighty entertaining spoof on the current dire trend to physical exertion in musical appreciation, and makes its point with such insidious infectiousness, that I continually find myself involuntarily strutting my stuff about the room to it.

'Tubes World Tour' opens proceedings with a furiously exciting flurry of guitars and synthesisers, before launching into a catalogue of the adventures and traumas that occur when you're on the road with the world's lowliest, most tasteless band, and acts as a reminder that it's about time that world tour took in somewhere outside the States - like here, for instance! It would be interesting to



see how British audiences would react to a humour that is very American, and to a presentation that has had worried mothers and City Fathers taking to the streets, and paranoid headline acts refusing to play anywhere near it.

The centrepiece of the album is 6½ minutes of 'Poland Whole/Madam I'm Adam', which I may call a mini earth opera, and just have, and which sees Fee Waybill suffering hallucinations/trepidations/intimations about life on a mythical Broadway stage, with a passing debt to Eric Burdon, but recovering in time to share the Utopian normality of the title track, wherein the white punks come to terms with their privileged position, and affluence is the drug.

Like I said, I'm not too sure 'Proud To Be An American' works in the album context, and 'Slipped My Disco' and 'Young and Rich' probably last about a minute too long for peak effect to be maintained, but I only really noticed that when I stopped listening to the album for pleasure and put on my critic's hat, so it can't be all that important.

The production, by our very own Ken Scott, is a big improvement on the job Al Kooper did with the first album, eschewing the temptation to go overboard with synthesiser trickery, and concentrating instead on crispness and clarity, which benefits the vocals particularly. It's always difficult to judge just from listening to records, because it's amazing how much of a propping-up job can be done in the studio, but it sounds as if all the members of the Tubes have substantial musical chops to back up their obvious teen appeal and whacky, off-beat wit. The synthesiser work and Prairie Prince's drumming in particular are

standouts.

With more flippancy than Frank Zappa, more objectivity than Alice Cooper, and less misanthropy than Becker and Fagen, the Tubes observe the ghastly decaying of the American Dream, and take full advantage of the dramatic and fantasy elements inherent in the rock culture to maximise the appeal of their vision. Great group, great music, hopefully a great stage show.... Love it to death!

Paul Kendall

**'THE RAMONES'
Sire Import**

Phew, what a scorcher! From the opening call to action of 'Blitzkrieg Bop' to the last strung-out powerchord of 'Today Your Love, Tomorrow The World', this album is a high-energy sizzler with enough power to light up New York City for a week!

It only lasts about 28 minutes - but then if you travel at double the speed, you get there in half the time. And there's no guitar solos either, just Johnny Ramone's rampaging block-chord power-riffing, which threatens to burn holes in the speakers. He locks into a simple chord sequence, and hangs on for the whole track, which admittedly is not that long - the epic track on this LP is 'I Don't Wanna Go Down To The Basement', which uses a mutated 'Hang On To Yourself' riff, and clocks in at 2.35.

Joey Ramone's vocals are a cross between New York street jive and a mid-60s British pop singer. Dunno how affected this accent is, but once you get used to it, it's pretty amusing, missed syllables and all! The mutant vocals and ultra-simplicity of the music and lyrics do take some getting used to, but once you get past the curiosity stage, the effect can be shattering, especially at high volume.

Before getting on to the music a word about the sleeve. The front is a simple photograph, (black and white, natch!) of the guys, who look like they're just daring you to pull their record out. They're decked out in their stage and street gear - leather jackets, torn levis and sneakers. Not to mention shades and blank expressions. Latent violence is pretty evident in the music too. 'Chain Saw' kicks off with the grating whine of said power tool. It boasts a chorus which goes:

"Texas chain saw massacre
(pronounced massa-cree)
They took my baby away from me".



Or how about this for the complete lyrics of 'Loudmouth'

"You're a loudmouth baby
You better shut it up
I'm gonna beat you up
'Cause you're a loudmouth baby"

The lyrics are great (!!!), the subject matter being accurately conveyed by the titles - 'Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue', 'I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend' (the only track which, by a little stretch of the imagination, you could call sensitive).

It's impossible to mention highlights, 'cos the whole album's a highlight, geared and stripped down for maximum energy and effect. At the moment 'Judy Is A Punk', 'I Don't Wanna Go Down To The Basement' and '53rd and 3rd' seem to have the best riffs. The knockout punch is saved for the end - a three-song power-drive consisting of Jim Lee's 'Let's Dancel', which was a hit for Chris Montez, 'I Don't Wanna Walk Around With You' and 'Today Your Love, Tomorrow The World'. This is probably one of the most energy filled six minutes yet committed to vinyl. There's hardly a gap between the three, just time for Joey Ramone to yell 1-2-3-4 before they slam into the next riff, which gradually get faster and more frenzied. The monstrous 'Today Your Love...' is a veritable rush, with Nazi overtones to boot - 'I'm a shock trooper in a stupor' sing the lads. That no-gap-between-the-tracks trick would have upped the album's energy quotient yet another notch (my punk-rock buds gurgled at the thought!). With the album as it stands you get time to catch your breath.

It's great to see a band which built its initial cult following on a dynamite stage act come over so well on its studio debut (the album was produced by Craig Leon). I haven't seen the Ramones live as yet, but hopefully the Ramones/Flamint Groovies tour will have rectified that situation by the time you read this. On the strength of this album I can't wait!

