

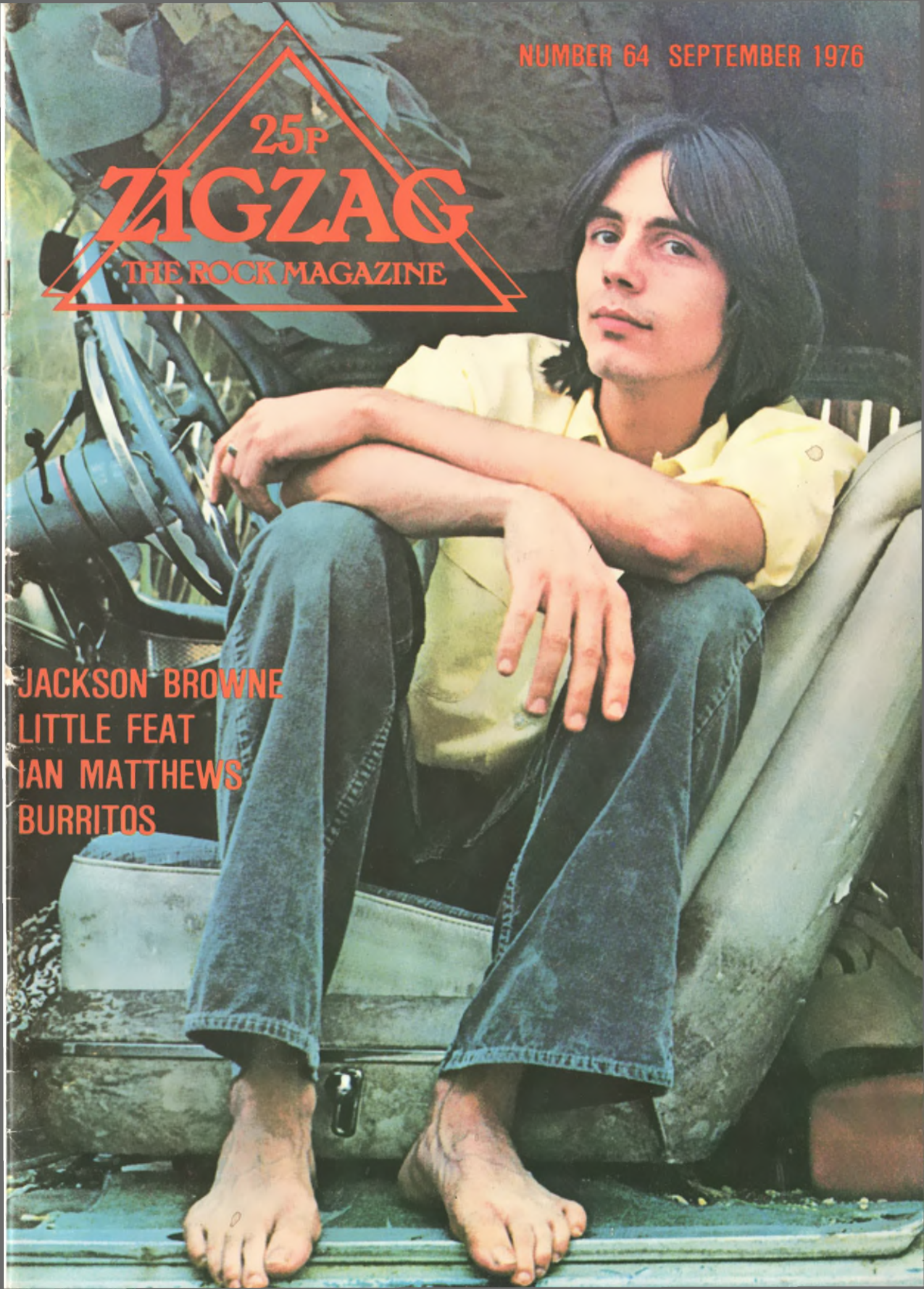
NUMBER 64 SEPTEMBER 1976

25P

ZIGZAG

THE ROCK MAGAZINE

JACKSON BROWNE
LITTLE FEAT
IAN MATTHEWS
BURRITOS



American Flyer



Doug Yule Eric Kaz Craig Fuller Steve Katz



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ZIGZAG 64

September 1976

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CONTENTS

Hard-core Zigzaggers will be familiar with the non-appearance of various scheduled articles...but for newer readers, let me explain that for reasons beyond our control (ie we are completely inefficient) we are sometimes unable to present the contents we envisaged the previous month. So, from the trailer-advert in the last issue, we haven't managed to fit in the Eagles, Jefferson Starship, Warren Zevon or Ian Hunter - but we have got Jackson Browne and Joel Scott Hill instead. (And the features we missed will turn up sooner or later). OK...apologies and explanations over, let us proceed.

Kendall and his lady love, in the manner of true hippies, have been hitch-hiking around Cornwall - visiting such shrines as the Chilli Willi recording studio in Camelford, and the rehearsal hall used by Will Birch during the week he drummed with Charlie and the Wide Boys. Invigorated by the scent of seaweed and the salt spray, he returned to beat out the conclusion of his LITTLE FEAT interview (wherein Lowell describes the inspiration behind 'Willin!'), a concise history of A BAND CALLED 'O' (soon to be big, says PK), and a piece on the enchanting McGARRIGLE SISTERS. What a hard working little laddie!

And that is certainly more than one can say about a certain Andy Childs! As we all know, Childs somehow manages to retain the title of World's Laziest Rock Writer - fighting off such comatose contenders as Connor McKnight and Sankey Phillips - but there is worse to come! Whereas Childs crawls out of his room to allow the summer sun's beneficial rays to warm his yellowing pigment, he hibernates for the whole of the autumn and winter. So if you happen to tread on his hand as he attempts to crawl unaided from the cheap bar of the Tithe Farm in Harrow, tell him to get his quill out and start scratching. Come on, kid...we need ya!

The famous Mac Garry, scourge of the Aylesbury boat basin, where he is often spied dreaming of the clang of the Yankee reaper, is in love again - a sad state of affairs which means we are unable to include his hefty article on Warren Zevon, half of which concerns his new romance. If he approves of my nimble scissor work, the Zevon thing will appear next month...so the only Mac item in this issue is his Over The Garden Wall.

The staunch, steadfast and stoical John Tobler, real heartbeat of the magazine these last seven and a half years, has come to grips with his IAN MATTHEWS interview, and converted it into a definitive chronicle. The first of the 85 chapters appears within. Meanwhile Matthews still searches for that elusive break into the big time, as he tours America with a new band known as Ian Matthews'n'Motion.

Whilst not being the all-encompassing interview Zigzaggers would have wished for (don't worry, it's just a matter of time), the JACKSON BROWNE chat, conducted by our Dutch mate Constant Meijers, will, I'm sure, bridge the gap temporarily. The new album has now been scheduled, so that's something to look forward to, and I hope you won't miss the return of the incredible David Lindley, who is about to arrive with Crosby & Nash.

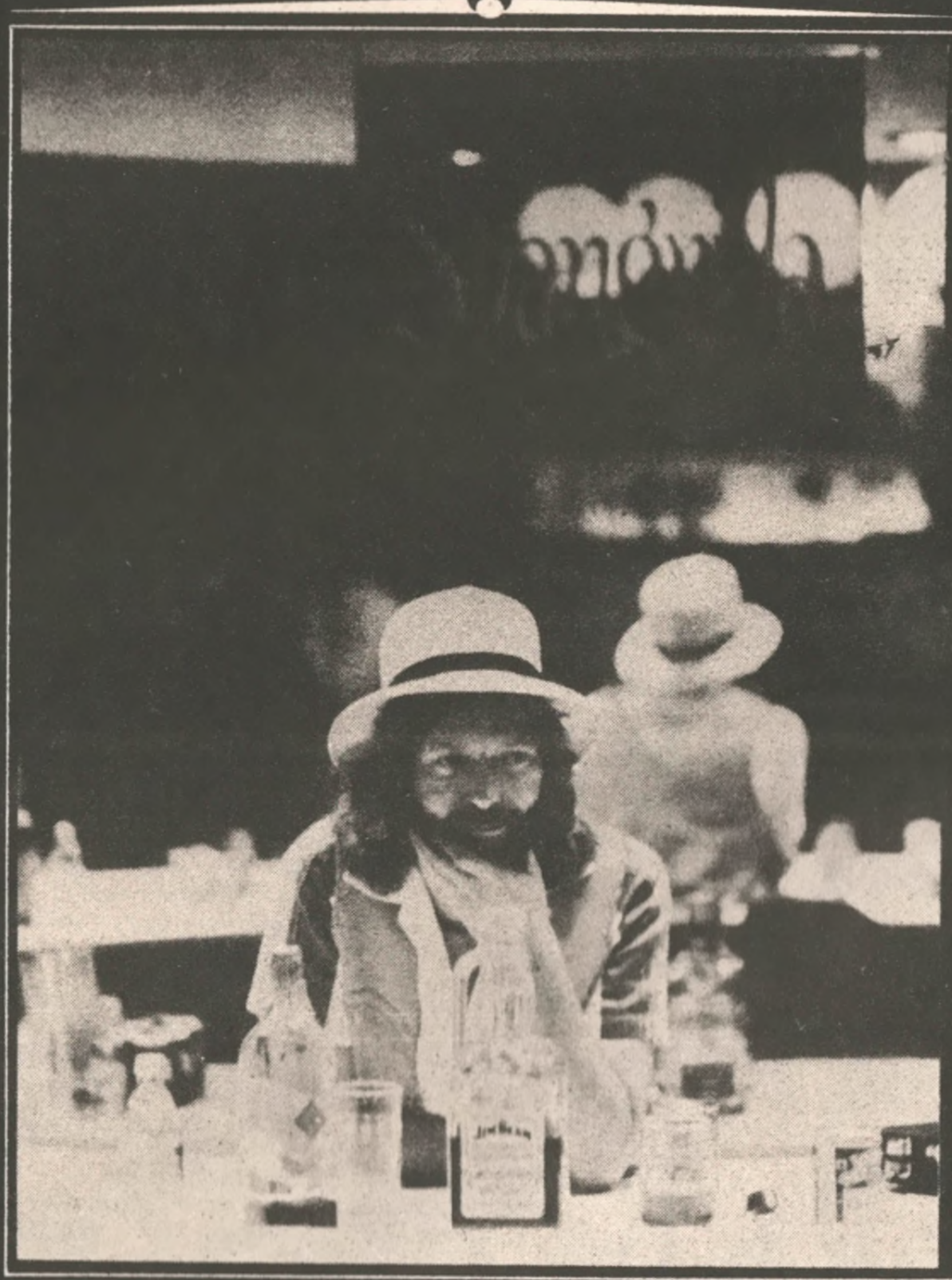
Joel Scott Hill is one of those larger-than-life geezers that are hell bent on living every hour to the full - and it's great to see him fronting the fabulous FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS, one of the real Californian bands. Last time they were here, Joel told me and Tobler the story of his life...filling 13 sides of cassette in the process. At first I thought there was no way we could use it - but listening to the new Burritos album, I knew there was no way we couldn't. Joel has been witness to the entire history of Californian rock music, and as such, his recollections and background details are essential to the ZZ encyclopedia jigsaw. Go and see the Burritos if you possibly can - they're what music is all about.

Still the letters flood in: "more anecdotes about this Kris Needs bloke - he sounds like a real loony!" Yes, friends, Needs is a real loony! Back in '72, David Bowie personally phoned Needs (then a junior reporter on the Bucks Advertiser) to hype him about a forthcoming Friars gig, but Needs couldn't talk to him because he was busy interviewing some local vicar! He was also once propositioned by Wayne County in the Marquee bar (he still has the note to prove it), and the solemnity of his recent marriage was rent asunder by a drunkard in the congregation singing hymns out of tune, and by a bee that buzzed his way up his spouse's wedding dress...much squealing and lifting of veils! As I remember, Morgan Fisher from Mott was particularly assiduous in his efforts to find the interloping insect! But enough of the Needs legend for now. This month he contributes his interview with Cyril Jordan of the FLAMIN' GROOVIES, which he has managed to transcribe between trips to see the Stranglers, about whom he is raving incessantly. Myself, I'm not to be pleased with the Stranglers: they agreed to review eight albums for our Random Eight feature, and promptly disappeared into the night, clutching said albums...which is why the feature is absent this month. They'd better have a good excuse!

You readers seem divided about the Michael Hurley strips. Half are perplexed by their inclusion, and the half who know Hurley's work want more. For those in the dark, Hurley is a legendary artist and singer who made two gloriously idiosyncratic non-selling albums for Raccoon Records, the Youngbloods! label, and another for Rounder. Personally, I think his stuff is weird enough to merit inclusion.

And this is where I collapse in a debilitated heap and thank the heavens that Zigzag is not a weekly publication.

ERIC CLAPTON



(no reason to cry)

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Last month we left Lowell talking about 'Willin'', and as it's one of their best known and best loved songs, it seemed worthwhile to dwell on it a little longer, so that's where the conversation picks up again:

ZZ: Was 'Willin'' more or less the first song you'd written?

LG: I'd written thousands of songs, and you wouldn't want to hear one of them, but that one set me a kind of standard. After that it was like "Well, I've got to go one better, or what am I here for".

ZZ: How did you come to write the number, it sounds like a very instant thing.

LG: I don't know really... I remember that I wrote it at Richie's house, where a guy was talking about the 'three wicked Ws', which were weed, whites and wine... and I went "Oh, that's it". Then Richie's sister-in-law walked into the room, and said "Oh, look at that chair - it's been warped by the rain", and I thought "I'd better start making some notes here". So I scribbled various things down and bashed it into shape, and it all seemed to come together with a tune I'd written the previous day... some music without words that I'd started. The song just happened, seemed to flow together, and I feel that those songs which come together as naturally as that are subsequently the ones which have been the most successful... in terms of a song having substance and quality.

ZZ: Do you usually find songs happen almost accidentally like that?

LG: Very occasionally, when the moon is in Asparagus, and the planets are aligned. I have no idea why that happens, it just does. What I will do is think about a subject matter or title for a while, and then something will happen - it will come together.

ZZ: Talking of subject matter, both that song and 'Truck Stop Girl' are about truck driving, which is a very romantic thing in the States at the moment, especially after 'Convoy'; was it like that when you wrote those songs?

LG: It's part of the nihilism that's engulfing the country... the concrete freeway that leads to a dead end. For me the romance that exists in that is due to the fact that transport from one low level city to another has become so important. If truck driving round LA stopped, everything would stop... LA as a city would cease to exist... people would kill each other on the streets for food... everything that is consumed in that city has been in a truck.

There used to be a great train that ran from San Francisco to San Diego, but it doesn't exist any more - everybody just likes to jump in their car and take the truck route. The romance that exists, the glamour, is merely someone else's creation... the person that is living the life is not necessarily glamorous. Jimi Hendrix always seemed like a very glamorous guy to me until I met him, and he was a sad guy, very unhappy. Spending months on the road - as a truck driver, or as a musician - is, for me, a very painful way to lead a life... you never get to know anybody, and it causes no end of strife, one way or another. Performers like Elton John can afford to be a little more glamorous, but Little Feat is a long way from being that kind of financial success.

Little Feat exposed!... Left to right: Bill Payne, Sam Clayton, Lowell George, Kenny Gradney, Paul Barrere (forget the accent grave) and Richie Hayward.



The pitter patter of
**LOWELL
GEORGE**
and his barefooted
LITTLE FEAT

It isn't romantic to cram into a studio and play a song twenty times to get it down on tape the way you want it...and it's no different in movies. I mean, how boring it must be for an actor to have to sit there between takes, for camera angles and lighting, etc.; then he has to go through the motions of, say, taking out a notebook and dialling a phone number about fifteen times before it's completed to the director's satisfaction. The boredom born of that sort of time-wasting...like you could cram six months work into an hour or two...or two years in the case of something like 'Cleopatra'. Oh boy, I bet that was something!

I heard a story about that: a friend of mine worked at a delicatessen called Greenblatts in Hollywood, and Elizabeth Taylor apparently had pastrami sandwiches flown out from Greenblatts all the way to Spain on a jet plane. He used to make up the order, a driver would come and carry them out to the airport, and off they'd go...well, that IS glamour, I have to admit that!!

ZZ: Yes, I think I would too; but coming back to more workaday matters, how did Clarence (White) get to sing 'Truck Stop Girl' on 'Untitled' before you recorded it?

LG: It was one of a number of demos we'd done, and Russ Titelman gave it to Gene Parsons, who passed it on to Clarence. I thought Clarence, who wasn't primarily a singer, did a magnificent job on that song...I mean, Clarence was one of the all-time innovative musicians.

ZZ: Are those songs written from personal experience...were you ever a truck drivin' man?

LG: No, but I worked in a gas station for a while, with a guy called Rick Cunha. (Note: this same gentleman has since moved on to play guitar on both Emmylou Harris' solo albums), while I was faking through college. He was the manager, and I looked after the pumps. I went to an art history test one day, and did very well without having read the book, so I said "Forget it!"

That stuff was always romantic - 'Six Days On The Road' and so on - there were railroad songs, and before that there were wagon train songs...modes of transport... 'Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal' - it's folk music, basically, and I really enjoy writing, playing, investigating that kind of music.

I studied Indian music with Ravi Shankar for about a year, and wanted to play sitar, because that's what was happening. Warren Klein (who used to be in the Fraternity of Man) studied with me, and in fact he still plays the sitar for several hours every day...he's been playing for five years now, and if he continues, in another ten years he'll be ready to play to an audience! That's the sort of time scale they work on...like his teacher played his first concert when he was forty five years old!

Indian music has been a real touchstone for me; I love Mexican and Bulgarian music, and Country & Western music too...the melody contained in those fields...all those notes between the notes, the elaborate glissandos that you don't find in most western music. The western scale has twelve notes, but the Indian scale has all the notes in between.

ZZ: Isn't the pedal steel guitar like that?

LG: Oh yeah; one of the reasons I would love to learn pedal steel is because it reaches all those notes. You can achieve a somewhat similar effect with the human voice too... Aretha Franklin and Mavis Staples and Ann Peebles - they've got tremendous voices. But I would have to sit down and study pedal steel for a couple of years to get to be any good on it, and I have too much work - as you've noticed.

I'm also very interested in electronics - in the technology behind the music. George Massinger, who's our engineer now, has really excited me in that direction, because he's shown me there is no set formula for making something sound good. For example, the Meters and 'Cissy Strut' - the snare drum is on Mars...no-one in their right mind would put a snare drum sound like that on a record, but they did, and it sounds great.

ZZ: How does Richie get that amazingly debauched drum sound, that he really started developing around 'Dixie Chicken'?

LG: Isn't it sleazy? Richie got a new set of drums about that time, which helped, and the tuning of the drums for the studio received a lot more attention on 'Dixie Chicken'...we spent time getting all the instruments to sound better. The first album we didn't get to spend too much time, the second one we got a little more, and by the third album, I said "Heck, let's make this one sound as good as we can make it sound". 'Dixie Chicken' is a combination of live, almost Hollywood style three hour sessions, and very long, complex, drawn out overdubs.

When I was with the Mothers, Frank wanted me to learn the whole repertoire of Mothers' albums...which at that point was five. I remember we spent five months learning 'Brown Shoes Don't Make It', and we played it only once. I mean it's a very difficult piece what with all the cues and everything.

You see, most of the records were edited from longer pieces...the tracks were cut into concise pieces - so everyone had to learn them from scratch again, to be able to play them as they appeared on the albums. Actually, I'm discovering more and more everyday that that's the way it should be done: 'Dixie Chicken' started out as bits and pieces of tape, and evolved into a song...same with 'Fat Man In The Bathtub' and 'Juliette'. Tape to me is like notepaper.

ZZ: Was this a change in methods of working that you introduced when you took over production?

LG: No, because I did it like that before. I did 'Cold, Cold, Cold' that way...in fact the initial track of that was cut in Richie Hayward's living room, and I just took the tape into the studio for everyone to play over. It wasn't entirely successful as it stood...it was about 15 minutes long, but I edited it down, snipped it up, and tried to make something out of what was essentially just a mindless piece of music.

ZZ: We were talking about the change in the instrumental sound on 'Dixie Chicken' and its greater complexity, but there's also much more attention being paid to the vocals from that point, isn't there?

LG: I really wanted to concentrate on

vocals. Some of the songs can be acclimatised to easily... 'Willin'', for example, is not a very difficult song to sing...but some of the songs are real tough for timing. What we are getting now, though, is a real flow between us all, because we are having fun. I used to be scared stiff, and all of a sudden, one day, I started having fun - I don't know why.

I saw the Who, and really concentrated on them in Glasgow, and from all indications, they really do have a great time. Keith is bonkers...he plays drums like no other drummer has ever played, and it looks like a lot of fun, and with the kind of space that's available to him from the other musicians, he can get away with it. We have six pieces, and everything has to be more symphonic, but it looked like a great deal of fun, and I have to admire him for that.

I was tired of being scared of going on stage and performing in front of an audience. Then it suddenly changed at a Who gig we did at Anaheim Stadium - a parking lot full of punks and hoodlums looking for a punch-up...is that what you call it?...everybody was preparing for malevolence of one sort or another, but we went out and had a great time. Mid-way through, someone threw a toilet roll in the air in a great arc, and Kenny grabbed a note - the right one of course - and threw it right back at him, and everybody went "Uh uh...these guys have got something!" Basically, though, very few people come to gigantic gigs to hear the music. It's not my favourite performing situation...I'd rather do four or five concert hall dates than a stadium.

ZZ: Do you enjoy touring much, or do you feel more at home in the studio?

LG: At one point I was more inquisitive about studio work than the stage, but now it's more or less equal. Being on the road and working from a hotel room. Mind you, it doesn't bother me; as long as I can get up on stage in front of an audience and have a PA that works, I guess I'm happy. Every night is a new challenge for a new expression. We never play the same way twice - I will constantly be changing the phrasing of songs, which leads to trouble some times, but I would prefer to do it that way, so that it doesn't become done by rote.

Pharmacology has entered into it occasionally to keep the boredom at bay. Actually, it's amazing what a big part pharmacology has played in music. In LA the Byrds were the start of the psychedelic revolution, and all this new music suddenly arrived.

ZZ: Right...John Phillips was in a suit playing folk songs, then he went off to the Virgin Islands, and came back looking like a scarecrow.

LG: The Mothers, when they were unknown, everybody wanted them to change their name...it was too far out. Frank was told "I don't know how the group's going to be successful if you keep saying 'fuck' on stage and playing so loud", yet later on it transpired that Frank has talent. Van Dyke played with him for a while, he was on a few cuts on the first album - he resigned because they used to make him play in front of Billy Mundi's bass drum. It's really funny to see where these folks evolved from...Clarence White was in the Kentucky Colonels



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- who were great - and he didn't smoke dope until he was way past that. It was all sort of intertwined - groups like like the Standells came out of that era.

ZZ: What exactly was your involvement with the Standells?

LG: Oh boy, if you ever mention that, I'll really...oh no...oh, oh...

ZZ: Come on, give us a break...the Standells are like semi-legendary figures over here, people will be interested.

LG: Well, I wasn't on any records. What happened was a friend of mine, John Fleck, was playing bass, and he asked if I wanted a gig. Now I'd heard one or two records on the radio, but I knew nothing about the group. So anyway, I showed up, and said "What do I do?", and they said "Sing and play guitar". I only did about six or seven dates with them, and on one gig these Chicano girls, about 14 or 15 years old, showed up and stood around the door asking about Dickie Dodds, who was the drummer and singer previously. They found out that I'd replaced him, and I was in fear of my life for the next four gigs, because these girls kept showing up. Shades of Charlie Manson! I envisaged being attacked in my sleep...I swear to God, I didn't dare stay in a hotel because I thought they were after me; I mean, they were real...not activists exactly, but they weren't averse to carrying razor blades in their coiffures. Whew!!!

(As if to wipe away such unpleasant memories, Lowell professes further refreshments, to the accompaniment of the superb Paraguayan harp music that he'd been listening to earlier).

LG: When I break out this music, it drives the band nuts, because they want to hear Stanley Clarke.

ZZ: That's something I was going to ask you about, actually. What sort of stuff do the various Little Feats listen to, because there's a whole lot of influences in your music.

LG: Everybody, everything; every musical note that we've run into is somehow included, or if it hasn't been, it will be. Most writers - songwriters and authors - condense many stories into one to make an event more accessible. It's like daytime TV in most of the States - soap operas where every day there's an abortion or a divorce, and it goes on and on, and I wondered where they get all the material - and of course it's just a condensation of many people's lives. The idea is to create another reality, and some folks get very depressed about it...Tom Waits can get very depressed...he's one of my favourite songwriters.

He does repeat himself, but he's real funny. I was standing outside the Troubadour one night, and at the time I was really into cigars - sit down in a restaurant, have a meal and a glass of wine, and a cigar - because I thought it was groovy. I'm over it now, I think. Anyway, I had this cigar - about a dollar's worth - in my pocket, and Waits was sitting outside the Troubadour, looking like a transient, wearing the same T-shirt he'd been wearing for four days...he was playing inside that night, and there he was, sitting on the pavement rolling dice. He said "Hey man, how much is that cigar worth, 50 cents?",

and I said "No, man, this is a dollar cigar". "I'm gonna bet you 50 cents against that cigar"...and he rolled a seven, so I lost the cigar, and I knew from that moment he had something going. He's really a character.

The kind of humour that Waits has is very cosmopolitan. He does great stuff - one time he tried to give this hobo a pair of shoes, but the guy wouldn't take them, he had too much pride; so Waits threw them in a trash bin, and walked away across the street and watched as the hobo took them out of the trash bin - which is quite interesting in this day and age.

ZZ: Why do you think it's taken so long for Little Feat to achieve any really tangible success, while groups who've followed in your wake are making it?

LG: What is success? To me it's music...action paintings...if you put the paint in the right place at the right time, it happens. Then there's people like Charles Mingus roaming around playing lounges and stuff, and maybe they're happy - I would hope so. I work hard, and the rest of the group works hard, so it may happen - other than that it's really down to trying to find the best way to have a good time. We don't try to compromise...I use my own ears as the criterion - if I don't feel good doing it, I don't know how anybody else could feel good hearing it.

ZZ: Looking back, do you feel that your ears have done a good job?

LG: Well, attitudes to things like that vary with the passing seasons. I mean, how would you like to go back to your senior year composition. Have you ever done that? Embarrassing, isn't it?

ZZ: It's a bit different though. All your work with Little Feat has been work of some maturity...

LG: This band goes back five years, to the very beginning when Bill and I got together. I wrote 'Willin'' way back in '69...

ZZ: That's hardly adolescent work though...

LG: Way back then it sure was, I had no idea. I mean...the pieces of paper I've signed. It's like "All the money I have made...", and Randy Newman laughs...it's tough...

ZZ: Is that what inspired you to record 'On The Way Down'?

LG: That's a very good song, and it's also very typical, that's the status quo of the music business. There's a lot of people that could be aimed at, but you also always run into folks like Bonnie Raitt and Jackson Browne who don't care...real folks, who aren't star struck. Being on the road is tough...being in the studio is tough. Sometimes you work all night to get a track, and nothing happens...that's the way it goes. That's something that at most beginning musicians can't live with...they can't stand the idea of not being successful first shot, and it takes a long time, it really does.

And with that parting shot, the wise old man of rock'n'roll made his excuses and stumbled off in search of sleep, or something, while Chalkie and I, still suffering from the effects of his hospitality, lurched out into the early evening sunlight, in search of the next train home. (Just like Needsy!) Paul Kendall

It came as no great surprise to me that Ian Matthews should come quite so high in the recent poll concerning who you'd like to read about, and it's additionally a great relief that so much of our audience, at least the ones who write, want to know more about those who came to fame some years ago rather than those up and coming. I'm with you, although I have my doubts about some of the other people listed in the masthead...(Bitchy, John, bitchy...who can you mean?). Right, back to Ian. What you'll be reading was done mostly during Ian's long contractless sojourn following the 'Bear' album. As I recall, Ian, the justly famed Monty Smith and myself limped through London in a taxi, heading towards Knaphill, that bastion of sanity which is close enough to London to stay in touch with what's happening, but far enough away to remain uncontaminated, unlike some other places I know. (Really, John old chap, this snide jingoism must cease...please get down to the meat of the matter). Due only to the fact that Monty (at the time press officer for Elektra) continually thrust cans of beer into my sweaty paw, I refrained from asking too many questions which might form part of the interview. However, one item which might be of interest is that Ian was once offered the chance to join Steely Dan, while Richard Thompson was asked to join the Eagles. The reasons why each of them refused remain unstated, but it's comforting to note that the very best British musicians, particularly those with a certain American bias to some of their music, are appreciated to that extent by their more successful (commercially) American peers. With the preamble over, let's start with some short items relating to Ian's career with the Pyramid and Fairport.

If you've read your previous Zigzag piece on Ian Matthews, you'll remember that the Pyramid was termed a 'Lincolnshire surfing group', who were extant during the mid to late sixties. One of the members of the group, Steve Hiett, cropped up again later in Ian's career as the photographer who took the pictures on the 'Matthews' Southern Comfort' album.

ZZ: Presumably nobody else from that band was of note, apart from yourself.

IM: At the time, they were all of note...the band was mainly three singers, me, Steve, and Al Jackson. Not the Al Jackson, of course, Al Jackson the furniture designer. We had a backing band of drums, bass, keyboards and lead guitar, so it was a pretty hefty unit. At that time we were managed by Jonathan Weston, who manages Shawn Phillips now. We got a record deal with Deram, and they put out 'Summer Of Last Year' with, I think, 'Summer Evening' on the other side, both written by Steve Hiett.

ZZ: I read that somebody from Pyramid suggested you join the Fairports...

IM: It was all coincidence - Pyramid had broken up, and Tony Hall was in charge of Deram at that time. For some reason, Steve was in Tony's office, and Tyger called Tony asking if he knew of a singer, because Fairport wanted one. Steve said he knew someone, but Al Jackson wasn't in when he called! No, not really...

ZZ: You started out as Ian Macdonald, and I've heard several reasons why you changed it to Matthews. One was that



GOIN' BACK WITH IAN MATTHEWS

it was your real name, and your mother remarried or something, and there's another which said that Judy Dyble (original Fairport lady singer) went off with Ian McDonald of King Crimson.

IM: That's the real reason - I didn't want people to think it was me! In fact they're both true, because my real name is Ian Matthews Macdonald, a double barrelled surname, and my parents dropped the Matthews. So all I did was drop the Macdonald, and bring back the Matthews.

The first Fairport Convention record was a single, 'If I Had A Ribbon Bow', a song from pre war years, which Ian recalled as having been discovered in Joe Boyd's collection of jazz records. Oddly enough, it was on Track Records (604020, by the way), and was produced by Joe Boyd for the legendary Witchseason Productions, while the B-side was written by Ian ("I wrote two verses lyrically") and Richard Thompson. The reasons for signing with Track seem vague, as are the reasons for leaving after one single. Just before Track leaves the story for good, 'If I Had A Ribbon Bow' was also included on Backtrack 2, one of a series of fourteen budget albums, featuring mainly the Who and Jimi Hendrix, but with a small variety of other artists thrown in as well. They're probably deleted.

Fairport then moved to Polydor,

apparently taking with them the B-side of the single, 'If (Stomp)', a pleasantly lightweight jugbandlike affair, which appears on their first album, devastatingly titled 'Fairport Convention'. There are, of course, no original members left in the new Fairport group, but the original lot lined up as Ian, Richard Thompson, Tyger Hutchings, Simon Nicol, the late Martin Lamble, and Judy Dyble. Their album was quite adventurous for its period (1968) including some intriguing song writing credits, like Emmett Rhodes, whose 'Time Will Show The Wiser' was taken from the 'Merrygoround' album on A&M. Seemingly, Hutchings was a great seeker after new and interesting songs at that stage, and of course he still may be, and he gave the 'Merrygoround' album to Ian, who added the information that Rhodes was now an engineer at the old Countryside Studio, which had changed its name to the annexe. Interestingly enough, that track is the one chosen by Richard to represent that first album on his excellent (guitar/vocal) compilation. Then there's a couple of Joni Mitchell songs, 'I Don't Know Where I Stand' and 'Chelsea Morning', which were not released in this country by their author until a year after the Fairport versions. "I think Tyger wrote to people in the States and got demos, and he used to do the same with Dylan songs". Shrewd,

Then there are a couple of writing credits which include members of the group along with other persons. For example, 'Decameron' was written by Paul Ghosh (pronounced gauche rather than gosh) and Andrew Horvitch. "Most of Fairport lived at a place in Muswell Hill, although I didn't, and they were two students that lived in the house who have subsequently vanished to my knowledge. George Painter, Painter the poet, wrote the words to 'The Lobster', although I don't know whether that's what he called it".

Other than that, there's 'One Sure Thing', written by Harvey Brooks and Jim Glover, who were once part of a Verve group called Jim and Jean, who had two albums released, 'Changes' and 'People's World', from which this particular song came. Also involved on the record side with Jim and Jean were Al Kooper and Paul Harris, among others. Perhaps the most interesting credit goes to Bob Dylan and Ben Carruthers, who apparently co-wrote a song called 'Jack O' Diamonds'.

"Tyger heard that song in a TV play, although I don't think the play had anything to do with Dylan. It was about '66, '67, and Tyger heard the song and wrote to the BBC, who said Carruthers had written the words, and Dylan the music, or the other way round. I don't know which - I was very flexible in those days!" Just by chance, a lowly employee of the Acme Transcription Service who was working on this interview possesses a copy of the same song as performed by Ben Carruthers and the Deep, produced by Shel Talmy, and on Parlophone in 1965. Small world...

Ian's role on this album was that of lead singer, although not on all the tracks. I like best his middle eight passages in 'Chelsea Morning', slightly echoed, and at a very different tempo to Dyble's lead on the verses, while he is also credited with playing Jew's harp. "That's the studio thing - they just wanted me to look good, because I didn't play anything else at the time. I did play that on 'M1 Breakdown', and I really cut my mouth open too. I went to listen to the playback with blood dripping down my face!"

I reckon the album's quite nice, obviously a testing ground for what was to follow, but quite a milestone in its soft rock sound, which English groups were still finding difficult to imitate at that point. It's been re-released several times, most recently on the Polydor Flashback series (2384 047)

Then again, unaccountably, the Fairports moved to Island, presumably because of Witchseason's increasing ties in that direction, actually. Their first album there was the cover story of Zigzag No. 1, 'What We Did On Our Holidays', which remains one of their finest as far as I'm concerned. Apart from his vocalising, Ian was also playing congas, as the fine picture on the rear of the sleeve demonstrates, but with the entry of Sandy Denny, his days with the group were numbered. "Sandy brought a new kind of feeling into the band, and they were starting to do traditional things. I went along with it so far, until it came to a point where they arranged a session (for the next album) to do a traditional thing, and didn't tell me, which was going a bit far...because they knew I'd object".

The only song Ian had a part in writing on 'Holidays' was 'Book Song', on which he was the lyricist. It was

rumoured that the song was about a bird who worked in a library, apparently a misconception. "No, it's about my wife, although she wasn't my wife at that point. She didn't work in a library - I just compared life as being a book". It's a very good song, musically the work of the inevitable Thompson, although to say it's the best track on the album (which contains, for example, 'Meet On The Ledge') may be going a bit far. Perhaps the most fascinating track on the record is 'Mr. Lacey', a Hutchings song praising the work of Professor Bruce Lacey, a well known British looney of the time, although I haven't heard of him for years. "He was a crazy guy, a friend of Tyger's. Tyger wrote this song about this crazy professor who had three robots, and we said 'yeah, yeah'... and then Tyger said 'I'm bringing him down to play the solo'. And it turned out that the solo was the three robots walking about, making that noise. Oh, and he came down in a space suit too!"

Which brings us to half way through 1969, when, following the tragic accident in which Martin Lamble was killed, 'Unhalfbricking' was released. Ian was only on one track, the epic 'Percy's Song', probably a song everyone knows, although few without this album would know the title. After making that track, Fairport were reduced to a five piece when Ian left during the early part of the year. "I felt like a fart in a thunderstorm, but it was mutual. They wanted me to leave, and I wanted to leave. But not as much as they wanted me to leave. I have regrets about leaving, but at the same time I'm glad I did, because the next two albums were just amazing albums that I could never have taken part in. I could have taken part in some of 'Unhalfbricking', but 'Liege & Lief' was just way beyond what I was into. I regret having to leave a successful band. The time I spent was completely invaluable".

There's no intention to dwell further on the story of Fairport Convention, which is something for another day. Let's just mention the numbers of the relevant Island LPs, which, believe me, you owe it to yourself to possess. 'Holidays' is on Island ILPS 9092, while 'Unhalfbricking' is ILPS 9102. Should you be really flush and a completist to boot, then 'History Of Fairport Convention', a double album (ICD4) is a good buy. It contains a side and a half of the material we've been talking about, although on much of it, you can't hear Ian too well. The record sleeve bears a tarted up Frame tree, which follows the group up to about 1972

So there's Ian Matthews standing around in spring 1969, when along came this bloke called Steve Barby. In fact he wasn't a bloke, he was two blokes, Ken Howard and Alan Blaikley, who'd had hits with Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick & Tich, and with the Herd, among others, and were looking for a new hit vehicle, which they saw in Ian. Of course, they were right about that, as we shall see... After being turned down by Atlantic, Island and Reprise (probably Island first, in view of his previous contractual position), our subject signed with Uni. Never heard of it? Not surprising, because it's long defunct. For its short life, Uni was a subsidiary of MCA in this country, which Ian reckons hadn't even started when he signed, and which folded shortly after he left. What an influence

he must have had!

In 1970, on UNLS 108, 'Matthews' Southern Comfort' was released. Despite appearances, it was in fact a solo album, titled after a song by Sylvia Tyson (nee Fricker) called 'Southern Comfort', which appears on the next album. "It wasn't necessarily my intention to have a band called Matthews' Southern Comfort. The album was going to be solo, and we were going to see what happened". In fact, by the time the album came out, a band had been assembled, although only Gordon Huntley on pedal steel remained from the album. Not unnaturally, there are several familiar names from the Fairports and thereabouts involved on the record, like Thompson, Hutchings and Nicol, plus Gerry Conway on drums. ("I met him because he was in Eclection, and Richard and Simon knew Trevor (Lucas) and George (Hultgren, now Kajanus) and Mike Rosen very well"). The ubiquitous Hutchings was again instrumental in the acquisition of Huntley - "When I did that album, I was looking for a steel player, and I said 'Help, help, Tyger, who shall I use?', and he said 'Well, I did a session last week with a steel player called Gordon Huntley'. Gordon had played in country bands, and he thought differently from the rest of us about stage presentation and stuff like that, although he adapted eventually".

Of the others, Roger Coulam, who plays keyboards throughout, was with the original Blue Mink, and Ian first heard him on a Rab Noakes album on Decca, which was apparently one of many sessions which Mr. Coulam did at that stage. Pete Wilsher, who plays on one track, is from various British country bands; Dolly Collins (sister of Shirley, now Mrs. Hutchings) had done gigs with Fairport, and was the only pipe organ player that Ian knew; Poli Palmer was a friend from Blossom Toes (anyone know what he's doing these days?); and Marc Ellington is a perennial folkie who has several albums on the market, although I expect most of them are in the bargain bins by now. Actually, his albums are well worth investigating apart from Marc's own talents because they nearly always boast credits for such as Richard Thompson, Dave Pegg, Chris Hillman, Dave Mattacks, Ian, Sneaky Pete, Huntley, Donaldson, B. J. Cole, Conway, Denny, etc.

Finally getting to the music, how about a concise answer to the question "What do you think of the album now, Mr. M.?" "Rubbish!! I like 'Dream Song', but there wasn't much of any direction to the album. Howard and Blaikley were new managers to me, and I was kind of feeling my way. They took me on the understanding that I was going to do some of their songs, and we kind of sold ourselves to the record company on that basis. But then I started to change my mind, 'cos I didn't particularly like their songs, which was reflected on the next album, when I didn't do any!" I have to confess that I had distinct dreads about re-listening to the album after a gap of several years, but it seems to have mellowed, and there were only a couple of cringeworthy tracks, 'The Castle Far' and 'What We Say'. The amazing Barby has five and a half writing credits, Ian himself has five, Richard Thompson has a song called 'A Commercial Proposition', which I don't think is recorded elsewhere, while a couple of odd credits go to 'Hamwood',

another compilation name, of Albert Hammond and Mike Hazlewood, and to Frances Cornford, a lady poet, who fascinatingly (!) loses her credit when the song in question, 'The Watch', makes it to the 'Best Of' album.

Most of the songs seem OK now, and the backings are pretty nice, to the extent that I'd recommend purchase if you can get it for a quid. The number is Uni UNLS 108, and please note that one of the songs, 'I've Lost You', was later done by Elvis, although Ian was less than complimentary about the great man's rendition. It was the first of three albums which came out by Ian in 1970.

Appropriately enough, the second album was called 'Second Spring' (UNLS 112), and this time featured Matthews' Southern Comfort as a band. As mentioned before, Huntley was there on pedal steel, and three members were plucked from a group named Harsh Reality. "They had one album on Phillips in 1969. It was horrible - it had all bodies on the front with blood running out of them". Mark Griffiths (lead guitar), Roger Swallow (drums), who later appeared at the time of Plainsong, and Carl Barnwell (guitar, songwriting), a Californian, were the three, but Swallow only stayed a couple of months before he was replaced by Ray Duffy, a Scottish Lutonian, who had been in Marmalade and now drums for Gallagher and Lyle. The original bass player was one Peter Watkins, a student, but he also didn't last long, and was replaced by Andy Leigh, who had been in Spooky Tooth at some part of their tempestuous career. "Yeah, but I knew Andy from way back, when he played with the Pyramid, which I forgot to mention", (and I forgot to edit in). Subsequently, Leigh was in Denny Laine's Electric String Band, and later had a solo LP out called 'Magician' (UK Polydor, US Sire).

It's almost inevitable that this record should eclipse its predecessor, if only because all the musicians involved must have felt rather more involved. Also, Steve Barby's only role is that of 'co-ordination', whatever that may be, and he had no hand in the song-writing, which for the first time begins to show Ian's interest in the under-rated and obscure, or 'unexposed' as Jerry Gilbert would have it, American writers. Sylvia Tyson's 'Southern Comfort' is well done, if a little complicated, while James Taylor's 'Something In The Way She Moves', which must surely have been pinched as a title by George Harrison, and the magnificent 'Darcy Farrow' by Steve Gillette and Tom Campbell, after which Ian named his daughter Darcy, end the record, and all are adventurous, both musically and probably from the point of view of obscurity, as this was before James Taylor really happened. Ian's own writing was also improving fast, and his two tracks, 'The Ballad Of Obay Ramsey', a very genuine and tasteful tribute to the banjo player from White Lightning, and 'Tale Of The Trial', a bizarre story of weird people, easily prove the point. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Carl Barnwell, who also contributes two tracks, one of which seems obscure (to say the least), and the other dirgelike. The other two tracks are Ian's arrangement of traditional songs, a misogynist's delight in 'Jinkson Johnson' and 'Blood Red Roses', which seems to owe its inclusion more to the



Late 1968 line-up of Fairport Convention, during the time 'What We Did On Our Holidays' was being recorded: Left to right: Ian Matthews, Simon Nicol, Tyger Hutchings, Martin Lamble, Sandy Denny and Richard Thompson.

fact that it acts as a showcase for vocal harmonies than anything else.