Kris 'White Punk On Dope' Needs

**'Rose Of Cimarron'
POCO
ABC ABCL 5166**

I've been a buddy of Rusty Young ever since we were at high school together way back when in Denver, Colorado. In all those years since he put together Poco, we've been keeping in touch, and I even helped out as an unpaid roadie cum rabble rouser on a couple of their early tours of the Mid-west. Quite a way to spend a summer vacation - but that's another story. Anyway, when I told Rusty I was making this trip over to London for a while, he loaded me with copies of the band's new album, saying: "Whatever you do over there, make sure you give these to Peter O'Brien". Which is how Peter found himself giving hospitality to a perfect stranger one weekend, and how I, in a rash moment brought on by excessive consumption of your English beer, was persuaded to write the review which is about to follow.

Having established my credentials



and, very necessary in these post-Watergate days, declared my interest, I take no shame in urging you to get off your asses, and grab yourself a copy of this album. When you've been putting out records for as long as Poco, and with relatively little mass acceptance, to keep on delivering the goods is a real act of faith in your music, and deliver the goods is what Poco have done on 'Rose Of Cimarron'.

One night, at one of those all-night booze'n'bull sessions that followed a killer concert in Cleveland, Ohio, Rusty told me: "Sure, we want that mass acceptance, and we've been around long enough to handle that success when it does arrive. You won't find us quitting to mountain residences, spaced out on dollar signs and dope. And we won't let any asshole manager tell us when we can or cannot say anything. We know our music, we know our minds and, on or offstage, we can stand on our own feet and deliver".

Well, I sure hope this might be the record to do it for Poco. I'm a little worried that these ears don't hear an obvious hit single that would blaze a trail for the album's rise up the LP charts where it belongs. Make no mistake, though a hit single off an album is no guarantee of success, it isn't going to hinder the sales, that's for sure.

I know what you're probably thinking by now. Typical bull-shitting Yank! Been rapping at us for ten minutes, and he still hasn't told us what we'll find on the record. Fair enough. But let me quickly get in a word of praise for the band's new record company, ABC, who have done a fine job of packaging this LP. Personnel listings for all tracks, and some great photos taken at the Santa Maria Mission in the Nevada Desert. Sets the mood perfectly for what's inside.

When Richie Furay left, I remember Paul Cotton telling me, "I guess we'll have to get Rusty to carry a little more weight on the songwriting side". With four out of five on the first side he's surely doing that, and 'Rose Of Cimarron' is as much of a killer opening as was his 'Sagebrush Serenade' on 'Cantamos'. He has a great flair for writing songs that capture the sweeping panorama of the American west and its multi-faceted way of life. You really need to listen to this on cans, there's so much going on here.

If there's a hit single, I think it may

be the next track, 'Steal Away', with Paul Cotton's distinctive lead guitar swooping in and out of those gorgeous Poco harmonies. Tim Schmit's writing contribution is the third track on either side. 'Just Like Me' is one of his typical reflective songs, cooling things down before Rusty's really exultant finale. In fact, getting the record turned over has been really difficult, as every time it ends, Peter leaps across the room and puts the stylus back to the beginning of 'Company's Coming/Slow Poke'. Then he's off again, bopping around the room, miming all the guitar, steel and banjo picking, fiddling, hand-clapping and whatever, interspersed with grotesque attempts at square dancing. I wish I had a cine camera with me. They'd never believe it back home.

Paul Cotton takes over on side two. The hero of 'Too Many Nights Too Long' is in jail, a predicament that drives him to sing snatches of Spanish. Tambien en Espanol, even! For the whole of this side, Poco are joined by Steve Ferguson on piano, though you would have to listen very carefully to know it, and Al Garth variously on violin, fiddle and alto sax. The fiddling is well to the fore on 'When You Come Around', but it's his stunning sax solo that steals the show on Tim's contribution (and Peter's vote as the single), 'Staring At The Sky'. Al isn't a fully fledged member of the band, but he's gigging with them a lot, and I guess it's just a matter of time before they become a 5 piece again permanently.

My second choice for a single, 'All Alone Together', lopes along, propelled by Tim's driving bass and George Grantham's rock steady drumming. I tend to take George's contribution for granted, (something I'm sure the rest of the guys would never do), but I hope he'll regard that as a compliment to the unobtrusive excellence of his playing.

Paul and Rusty get in some duelling acoustic guitar and dobro picking on 'Tulsa Turnaround', which hasn't failed yet to get everyone who's heard it on their feet and looning around, leaving them at the end of the album with big smiles on their faces, like I've seen duplicated at hundreds of Poco gigs across the States.

They are a beautiful band, and it's been a privilege to be given the opportunity to write about them. I fear I haven't done them justice, but if you get half a chance, settle the stylus in the grooves of this album, turn the volume way up, and prepare yourself to be found guilty of smiling insanely in public... It's a good feelin' to know.

Lomax Gold

**'The Sunny Side Of The Mountain'
COUNTRY GAZETTE
Transatlantic**

Few records could have more appropriate titles. The Gazette make music which fits sunny summer evenings perfectly, a leavening of flatout picking and straightforward tunes, and this meld produces some unpretentiously pleasant records, which very defin-



itely appeal to me, but for some reason don't seem to get through to other than the specialist bluegrass audience. It's the same to a great extent with the Dillards, who share the distinction with Country Gazette of being the leaders of the crossover movement into the more lucrative fields of country rock.

I find myself looking for ways for both groups to make that transition with a little more success than they've so far achieved. Perhaps the unison vocals which are generally the rule here prevent that nebulous identification factor, although when solo vocals are taken, they don't seem so convincing. Maybe both groups are still too obviously 'country', (which of course they are), and from my experience with record companies, it's the kiss of death in the English market to put that label on a record, because it apparently conjures up visions of bouffants, cowboy hats and sentimental rubbish.

If that's what you think about Country Gazette, wise up here. A recent personnel change has brought back Kenny Wertz on guitar, with Roland White moving to mandolin. Since big Byron Berline left the group, they haven't been able to find a fast enough fiddler to replace him, although Dave Ferguson played with the group for some time, and in fact appears on the record. So what we have are a very experienced group whose past credits include the Scotsville Squirrel Barkers, which I'm sure you all know included Chris Hillman and Bernie Leadon, the Kentucky Colonels, the Flying Burrito Brothers, and how many others do you need to know? The songs include 'Still Feeling Blue' written by GP, tracks by Waylon Jennings, Tom Paxton, and Mickey Newbury, plus several group compositions. As well as all that, the great Al Perkins appears on the record, and even Frame gets a name check, apparently in connection with a family tree which he has been suggesting for some time, centred round the group.

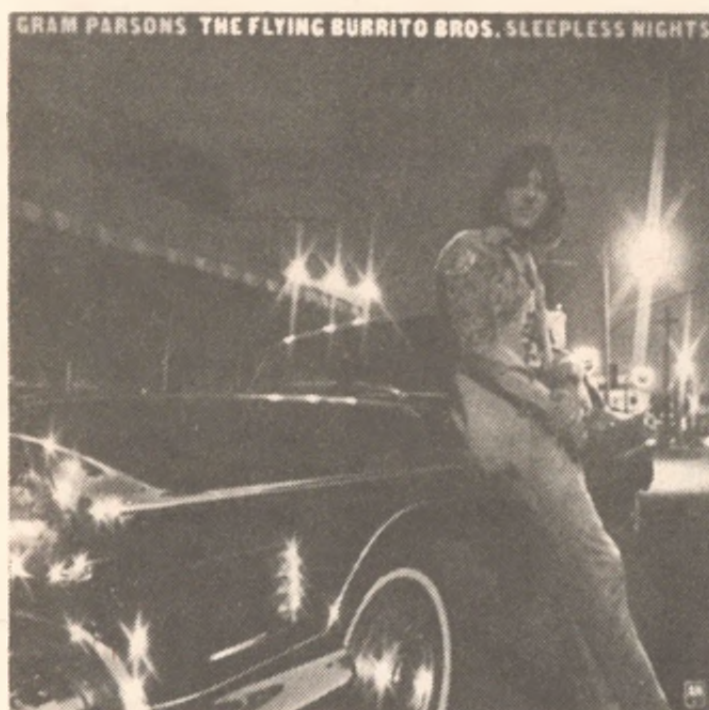
There seems no earthly reason why you shouldn't go out immediately and buy the record. So do it.

John Tobler

'Sleepless Nights'
G.P./BURRITOS/EMMYLOU
A&M AMLH 64578

When I interviewed Emmylou Harris last September, she told me they still had three unreleased tracks in the can from the 'Grievous Angel' sessions, and that these tracks would probably be released as part of a Gram Parsons anthology she was helping to prepare. I wasn't terribly excited at the time, assuming that this album would be basically a 'Best Of', with those three unreleased songs thrown in to attract the fast-growing legions of hard-core Parsons devotees. How wrong can you be? Apart from 'Sing Me Back Home' and 'Close Up The Honky Tonks', which appeared on that rather good Burritos double a couple of years back, all the tracks on 'Sleepless Nights' are making their debut on vinyl.

Not that the songs are exactly unfam-



iliar, mind you. The title track - one of the three done with Emmylou - is, of course, on 'Pieces Of The Sky' in a fairly similar form, and 'Tonight The Bottle Let Me Down' and 'Together Again' are also on Emmylou's albums.

The Burritos' tracks - nine of them - are presumably the last things they did before Gram left in 1970 and, like the third side of 'Close Up The Honky Tonks', they are mostly classic bar-room songs - tales of drunken nights, faithless women and prisoners in disguise. The Burritos line-up is the same one that made 'Burrito Deluxe' (Parsons, Hillman, Leadon, Clarke, Kleinow), so the overall sound doesn't bring any surprises, with Parsons' bittersweet vocals floating along on the wings of Sneaky Pete's swirling steel and Chris Hillman's perfectly simple, melodic bass, and there's little suggestion of these tracks being unfinished out-takes.

The quality, therefore, rises and falls on the strength of the individual songs, and most of them are great, even though their familiarity from other sources dulls their initial cutting edge. 'Sing Me Back Home' and 'Green Green Grass Of Home', the two 'prison' songs, are given beautiful, cracked readings by Parsons, and in fact the only tracks I'm not particularly enjoying at the moment are 'Dim Lights' and 'Honky Tonk Women'. Both fit perfectly into the honky tonk ethos of the album, but the former is just too well-known to have any real impact, while the Stones' song, unlike 'Wild Horses', sounds very uncomfortable with a countryish interpretation, and Gram sings as if he knows it. File under 'Mildly embarrassing', I'm afraid.