Filling in a few of my knowledge gaps produced the following information. Steve Gillette was (and is) a folkie, who originated from the East Coast, and followed a parallel path, according to Ian, to John Denver. I believe I've recently heard that he has an album out on a small private label. Anybody know? Tom Paley, who crops up in my elderly Elektra collection, plays banjo on the 'Obay Ramsey' track... "He was with the New Deal String Band, and the New Lost City Ramblers. He's pretty old, and it took us a long time to do that one, because he was used to frailing, and we wanted picking on that particular track". Roger Churchyard, who plays fiddle (and very well too) on a couple of tracks, was acquired because not only was he the sole English country fiddle player Ian knew of, he was also supposed to be the best. Roger was apparently at one time in Country Fever, which also contained the great Albert Lee, now, boys and girls, of the Hot Band. Another single track addition was Martin Jenkins of Dando Shaft, a band vaguely in the folk/country/rock area around that period. As well as playing mandolin and fiddle on the first Plainsong album, Martin nearly joined that group, but he's another one who seems to have subsequently vanished.

At some enormous speed, the band were back in the studio again. The big result must be said to be 'Woodstock', which was a huge hit, getting to number one in October/November 1970. Presumably from the same sessions came the final Matthews' Southern Comfort LP, the reasonably titled 'Later That Same Year' (MCA MKPS 2015), which for my money moved in two opposite directions. Of the five songs which came from outside the group, four are excellent, while the other is only all right, and while Ian's songs generally make it, Carl Barnwell's three compositions seem of interminable length, a couple clocking in at over six minutes. 'Woodstock' was omitted for some reason.

Of the outside songs, Carol King's 'To Love', written with Gerry Goffin, can be found on 'Writer', the album, before 'Tapestry', and I would hope that all good Zigzagers know that 'Brand New Tennessee Waltz' is not only on the first Jesse Winchester album, but also on his most recent. Al Anderson, who wrote 'Mare, Take Me Home' and 'When She Smiles (She Makes The Sun Shine)', which are both quite excellent songs, was in the Wildweeds, a group onto which Ian claims to have turned John Peel, and also in NRBB, a previous member of which was Steve Ferguson, later a

soloist on Asylum and a helper on the latest Poco album. The last song in this category is 'Tell Me Why', the work of a certain Mr. Young, who's a friend of Childs', I believe.

Additional musicians used were Roger Coulam again, a percussion sessionman called Tristan Frye on vibes, Keith Nelson, an American banjo player from the Ramblers, an English bluegrass group, and one Timothy Kraemer, a keyboard player who took care of string arrangements, and was introduced by Howard and Blaikley. Higgy was the roadie - but to get a mention he must have done something special? "Yeah, he was totally useless!" It's worth noting if you're interested in acquiring this album that the American is rather more available as a cut out, and rather cheaper at that, as all the three MSC albums so far mentioned are long deleted. The US copy of this one had 'Woodstock' substituted for Carl Barnwell's 'Jonah'. Ian felt the latter was a good track, and that it was the one removed to make way for the hit simply because it was slow.

In fact, before this LP hit the streets, Ian Matthews had left the band which bore his name, due some, said, to his inability to cope with being a star after getting to the very top of the charts. "Top of the Pops was OK, but it was

just everything else... I was very vulnerable at that time, and easily led. I just couldn't cope with everything that came along with a hit record, or I didn't want to know about it, and it wouldn't go away - photo sessions, stupid questions all the time". But wasn't it exactly what you'd been aiming for, to be number one? "It wasn't what I was aiming for. It was nice to have a hit record, and I don't regret that - I thought it was what I was aiming for, but when I got there it wasn't. I think had I been prepared, I could have dealt with it, but I just didn't know what having a hit record entailed".

Was it unexpected, taking a Joni Mitchell song concerning an event like Woodstock with huge current affairs potential? "Oh yeah. It didn't sound like a hit record, did it?" Mmm... seemingly, the split between Ian and the rest of the band was amicable - "They didn't ask me to leave, which makes a change! But the 'Woodstock' thing wasn't the only reason. I considered us by then to be a very shallow band musically, and I thought we'd gone as far as we could. I like to think I'm usually right in these matters, but obviously they thought I was wrong, because it reflects on them if I'm right. I think that their subsequent marvellous career more or less indicates who was on the right track!" In fact, Southern Comfort signed with Harvest, with Carl Barnwell leading the group, or rather assuming the position of front man, and after one or two albums, (Three actually, John), the group slipped into the great vinyl vat. It is just (and only just) worth noting that the great Martin Hall (a smile, a song and a transcription) produced a group called Colonel Bagshot, who recorded a Carl Barnwell song in 1971, and CB may even have been in the group. Of the others, little has been heard since, although Gordon Huntley sometimes turns up on records.

After having a number one, you might have thought that Ian would have some trouble leaving his record company, but no..."This new guy took over, Mike Maitland. I remember this meeting we had - we wanted to do an American tour, and Mike Maitland, who had just taken over from Brian Broly, said we couldn't; or we wanted financial backing, which was in the contract, and Maitland said 'We're in the course of changing things round, and we can't do it at the moment'. Howard and Blaikley went in at two o'clock in the afternoon, and came out at four with a release. No ties, a complete release". Story book stuff...

The only remaining item on the agenda was the 'Best Of Matthews' Southern Comfort LP, which didn't come out until about 1974. At the time of its release, Darcy Matthews had a letter published in 'Sounds', which said something to the effect that whoever compiled the album should be encased in concrete and thrown in the Thames. As Darcy was only about two years old at the time, it doesn't take too much to assume that her father was the letter's author.

Which brings us to the end of this chapter. As we're only a third of the way through the transcript, and there are eight albums to go, I wouldn't like to promise you that it'll all be finished next time... in fact if I try really hard, I'll probably manage to spin it out past Christmas.

John Tobler

Kris Needs corners Cyril Jordan, founder and leader of the Flamin' Groovies, in room 315 of the Agnew Hotel, and produces his tape recorder.

CJ: Is it switched on? OK man, before we start, let's get one thing straight: Nick Kent most emphatically did not play on 'Slow Death'. We used to regard Nick as a good friend, but lately he's been putting us through some weird trips - like what he said in his Zigzag interview, and not turning up in Paris...

ZZ: Hang on a minute! Are you saying Nick Kent didn't record with you when you were here in 1972?

CJ: He certainly didn't play guitar on 'Slow Death' - that was me and James... and James is kind of uptight about Nick spreading the word that he (Nick) had to deputise because James had a broken hand. I mean, that's pure fiction, man! Nick used to hang around with us a lot, and he used to jam with us - and he was on the B-side of 'Slow Death', 'Tallahassee Lassie'... but his contribution was a few handclaps.

ZZ: And what's this about Paris?

CJ: Well, when we were here last November, recording the album, we had a gig in Paris - and we naturally wanted Nick to come along... so we got Phonogram to organise it. Then Nick didn't show, and we assumed that Phonogram had fxxed up and not given him the air ticket. Then we heard that Nick definitely had the ticket...

ZZ: What did he do with it?

CJ: Don't ask me! He was talking about ways that record companies supported his habit in that Zigzag interview... maybe there was some connection - but that's only conjecture on my part. We were pretty worried at the time - we thought his plane had crashed.

ZZ: You must have mixed feelings about being back in England after the non-success of the 1972 assault.

CJ: Oh no, man... it's great to be back. I love England and only wish we could stay longer - but we're fixing up a full tour for later in the year. No, man - England is great... we had some riotous times here... it's only the mention of Walthamstow, where we used to live, that sends shivers across my breast!

ZZ: The mention of Walthamstow's enough to send shivers across anyone's breast! Let's get onto the new album: I think it's great... it's all the sparkle of the sixties...

CJ: Are we throwbacks from a lost age, or what? Now, you like all that sixties beat-boom stuff, the same as we do - but a lot of people put us down for it as though we're into a parody... a sort of Liverpool Sha Na Na, or something. That's crap, of course; all our music comes from the heart, not the wallet... I mean, if we'd been prepared to compromise, we could have broken out years ago, but I'm simply not prepared to grind out music that doesn't thrill me to the marrow. My favourite albums are things like 'Meet The Beatles' and the first Kinks LP, so if I've been playing those to death for over ten years, obviously it's going to have an effect on what I write... and we've inevitably

got the feel and melodic structures of that era into some of our songs - which is great, as far as I'm concerned! I just wish a few more groups felt the same way... I mean you just don't get hit records in the class of 'A Hard Day's Night' anymore, do you? The only single I've bought in recent years has been 'I Can Help' by Billy Swan.

ZZ: Are you happy with the sound of the album?

CJ: We couldn't be happier: I mean, one of the reasons we haven't recorded seriously since 1972 is that Dave Edmunds spoiled us. He knows the music, and he knows the feel, and Rockfield is the only place for us now.

ZZ: How does Edmunds get that sound?

CJ: I wish I knew! All I know is that Dave Edmunds has strange, strange powers... and ideas light years beyond the grasp of normal producers. We took Dave's album over to Brian Wilson's house - and he just totally flipped over 'Da Doo Ron Ron'... he'd play about twenty seconds and then put the needle back to the start - and then he played it about a dozen times, straight off - shouting things like "That's God playing drums!" When we got there, he'd just finished the basic track of 'Palisades Park' (on '15 Big Ones'), but I heard the album just before we came over, and I don't think it shows his real power... I was rather disappointed, especially after listening to some of the stuff he was working on. I mean, he's so good, it's unbelievable! He showed me some tunes about two years ago, which just knocked me out: one was called 'Get Your Girl And Go Riding', and it had all the amazing quality that made those mid-sixties Beach Boys singles so powerful and lasting.

ZZ: Is he a mate of yours then?

CJ: We know him, yes. The reason we went to see him recently was that he kept telling us about a version of 'Johnny B. Goode' he'd worked out... in a minor key! He played it for us on his piano, and it was sensational... the Beach Boys were going to do it, and he wanted to know what we (George, James and me) thought of it.

ZZ: What happened to it?

CJ: Nothing! I assume that nobody around him encouraged him to work on it, and it just got shelved - but you've got to hear it... it's so weird. I mean, Chuck Berry in a minor key! But it works. I think it would be a number one record if he got round to doing it.

ZZ: Has he heard your album?

CJ: No - we haven't had a chance to play it to him. We finished the album last year, but only got copies a few weeks ago... it's not even out in the States yet! Doesn't come out till the end of the month (July). It's hard to relate to people raving about stuff you did 8 months ago... I mean, the album is old dogshit to us now.

ZZ: It might be to you mate! Are Phonogram putting out a single?

CJ: Yes, 'Don't Lie To Me' will be released in England around the end of July. Actually, when we came to base ourselves in England in 1972, the original idea was to release single after single after single, like the old sixties groups used to do... one every two months or so.



Adrian Boot

"We're just trying to bring a little innocence back to rock'n'roll"

KRIS NEEDS TALKS WITH CYRIL JORDAN OF THE FLAMIN GROOVIES

ZZ: Why didn't you?

CJ: Well, 'Slow Death' was the first, and that went phuttl! The BBC would not touch it, and it got a pretty cool reception... so we released 'Married Woman'.

ZZ: Great single!

CJ: Yeah - so great that it sold less than 400 copies! Then, they felt that whatever else we recorded "Lacked magic"... so when they flew us home for Christmas, they didn't ask us to come back. It was an experiment that failed.

ZZ: I heard that you caused a few cardiacs at UA during that time - huge phone bills and expenses, and always causing havoc in the office...

CJ: We used to do things like cello-

tape telephones down, tape up drawers and stuff like that; we were the bad boys always hanging around and preventing people from working, but all the UA groups used to do that... you couldn't walk six inches without tripping over a flaked-out Hawkwind, or bumping into a Brinsley... UA encouraged a family atmosphere, and it was always a happy, friendly place to hang out.

ZZ: In fact, some of the new album is old tracks cut during 1972 - is that so?

CJ: Yes. The first night we went to Rockfield, we cut 'Slow Death', which was the first UA single, and 'Shake Some Action', which is the title track of the new album, of course. And we also did 'You Tore Me Down' at that session.

ZZ: Most of the tracks, for instance 'You Tore Me Down', have a really fat sound to them... can you give us a rundown on some of the recording techniques?

CJ: Well, on that track, we put down a basic track of drums, bass and acoustic guitar - and then Dave got me to play that same acoustic guitar part another nine times - all on the same track. Not on separate tracks, so they can be mixed down to give a wide sound, but 10 layers of guitar built up on one track - all superimposed on each other... and that was just the acoustic guitar! Then Dave popped some echo on it, let it leak onto another track just a little, and before you know it, you have this great solid wall of sound! I mean, he is so good with his basic ideas,

and use of the console, that the whole album took only nine hours to mix.

ZZ: 'Shake Some Action' itself sounds like a massive overdub job...

CJ: Yes, that descending phrase I play on lead guitar is overdubbed about six times - as well as which, Dave likes to have remote microphones scattered around the studio, to fatten up certain passages. There again, 'She Said Yeah' was just cut live; the only overdub was the lead guitar part, which James and I played simultaneously. Dave put leakage on that part too - so if you could isolate our guitar parts it would sound as if we were playing in a canyon. I tell you, man, I'm just knocked out with the overall sound of that album. If you play it on a really good hi-fi, it's almost too powerful - you have to tape pennies on the pickup to keep it in the groove!

ZZ: What about the vocals?

CJ: We've always doubled vocals. We tripped them on 'Supersnazz', but that was going too far, we found.

ZZ: I've got to say that my favourite track is the last one - 'I Can't Hide'.

CJ: Well, there's a strange story to that one...a full moon trip, right? The arrangement of that song was a bit difficult to pull together for some reason; it took a long time for George (Alexander) and David (Wright) to remember it...so it was a case of George, David and me bashing away until we'd got it right. Well, then the three of us made 14 attempts to get the basic track down, but one of us ballsed it up on every shot...until the 15th take seemed to be going perfectly. But then David missed the stop at the end...and we all raised our hands in horror, going "Oh no! It can't be". Edmunds had automatically stopped the tape and couldn't have heard me saying "OK, let's take it from there...1-2-3-4"...and he only turned the tape back on as we started playing again. Well, we went in the booth to listen to the playback, and where we'd stopped and started, we heard this weird baroom boom sort of steel guitar sound...and we all looked at each other in disbelief! What it was, was the guitar distorted by the tape being shut off, and the tape starting to roll again! So we kept that part in, and elongated the ending.

ZZ: I thought that must've been a 10 foot bass guitar or something! Was that song the most difficult to record?

CJ: Oh yes. To give you some idea of how the rest of it came together, we cut and mixed 'Let The Boy Rock and Roll', 'Miser y!', 'Yes It's True!' and 'St. Louis Blues' all the first night we were there.

ZZ: Before we leave the album, can you tell us about the sleeve?

CJ: Sure. The front was shot in City Road, here in London, right across the road from the tailor who made our suits. We'd always wanted to dress like that, but you can't find tailors who can capture that style and spirit in America. We just wanted to get back to the flash of that era, which were the best years, as far as I'm concerned. Of course, we went through a lot of hassle with the record company, because they said the shots were too dark - but we won them over

in the end. We had the same problems with UA in 1972; we wanted darkness and atmosphere for our singles picture sleeves, and they objected on the basis that nobody could see what we looked like. But you look at all the early Stones photos; they're all like that... I mean, there must be something about colour film or processing in England, or something in the winter atmosphere that makes photos come out like that, because you just can't achieve that subtle effect in the States. I mean, you go back and look at some of those Kinks and Beatles and Stones sleeves...you look at 'Aftermath' - which also happens to be one of my favourite albums.

ZZ: Which albums are you listening to these days?

CJ: The same stuff I always was... and I feel just as intense about it still. I could never get tired of it. I get in my car, turn on the radio to sample the current hits, but I invariably think "Oh shit!", and turn it off. You can't beat all those old classics by the Beach Boys, the Kinks, the Stones and the Beatles, and all those great songs like 'Little Girl I Once Knew', 'Hippy Hippy Shake', 'Lies'...those sort of things will last forever, whereas I just can't listen to most of the shit that's being pushed out now. It's such a shame, man - I can't stress enough how adulterated the culture of rock'n'roll has become. I don't know...I guess you could say that the Groovies are just trying to bring a little innocence back.

ZZ: Are there no up and coming bands in San Francisco (home of the Groovies)?

CJ: There are millions of new bands, but the only two I can relate to are Loose Gravel and the Hot Knives. The Hot Knives have just started up; they've got a chick singer who sounds exactly like Signe Andersen, you know...and you remember how cool she was! And Danny Mihm and Tim Lynch are in the band too. (Brief aside: John Seaton, Groovies tour manager and Hot Knives manager, furnished me with a copy of their first single, on the KO label, 'Around The World'/'Lovin' You' - an impressive entry from a band who obviously share the same rock visions as the Groovies...not surprisingly, as drummer Danny and guitarist Tim were long standing Groovies. I think the record is available from Rock On Records in London if you're interested).

ZZ: How are Loose Gravel these days? Is Mike Wilhelm still with them?

CJ: Oh yes! He still gigs with them when he can, but he does mostly solo work, because it's so hard for a band playing good solid rock'n'roll, like they do, to get anything going in that dead end town. I mean, you know how heavy that Wilhelm album on Zigzag Records is...well, that's years ago! You ought to hear him now! If he came over here he'd kill 'em! He'd blow minds, man...he still blows mine, for sure. You guys should work on getting the original Charlatans tapes released on your label, someone should bring that out. Actually, I saw Dan Hicks the other day at a club in San Francisco...he was wearing a Dan Hicks T-shirt! Boy, he was w-a-s-s-t-e-d that night! Yeah, Mike Wilhelm is dynamite! (another goodie is produced; this time a new limited edition single by

Loose Gravel. Particularly impressive is a fine rough'n'rowdy version of an item called 'Frisco Band'. Great stuff.)

ZZ: What do you think of the New York bands?

CJ: This current lot? I don't know - I haven't seen any except a group called the Poppees. I produced a single for them about 3 months ago, 'Jealousy'. I tried to apply the Edmunds techniques and it did sound intense and fat, but that elusive something was missing... I was still really proud of it, but the group hated it.

ZZ: Why didn't you try producing the Groovies during your barren years?

CJ: Well, we cut a lot of demos and garage jobs, but there was no point in spending out if we didn't have a deal on the horizon. You see, when we got back to San Francisco after our English efforts of 1972, we had nothing. We didn't have a truck, a PA, a place to rehearse, any money...we were down and out, but we pulled ourselves together and started to do the rounds of record companies again - and one guy, Ken Sasano of Capitol Records, almost signed us up. We played him the Edmunds stuff and he flipped! He told us he was sure he could get us on Capitol and said we'd be hearing from him within a week. After two weeks we went to see him and found he'd been fired! I think the whole floor had been sacked - just swept right out! So all we salvaged from that affair was some demo-studio time, which we used to cut a song called 'When I Heard Your Name', and a real good version of 'Shake Some Action'.

ZZ: Any other companies sniffing?

CJ: Mercury Records kept us on a string for about seven months, but in the end they couldn't come to terms with our music. They couldn't see it in any context other than 'novelty' and wanted us to perform and sell it as such...you know, the Sha Na Na trip - so we told them where to stick it. I don't know man...they were almost scared of us...are we so strange or what? Are we involved in a lost art form or what? What's become of the rock'n'roll business? I suppose that if we'd given them a few bars of wah-wah chicken guitar, or some reggae shit, they'd have drawn out their contracts faster than Wyatt Earp.

ZZ: You know the answer then...play some lowest common denominator rubbish, and you'll hit the jackpot!

CJ: Come on, man...I've been playing for ten years now, and financially I've got nothing out of it. Whether or not the Groovies will make it this time around or not, I have no idea. Obviously, I hope they will, but whichever way it goes, you come along and see me in about ten years more, and I'll still be playing the music I love.

Kris 'Night Time' Needs

Footnote from Frame: In my Zigzag 25 article, I was uncomplimentary about James Farrell's guitar playing. Please allow me to retract that statement - the guy's playing at the Roundhouse had me gaping, it was so good. For full background guff on the Groovies, may we draw your attention to Zigzags 25, 47, 57 and 63, Trouser Press 13 and various Bumps.

It's 4a.m., and Pix is ever so slightly swacked. So much so, that the chances of his successfully negotiating the tortuous lanes, that pass as free-ways here on Jersey, on his way home from the hotel where late-night, duty free drinking is in order, seem frankly slim.

Still, he's not worried about that, because the band, called O, that boasts his services as lead vocalist and guitarist, has just played a triumphant home-coming gig in the dramatic setting of Elisabeth Castle - an imposing Mont St. Michel job, which the 1500 strong audience reached by crossing half a mile of narrow causeway while the tide was out - and he and his mates are well chuffed, as are the motley collection of journalists and record company personnel that United Artists, in their infinite wisdom and generosity, have flown out to see their latest signing.

The concert is held in a grassy bailey of the castle, and after a cautious beginning, as band and audience seem to be checking each other out, like old friends renewing acquaintance after years separation, it develops into an absolute rip-snorter of a show. The well-paced blend of old stuff and material from the new 'Within Reach' album climaxes with a storming 'Red Light Mama, Red Hot', and by now, although it's getting pretty chilly, everybody's reluctant to leave. They have to, though, because the tide's coming in, and as the straggling human snake wends its exodus from the castle towards the distant lights of St. Helier, we're all hoping we don't get the same treatment as Pharaoh's chariots. Needless to say, we don't, and it's everybody back to the hotel to toast the success of the night's work.

Equally needless to say, Pix eventually makes it back safely, as do the rest of the band, and three weeks later they're in their adopted home town of London again, to repeat the dose in front of an equally enthusiastic audience - though this time it's in the somewhat less commodious confines of the Marquee. Again, the mood is...err...mellow, only this time I'm the worst offender (in what's fast becoming traditional Zigzag style, it seems), and I find myself compelled to flee the premises, postponing any possibility of an interview...which eventually takes place in the plush penthouse office suite of one Andrew Childs, (who might be the world's laziest rock writer, but is one of its most dedicated press officers).

Although O's seeds germinated in Jersey, the band took root and began to flourish on the mainland - not surprisingly, as an island of 45 sq. miles, with a population of barely 60,000, offers very limited potential for mass appeal and commercial success. Pix takes us through the formative years:

"To start with, Mark (Anders - immaculate bass) is the elder brother of Craig (guitar, vocals, black hat), so their relationship started off very early, and they had a band called the Intruders, who used to go round doing the village fetes and things like that, playing Shadows tunes, for which they got paid Mars bars (Oh yes?! Obviously these village fete promoters had a very caustic sense of humour!) and Coca-colas. So did I, when I started off in the mid-sixties. Their drummer at the time was a bloke called Pete Filleul, who ended up as our keyboard



Starting with the cowboy-hatted Craig Anders, and moving clockwise, we have Jeff Bannister, Derek Ballard, Pix, and Mark Anders.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF A BAND CALLED O

player. When I was about 15, I formed a band called Four More - though there were only three of us, because the singer decided not to join, which is why I began singing - and that went through various line-ups, until I ended up in a band called Steam, which was reasonably successful. But the island seemed to get smaller and smaller, so me and the drummer, Jerry Robbins, went to college in Leicester, and Craig was in Oxford, doing architecture. All set on the rails towards a good life...

Inevitably, though, a few months of not being in a band was more than enough, and Pix decided that life on the road was closer to his idea of the good life than a big future in computer maintenance, or whatever.

"It turned out that the keyboard player, Pete, had also come to England in about late '68, when the old band parted company. We got in touch with him first, and then Craig, and we formed a band without a bass player, doing freaky psychedelic stuff. Then, after a while, we got in touch with

Mark, who was making steady bread with another band, but got talked out of it. The Parlour Band was formed out of that".

Later...Pete got the big E from the band, and - oh! the irony! - proceeded to form his own Parlour Band, and secure a contract with Decca, while the others, now aptly called Rock Bottom, were scuffling round Leicester with minimal results.

"Pete turned up on the doorstep one day during '71, when we were penniless and literally living on porridge, saying that he'd got this record deal, but that his band had just split. So we agreed to go into the studio and do the album with him. So we did the album - with a guy called Mick Talbot, who'd just done Thin Lizzy, producing - and then Decca said 'Why don't you go on the road and try to sell it?' So we did a couple of disastrous tours with people like Caravan, but the thing was, it was all Pete's songs, and they weren't really where the rest of us were at".

The album, 'Is A Friend', was on

Deram SDL 10, and was deleted two years ago, but I can't imagine the band would want you to hear it anyway. So, as the Parlour Band became a more integrated unit, rather than Pete Filleul's backing group, it was all change, with a new label (Epic), a new manager (who shall remain nameless), and a new name, which Pix (rather reluctantly) elucidates:

"If there is any reason for 'O', it's that, having learnt our lesson from the Parlour Band, who used to keep getting booked out as a folk act, we wanted a name that was completely ambiguous. When the band started out, we didn't have any particular direction, not because we were directionless, but because we wanted to feel free to follow whatever path we chose. So we wanted a name that wouldn't really suggest anything, and allow any image to come off the music. O is a number and a letter, and it's not positive and it's not negative - it's nothing. It's the closest you can get to not having a name".

This changeover was accompanied by both good and bad news. First the good news: Jerry Robbins, the old drummer had left, ("He'd fallen in love and got married, and there wasn't enough room in the truck for his wife"), and was replaced by an old friend, Derek Ballard, from a Hornchurch band called Custer's Track, giving O one of the best rhythm sections this side of the Atlantic; also CBS/Epic were fired with initial enthusiasm for their new acquisition.

Now for the bad news: the aforementioned, un-named manager waltzed off with the CBS advance, leaving the band shkel-less, and CBS wondering whether to chase their initial £50,000 with even more, in an effort to recoup their loss, or to write the whole lot off as a mishap best forgotten. They elected to pursue the latter course of action, so that, with band and record company a millstone round each others' necks, relations became more strained, until they snapped, following an outspoken interview in NME last August, and O were released from their contract.

In their eighteen months or so with CBS, however, O recorded two albums, both of which are good, with some distinct highspots, without being earth-shattering, either musically or commercially. The first, 'A BAND CALLED O' (EPC 80120), which was released in June '74, was the result of two different lots of recording - one with the mighty Ben Sidran, of Steve Miller Band and solo albums fame, and the other with Chris White, who used to be with the Zombies, and has subsequently been involved with Argent.

"The initial buzz at CBS was really good, so when we mentioned it would be nice to get an American producer who would suit our style better, they got Ben Sidran over specially. Unfortunately, though, we had limited time, because Ben is a very together guy, with his own TV show in Wisconsin, where he lives, and he had to get back to that. Just before he left, we sat down with him, and had a rap, and we'd been doing a lot of jamming in the studio - Pete was never up to much as a keyboard player, technically, though he had some good ideas, but Ben is a beautiful player - and he said 'Look, why can't you come up with stuff like you jam, instead of all

this incredibly arranged sort of stuff?' We had all known that's what we should do, I think, but nobody had the courage to stand up and say it. So... we virtually rewrote the album, and went into the studio again with Chris White, who's a good guy, but just a bit lacking in imagination".

The album covers a very wide area - probably a bit too wide - from the melodic 'All I Need', which wouldn't be out of place on Joe Walsh's 'Barnstorm' album, through the lengthy, spacey 'Captain Cellophane/Sidewalk Ship', from the Ben Sidran sessions, to the rather uninspiring funk of Pete Filleul's contributions, and the rock 'n' soul of Stevie Marriott's 'Red Light Mama', which, as I've mentioned, is still an on-stage showstopper. Despite the occasional deadspots, though, it's an album I'm very fond of, and play regularly - more so, in fact, than 'OASIS' (EPC 80596), which followed it in March '75, and boasts one of the CBS art department's very silliest creations for a sleeve:

"There were lots of things in the CBS contract that made it better we get a new deal - we didn't have any control over the artwork, for example. CBS really do produce some incredibly bad album sleeves. The band isn't exactly the prettiest in the world, so why splash our faces all over the front? We didn't want that. We had a complete concept for that sleeve, all to do with a camel at a motorway service station, and they said 'Great... yeah!', and then came up with this stuffed camel in a greenhouse!"

The record inside, produced this time by CBS staffer Nick Graham, follows a more concerted, overtly funky direction, with Pix and Craig sharing nearly all the writing, but although the production and individual performances are an improvement on the first album, there's a lack of dynamic and textural variation that makes it less stimulating than its predecessor. Still a good record, though, especially side one, which features 'Fine White Wine' and 'Foolin' Round', two of O's best songs.

So, in mid '75, saddled with fearsome debts and an unco-operative record company, O did the funky re-organisation once again. Pete Filleul left, to play with East of Eden, and more recently in Barbra Dickson's backing band, and was replaced by Ian Lynn, who lasted a few uncomfortable months before making way for Jeff Bannister, a valuable addition, who not only plays excellent keyboards, but also writes and sings, and fits comfortably into O's good guys aura.

"We got him through Alan Bown, who was working at CBS in A&R at the time. Jeff was working in these incredibly seedy clubs in Soho - you know, a strip act every fifteen minutes, um... stains on the carpet, it's so funky you can't even see what you're drinking because it's so dark - and he'd been doing that for about three years, making ends meet, so he was dead happy to join. He's a good player with a lot of experience, so it's worked out well".

With the band revitalised internally, a change of outlet completed the process, as managers Bob James and Barrie Marshall took them to UA to fill the gap left by the departure of their other act, Man, to MCA. Clearly O are far happier in the more relaxed, family atmosphere of UA, and they

are also being given the sort of attention that a much smaller roster of artists permits, and virtually complete control over their own artistic destiny, from the album design to the album production, which they did themselves, with help from Doug Bennett, the engineer at Olympic.

'WITHIN REACH' (UAG 29942) is undoubtedly O's peak thus far in every department. The production is crisp, the individual performances show off everyone's potential well - especially Pix's vocals, which have improved enormously since the first album - and the songs, (two by Jeff, the other seven shared by Pix and Craig), although uneven in relative strength, strike a good balance of variety and coherence. Even more important, however, is that for the first time, the band had the time and experience to use the studio as they wished, rather than as an extension of the stage:

"If you go into the studio with everything worked out, you're in a situation where you're not allowing yourself any feedback from the studio. The studio is a beautiful situation - you've got all these effects, and everything sounds good - and arrangements form off what comes back at you. To me, you cannot go and record an album as you would do it on stage, though the two things can cross, like on 'Dontcha Wanna'. If Dr. Feelgood were in here, they'd jump on me for saying that, but they're a completely different band. Being on stage is where it's at, but I don't regard that as being a creative process - it's a communicative thing, and to do with enjoying yourself. The studio is something else again - it's like a documentary, trying to produce something for posterity".

What Pix said about the studio/stage dichotomy reminded me of Lowell George's attitude, and it transpires that although there's not a great deal of similarity between the music of Little Feat and O - O rock more, where Little Feat roll - their disciplined approach to structure and layering of music has much in common:

"The bigger the gaps you've got in a piece of music - the less that's being played - the bigger the sound you get off the plastic. A lot of English music sounds like porridge, but I like stuff like old Tamla and Stax, where if you isolate any one thing it sounds really stupid, but when you put it all together, you get a resultant melody line. That's been carried to the limit almost by people like Little Feat, where no-one is actually playing what you're hearing".

Like the rock'n'roll doctors, O have had a long, tough road to travel, fraught with pitfalls and disasters of all kinds, but at last they seem to have turned onto a dual carriageway, where they are picking up speed towards their destination. The only concern I have is that I can't hear, on 'Within Reach', the hit single that O both want and need if they, like SB&Q, are to be lifted from the ranks of much-admired also-rans to the dizzy heights of headline tours and 'Daily Express' features, but I'm sure it'll come eventually. With most new British bands sharing an ethos of aesthetic nihilism, O have too much ability, experience, integrity and - in Pix - potential teen appeal, not to succeed. It's within reach, for sure... I hope they can grasp it.

Paul Kendall

*I grew up singin'
Naturally.
The whole family sang.
Grandpa called.
Aunt Norma played jazz
Piano.*

*Grandma played the marches
Pop really liked
His gypsy song man
Mom always went to church
To sing.
She loved to sing.
Truly.
The family loves to sing.*

*It's just that simple
Music
Makin' up words
Naturally.
Thinkin' of them*

*So I'll always
Stay so long
Sing so loud
Smile so much
When I know that
it's a good night for singin'.*

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*"it's a good night
for singin'"*

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Jackson Browne

One of our European cohorts, Constant Meijers, who runs the excellent Dutch magazine *Muziekkrant Oor*, recently returned from Hollywood clutching a batch of interviews – including this chat with Jackson Browne. Constant offered us the tape in view of Jackson's poll-topping popularity with *Zigzag* readers; it was recorded backstage after he had finished his set, and the conversation is shrouded by the sound of music wafting from the auditorium...at one point you can hear Linda Ronstadt closing her set with 'Heatwave' – then, after pause, you hear the Eagles starting up with 'Take It Easy'...most interesting. Anyway, let's get on with it: Over to you, Constant old bean.

ZZ: First off, can you clarify these rumours that you intend to settle in Paris?

JB: I was in Paris recently, but only for a couple of months...for a vacation. I did a really long Spring tour of the States, and just felt like going to Paris to relax after running the gauntlet of so many concerts and hotels and cities; but I certainly have no plans to move there permanently.

ZZ: Did the city inspire you?

JB: To write, you mean? No, not really...but I wasn't looking for inspiration, I was looking to unwind; so I just stayed in a lot, and walked a lot – it's a very nice city to walk in...and I achieved my aim; I cleaned my head and had a rest.

ZZ: Your follow-up to 'Late For The Sky' seems long overdue: have you started work on it yet?

JB: Oh yes. I've been putting songs together, rehearsing with the musicians, and we're just about to go into the studio. Actually, the material for the new album remained a little undefined for some time, and I find that I'm doing it a little backwards from the way I've done it in the past. Usually the music evolves after the lyric, or because of the lyric, but this time the music seems to predominate and the words are coming later.

ZZ: Do you find it very difficult to write lyrics?

JB: Well, the most important thing is intention – what you intend to say in the song. Once that has been established, you can work on the theme. It's all a matter of diligence really. Usually I sit down and work on a lyric, and half-way through, I find that I'm questioning the words – asking myself exactly what I'm trying to get at. I have to clarify the intention of the song in my own mind, and bring out what I intuitively feel I'm trying to say through that song...but once I'm over that hurdle, the actual words seem to come along without too much trouble.

ZZ: Do you find that most of your songs tend to examine the past?

JB: Many of my earlier songs were written in the past tense, and were about past experiences, but these days, more and more, I tend to write about the present. Like the whole of 'Late For The Sky' was about the present – including 'Before The Deluge', which though it was written in the past tense, was about the present.

ZZ: A lot of your lyrics seem to have an underlying theme of bitterness...would you agree?

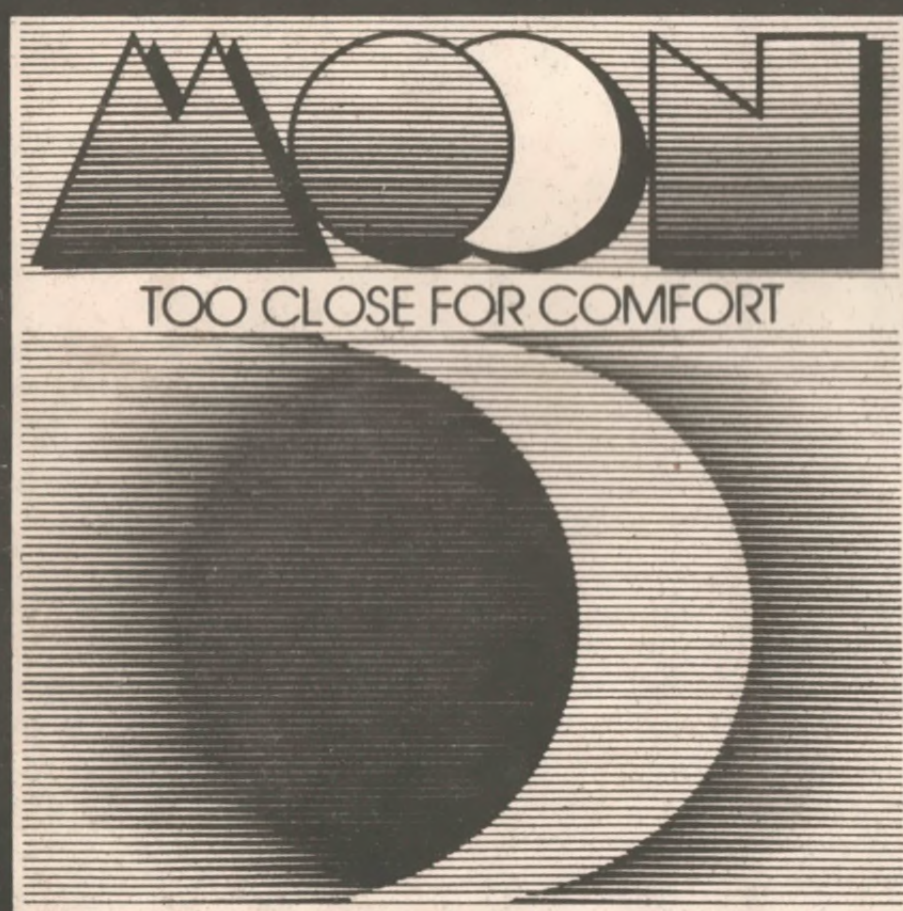
JB: A little perhaps. I wouldn't say they're deliberately bitter; in fact, I invariably feel the need to inject a note of optimism or positive energy, even though I may delve into a theme of disappointment.

ZZ: To stay with your lyrics, I find that you often write several songs around the same subject.

JB: Well, I can only write about things which interest me – so, yes, there is an element of repetition of theme, although I try not to keep writing about the same idea or emotion. For example, 'Rock Me On The Water', 'For Everyman' and 'Before The Deluge' are three songs about the same thing, but at the same time they progress. When I wrote 'For Everyman', I couldn't go back to singing 'From Silver Lake', because it was an about face, even though the subject matter was the same. So, I'd have to agree with you...if the subject is one I've used before, I do express my current opinions and ideas, so the viewpoint is up to date, as you might say.

ZZ: To a lot of people, rock music is a religion, and rock singers are idols...how do you feel about that?

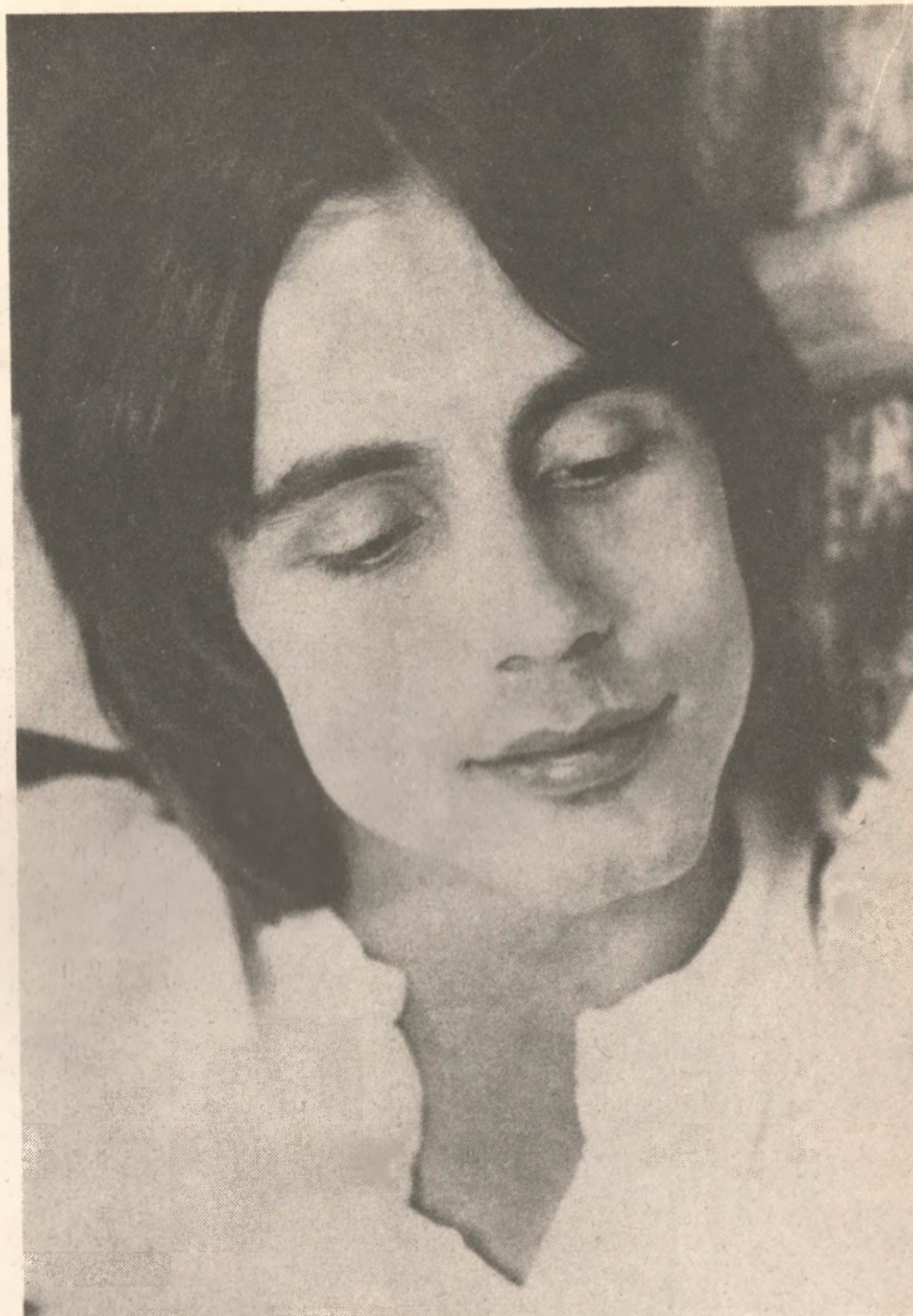
JB: Rock music is not that important. It gets a lot of attention because so many people in our culture do look to it for entertainment or inspiration or guidance, or even leadership in some cases...but rock music is really a very small part of what goes on in the world...it's simply



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Barry Schultz

not that important.

ZZ: Are you a happy person?