The real highlight of the album, though, is saved until the very end. Charlie and Ira Louvin have contributed several great songs to the West Coast school of country rock, of which Parsons was a crucial guiding spirit, (remember 'If I Could Only Win Your Love' or 'The Christian Life', for example), but 'The Angels Rejoiced In Heaven Last Night' surpasses them all. Emmylou told me that this song - the ever-so touching story of a saturnine, gambling Daddy who turns to the path of the Lord when Mummy puffs it - was left off 'Grievous Angel' because Gram didn't want too many 'death' songs on the album, but she referred to it as representing the height of their duetting powers, and she was right. Those who deride country music for its sentimentality,

(Sandy Pearlman once dismissed the whole genre as 'debased swill'), will probably look on this as a grotesque manifestation of same, but I'm sure anybody with an ounce of romance in their soul will love it. Same goes for 'Your Angel Steps From Heaven'.

I'd be lying if I told you this album was as good as 'Grievous Angel' or even 'G.P.', but it certainly ranks with 'Elite Hotel', and in fact probably shares that album's good and bad points to a large extent, (even down to having a great cover photo), but whereas Emmylou's second offering was basically disappointing in its sense of 'deja vu', 'Sleepless Nights' is an unexpected goodie, and a valuable addition, (presumably a final one), to the already impressive Parsons legacy.

Paul Kendall

'Unlimited Edition'
CAN
Caroline CAD 3001

This is one for hardened Can-atics, being basically a collection of snippets which haven't made it onto past Can albums.

In the past, most of this extraordinary band's albums have comprised lengthy improvisations edited cleverly to make tracks... and very good tracks too. As Can record everything they do (and they do quite a lot in their Inner Space studio in Cologne), the group were naturally sitting on a mass of stuff begging to be turned into an official bootleg.

'Unlimited Edition' serves as a sort of history of Can messing around in the studio, with the addition of some unreleased goodies and prototypes of later tracks - for example 'Ibis', (September 1974) seems to be the session that gave birth to the mutated reggae track 'Dizzy Dizzy' which appeared on 'Soon Over Babaluma'. One of the albums, (it's a double), came out in 1974 as 'Limited Edition'. Not surprisingly, the quality is varied. Items like Jap crooner Damo, (who was the group's singer in their middle years), croaking 'Blue Bag (Inside Paper)' are dispensable. But the inclusions such as 'Gomorrha', a science fiction film theme, and one of the band's finest efforts, are worthwhile.

There's a fascinating peek at Can's early days when their singer was a crazed negro called Malcolm Mooney. The combination of Mooney's sung/spoken vocals and the band's hard, thrashing backings, which bring to mind the early Velvets, is pretty weird. 'Mother Upduff' and 'The Empress and the Ukraine King' are fascinating classics. Another track from the same period - 'Cutaway', an 18 minute collage of group and machine produced burps, conversations and brief musical snatches - is the album's tour-de-force. It makes side three almost redundant. Mooney apparently left the group with some mental disorder - he had a penchant for singing 'Upstairs Downstairs' for hours on end! This did little for group creativity. As for the rest, it varies. 'Transcendal Express' has Irm in Schmidt laying down a synthesised

DIGA

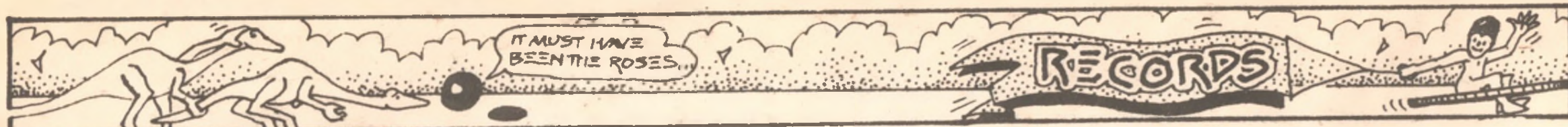
A NEW, EXCITING BRAND OF MUSIC FROM A BAND WHO SUBTLY BLEND EASTERN AND WESTERN RHYTHMS WITH A STRONG SENSE OF MELODY. HEADED BY GRATEFUL DEAD DRUMMER MICKEY HART, DIGA RHYTHM BAND REPRESENT A NEW DIMENSION IN CONTEMPORARY ROCK.



UAS 29975



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European folk dance, while Michael Karoli, he of the deranged spider guitar scrapings, adds Eastern ukelele! (Well, that's what it sounds like!) Anyway, it works.

The 'Ethnological Forgery Series' of snippets vary from an aborted attempt to blurt a Dixie blues on a trumpet, to what sounds like a teutonic theme to 'The Flowerpot Men'. Quite interesting, but not essential.

All in all, it's a patchy but interesting album from one of the most unusual and creative groups around. If you're thinking of trying Can for the first time, though, sample 'Ege Bamyasi' or 'Soon Over Babaluma'.

Kris CaNeeds

'Agents Of Fortune'
BLUE OYSTER CULT
CBS 81385

First off, I'd just like to say that writers who get special credits on an album sleeve really should restrain themselves from rushing to their typewriter, and giving that same album a quite ludicrously effusive review. Those of you who read Max Bell's extravagant NME piece might well have got the impression that 'Agents Of Fortune' is a mid-seventies milestone in much the same way that 'Blonde On Blonde' or 'Sgt. Pepper' were ten years ago. Such seminal influences, by definition, can only be truly judged in retrospect, but, excellent though it is, I doubt that 'Agents' will be regarded as such five years from now.