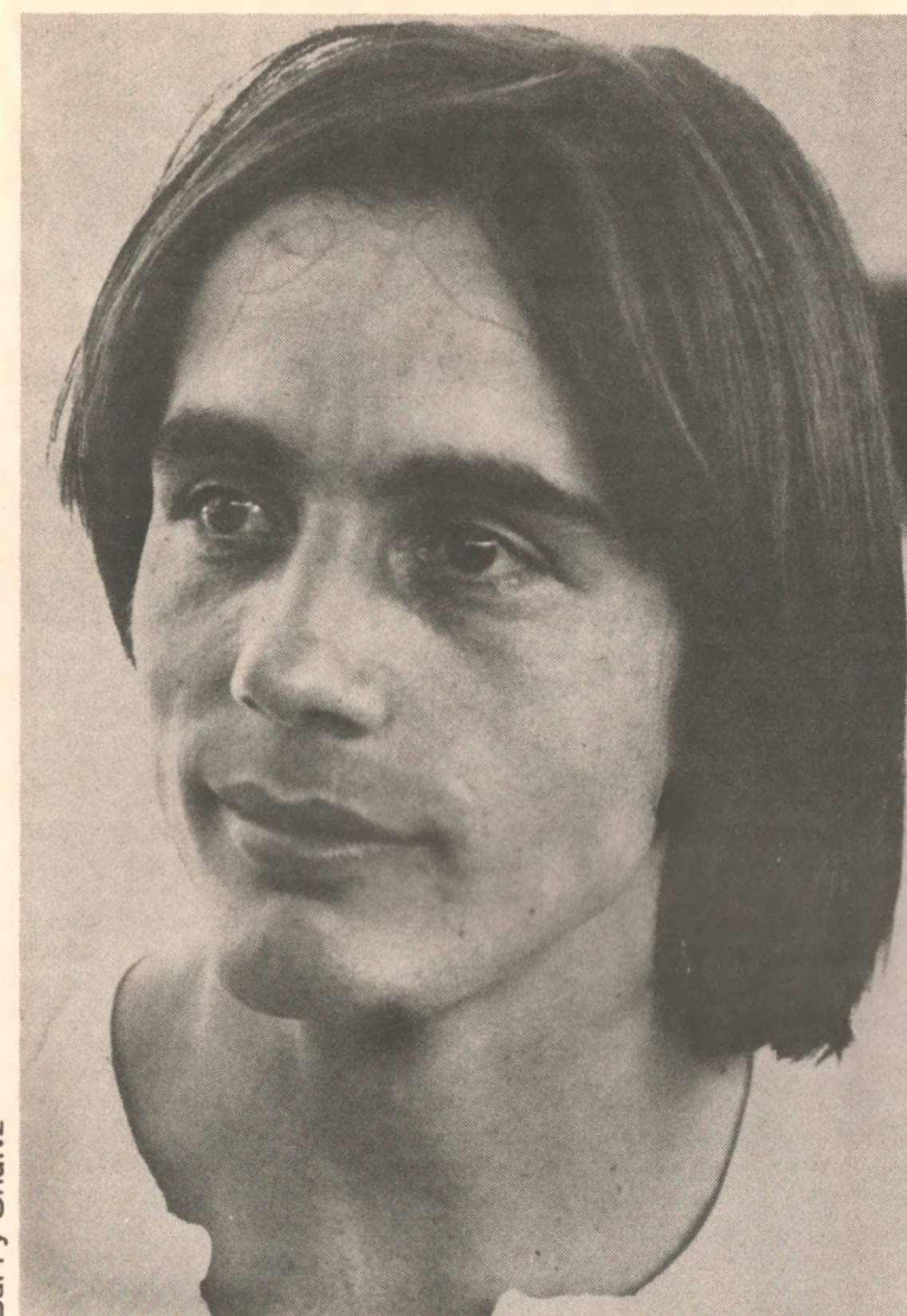
JB: I find it pretty easy to have a good time...but on the other hand I do have days when I don't hear what anyone is saying to me, I go places and I'm not really there. I suppose I'm basically happy, yes...I mean, I really enjoy my life, and when I say that rock music has been magnified beyond its real importance, I'm not saying that I don't think it's valid...I love music - it's the life I've chosen, and like I say, I have a good time doing it. We're very fortunate to have the choice...like I was looking at a wall map at a friend's house the other day, and it struck me that about one third of the world has never even heard rock music. I mean, to the Chinese, even Mozart is decadent...they have no choice in the matter; they're born, they struggle, they suffer and they die...whereas we live in a privileged culture, and can make all our own choices. How we want to live, what we want to do...it's up to us. If you have only one choice, you have no problems - you do what you have to do.

ZZ: Talking of choices, you seem to enjoy using similar chord progressions in various songs...the same chords...

JB: Yeah...the three that I know! I am trying to expand my musical horizons, but very gradually. I do have favourite changes, and chord progressions, and intervals that do tend to crop up every so often...you go through phases where certain passages appeal to you, and then you may never use them again. Basically, I think that music is knowing what you can play and what you can't...and that singing is knowing what you can sing and what you can't. You've got to be aware of your limitations, and it's up to you to make the best use of your abilities within that framework - which is what I try to do.

ZZ: You've yet to make the big breakthrough to huge international stardom...do you ever wish you were as big as, say, the Eagles?

JB: Oh yes...sure I do...but my concept of 'stardom' has changed over the years. I mean, Joni Mitchell has been as incredible as she is now for many, many years - but now she's phenomenally huge. I did a tour with her four or five years ago, and I thought she was a gigantic star - because in my estimation she was incredibly important...but in reality she was only a minor star compared to her standing today. Sure, there are times when I sit around



Barry Schultz

at home thinking "I want to be gigantic!" - but it's the same as wishing I were an extra two inches taller, or whatever...just daydreaming. I'm happy enough at present.

ZZ: You mentioned Joni Mitchell - are there any other artists you really admire?

JB: Yes indeed! I love the Eagles, Linda Ronstadt and all the musicians in her band, all the musicians in my band, I really admire Little Feat, John David Souther, Gregg Allman, Bonnie Raitt, Bruce Springsteen...there are lots of great musicians around...

ZZ: ...Most of whom started out in the sixties...

JB: Absolutely.

ZZ: Do you feel that the seventies music scene is much less energetic?

JB: I wouldn't say that exactly...but music is usually a reflection of, or at least linked to, the current state of affairs, and here in America we've come to a great lull. The sixties were characterised by all sorts of social changes, but the seventies have been stalemate...stillwater. Liberals and the extreme left are disappointed and disillusioned, with so many of their front runners and spokesmen having turned out to be fools or charlatans; and the people who believed in Nixon and the Government and law and order are totally disillusioned too - for obvious reasons. So the end result is that the great middle-of-the-road body of people is simply widening.

ZZ: The grey masses! Do you sense any sort of fear or anxiety about the way things are these days?

JB: A friend of mine writes some very good songs about that...a guy called Warren Zevon. He has a song called 'Mohammed's Radio', which really sums up that whole situation. His album is just about to come out on Asylum - I think you'll like it. He can write very beautiful love songs, but there's something very penetrating behind the intention of his songs. Another one you should look out for is Jack Tempchin; he's about to cut for Asylum...his songs are very simple, very open, warm and honest, whereas Zevon's songs are honest, but sort of disguised, you know.

Constant Meijers

Note: Next month we'll have a long interview with Warren Zevon, conducted by the eminent Mr. Garry.

TED NUGENT

The critics have never taken Ted Nugent lightly. A sample of their ravings included items like... "a disciplined approach to the musical urge to kill... one of the great virtuosos of the heavy metal guitar... surgically attached to his guitar since the age of nine... the Neanderthal Man of Rock... if talent, flamboyance, and an ominous stage presence will get you to the top, then Ted Nugent is on the way...". Ted Nugent's latest album is pure musical mayhem! Watch out for his UK tour

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"It don't bother me" Early Bert Vol 1

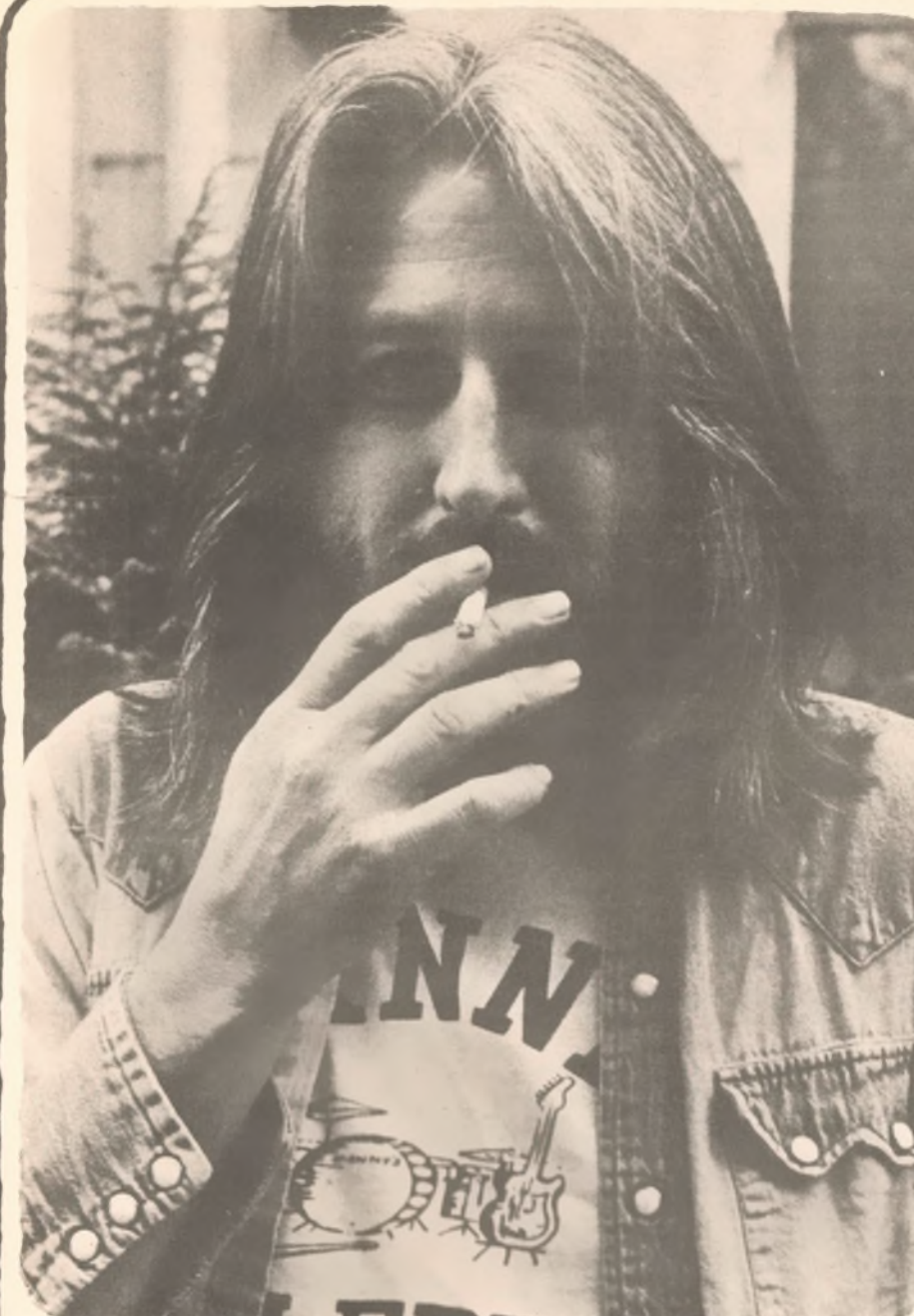


"Jack Orion" Early Bert Vol 2



"Nicola" Early Bert Vol 3

neatly rip this page from the magazine. In only 243 months you'll have the complete story of Joel Scott Hill..... told in his own words. This month we get up to the early sixties.



THE JOEL SCOTT HILL STORY

Episode 1: Strangers in San Diego..... Innocents in L.A.

I was born in Texas, and even though we moved away when I was 8, that's where I got my first musical roots..... life in the south is always surrounded by music, especially in the churches; all of the musicians take their instruments to church, and pick along..... they really get it on, with guitars, fiddles — anything goes.

We lived in North East Texas, up near the borders with Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana.... at a place called Mount Pleasant, near Texarkana, where Leadbelly once murdered some guy.

My father, who was a hobo during the thirties and forties, was my first real influence. In those days, if you could pick a guitar, you could go up to a farmhouse and literally sing for your supper — play them songs, and they'd feed you. So he knew all the currently popular stuff as well as most of Jimmie Rodgers songs. He roamed all over the country, just travelling and singing, and he used to teach me the songs — so I've been singing Jimmie Rodgers songs since I was 5. Then, gradually, I began to learn guitar, until I could play enough to become his accompanist.... and I began to travel around with him.

When he was home, we always used to listen to the Bob Wills show on the radio, every Friday night, beaming in from Tulsa, and we also used to hear The Grand Ole Opry, and all sorts of country and gospel stuff.... so, by the time I was a teenager, my head was absolutely full of country music.



I was too young to go there at the time, but the big musical centre in the area was just over the border in Louisiana..... Shreveport. There was a really great radio show based there....

The Louisiana Hayride, which set a good number of people on the road to success — Johnny Cash, Elvis, James Burton, and the big star of the show, Johnny Horton — he was the man. I had a cousin, Jeannette Hicks, who was 4 or 5 years older than me; she used to get up and sing in school assemblies, and she was later a regular on the Louisiana Hayride.

The other big talent draw in Shreveport was The Bossier Strip, which was a southern version of Las Vegas — one club after another, with gambling in the back rooms. It was all centred on a highway outside of town, and every southern musician has played the road houses on the Strip at one time or another. I think they've cleaned it up a little since those days, but it used to be a case of "everything goes".... it was a really loose place to be — as outside the law as it's possible to get.

As I said, we moved west — to San Diego, California, when I was 8, and after a while, I got involved with a group at high school — playing rock'n'roll, which was just about getting started. This would be around 1955, I guess.... and our group was playing rock'n'roll — because that's what the kids wanted.... they wanted music to dance to!

My first big gig, however, was when I went back to Texas for my summer vacation that year. Jeannette was on the Louisiana Hayride, and she asked me to play lead guitar with her — which I did. We shared the bill with Johnny Cash and Johnny Horton.... I couldn't believe it!

I went back to San Diego, and Jeannette went on to become George Jones' first partner.

When I got back from Shreveport, I was full of country music again, so I decided to abandon rock'n'roll and get a country group together. I got these guys together, and we began playing country music at these service men's clubs.... instead of after-game school dances, we were playing the marine and naval bases around town. San Diego is the base for the Sixth Fleet, so there was plenty of work, and most of the sailors were from the south or the mid west.... they loved country music — so we were onto a good thing.

We had a fiddle player, a slap bass, drums, lead guitar, and we playing

rhythm guitar and singing - and we would play country, rockabilly, and rock 'n' roll... a real assortment. THE STRANGERS, we were called.



We became quite well known in San Diego, but there wasn't a lot of hip penning there, and we decided to try and make it as a recording band. We cut a few demos locally, but they were on real antique one track equipment, and we all knew we'd have to go up to L.A. to cut anything decent.

It so happened that I knew this guy from Phoenix, Arizona - Jody Reynolds, who had just had a national top five hit with a song called 'Endless Sleep'. His follow-up was out, but wasn't getting anywhere, and he was gigging around Southern California, trying to get something going. Anyway, he was playing at a basement dive in downtown San Diego... a typical rowdy sailors' club (and incidentally, the Canadian and English sailors were by far the worst for starting trouble - throwing chairs and bottles, smashing places up - though they were generally pretty raunchy dives, with giant guys on the door, you know?), and we ran into him and got him to come up to L.A. with us and act as our producer.

So, around the end of 1958, we cut 4 sides at Gold Star recording studios, which had just opened, with Jody producing and advising us. It cost us 300 dollars, which we'd saved up from our gig money.

All 4 tracks were instrumentals, and we took the tapes to every record company in Los Angeles... but nobody wanted to know. Not the slightest bit of interest! We started with the major labels, then went to the independents, and finally wound up trying to persuade Titan Records to release them... we said the guys could have the masters for nothing, if he'd just put a record out.

Finally he agreed to put out 'Cockroach Crawl', but he changed the title to 'Caterpillar Crawl' because he said our name was in such bad taste that the radio stations wouldn't play it. It was a good catchy tune, and we thought it had a chance of making it.

Well, it came out and immediately hit the local charts in both San Diego and L.A. it was all over the radio, including station KGFB, who thought it must be a black group.

Titan's distribution set-up didn't extend beyond the Rockies, but a guy from the East said he wanted to buy the tapes, and he advised us to hold off making a deal with anyone else until he'd been able to get the money together... but he went back East and covered the tune with one of his groups - Dick Jensen & The Room Mates, or something - and we lost out... but their version was so bad that it didn't do a thing.

Eventually, we got a national deal with Dot Records, and the single actually got into the charts - top 40 in some areas - and we started to tour around as a back-up band, and to promote our own single. First off, we did a tour of New Mexico and Arizona, with Jimmy Clanton, who had just had a huge hit with a song called 'Just A Dream'. It was during a real cold winter spell, and because it was all snowed in, we had to get to our first gig, in Flagstaff, Arizona, in a plane. The pilot was nuts - anyone who even took off in those conditions had to be nuts - and we were whirling through snowstorms, almost got killed when we landed, as the plane skidded around all over the place... and when we eventually got to the gig, the audience turned out to be no more than a handful of Indians, just standing around and looking balefully at us.

Then we started doing pretty big gigs: we were one of the first white groups to play El Monte Legion Stadium, where we shared the bill with Sam Cooke, Wilson Pickett & The Falcons, Joe Turner, and Eddie Cochran... in fact, we did several shows with Eddie Cochran.

The high spot of that whole experience was The Dick Clark Cavalcade of Stars of 1959 - at the Hollywood Bowl... about 50 acts, including us, Bobby Rydell, Frankie Avalon, Duane Eddy, the Fleetwoods... it was an amazing bill! We came on, and the audience just went crazy - we found out afterwards that we were regarded as the big local band -

and we didn't even know it! Mind you, we were still only allowed to play two tunes - both sides of the record... and one of them was mimed! Presentation was real crude in those days - but that was a great show.

Naturally, we never saw a cent in royalties - another local group tried to sue us for \$100,000 because they said we stole their name... and it cost a lot to get out of that and keep our name. The record company guy told us that legal fees ate up all the profits. So we got kind of dispirited... made a couple more local hits, but nothing was happening, and we split up.

I went back to LA and cut another 2 sides, using session guys from San Diego: a guitarist called Gene Lamar, a pianist and a bass-player. I didn't have a drummer, so I brought in Sandy Nelson, who I had got to know during the days of 'the hit'. I sold the tapes to Trans American Records, and the record became a Top Ten hit all up the West Coast... 'Little Lover' by Joel Scott Hill.



'Little Lover' even got to number one in Las Vegas... so I went there and got the royal treatment! This would be towards the end of 1960 by the way... and I was doing shows with a disc jockey called Jimmy O'Neil - he was only just starting out at that time, but he subsequently became the announcer on Shindig. Ok - so I was a star for a week in Las Vegas, where I shared the bill with Larry Verne (who was top of the national chart with 'Please Mr. Custer'), but then I went off on this record hop tour with Jimmy O'Neil.

We'd go to places like Santa Monica, and Pasadena - all over Los Angeles - and he'd play the current hits, while I was the live act. He hired different guys, so I only did it for a while, but an interesting fact was that the backing band he provided had people like Larry Knechtel and Mike Deasey, who became big session names later.

Well, inspired by the success of 'Little Lover', I got the Strangers back on the road, and we cut some tapes with Dore Arwin Records... where Lou Adler was the runaround office boy! We'd send him out for coffee and such! We recorded several tracks, again at Gold Star, but none of them got released... there was a song called 'TNT in a T-shirt', and another called 'I call my baby Kitty Cat'. I remember - both written by Billy Coe, who was an LA songwriter.

Because of all the dissatisfaction and hassles of recording, the Strangers decided to concentrate on live work - where they could at least make a bit of money, but I was drawn to the studio scene... and since the middle of 1960, I had been doing session work. A friend of mine who I had brought up to LA (he was working in an aircraft factory in San Diego) had got involved in a label called Indigo, which had an act called Kathy Young and the Innocents, and another guy called Chris Montez.

I had played several Wink Martindale shows with The Innocents, and when they were looking for suitable material for a single, I suggested 'A Thousand Stars'. I worked the song up with them, and I co-produced it in the studio with Jimmy Lee (the friend from San Diego) - but he took all the credit. The record got to number 3, sold a million, and I didn't get a dime's worth of recognition!

Nevertheless, for the next two years or so, I alternated between gigging with The Strangers in San Diego and working on sessions in LA - primarily with Jimmy Lee for his Indigo label, and his subsidiary, Monogram. I played on all the Innocents records, and a lot of stuff by Chris Montez, who was very big with the Mexican community, but couldn't find the right single to make the crossover to the big white market.

Well, Jimmy asked me to concentrate on some Chris Montez sessions, and together we wrote some songs we thought might be suitable - including one called 'Let's Dance', which I produced using Jesse Sales on drums, Ray Johnson on organ, Ray Pohlman on bass, and me on guitar. Monogram put it out during Summer 1962, and it eventually got to

about number three. Another huge hit... million seller.

I got no credit for either writing the song or producing the session, of course. Meanwhile, Jimmy Lee was in Cadillac and stuff, and had the reputation of being the hot producer in town... so after a while I split back to San Diego.

So many kids, young and naive, were taken to the cleaners during that period. It was rip-offs all the way down the line, and it was that way for a long time... you expend all that energy and enthusiasm, and see somebody else making all the money. At first, it was such a buzz just to be involved - but I was married with a couple of kids, and the travelling back and forth, together with the unsubstantial rewards, convinced me to get back to San Diego and go back in the clubs with the Strangers... after all, my last solo effort, 'My Secret Love', which had Leon Russell, Billy Strange, the Blackbyrds and Jack Nitzsche on it, had got lost in the effort to make Montez a star.

Well, that brings us up to the middle of 1963, and the club scene in San Diego was beginning to wind down... we just couldn't get enough work - especially as we now did rock 'n' roll exclusively. We still got a lot of gigs at Carl's Dine And Dance on 16th Street, and we were big at Rosie's, on the beach, which was the first rock club in San Diego, but they only wanted country music in the sailors' bars... and it became a question of either compromising to make ends meet, or moving back to Los Angeles, where rock bands were more acceptable.

You see, it was a weird scene in San Diego; the sailors' bars only did really well on the 1st and 16th of every month - pay days! The rest of the time, business was slow, but club owners had an intuitive aversion to rock music; they thought it was just a fad, like hoola hoops or something, and they were afraid of losing their regular clientele. They only wanted spenders, like the sailors who got drunk and blew all their pay, but I think they really underestimated the spending power of the kids, most of whom made a lot of bread from working at the aircraft factories during vacations. So it was a pretty sterile scene, really - and, in fact, the best country music to be heard in the area was being played at the Bostonia Ballroom in El Centro, a few miles east of San Diego. You could see Sneaky Pete playing with Smokey Rodgers, or Roy Hargrove, who had a big hit with 'Cocaine Blues'... that was the real centre of country music in Southern California - in that little border town this side of Mexico.