Points of interest and possible clues: Sandy Pearlman has composer credits on only one number, and Eric Bloom has none at all, leaving Albert Bouchard with the lion's share of the writing, and somebody called David Lucas helps out the usual Krugman/Pearlman production tag-team.

I suspect that Sandy Pearlman's influence in the Cult corner is on the wane, and so is the emphasis on the dark, macabre side of the rock culture which was primarily Sandy's interest. The subtler, more melodic side of the band, which has always been evident from 'Last Days Of May' through 'Wings

Wetted Down' to 'Astronomy', on the other hand, gets an increase of attention that is roughly proportional to the extent of Sandy's step into the shadows, and I would guess that Allen Lanier - who contributes two songs, and whose keyboard work is much more upfront - has become a much more important voice in the scheme of things.

For the first time, the Blue Oyster Cult are writing about relationships - hardly in an orthodox manner, for sure, but when Donald Roeser sings: 'Seasons don't fear the Reaper, nor do the wind, the sun and the rain... we can be like they are... come on, baby, take my hand, we'll be able to fly, baby I'm your man!', it's almost like they're deliberately kissing off the death, dope 'n' devilment stuff. Also for the first time, the lyrics throughout the album are nearly all distinguishable, and, in fact, the production as a whole is cleaner and more disciplined, 'poppier' even, with the rhythm section in particular sounding better than ever before.

Don't get worried, though. The Cult aren't sounding like Loggins and Messina, because even when they're laying back a little, the sound is all taut sinew without a trace of flab, and the mood of tense apprehension that has gone with the other albums is pretty much undiminished here. 'This Ain't The Summer Of Love' kicks things off with 2½ minutes of unrelenting savagery, and Eric Bloom gleefully sneering prophecies of doom. It's probably wishful thinking, but it would be colossally entertaining to see this as the big hit single of this summer... ten years exactly from 'Summer In The City', and archetypal seventies back-lash.

Side one is actually more the Cult we know and love. '(Don't Fear) The Reaper' is a direct descendant of 'Last Days Of May', and not as heavy as the title might suggest, but 'E.T.I. (Extra Terrestrial Intelligence)' and 'The Revenge Of Vera Gemini' go straight for the jugular. I don't pretend to know what they're about, but 'E.T.I.' unleashes itself with the sound of Buck Dharma's guitar exorcising itself - the malevolence of which is equalled only by John Weinzerl on Amon Duul III's 'Syntleman's March' - and continues

with a classic Bloom vocal riding a bucking rhythm with ruthless ease. 'Vera Gemini' is more keyboard based; organ and synthesiser soar as Patti Smith, who wrote the words, adds breathy vocals.

The real surprises come on side two, with the Cult sounding like Alice Cooper meets the Rascals on 'Sinful Love', returning briefly to home base for 'Tattoo Vampire, which gets underway with some outrageous choking chainsaw noises and accelerates into a typical heavy metal romp as Eric spits and snarls in fine style, before moving off into left field at all sorts of bizarre tangents for the three concluding numbers.

'Morning Final', Joe Bouchard's big number, manages to be mellow and menacing at the same time in the relating of a subway murder, and summons up hints of Steely Dan's 'With A Gun'. At the end, a train hurtles down the hot rails to hell, only to encounter... a soulful ballad, (wouldya believe?), in 'Tenderloin', Allen's second contribution, boasting a nice jazzy keyboard backdrop, and another genuinely superb Bloom vocal.

Even more unlikely is the closer, another Albert Bouchard tune using one of Patti Smith's poems. 'Debbie Denise' does sound like the Four Seasons in the hands of Phil Spector, but it also sounds dynamite; the hook line 'I was out rolling with my man/band (?)' is the sort of which hit singles are made, so maybe the Cult are about to break through into the AM market, and - despite the natural desire to keep something good to oneself - it would be excellent to see music of this quality doing it.

Agents Of Fortune' will probably come as a shock to those fond of lobotomising themselves to the sound of heavy metal Nazis, and I've no doubt Lester Bangs is appalled, but it is a crossroads album, which sees the Blue Oyster Cult moving away from a stance which, although at first amusing, was obviously becoming restrictive, and beginning to explore the enormous potential within the band. The present is impressive, the future richly promising.

Paul Kendall

The infallible Mac Garry guide to all albums received for review

Dateline: Monday 21st June
Not so many albums this month - it's summer

PICK OF THE MONTH

'Warren Zevon'
WARREN ZEVON
Asylum K53039

Who is Warren Zevon? I have no idea, except he made a fairly frightful album for Imperial (called 'Wanted Dead Or Alive') a few years ago, and then split to Spain to get away from it all.

Not everybody up here agrees with me, but I think this album is dynamite. Side 2 is double dynamite, and has been frying on my turntable for most of the month.

Good songs, inspired choices of session players and singers, plenty of thoughtful touches, a lovely mix, and ace production by Jackson Browne. It's so good that I've made it one of the subscription albums this month.

It's great to hear that cutting edge of David Lindley's slide guitar again - but here's a tip: listen out for Waddy Wachtel, who plays most of the guitar parts on the album.

(Frantic digression: please allow me to nip off at a tangent and reveal a superb scrap of trivia. Amongst the many untranscribed cassettes littering Yeoman Cottage were interviews with Amos Garrett, Geoff Muldaur, Bill Keith and Jim Rooney, which I decided to stick together as a giant exposition of the Boston/Cambridge folk scene in the sixties (since I have time on my hands and no-one else seems to be bothering), and, in the course of my researching, I came across this snippet in Sing Out, dated Feb 1961: 'Waddy Wachtel is the best fretless banjo player on the East Coast. He learned from Rufus Crisp while a member of Margot Mayo's always remembered American Square Dance Group' - and that's the honest truth! Does anybody have any info on this Wachtel guy, because for me he's the best studio guitarist since Amos Garrett, who was the best since David Lindley).

BETTER THAN YOU'D EXPECT

'Black Rose'

JOHN DAVID SOUTHER

Asylum K53037

From tin pan alley gossip, I'd heard that old JD was a burned-out space-case, but of all the washed-up has-beens to release albums this month, his stands up extraordinarily well. Good songs, framed with superb work from all collaborators, including Lowell George, Linda Ronstadt and producer Peter Asher. Second best album of the month, I'd say.

APPALLING FILTH

'Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias'

ALBERTO ETC.

Transatlantic TRA 316
Disgusting, obnoxious and totally unnecessary, I'm glad to say. Even the pussy cat on the front cover has venereal disease. Please send me their second album as soon as it comes out.

BETTER THAN MOST

'Chronicle'

CREDENCE CLEARWATER

Fantasy FT 528

Twenty scorches on one album can't be bad.

'Bonnie Raitt' K56255

'Give It Up' Warner Bros. K46189

'Taking My Time' K56254

BONNIE RAITT

All reissued as a direct result of Tobler's ecstatic enthusiasm, no doubt.

MORE OF THE SAME (as last time around)

'Another Passenger'

CARLY SIMON

Elektra K52 036

'Rose Of Cimarron'

POCO

ABC ABCL 5166

Good, consistent and predictable.



'Words We Can Dance To'

STEVE GOODMAN

Asylum K53038

Starts off with a killer, then deflates slowly. Now and then he cuts a cracker of a track; most times he cuts turkeys.

RECONSIDERED OPINION (I ain't proud)

'Bellamy Brothers'

BELLAMY BROTHERS

Though unlikely to become a lasting constellation in the firmament of rock music, the Bellamys hardly deserved my ill-considered and callous words last month. I say this as a result of further investigation of this album, following the persistent badgering of Omaha O'Brien and John Tobler, who reckoned it's the second best album released this year. I don't think it's anywhere near as good as that, but all the same, it's a more attractive proposition than I originally thought. OK, Tobler?

NADIRSVILLE

'Welcome Back'

JOHN SEBASTIAN

Reprise K54074

I was almost beside myself with joy as I saw his single climb to the top of the American charts, but I was disappointed as hell the first time I heard Paul Gambaccini play it on his show. He's trying hard to recapture the years when his arteries pumped magic, but this is... oh dear, give me 'She's Still A Mystery' any day. In concert (I'm assured by Frame, who saw him playing in Woodstock last November) he is still phenomenal, so there remains a spark of hope. Come on, Johnny boy... you can do it.

GOING DOWN SLOW

'Slippin Away'

CHRIS HILLMAN

Asylum K53041

Is this the year they all dry up? One of the best bass players ever invented turns in a bland, lifeless album... zzzzz (wake me up when it's over). His worst solo album ever.

'Cardiff Rose'

ROGER MCGUINN

CBS 81369

His last album was a grotesque little horror, but he came back in a BIG way on the Dylan tour, and with Mick Ronson producing his new album, using the best aspects of the Rolling Thunder band as a back-up, it looked as if it might be tickety-boo again... but McGuinn comes off as the bewildered ex-star, totally out of touch with the current scene. Disappointing, to say the least.

GOING DOWN FAST

'Illegal Stills'

STEPHEN STILLS

CBS 81330

Believe it or not, this is the opening paragraph of the CBS hypesheet accompanying this album: 'The release of a Stills album always causes more than a ripple of excitement, largely because he never fails to deliver an album that is inferior to the last'. Beautifully put! I couldn't have been less diplomatic myself. Unfortunately it's true - and I feel it holds true for a lot of others on this page too... so much so that I wonder

if it isn't time to pop this bunch of over-the-hills into the dustbin and turn our ears to some of those to whom churning out albums hasn't yet become a job, a regular necessity to ensure income.

Quite honestly, a good half of the songs on the new albums by Stills, Sebastian, Hillman and McGuinn should have been confined to the ears of friends (on the payroll?). Don't get me wrong; I love all these guys... their music has turned my world these last ten years, but if only they'd wait for some inspiration before entering studios, then their music might not sound so tired and formula-bound.

Stills is capable of turning out great stuff - too great to be criticised by the power-wielding dummies in the pop press - but this is a sad old lack-lustre album.

I agree with CBS - definitely inferior to his last one (which I thought was pretty good, incidentally).

HO HUM

'Read On'

JOHN DAWSON READ

Chrysalis CHR 1102

Literally weak, thematically hazy, and the tunes aren't too hot either. Sorry, old chap, but I have a feeling that you're about of time, and b) about to be dropped from the label.