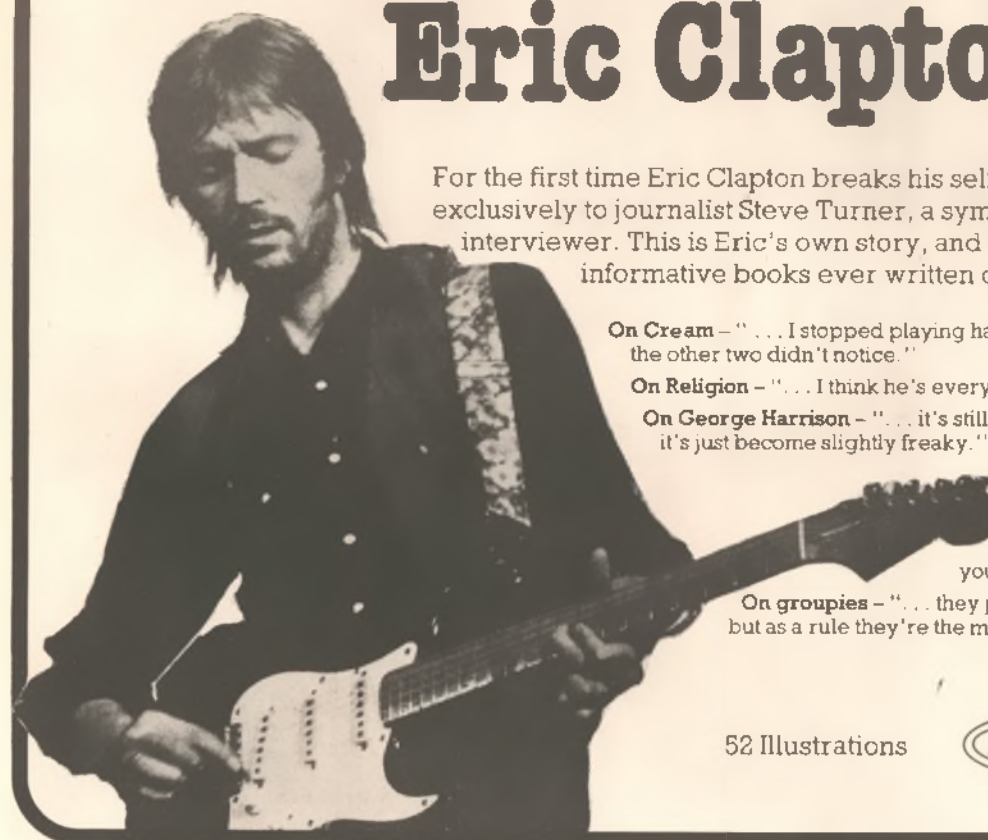
We decided to say goodbye to all the sailors' bars, and we headed East... gigged a bit in Phoenix and Tucson, but then we inevitably wound up in LA, where we landed a residency at this place called The Tailspin, on Cajunega... a swing music club. They had 2 dance contests a week, hundred dollars first prize, and we had to play nearly all swing... so we got in this black horn player, and did all this honky tonk stuff.

This was still a year or so before Sunset Strip went rock-crazy. Ciro's, and the Moulin Rouge and places like that were still into big bands and catered strictly for the cocktail set... the Byrds were yet to come! The only place on Sunset where you could hear good rock music was a coffee house called The Sea Witch, where Jerry McGee had a hot little band with Larry Taylor. Other than that, Hollywood was pretty bleak, so we used to go to the Palomino in North Hollywood - which was where all the country guys used to congregate. We used to go up there every night we had off.

It was there that I ran into James Burton again. I'd met him the very first day he arrived in LA. The Strangers were on this local radio show, Cliffe Stone's Hometown Jamboree - and Bob Luman & The Shadows (including James Burton) were guest artists one week. Luman was on an Elvis trip at the time, prior to going country, but his band all left him to join Ricky Nelson.

But the Palomino has a lot to answer for - because that's where I first ran into P.J. Proby! Pete

Conversations With Eric Clapton by Steve Turner



For the first time Eric Clapton breaks his self-imposed silence and talks exclusively to journalist Steve Turner, a sympathetic and knowledgeable interviewer. This is Eric's own story, and as such it is one of the most informative books ever written on rock music.

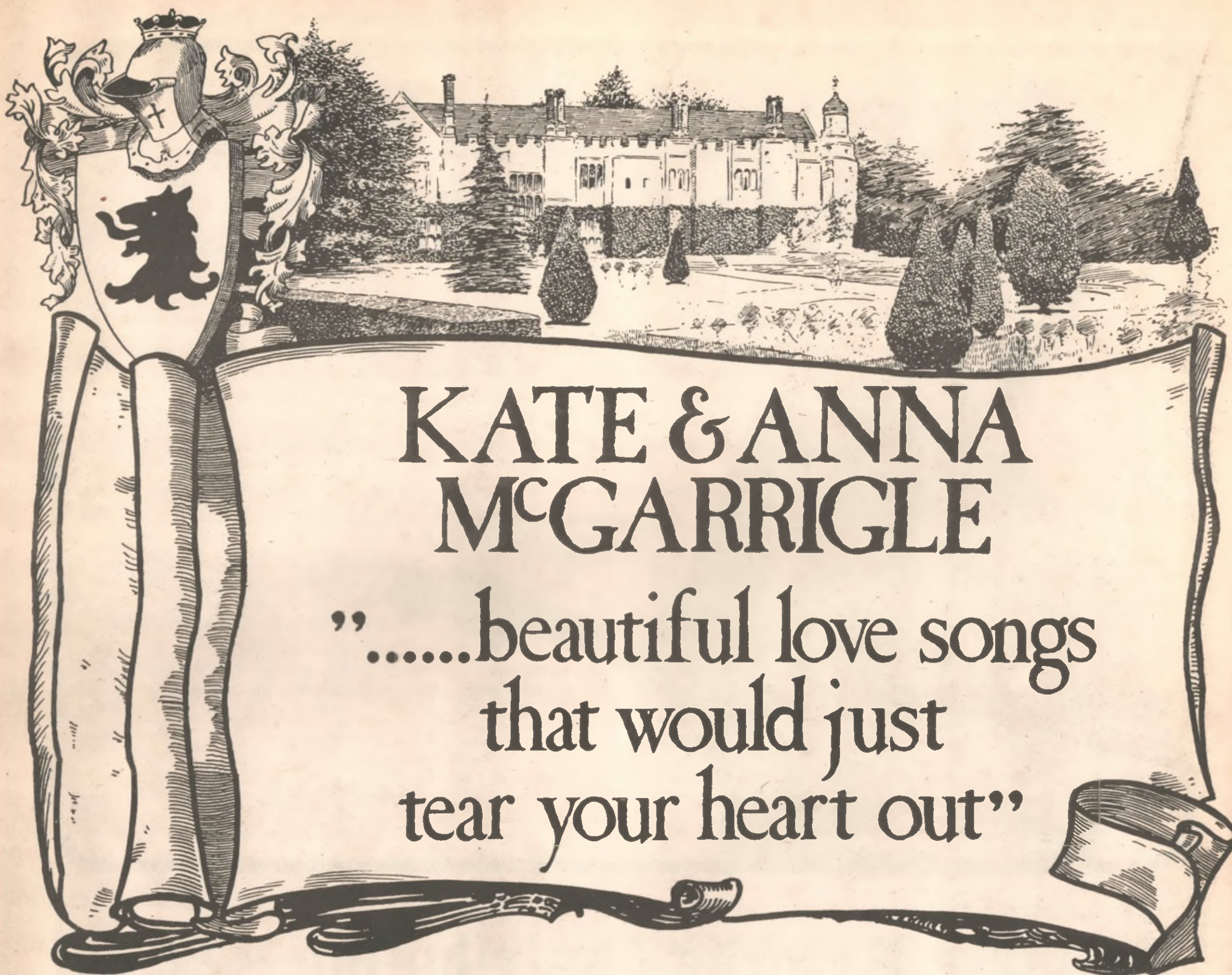
- On Cream - "... I stopped playing half way through a number, and the other two didn't notice."
- On Religion - "... I think he's everybody's God and I like sharing Him."
- On George Harrison - "... it's still a very lively relationship... it's just become slightly freaky."
- On heroin - "... musicians live on a very intense emotional plane of necessity, and heroin is probably the strongest pain killer you can lay your hands on."
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KATE & ANNA MCGARRIGLE

".....beautiful love songs that would just tear your heart out"

One of the most notable trends in popular music over the last five years has been the development of female performers, especially in America, as artists in their own right, rather than as producers' puppets; whether by interpreters of outside material - like Linda Ronstadt or Emmylou Harris - or by singer/songwriters - Joni Mitchell (obviously), or Janis Ian, or our own Sandy Denny and Joan Armatrading - the list of major lady artists seems to be added to almost monthly, while their male counterparts, working in similar areas, seem for the most part to be well bereft of sparkle or inspiration.

One particularly healthy aspect of this most welcome trend is its element of self-perpetuation. In the same way that singers like Tom Rush in the 60s helped to bring on new talent, so the established ladies are drawing attention to lesser known female writers (as well as male) by recording their songs. Wendy Waldman, despite her own fine records, is still best known for her contributions to Maria Muldaur's repertoire, and Kate and Anna McGarrigle already had a reputation bubbling under through credits on albums by Maria and Linda Ronstadt before it burst into a veritable geyser of critical acclaim, following the release of their own offering at the beginning of this year.

As some of you probably know, it was actually as a direct consequence of Maria's interest in their songs that the sisters got the chance to make

their own album, as Kate, the elder and the more prominent spokeswoman explains:

"Greg Prestopino, one of our producers, lived in Boston around 72/73, when I was there too, and we met at a party. He helped Maria on her first solo record, doing singing and a lot of background work (Note: He gets a 'Special Thanks' credit on both Maria's first two solo albums), and he liked a lot of the stuff that Anna and I had written, so he took some tapes out to California, and went through the trouble of listening to all these songs - some of which were just done in the living room".

Of all the songs that Greg showed her, Maria did Kate's 'Worksong' on her first record, which turned out to be an unexpected smash hit album, and when she went back into the studio to record the follow-up 'Waitress In A Donut Shop', she had chosen to do 'Cool River', which is one of Anna's songs...only they didn't realise that:

"They flew me (Kate) out to California to do the piano part, because they thought it was my song; so they said 'OK, start playing!', and I said 'Well, can I hear the tape?', because I didn't know the song, and there are lots of chord changes in it. Joe Boyd, Maria's producer was going 'There's something wrong here, she doesn't know it, and she's supposed to have written it'.

I thought they knew. So I had to learn the song, and I couldn't play it on the piano...but I didn't feel bad, because Garth Hudson couldn't do it either. It started off with six musicians, and got down to Garth on accordion, me on piano and Maria singing, and we did forty seven takes! I guess she didn't feel right or something. So they brought in some guys from Nashville, and did a whole different version".

In fact Kate and Anna, who was also brought out when they realised it was her song, contribute backing vocals to the version on the record, and it was while they were both out on the West Coast that Warner and his Brothers suggested that it might be a good wheeze if they did a spot of recording on their own behalf.

"They said 'Would you like to do a record?', and Kate already knew Greg, and Joe too, so we went with them. They really didn't want us to do it with just Greg, because he had never produced a record, and of course we had never made a record. It worked pretty well though, because Joe's understanding of music is amazing; he knows a lot about all sorts of music, but he's not a musician, which is nice, because he didn't try to come on in that direction. It was really a communal effort by the four of us together. The arrangements that are directly ours are 'Heart Like A Wheel' and 'Swimming Song', and the orchestral ones came from a friend of Joe's".

I've already reviewed the album at



Photos by the spitting Chalkie Davies

some length in Zigzag 59, so those of you who are anxious to witness the unsightly spectacle of my slobbering and gibbering in print will have to refer to that, as I'm just going to say that it's a great record which I urge you to investigate, and then move on to look at the history leading up to this momentous phonographic achievement. Ready?... "This is a great record which I urge you to investigate"...

Let's start at the very beginning, (a very good place to start)... the McGarrigle family originally came from Ireland, but very sensibly emigrated to Canada during the last century, and the sisters on whom our tale hangs were born and raised in the tiny village of St. Sauveur des Monts, situated to the north of Montreal in the Laurentine area. Although this region is now a prosperous skiing centre, in Kate and Anna's childhood it was still a poor farming community; but whatever else may have been in short supply in the McGarrigle household, music certainly wasn't.

"Both our parents sang and played the piano, and our father Frank insisted that we play too...even when we didn't want to. Naturally, coming from the kind of family we came from, we sang a lot...every night...and our father taught us harmony singing at a very early age, and there was always a bizarre assortment of instruments lying around that we were allowed to play".

Those of you who have had the pleasure of listening to their album will be able to vouch for the wide

range of influences that are so gracefully accommodated in the McGarrigles' music. It's a range that is unsurprising when you realise that Quebec province, although vociferously French for the most part, is also home to immigrants of many other nationalities, and so Kate and Anna were exposed to various ethnic musics as children. Apart from the French Canadian folk music of the area and their family's own Celtic heritage they were, for example, in contact with people as diverse as the local nuns, who taught them Gregorian chants, and a Russian count, who had fled his homeland in the wake of the Revolution, but still harboured a passion for its songs. Within the family too, the variety of tastes was considerable:

"My father, who was in his late forties when we were born, was a great Stephen Foster fan (Note: SF was a 19th century American songwriter, who worked with the original Christy Minstrels, and wrote 'Swanee River' and 'Oh Susannah' among others. He died penniless in New York in 1864 at the age of 38), and he had fought in the First World War, so a lot of the songs he knew were pre-War, nostalgia things. We never had a fancy record player; we had a radio with a 78 deck on it, and when our father came back home from the city, it always seemed like he'd bring in a new 78 - either an opera, or an opera singer singing a genteel song. Also a lot of close harmony stuff...the Mills Brothers, that sort of stuff...Gershwin too".

"Because our sister Janie was a few years older than us, she got tuned into different trends before we did. The Elvis Presley thing happened when we were nine or ten, and I think she started playing the guitar then, because our father had a guitar, and then we picked it up a few years after".

When Kate and Anna were in their early teens, the McGarrigles actually moved into Montreal, where the winds of change - reduced to a whispering breeze by the time they reached the Laurentine hinterlands - blew much stronger, and in the early 60s, in Montreal as all over North America, the happening thing was folk music:

"The first group we ever had was the three of us, and we won a holiday talent contest in the summer of '58. Two years later we went to sing in a church basement, with Anna singing lead and Janie and I singing harmonies, but Anna was so nervous that it ended up as just the two harmonies. Then we formed a group at school with a French girl, Michele Forest, doing occasional local things; and when we were fifteen or sixteen we ran into a bunch of people who knew a lot more about it than we did, and we formed a group with these two guys, Peter Weldon and Jack Nissenson, called the Mountain City Four, and we continued doing that on and off for ten years. It was originally very Weaversish, but then it got more electric".

As anyone who has read Richie Yorke's very readable book on the Canadian music scene 'Axes, Chops & Hot Licks' will know, the local musicians in the 60s, even in the cultural centres of

Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto (whence Neil Young was forced to depart in search of fame and fortune), were offered little opportunity of advancing their careers. The Mountain City Four (so called despite the fact that the line-up was anything up to nine or ten, depending on the nature of the gig) established a strong following and reputation, with their repertoire varying from traditional material through the very current songs of Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie to songs by friends like Wade Hemsworth, yet for all their local popularity, the group never really got beyond the confines of Montreal:

"We did actually belong to the Musicians Union, but nobody wanted to take it that seriously, because we were still at school, and we couldn't have made a living out of it, because there were so few places to play in Montreal. It's 80% French, with only a very small English population at McGill University, and around the various coffee houses. Actually, the people we would meet in these coffee houses weren't really from Canada, they were usually American. The whole Montreal folk workshop was run by English and Irish, and it had a sort of pub atmosphere".

After finishing high school, Kate went to McGill, and Anna studied at LEcole des Beaux Arts, and it was around this time that they started trying their hands at songwriting - so successfully that in 1967 the National Film Board commissioned them to write a song for the centennial film 'Helicopter Canada', which apparently was nominated for an Academy Award. By 1968, though, Kate had finished college, and with the Mountain City Four drifting apart, she decided to move on:

"I worked in a straight job for a month, then I decided I didn't want to do that, so I joined a group in Montreal as a singer for about six months, then got a job just playing piano, with a bass player, harmonica player and guitarist, and that was my first real taste of living and working as a musician, travelling around".

"This was in '69, and when I was working with this group I really saw all these people who were on the way up or down, who we had never had the chance to see before, and most of them really weren't all that good. We had never gone out of Montreal before, so when I went out and saw what all these other people were doing, I thought 'Gee, maybe our songs could be just as good as some of these people's'. Previously we'd never really dared to write songs, because there were always these other ones that were so good. Then I realised how these people were expressing themselves, and writing your first song is so great ... I really became uninhibited".

Kate eventually moved to the States and worked the folk circuit, sometimes alone. Sometimes with another girl called Roma Baran, and meanwhile Anna stayed in Montreal "working six or seven months out of the year, then doing a little writing and a little art", but keeping in touch with her sister:

"This girl guitarist and I (Kate) had split to the East Coast, and somebody gave us the money to do a demo tape; and we didn't have any songs, but Anna had just been writing this song called 'Heart Like A Wheel', so we sat down and learnt it. We did the

song one time at Syracuse University, and this guy in the audience liked it, and he had a contact in New York with a group called McKendree Spring, and they were making a record, and this guy got them to do the song... it was a strange version".

(Lengthy note: the album in question is 'McKendree Spring 3' (MCA MCF 2658) which was released here in late '71. In his definitive account of the group's activities in ZZ33, Mr. Huge N. Tobler gets the sisters a little confused, but it's an interesting quote anyway:

"...as a guest writer, there's a lady called Anna McGarrigle, about whom Martin Slutsky (MS's guitarist) had this to say. 'She is in fact Loudon Wainwright's wife. She was once half of Kate and Roma, who were a quaint sort of folk duo - two girls who did some beautiful love songs that would just tear your heart out, with beautiful harmonies. They played a lot of nice instruments like autoharp, guitar and piano, and that particular song 'Heart Like A Wheel' flipped us out when we heard it, and we all started playing it, and loved it, and to this day, I think that it's one of the best songs on the album'".

The McKendree Spring rendition of the song also appears on the soundtrack of the film 'Play It As It Lays'. So there you go...)

"Originally we did it like Linda Ronstadt. She heard a tape from about 1970 when I played piano and somebody else played cello. What happened was she was on tour with McKendree Spring and Jerry Jeff Walker around that time, and we had sent her a tape through Jerry Jeff, whom we had played with before, but she didn't record it until 1974. Apparently she did it as an encore in New York not so long ago, and prefaced it with a rap about how she'd been doing it for years, but all her producers and the people at the record company thought it was the most corny thing imaginable and wanted her to stop singing it, but one day she heard Maria Muldaur singing it, and thought 'Well, if Maria's doing it, it must be a good song'".

Through '71 and '72, both sisters were writing more, and Kate was expanding her circle of acquaintances in the States, including Greg Prestopino, Paul Siebel, and Loudon Wainwright, whom she married, and whose records she helps out on from time to time, both as a writer and a musician. In 1974 the pair began playing together again in both Canada and the States on a more regular basis, until last year, when it all started happening.

Perhaps surprisingly, they decided not to use the songs for which they were already known when they came to do their album, with the exception of 'Heart Like A Wheel', which had been a big hit for Linda Ronstadt the previous year. 'Kate & Anna McGarrigle' (Warner Bros. K56218) comprises twelve songs: five by Kate, three by Anna, a French Canadian song written by Anna in tandem with a gentleman called Philippe Tatartcheff, Loudon Wainwright's 'Swimming Song', a gospel song from the Bahamas, and 'Foolish You' by Wade Hemsworth, who I was surprised to learn is in his sixties.

With the release of the LP, the sisters were supposed to undertake a promotional tour, but because Kate

was expecting her second offspring, this had to be cancelled, and in fact their recent UK visit was their first real live work of the year. This is a situation that their record company apparently finds less than amusing, for obvious commercial reasons, and on the evidence of their Victoria Palace performance, I feel bound to say that their rather ad hoc attitude to live work has a somewhat detrimental effect on their music.

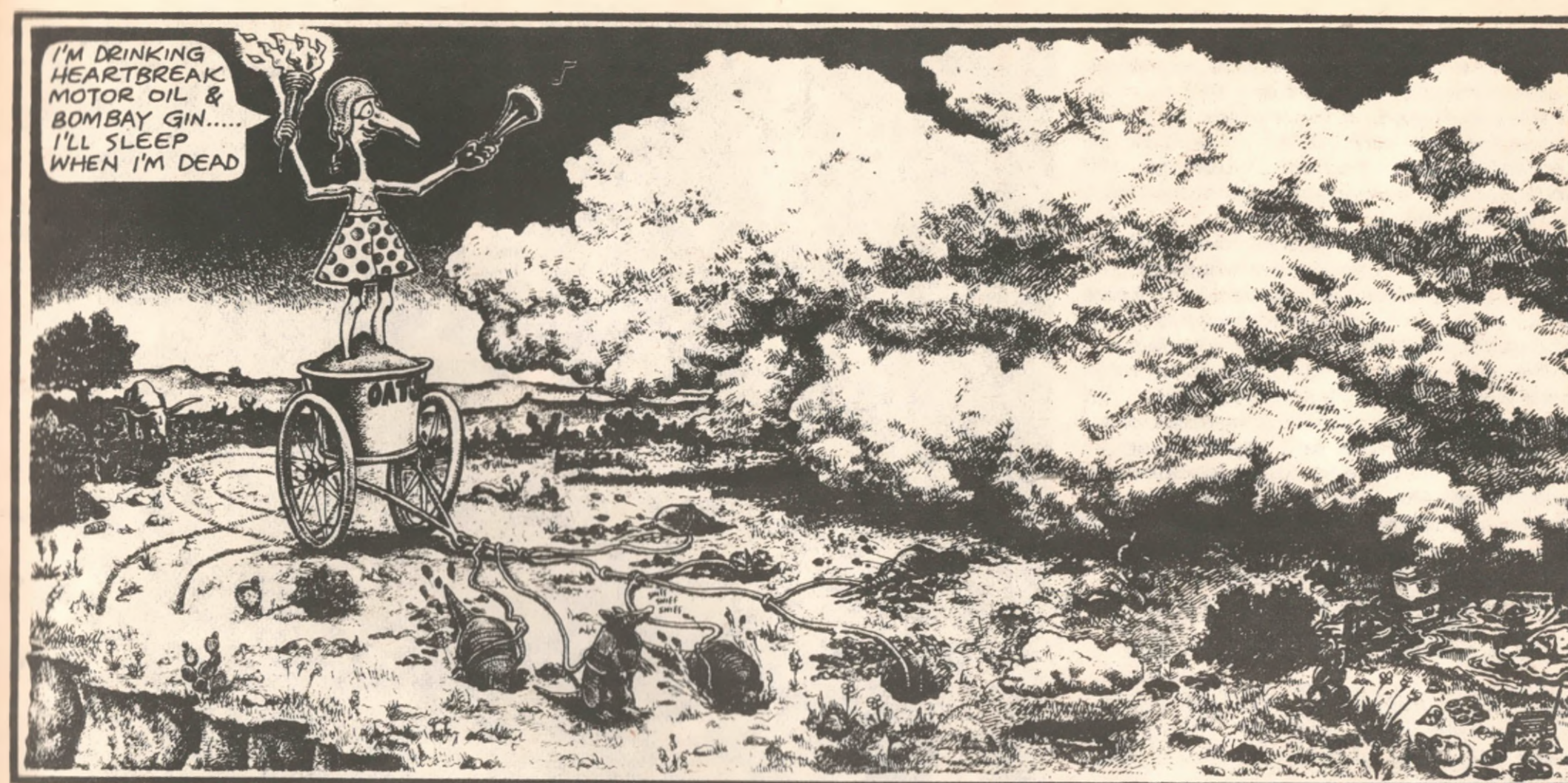
"We kinda like to do it this way. Sometimes the venue will be a coffee house with 30 people, so we'll do it as a duo. If it's a 2000 seat concert, we'll get some other people and do a couple of weeks rehearsal. We did a concert this February in Montreal and we got nine people to do that. It's nice to vary the balance - a little more rock in this one, a little more folk in that one, depending on who hires us".

Sure...spontaneity is all very well, but the musicians that Kate and Anna brought over with them in July - Chaim Tannenbaum and Andrew Cowan on guitars, Larry Packer (who has been with Sha Na Na and Lou Reed, and did the arrangement of 'Cool River' on 'Waitress In A Donut Shop') on fiddle, and Scotty Laing on bass, aided by Dave Mattacks - only had a couple of days rehearsal. Consequently, there was a distinct element of uncertainty about the playing, which combined with the sisters' understandable nervousness to nullify most of the emotion in the songs that transmits itself so affectingly on the record. However - and it's a big however - most of the audience loved the concert, and all the reviews except, I think, the one in 'Sounds', were ecstatic, so perhaps I was just feeling unresponsive that night.

That visit caused the postponement of the start of work on the next album, which should now begin this month in Los Angeles with Greg Prestopino as sole producer. The proximity of the sessions to San Francisco, where elder sister Janie lives with her husband, means that she will probably be helping out, and apart from more songs by Kate and Anna, the album will feature another Wade Hemsworth song ('In The Land Of The Musket And The Shining Birch Tree', which opened the London concert and sounded fabulous) and a medley of French Canadian songs. I'm looking forward to it with a rare anticipation.

When I reviewed their record, I said that Kate and Anna McGarrigle's music was immensely refreshing in its warmth and spontaneity, and the same goes for their attitude to their careers. Anna thinks "it would be fun to have a hit record" and be a commercial as well as a critical success. Kate does not seem quite so sure, but basically both are happy as they are... Kate living in New York, splitting her time between fully-occupied motherhood and the piano stool, and Anna in Montreal playing host to an unending stream of visitors to her apartment; both kept tolerably comfortable thanks to the wonders of publishing royalties, and content to work as and when the mood takes them. It's not an approach guaranteed to keep the record company satisfied, but when they write songs of the quality of 'Heart Like A Wheel' and 'I Talk To Me Of Mendocino', who's going to argue? Not me.

Paul Kendall



R • E • V • I • E • W • S

August was hardly the most inspiring month for album releases - hence the selection reviewed below is not, on the face of it, too appetising. Nevertheless, some ace waxings are expected almost instantly, and hopefully we can bring these to your ever attentive eyes and ears next month.

LES DUDEK
Columbia (Import)

For the uninitiated, Les Dudek has been connected in various ways with the Allman Brothers (he was one of the guitarists on 'Ramblin' Man'), Steve Miller and Boz Scaggs, which in theory ought to make him well worth our attention. In practice, he is a very fine guitarist indeed, ranking (and I speak here as a person whose favourite instrument by the width of the world is the guitar) with the very best around.

However, this first album isn't all sweetness and light, I'm afraid. First off, Les isn't yet a fully fledged writer, and of the eight songs (seven by Les, one co-written with Curley Cooke, making up the number), I only reckon that three make it. Side two particularly gets to be gratuitously funky most of the time, and it's a great shame that he couldn't persevere with the groove he found on side 1 with 'City Magic', 'Sad Clown' and 'Each Morning', because they're by far the best three tracks. In particular, 'Each Morning' is quite excellent, a long track with a supremely tasteful guitar solo which continues for minutes, while the guitar piece in 'Sad Clown' becomes nearly hypnotic.

It's on tracks like these that I'm led to comparisons with the instrumental work Van Morrison has surrounded himself with - innovative without being experimental, and a balm to the ears. Regrettably, the rest of the record doesn't reach the same standard, although as soon as Les starts to play his guitar up front, there's always a chance, like when the non-tune of 'I Can Do' relaxes its coils and allows a rare bit of tasteful skill to escape (as opposed to the automatic type of

skill which more often shows).

There's one diabolical track, the one which makes up side one, but thankfully the jewels found there lessen its impression. It's called 'Don't Stop Now!', and is a jazzy effort, much as I remember Lester Young on the rare occasions I heard him, and while it might not be such an audio sore on a jazz record, it doesn't fit here. Lee plays at Alvin Lee speed and highly progressive tunelessness, while Tom Scott, friend of the stars, wrestles with something called a lyracon, which occasionally sounds as if it's being strangled (and deserves to have been). It's the shortest track on the side, but seems by far the lengthiest.

The backing is generally in the capable, if on this occasion unexceptional hands of Jeff Porcaro on drums, and David Paich on keyboards, with the addition of several bass players, in particular Gerald Johnson, just about the only good thing about the last band that Dave Mason brought here, and also a Miller man of the past. Boz Scaggs produced the album, and there's no complaint about that, except that perhaps he influenced Les to do some of those duff budgies on side two, which are akin to the sort of thing he's doing himself. Still, you won't hear me saying a word against Boz, and if Les gets some nice tunes together, I'd like to think that I won't be able to say anything against him next time. Meanwhile, caveat emptor, unless you like funky fodder.

John Tobler

THE RUNAWAYS
Mercury (Import)

OOWHEE!! This platter boasts one of the most fetching sleeves I've had the pleasure to mas... ogle at. On the front the glitteringly attired Cherie casts a seductive eye over her shoulder while outstretched hands caress the mike (she's on stage, y'see). Open it up and you're confronted by all five Runaways. On the left there's sultry Joan Jett complete with chain hanging

out of her jeans pocket. In the middle is Cherie again, hand on hip and blouse unbuttoned to the waist. Their delectable teen dream cohorts Sandy West, Lita Ford and Jackie Fox pout provocatively alongside. All the girls look exceedingly tanned and healthy. There's more pics on the back and we even get to find out the girls' ages - all are 16 except lead guitarist Lita who is the old lady of the group at 17. As I said, Oowheel!!

Well after all this the music could have been re-runs of Moira Anderson's Greatest Hits and I still would have kept the album prominently displayed on my bedroom ceiling. Happily the aural contents contained within are equally enjoyable; the music sounds as fresh and exciting as the girls look.

Now a quick bit of background for those who may have been sporting out-size cat's poop-trays as their craniums for the past month or so. The Runaways were conceived by none other than Kim Fowley, mad architect of rock'n'roll who's been everything from songwriter to the Seeds to an Animal God of the Street. Whatever Kim does, he does with tremendous energy and enthusiasm and when he one day flashed on the idea of a band composed entirely of pubescent Californian yummies, it wasn't long before such a group was born - members having been rounded up from local discos and parking lots. The girls entered the studio under the guidance of Mr. Fowley, who is credited as producer AND director of this album. Relationships between Daddy and offspring appear to have become somewhat soured if recent interviews are anything to go by, with Kim claiming his creation has turned into a Frankenstein monster.

Anyway, whatever the scene, this album, which has been out for some time in the States, is a smasher. Joan Jett's sleeve note tells you exactly what's going on: "This album is for the young of age and the young at heart... when you listen to these songs you'll be reminded of all the fun you're having being and staying young". Yes, the

Runaways are all about teenage love, teenage sex, teenage hustling and most of all teenage parties where the revellers all end up too wasted to make school the next day. Every track is a teen anthem set to a fast, raunchy riff, horny as hell but tinged with a sort of worldly innocence.

Kim Fowley's 'direction' has obviously been a major part in the shaping of the sound; after all, it was his dream band. He also had a hand in writing most of the ten tracks along with the band and 14 year old Kari Krome, Fowley's early inspiration for the Runaways. Only outside composition is Lou Reed's 'Rock and Roll', rearranged by former Reed guitarist Steve Hunter and featuring cowbell to the fore - a good mover, the lyrics bursting with teenage lust and upfront punk girl innocence. Try this for size:

"Don't hold off, do it/I need your

lovin'

I'm gettin' so hot/I'm cookin' like

an oven".

That's from Joan Jett's 'You Drive Me Wild', which does, with all the unison moans and cries of pleasure going on! Or howabout:

"I want a kiss/Wet and real/I wanna

tell you

How I feel/All night long/It rained

and rained

Make me scream/Hey what's your

name?"

That was from 'Lovers', which young Joan also played a major part in. These lyrics are spat, screamed and pleaded by Cherie, the blonde bombshell, with able assistance from the rest of the Runaways.

The music is basic heavy metal, crossed with Suzi Quatro and a smattering of Stooges! Before hearing the album I had doubts about the prospect of a rock rhythm section composed of 16 year old high school girls rocking out with a vengeance. But one blast of 'Cherry Bomb' showed that these girls have got muscles not evident on the sleeve! (Could embarrass a Heap of big head heavy bands).

The album's big moment, the one to batter down what's left of your resistance, is saved for the end - the seven minute 'Dead End Justice'. It's a kind of Shangri Las melodrama when the good bad guy's chick is getting into trouble trying to grab some of the action for herself. Our hero, Cherie the 'rebel queen' gets in with the 'dead end kids in the danger zone', who spend the nights getting stoned, drunk and sleeping out. But poor Cherie's fun is cut short when she is busted and thrown in the teenie's slammer. Up to now, Cherie's been pouting and panting the words ("This is like a movie, I know I'm going to scream") over a high octave riff straight from Iggy's 'Fun House', but when she wakes up in jail it switches to military drumming, which gets louder and faster. Complete Saturday morning adventure movie melodrama breaks out as old lag Joan Jett, doing time for "...wouldn't you like to know" coldly comforts first timer Cherie. Escape is planned but Cherie hurts her ankle in the freedom break - despair! Do our heroes make it? We dunno, but the track's pure bliss from start to finish.

This is certainly a year for impressive debuts, and the Runaways ranks with the most promising. I'll leave the last words to America's only all-girl punk band:

"Our magic is young
Cause we just begun



Dion in the studio with Phil Spector. Photo by Roy Carr of NME.

We light up the sky
Always on the run
We live in the streets
In the alleys of screams
Cause we're the Queens of noise
The answer to your dreams". Kris

"I can never go home anymore! Needs

'Born To Be With You' (Phil Spector)
'Greatest Hits' (Phillips)
'Streethart' (Warner Brothers)
DION

The three most recent albums to come on to the British market, and as a measure of my own commitment to the artist, the 16th, 17th and 18th Dion albums I own. Two are in fact the man's most recent albums, while the Phillips LP is a compilation of his work on the US Laurie label after he split with the Belmonts for the first time. If you've never heard these sixties oldies, then you're missing something, because at the time, just pre-Beatles, Dion was one of the most consistent and consistently interesting American hit makers, although the traditional British bad taste prevented all but 'Runaround Sue' and 'The Wanderer' from making our charts. Neither song is bad, but I do feel they're over familiar when compared to some of the other amazing teen epics of lost love, teenage romance and general adolescent behaviour towards the opposite sex.

Like 'Sandy', for instance, always my favourite from the era, where the attack of the whole record is breathtaking, or 'Little Diane', which boasts a totally appropriate comb and paper solo, or 'Love Came To Me', with its ridiculous backing vocals and super sloppy lead from Dion, which is the real epitome of a punk

rock record, and not much actually like what the term seems to mean these days. Of course, there are some less good tracks, like 'Lovers Who Wander', which is an identikit pinch of various parts of 'Runaround Sue', 'The Wanderer' and 'Sandy', but altogether this is one of the best two quids worth you'll ever get, and it's heartening to see these artefacts of my youth available again. Incidentally, there are a lot of other very good reissues in the same series, like the Chiffons, the king of excess, Freddie Cannon, and Hotlegs, for all of which thanks to Nigel Grainge.

Dion was a survivor of the Buddy Holly air crash - did you know that? Other odd, or perhaps symptomatic, things have happened to him as well. He was well strung out on some sort of dope for a long period, but happily recovered, and perhaps the oddest thing of all resulted in the 'Born To Be With You' album, when he got together with Phil Spector, a bizarre meeting of veterans, whose fruits are spectacularly amazing. The odd thing to which I referred is that the record is only available in Britain, and hasn't even been released in the States, which apart from being peculiar, is also criminally negligent, because I think I actually prefer it to the reissue. Of course it's very different - the Spector soundwall sees to that, and while the songs are not all unbelievable, the first three tracks are so good that they make me want to cry, and I've rarely been able to say that in 20 years of listening to music. The title track is of similar epic proportions to 'River Deep' and 'Lovin' Feeling', and despite the fact that it's the same song, bears little resemblance to the Chordettes' original. 'Your Own Backyard' is one of Dion's own songs, dealing with his successful

anti-dope struggle, and is just moving because of the true life story it tells, while 'Make The Woman Love Me' is a total masterpiece. A dense instrumental carpet with Dion's voice soaring and swooping above it, like nothing you've ever heard. In fact the track was released as a single, but banned by the Beeb because it mentions the terrible word 'levis'. That is the only conceivable way it wasn't a massive hit, because it has everything, a performance at least as good as that of Nadia Comaneci. If you only buy one LP this year, make sure it's this one - it's unlikely that you'll have ever heard it, so please try, because without this record, your collection is incomplete!!!

Just how and why the Dion/Spector

alliance happened, I don't know, but it was short lived. Prior to that album, Dion had been with Warners for five albums of an overall patchy nature, and he has now returned to Burbank for 'Streethart', which, after all the Spector masterpieces, is somewhat of an anti-climax. This one is produced by Steve Barri and Michael Omartian, and has a white soul vibe attached to it, as typified by a sloppy remake of 'The Way You Do The Things You Do'. The songs are quite possibly fair enough, but the memory of what Spector did lurks like a spectre over the production, constantly bringing to mind just how great these songs might have sounded if a bionic producer had been around rather than two mere mortals. A couple of songs still

manage to stand out, 'If I Can Just Get Through Tonight' and 'Hey My Love', but there are an equal number plus of over orchestrations, underproductions, and worst of all, and updating of the theme of 'The Wanderer' in 'Lover Boy Supreme', which totally lacks the dignity which a veteran like Dion should accord himself. It's a big disappointment, but perhaps it would have seemed much better if I hadn't heard, and become besotted with, the Spector record.

At summing up time, 'Born To Be With You' gets eleven points out of ten, 'Greatest Hits' gets nine and a half, and 'Streethart' gets seven. Please try and find that Spector album for yourselves.

John Tobler

LIP SMACKING GOOD

This month's reader's choice comes from J.C. Crawford from Jericho, Oxford. He must have known he was on to a winner when he elected to write about:

'Back In The USA'

MC5

Atlantic SD 8247 - Deleted Import.

It was back in '68 that the MC5 came roaring out of Detroit, fuelled by a high octane lust for fame and fortune, and with John Sinclair and his White Panther party as back seat drivers and navigators. The landscape they raced through was the charred and desolate remains of the burnt-out summer of love, patrolled by the opposing forces who were to have their ultimate confrontation that same year in Chicago, and the appearance of the Five - all strutting, high energy, revolutionary flash - created a stir far beyond their immediate Ann Arbor environment. 'Creem', the immortal voice of the Detroit scene, said: "Very simply, the Five are the most important band to come out of Detroit. They set the pace for our rock and roll explosion, they formed the model of the people's band, they made high energy the byword of our music. They epitomize all our best and worst points".

The first album, on Elektra, was a live one, 'KICK OUT THE JAMS' (K42027), a quasi-political holocaust of white noise and skin-deep Coltrane, that proved to be their most successful release with sales of around 100,000. But then came the incident when the Five took out a newspaper ad in Elektra's name telling a record shop to 'Fxxx off!', and proceeded to send their company the bill. Elektra were not amused, and gave the band a quick-fire release from their contractual obligations.

By this time - mid 1969 - the MC5/White Panther link had cracked under diverse strains, and with the \$50,000 advance they'd got for signing with Atlantic the band moved away from the Trans-Love commune out to a country house, where they were joined by Rock critic Jon Landau to start work on their second album, in a substantially more light-hearted frame of mind:

"As we went along, as we started experiencing more, we started to develop our own attitudes and feelings, our own political ideas and our own philosophy. They differed with John's,

you know?...our point of view was that much more crazy, flippant, not so serious, not so...you know "We have to have this fucking in the streets or goddamn we are going to tear down downtown Detroit". We looked at it in an idealistic sense and would rather have kept it in an idealistic sense, instead of taking these ideas which couldn't be put into realistic terms".

'BACK IN THE USA' reflects this change of attitude. Titles like 'Call Me Animal' and 'Teenage Lust' tell you that these guys' basic pre-occupations amount to a Young Person's Guide to sex and subliminal subversion in that order. Squeezed between two slices of vintage American rock'n'roll, viz and to wit 'Tutti Frutti' and the title track, the filling of this piping hot toasted sarnie comprises nine brilliantly vicious teen anthems, lashed out with the channelled speed and power of a finely-tuned dragster. The exception is 'Let Me Try' - a rather incongruous attempt at slow seduction from a bunch of intuitive aural rapists - the only number over three minutes long on an album that checks in at a breakneck 28 minutes.

I guess the real stars of the show are guitarists Wayne Kramer and Fred 'Sonic' Smith, who duel and clash and surge in a dynamic exhibition of controlled dementia, but it's probably unfair to single out anyone in particular from a band who shared a rare musical and spiritual oneness; anyway, Dennis Thompson's clattering drums, Mike Davis' inexorable bass, and Rob Tyner's abrasive vocals are every bit as integral to the unfettered joy of this album.

The balance of side one is disturbed by the inclusion of 'Let Me Try', not that it blunts the edge of the ferocious opening sortie 'Tonight' or the feedback tinged swoop of 'Looking At You', but the real action gets cranked up on side two. 'High School' bursts in with a swaggering declaration of intent: "The kids know what the deal is/They're getting farther out every day/We're gonna be taking over/You'd best get outta the way!"; 'American Ruse', the album's most overtly political track, and an out-and-out mother of a number, hammers home the point: "I can see some chickens coming home to roost/Cos people everywhere are gonna cook their goose/Lotsa people working to get rid of these blues/Cos everybody's hip to the American Ruse";

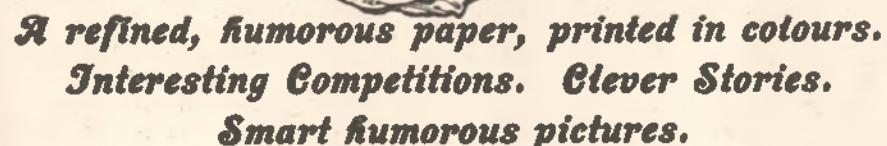
and 'The Human Being Lawn Mower', a merciless, multi-bladed flail, wraps it up before a definitive, tongue-in-cheek version of Chuck Berry's homage to the Mother Country delivers the conclusive body blow.

It's an absolutely classic album. Lyrically committed, incisive and memorable, and musically an imaginative, rocking powerhouse, it also packs an atmosphere that is almost unbelievable for a studio album. Sadly its merits weren't reflected in sales figures, and after 'HIGH TIME', a not terribly successful return to the jazzier self-indulgences of the first album recorded with Geoffrey Haslam, Atlantic decided in 1971 that debts of \$128,000 were more than enough, and declined to take up their option.

The Five did two tours of Britain in the spring and summer of '72, their powers undiminished, judging by the exhilarating performance at Aylesbury in the February (when the atmosphere was set just right by the fact that the miners' strike had caused power cuts and the gig was run on generators in near-darkness). There was even talk at one stage of the band settling in England, but after an unfortunate experience at the Wembley Rock Revival show, when they were virtually booed off stage by the uncomprehending Teds, they went back to Detroit to peter out with a whimper, not a bang, crippled by the disfavour of the city's scenemakers and their own drug hang-ups.

Their influence and memory live on though. There's not a single posing punk rocker, and very few men of heavy metal, who don't owe one hell of a lot to the MotorCity Madmen, and the riffs that grace 'Back In The USA' have cropped up in bastardised and watered down forms many a time since - just listen to the Ramones album, for example.