'Diamonds In A Junkyard'

NICKEY BARCLAY

Ariola AAS 1503

The production/arrangements/songs could be so much better.

NOT MY BAG, MAN

'High And Mighty'

URIAH HEPP

Bronze ILPS 9384

Ken Hensley and his henchmen (including John Wetton, for reasons best known to himself) flash out their eleventh album - according to the accompanying hypesheet 'their best... and most surprising album ever'. I don't like their music, and I'm certain they wouldn't expect me to... just as I'm certain they never read Zigzag. I respect them for what they've achieved - especially when you consider how badly their music compares with that of their peers - and hope they can either sustain their popularity, or have enough bread tucked away to prevent having to suffer the unendurable misery of declining status as they lumber through their thirties.

'Greatest Hits'

TONY ORLANDO & DAWN

Bell BELLS 265

Pure hokum obviously, but at least done with panache.

'Greatest Hits'

THE GLITTER BAND

Bell BELLS 264

I wonder how long it'll be before the G band revert to their previous name.

'Trocadero'

SHOWADDYWADDY

Bell SYBEL 8003

Condemned out of hand (by me, certainly) as mindless fodder for mindless people, I am assured by people whose opinions I respect that their stage show is pretty good. At least this album bears the best sleeve of the month.

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

It's still 'Old Number One'

GUY CLARK

RCA APL 1303

GOODNIGHT

This is my last appearance as Infallible Guider... I'm getting too much flak from the advertising manager who thinks I'm too ruthless. Someone else can do it. I quit. So much for honesty. Anyway, life's too short to waste wading through all this junk every month - I've got better things to do with my time. (Ed: Self righteous git).

IN THE NEXT ACTION-PACKED ISSUE OF **ZIGZAG**

REVIEWS SNIFF-SNAFF GRIST

★ IAN HUNTER ★ NEWS ★ JETHRO TULL ★

★ CLOVER ★ FAB PICS ★ IAN MATTHEWS ★ COLUMNS ★

★ LOWELL GEORGE ★ LOTS OF OTHER EXCITING STUFF TOO! ★

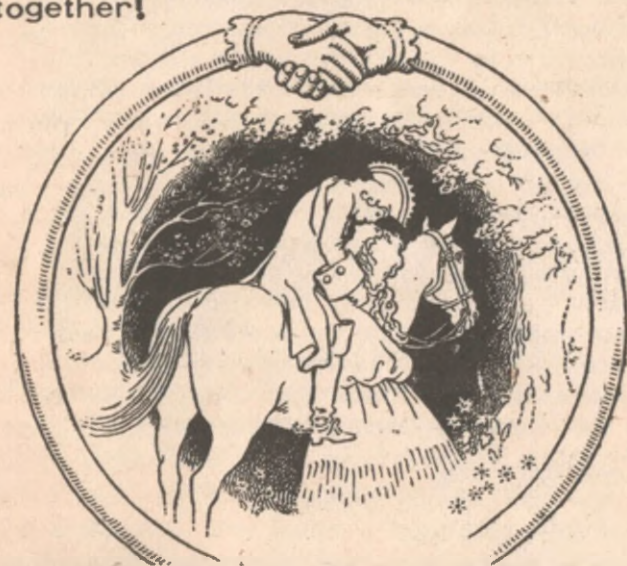


Being much addicted to women and the pleasures of the table, he sought by his affability to procure agreeable companions; and he succeeded the better as his generosity was unbounded and his indulgences unrestrained... but more of Frame's libidinous activities some other time.

First off, let me thank you good readers who've written in with poll entries, suggestions and good wishes. The poll results you see here are particularly interesting, reflecting as they do your wishes for future Zigzag content. We'll see what we can do - though some of them are obviously going to be difficult to interview. Biggest surprise for me was Jerry Jeff Walker at number 9.

For the poll this month, please send me your ten favourite ALBUM SLEEVES. That could be a goodie! Send all entries, and other correspondence, as usual, to The Famous Mac Garry, c/o Yeoman Cottage, North Marston, Bucks.

If you want replies to your letters, please include a stamped addressed envelope, and please excuse the scant scribble. If I were to answer every letter fully, I'd be working round the clock; my mail is now greater than that of the rest of the village put together!



No space for a contents column, or Stuff'n'Nonsense, scant space for me (I'm becoming used to it), and no room for the Fanzine pluglist, but just let me mention Nuggets, the second issue of which is now available from 67 Wentworth Road, Harborne, Birmingham 17 for 30p, including post. I like the fact that they don't take it all too seriously, and that they dig out relatively unknown bands to interview. Keep it up, guys.

I must also tell you about the Aylesbury Roxette, a new newspaper dealing specifically with the local music scene. First issue out soon at 25p, inc. post, from Yeoman Cottage. Staff includes Frame, Kendall, Needs and, of course, me. Aylesbury is the hub of the musical universe - in case you didn't know.

It's holiday time... the Fire Water Queen and I are off to Nashville to see Guy Clark. Make a change from Luton. Come on, Beck, that son of a bitch is coming.

Little Richard singing to me - 'Tutti Frutti' one more time.

Mac

ARTISTE YOU'D MOST LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN ZIGZAG

pos?	readers' poll.....June 1976	votes
1	JACKSON BROWNE	542
2	JEFFERSON STARSHIP	460
3	IAN MATTHEWS	372
4	THE BEACH BOYS	353
5	EAGLES / LEADON	337
6	BYRDS / MCGUINN	314
7	STEELY DAN	301
8	BOB DYLAN	283
9	JERRY JEFF WALKER	272
10	GRAM PARSONS	261
11	LINDA RONSTADT	247
12	FRANK ZAPPA	240
13	NEIL YOUNG	232
14	LITTLE FEAT	220
15	DAN FOGELBERG	219
16	THE WHO	216
17	PAVLOV'S DOG	203
18	ROLLING STONES	189
19	KINGFISH	188
20	JOHN STEWART	181
21	GRATEFUL DEAD	173
22	FLYING BURRITO BROS	169
23	FLEETWOOD MAC	165
24	MICHAEL NESMITH	159
25	KEVIN AYERS	153
26	KURSAAL FLYERS	147
27	CAT MOTHER	130
28	VAN MORRISON	129
29	BIG STAR	122
30	CAN	119
31	KALEIDOSCOPE (more?)	113
32	RICHARD THOMPSON	106
33	PETER FRAMPTON	102
34	EMMYLOU HARRIS	93
35	BLUE OYSTER CULT	92
36	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN	84
37	JETHRO TULL	83
38	FLAMIN GROOVIES	79
39	ROBERT WYATT	76
40	BOB MARLEY	71
41	THE DOORS	70
42	H.P. LOVECRAFT	67
43	GENE CLARK	63
44	PINK FLOYD	61
45	RICK ROBERTS	60
46	LED ZEPPELIN	59
47	DR. FEELGOOD	56
48	KING CRIMSON	55
49	TOM RAPD / PEARLS	50
50	MAN	49
51	BOB SEGER	47
52	IAN HUNTER	46
53	DAVID CROSBY	44
54	ELTON JOHN	43
55	CHRIS SPEDDING	42
56	ORLEANS	40
57	THE STOOGES	38
58	ENO	37
59	M.C.S	36
60	FRANKIE MILLER	34

SMALL ADS

Advertise here for only 7p a word!!! (Exclamation marks free - so use as many as you like!). All ads must be pre-paid by PO/cheque. Box numbers 50p extra. Advertisers must supply their name and address. Zigzag reserves the right of refusal. Late stuff will be held over to the next issue. Send your ad, written at least semi legibly, to Zigzag, Prestagate Ltd, 10 Kennet Street, Reading, Berks.

HOT WACKS ALBUM PRICES ARE THE CHEAPEST ON EARTH!!!!!! Shrink-wrapped US albums for less than a quid - despite the constantly shrinking pound! Are we all insane? Send a sae, soon as poss, to Bert Muirhead, Hot Wacks, 16 Almondbank Terrace, Edinburgh EH11 1SS

STARRY EYED MATERIAL REQUIRED or anything by Iain Whitmore, including Kites demos - John Rogan, Dept. of English, The University, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU.

American Kaleidoscope: When Scopes Collide - Pacific Arts PAC 102
MC5: High Time - Atlantic 40223
MC5: Kick Out The Jams - Elektra 42027

Iggy Pop/Stooges: Funhouse - Elektra 42055

Iggy Pop/Stooges: Same - Elektra 42032

Gene Clark: Roadmaster - A&M 87584
Gene Clark: White Light - A&M 88172
Kentucky Mountain Boys/Chris Hillman: Bluegrass Favourites - Ariola 87598

Sneaky Pete Kleinow: Cold Steel - Ariola 87736

Dillard & Clark: C&D - A&M 86027

Flying Burrito Brothers: Live In Amsterdam (2LPs) - Ariola 86439

Flying Burrito Brothers: Honky Tonk Heaven (2LPs) - A&M 87585

Flying Burrito Brothers: Bluegrass Special - Ariola 86501

Burritos: Hot Burrito - A&M 85272

Dillard & Clark: Fantastic Expedition - A&M SP4158

Dillard & Clark: Thru The Morning - A&M SP4203

Burritos: Gilded Palace Of Sin - A&M SP4175

All distributed by: Charmdale Ltd., 3 Sandringham Mews, Ealing, London W.5. 3DG. (01-579-9331). Ask for these and many more interesting imports at your local record store.

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Trans Oceanic Trouser Press, Who Put The Bomp, Omaha Rainbow, Hot Wacks... write for Fanzine Alley List to Compendium Books, 240 Camden High Street, London NW1.

WANTED: Zigzag number 35. Will exchange numbers 20 and 32, plus very good cash offer. F.F. Wright, 50 Harold Road, Plaistow, London E13

WANTED: Cassette of International Submarine Band. Your price paid. Box No. 1/62.

FLEETWOOD MAC freaks with fat scrap books or full historical info, please contact Pete Frame c/o Zigzag for Family Tree assistance.

Wackers, Nazz, Runt and MC5 albums wanted, Phone Mark at 01-691-0169

A word to anyone interested in music that's intelligent, amusing, observant and good...

LISTEN.

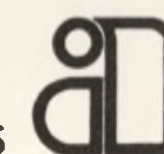
Steve Goodman

Words We Can Dance To K53038



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Jesse's Jig & Other Favourites K53025



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SOFT MACHINE

Soft

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Soft Machine are now



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JOHN MARSHALL



ALAN WAKEMAN

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