Where are they now? Well, Wayne Kramer is on a lengthy stay in the Big House for various offences involving naughty narcotics, and the painted tongues of Rumour has the others trying to get bands together, working for record companies, or suffering from self-induced terminal stasis. Tragic is hardly a strong enough word really, because for a glorious, fleeting moment in time, the MC5 was one of the greatest rock bands that ever was, and right now I'm listening to the record that proves it.



ONE TO TWENTY FIVE...SOLD OUT COMPLETELY
TWENTY SIX...Charlatans/Joe Cocker/Hawkwind/Dan Hicks/San Francisco Family Tree/Brewers Droop/Greenwich Village/Dave Van Ronk/Elton John.
TWENTY SEVEN...Jimmy Page/Bridget St. John/Ducks Deluxe/Kinks Traffic/Robin Trower/Stills/Byrds1.
TWENTY EIGHT...Jimmy Page/Nitty Gritty Dirt Band/Kim Fowley/Canterbury Family Tree/Kevin Ayers/Love/Byrds2.
TWENTY NINE...Genesis/Eagles/Beefheart/Everyly Bros./Byrds/Speight/Farewell to first Golden Era!
THIRTY TO THIRTY TWO...SOLD OUT COMPLETELY
THIRTY THREE...McKendree Spring/Led Zeppelin/Robert Fripp/Boz Scaggs/Clarence White/Frame in Memphis.
THIRTY FOUR TO THIRTY SIX...SOLD OUT COMPLETELY
THIRTY SEVEN...Charlie Watts/Nils Lofgren/Mighty Baby/country Joe/Crazy Horse/Grateful Dead.
THIRTY EIGHT...SOLD OUT COMPLETELY
THIRTY NINE...Michael Nesmith interview/Ralph McTell/Steve Miller/Evan Parker/Not much else.
FORTY...Dave Mason/Peter Hammill/Michael Nesmith/Allmans/Pic of Mac/Terrible cover.
FORTY ONE...Worst selling issue ever! /Byrds/Quicksilver/Velvets/Free/John Martyn/Moby Grape.
FORTY TWO & FORTY THREE...SOLD OUT COMPLETELY
FORTY FOUR...Eric Clapton/Tim Buckley/10cc/Marc Benno/Magic Band/Tangerine Dream/Blue Oyster Cult.
FORTY FIVE...Bruce Springsteen/Russ Ballard/Grateful Dead/New Riders of the Purple Sage/Poco/Rick Nelson.
FORTY SIX...Ron Wood/Leonard Cohen/Phil Lesh/Poco/Kevin Ayers/Rick Nelson saga Part 2.
FORTY SEVEN...Keith Richard/Roy Harper/Grace Slick/Chilli Willi/Rick Nelson and Redwing.
FORTY EIGHT...Jesse Winchester/Butts Band/John Sebastian/Arthur Lee/Neil Young/Curt Boetcher.
FORTY NINE...Ray Davies/Curt Boetcher/Gene Clark/Nick Drake/Jess Roden/Home, etc.
FIFTY...Little Feat/Sneaky Pete and the Burritos/Arthur Lee/Lindisfarne/Nico/Neil Young.
FIFTY ONE...The Doctor Feelgood story/Ian Hunter/Norman Greenbaum/Henry Cow and Gentle Giant.
FIFTY TWO...Lou Reed/Country Rock/The Strawbs/John Cipollina/The Burritos/Caravan/Wishbone Ash.
FIFTY THREE...Genesis/Pure Prairie League/Country Rock/The Magic Band (Mallard)/Jesse Colin Young/Strawbs.
FIFTY FOUR...Stephen Stills/Andy Fraser/Speedy Keen/Country Joe & The Fish/Billy Joel/Clancy.
FIFTY FIVE...Tim Buckley/Gerry Rafferty/Jack Bruce/Larry Knechtal/Todd Rundgren/Joe Walsh.
FIFTY SIX...SOLD OUT COMPLETELY
FIFTY SEVEN...Loudon Wainwright/Van Der Graaf Generator/Poco/America/Sutherland Brothers & Quiver/The Flamin' Groovies.
FIFTY EIGHT...Commander Cody/Bob Dylan/Barry Melton/Steve Miller/Blue Oyster Cult/Kaleidoscope/Nick Kent/Sandy Pearlman.
FIFTY NINE...Nick Kent/10cc/Kaleidoscope/Gram Parsons/James Burton/Country Joe/Reviews, etc.
SIXTY...Procol Harum/Nils Lofgren/Sons Of Champlin/J. J. Cale/Kaleidoscope/Eddie & the Hot Rods/Reviews, etc.
SIXTY ONE...Dr. Feelgood/Procol Harum/Dillards/Bonnie Raitt/Ozark Mountain Daredevils/Solution/Reviews/n't charts/n! Mac.
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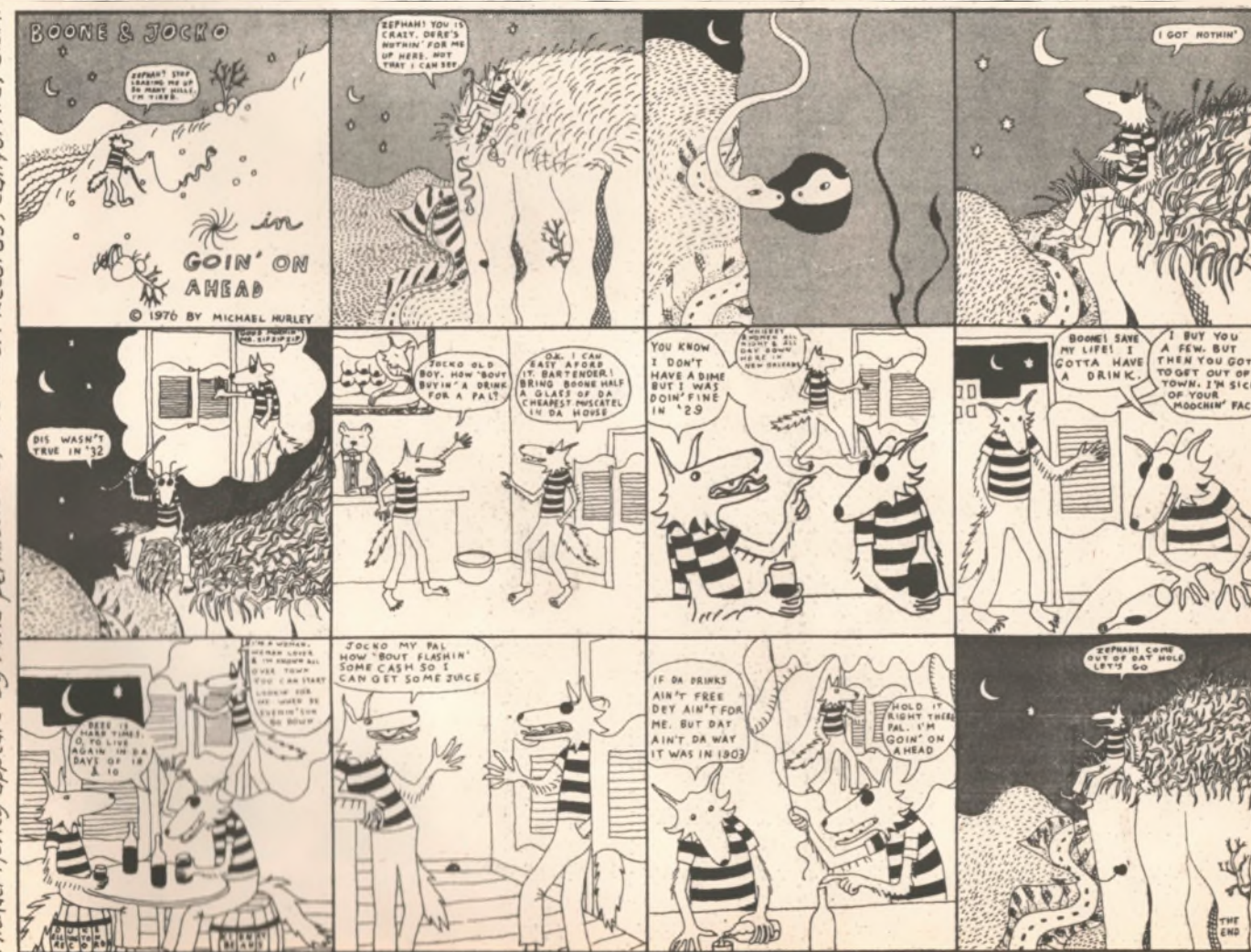
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LAST MONTH		THIS MONTH		ZIGZAG TOP THIRTY FOR AUGUST			MONTHS ON THE CHART	
		ALBUM TRACK (or single*)	ARTISTE	NUMBER				
1	1	Desperados Under The Eaves	WARREN ZEVON	Asylum K53039			3	
2	2	Memory Motel	ROLLING STONES	Rolling Stones COC 59106			4	
3	3	Shake Some Action	FLAMINI GROOVIES	Sire 9103 251			4	
6	4	Topanga	JOHN PHILLIPS	Dunhill DS 50077			76	
5	5	Cypress Avenue	VAN MORRISON	Warner Bros. K46024			89	
9	6	I'm Losing You	DWIGHT TWILLEY BAND	Shelter ISA 5012			2	
-	7	So It Goes	NICK LOWE	Stiff BUY 1 *			1	
4	8	L.A. Freeway	GUY CLARK	RCA APL1 1303			5	
8	9	Murder Man	JOHN OTWAY & BARRETT WYLDE	Track 2094 111 *			32	
14	10	Border Town	FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS	CBS 81433			2	
17	11	Transient Friends	GENEVIEVE WAITE	Paramour PR 5088 SD			16	
12	12	Past Present & Future	SHANGRI LAS	Phillips 6336 215			127	
20	13	Can I Make It Last	BOZ SCAGGS	CBS 64248			15	
10	14	Rebecca	FLO & EDDIE	Columbia PC 33554			9	
28	15	These Days	JACKSON BROWNE	Asylum SYL 9013			33	
11	16	Man Of Constant Sorrow	KALEIDOSCOPE	Pacific Arts PAC 102			4	
-	17	Here Come The Weekend	DAVE EDMUNDS	Swansong SSK 19408 *			1	
27	18	Clang Of The Yankee Reaper	VAN DYKE PARKS	Warner Bros. K56161			6	
-	19	September Gurls	BIG STAR	Ardent ADS 501			18	
23	20	Twelve Thirty	MAMAS & PAPAS	Dunhill DS 50031			100	
18	21	Me And My Uncle	MICHAEL WILHELM	Zigzag UA-ZZ1			8	
-	22	Eighteen Wheels	COMMANDER CODY & HLP A	Warner Bros. K66043			1	
-	23	Someone To Lay Down Beside Me	LINDA RONSTADT	Asylum K53045			1	
7	24	Don't Touch Me There	THE TUBES	A&M AMLH 64580			3	
-	25	Long May You Run	STILLS/YOUNG BAND	Reprise K14446 *			1	
15	26	Don't Fear The Reaper	BLUE OYSTER CULT	CBS 81385			2	
-	27	Miracles	JEFFERSON STARSHIP	Grunt BFL1 0999			3	
13	28	Only Sixteen	DR. HOOK	Capitol E-ST 11397			9	
16	29	If Not You	DR. HOOK	Capitol 23795			3	
-	30	Dead End Justice	THE RUNAWAYS	Mercury test pressing			1	
Bubbling Under:								
		Saving My Love	EARTHQUAKE	Berserkely BZ 0047				
		Disposable Rag	TOULOUSE ENGELHARDT	Briar BR 4203				
		Captain Jim's Drunken Dream	JAMES TAYLOR	Warner Bros.				
		Amanda	WAYLON JENNINGS	RCA LSA 3196				
		Love Has No Pride	AMERICAN FLYER	United Artists LA 650 G				
		Sandy	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN	CBS 65280				





In my younger and more vulnerable years, my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since. "Whenever you feel like criticising anyone", he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had".

Nevertheless, thanks to all you sweet folks who wrote endorsing my feelings about that appalling and miserable bag of hacked-out, second rate/second hand hype, the Melody Maker. As I told IPC recently in a personal letter, I am not averse to being approached to assume full editorial control of their 're-think programme'. Meanwhile, Sounds has sneaked up to become an excellent periodical once more. When Henderson and Peacock and Flood-Page and Walker and Penelope all left in that conspiratorial flurry last year, I thought it was all over for Sounds - and for a while it was. But now, thanks to sterling and dedicated work by ENTHUSIASTIC writers, it is now the weekly I enjoy most. Five stars to Sounds, but a bag of rancid maggots to MM.

And speaking of quality publications...buried deep beneath piles of pornographic literature which is forced daily through our miniscule letter box, I discovered the latest issues of Hot Wack's and Omaha Rainbow - both recommended highly! The small ads column will advise you of their contents and availability. I also came across issue number 2 of a xeroxed magazine called 'Sniffin' Glue, and Other Rock'n'Roll Habits'. Had Needs not subsequently stolen it from me, I might have been able to give a clearer description, but maybe a few amongst my readership (and, incidentally, I must stress that my readers are the cream of rock enthusiasts...people of impeccable taste), may find it interesting. Priced at 25p including post, it features the Groovies, the Rods, Richman, etc. Get it from Mark, at 24 Rochfort House, Grove Street, Deptford, London SE8 3LX.

And roaring out of England's hottest town, comes the second issue of the Aylesbury Roxette - devoted entirely to the music of our fair town. 25p from Yeoman Cottage, and worth every penny, if only for the snap of Friars sweetheart, Twinkle, on the cover. It also contains a superb photo of Needsy, absolutely gooned out of his tree as usual (reeling this time from the effects of McEwan's E Export) trying to look sober and dignified as he poses beside Curved Air's Sonja Kristina. He had to be lifted out of the chair after the photo had been taken!

Oh, I almost forgot: a million thanks for your 'birds names' lists (oh how I love lists!). Any notion of printing the assembled collection was scotched by less idiotic members of the board, because there were so many, but I'm finding a way to show the results to interested parties - so hang in there till next month (when the album winner will also be announced).

BEST EVER ALBUM SLEEVE

posn	Readers' Poll • August 1976	votes
1	HAPPY TRAILS Quicksilver	265
2	SGT PEPPER Beatles	214
3	AMERICAN BEAUTY Grateful Dead	203
4	ONLY IN IT FOR THE MONEY Mothers	196
5	STRANGE DAYS Doors	181
6	TROUT MASK REPLICA Cap Beefheart	169
7	FIRST ALBUM Pure Prairie League	168
8	WILL THE CIRCLE BE Nitty Gritty B.B.	162
9	GREAT RUM RUNNERS Robert Hunter	154
10	CARAVANSERAI Santana	151
11	AOXOMOXOA Grateful Dead	150
12	COURT OF CRIMSON KING King Crimson	147
13	SURFS UP Beach Boys	143
14	OGDEN'S NUT GONE Small Faces	138
15	BLUES FOR ALLAH Grateful Dead	136
16	SATANNIC MAJESTIES Rolling Stones	133
17	SAILIN' SHOES Little Feat	126
18	CHEAP THRILLS Big Brother	122
19	DESPERADO Eagles	120
20	FOREVER CHANGES Love	119
21	QUADROPHENIA Who	117
22	LATE FOR THE SKY Jackson Browne	111
23	DEJA VU CSN & Y	107
24	ELITE HOTEL Emmylou Harris	104
25	CLOSE TO THE EDGE Yes	101
26	BRINGING IT ALL Bob Dylan	100
27	G.P. Gram Parsons	94
28	ELECTRIC LADYLAND Jimi Hendrix	93
29	BARON VON TOLLBOOTH Karkner Slick	90
30	UNTITLED The Byrds	89

One of the main bummers of the month is the continuing decline and fall of Clive James. I used to buy the Observer every week just for his column, and then not read it until I was at the very optimum height of eager anticipation and receptivity...but his buffoonery on 'So It Goes' steered me off the fellow, and when he came on TV making some ridiculous assertion about dogs and their owners, I gave up on him altogether. And I don't even have a dog. Well, that prunes the list of Australians I like and admire to only two: Connor McKnight and Gary Shearston. All the others can rot in their vats of lager for all I care. Oh alright...Mr. Kendall insists that someone called Richie Benaud deserves a reprieve from such an unpleasant fate.

Thanks also to all you good people who have written in demanding the reinstatement of my Infallible Album Guide, but I fear there is little chance of my return...I'm outnumbered four to one by cads. Nonetheless, I intend to make various recommendations through this column. Best album of last month in my valued opinion, well...there wasn't one good enough to join the others on my A list for 1976: 'Old Number One' by Guy Clark; 'Warren Zevon'; 'Kate & Anna McGarrigle'; 'Shake Some Action' by the Flamin' Groovies; 'Howling Wind' by Graham Parker; and 'Silk Degrees' (oh yes!) by Boz Scaggs.

Good albums this month were the re-released Bert Jansch trilogy on Transatlantic, (Bert is one of the greatest blokes and musicians in the world), American Flyer (which isn't really the masterpiece I anticipated), the Best of Michael Nesmith, 'Renegade Picker' by Steve Young, and the Dwight Twilley Band. For other recommendations, see our super groovy Top 30, elsewhere in this issue.

Well, as you can see, the collated results show 'Happy Trails' by Quicksilver to be your favourite album sleeve of all time - a rather strange choice in my view, because although I love the idea, I think the actual execution could have been a wee bit more thoughtful. Nevertheless, it's a great sleeve and a great album, and a solid gold goblet (which he must pay for) is awarded to the designer, ex-Charlatan Mr. George Hunter of Globe Propaganda.

The poll category for this month is THE MOST PERNICIOUS INFLUENCE ON ROCK MUSIC, which was suggested by young Kendall. I didn't let on at the time, but I had absolutely no idea what pernicious meant, so I subsequently got out the old Penguin dictionary and learned that a pernicious influence is one which is 'very harmful, destructive'. OK - so let your pens run purple with vitriol, and send me a list of the ten most evil influences on the course of rock music - and that can include anything from Jonathan King to the introduction of drainpipe trousers, or from Radio One to gate-fold sleeves. The results should be fascinating. My address remains (much against my better judgement) c/o Yeoman Cottage, North Marston, Buckingham MK18 3PH.

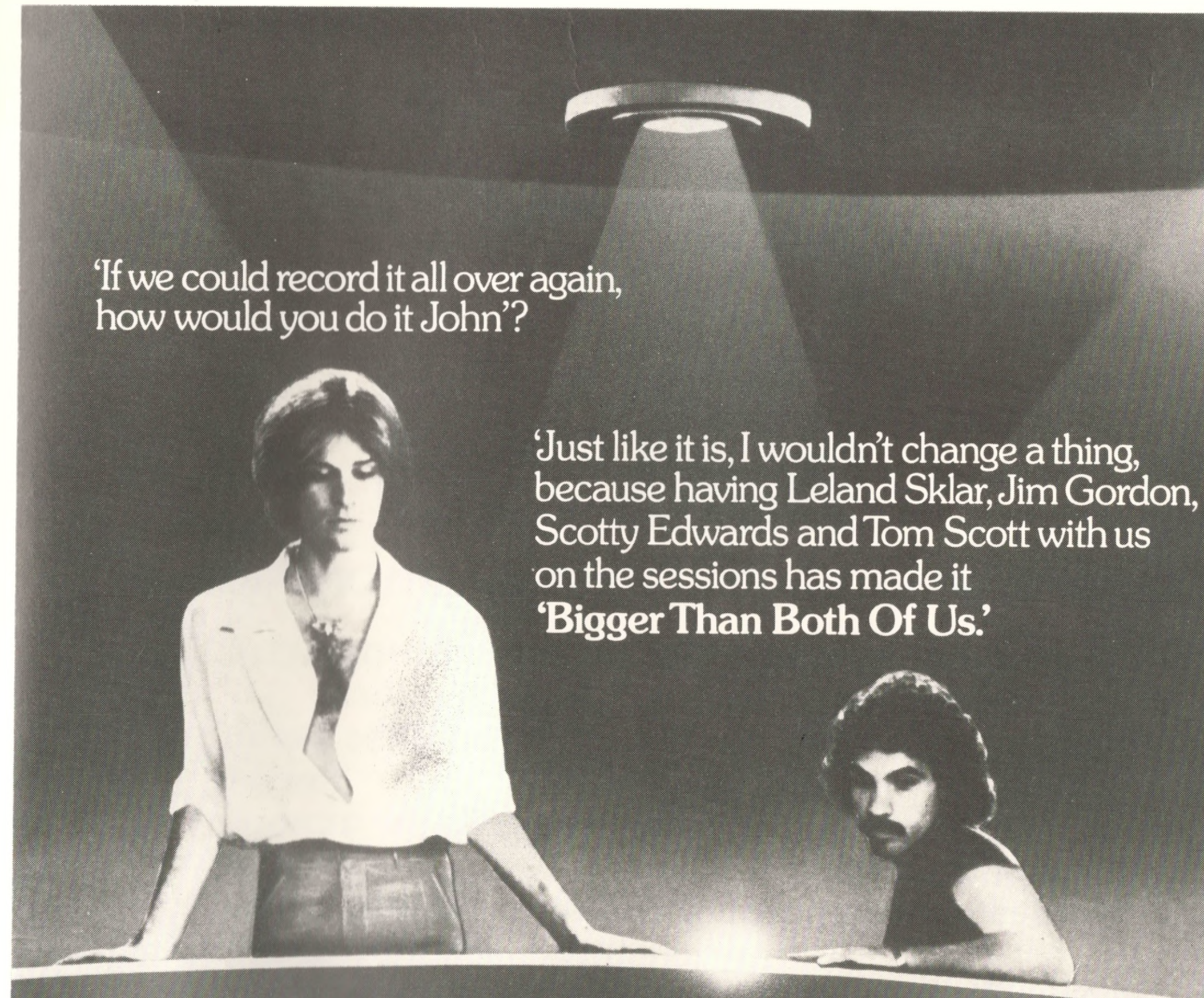
You have to admit it...this is a great year! 1976 is one of the best years ever! And right now, I'm off to enjoy another month of it to the full.

A great big kiss to you all (except the males).

T F Mac G

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