

# zigzag 69

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Jackson Browne**

**Ry Cooder  
Joni Mitchell  
Steve Hillage**

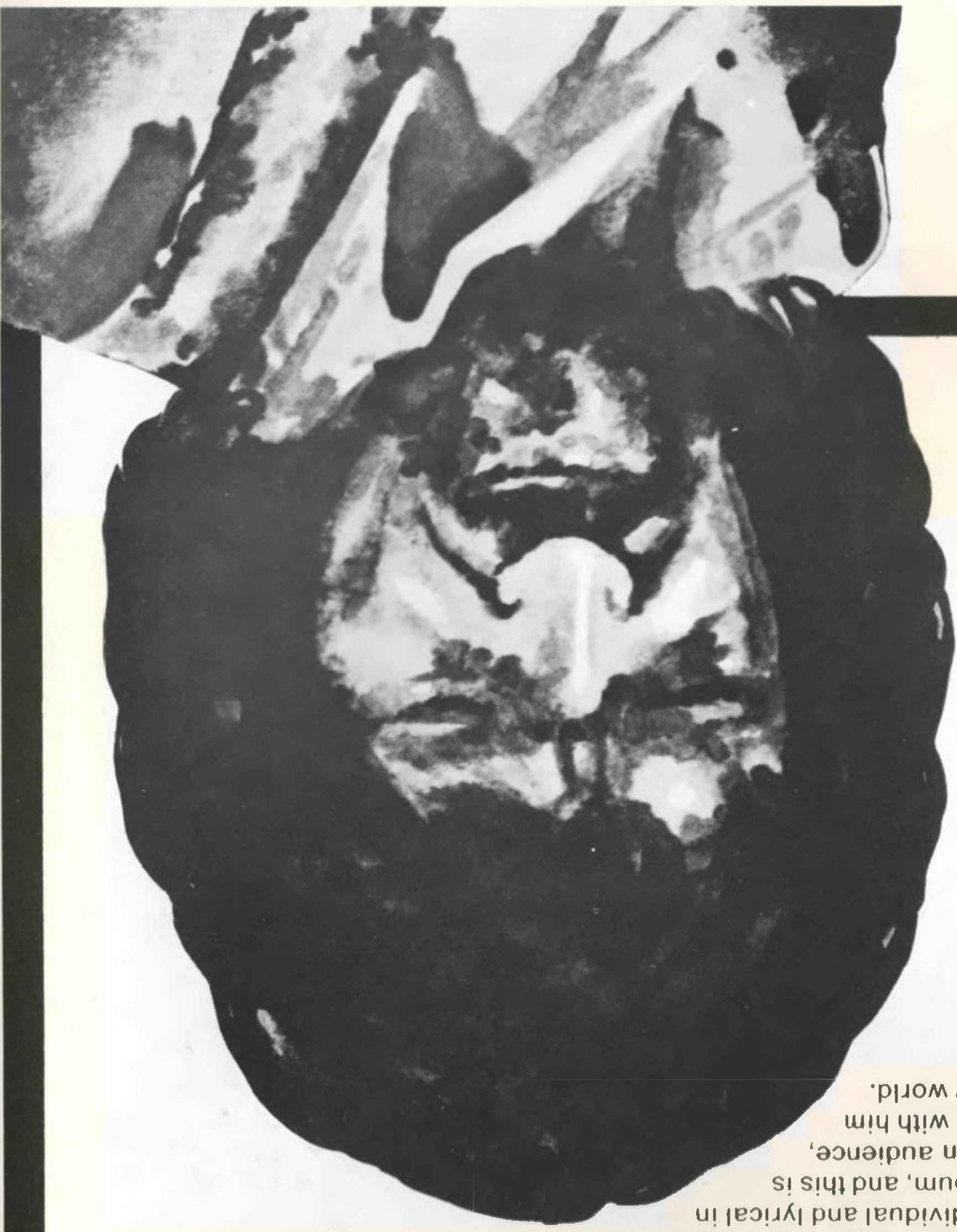


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Established in April 1969, and motivated by the music, not the money.

## SAYINGS OF THE MONTH

"I got the feeling in the courtroom that there was absolutely no understanding of the kind of life we lead. To them the things we come in contact with would be shocking, but they're as common to us in everyday life as the milkman coming to the door"...Keith Richards.

"I'm out to see Sir John Reid, and puke all over his face"...Malcolm McLaren.

"I wouldn't let Grace Slick blow me"...Marty Ballin.

"I spend most of my time laughing my ass off"...Leo Kottke.

"They (Led Zeppelin) thought it was my fault Robert Plant had such a big cock"...Joe Massot (Director of The Song Remains The Same).

"The safety-pin kid in the bar is taking his attitudes straight out of the Sunday People, rather than thinking them up for himself"...Mick Farren.

"James Brown sucks"...David Hancock.

"Fairport Convention will go on until my knees go"...Dave Swarbrick.

"Kevin Coyne's lyrics make Bernie Taupin look like a graffiti artist"...Giovanni Daddomo.

"I am not, I fear, a television person"...John Peel.

"John Lodge has chosen 'Natural Avenue' as the title for his debut solo album - he feels that his whole life has been one natural avenue towards it"...Decca Records advertising hype.

"Nobody plays the blues any more - not unless they're black and old"...Mick Brown.

"Crosby Stills & Nash are back together. All the problems are over; we've patched everything up and we're starting all over again"...Graham Nash.

"Get sniffling kids. And don't stop till you hit the ceiling"...The Rave.

"I'd rather be on Southend seafont than Sunset Strip; there's much more going on"...Wilko Johnson.

"If I had one leg, I'd be staggering"...John Olway.

"Hey, I know more than three chords now! I know four and a half! I'm practising all the time...the Blue Oyster Cult have shown me that rock'n'roll is hard work, it's harder than being in the army"...Patti Smith.

"When there's a tidal wave coming, you don't just sit and sip your coke and pretend everything's cool, you jump in your boat and go, dad!"...Ted Nugent.

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## STEVE HILLAGE.....ELECTRIC GIPSY

*"Just think: if I'd stayed on at Canterbury and evolved my philosophical outlook, I could have been a lecturer now - in some forgotten university in Ghana"*

As I recall, it was the "Ivins" jukebox" himself, Andy Dunkley, who first assailed my ears with Steve Hillage's album 'Fish Rising!'. At the time we were both employed on the mammoth and exhausting Dr. Feelgood tour of Autumn 1975, and were about to trundle over a few hundred more miles of the nation's motorways, when Dunkley, no doubt smitten with the same inspired madness that moves him to play so many excellent records at the Roundhouse and such places, suddenly whisked a cassette of 'Fish Rising!' from the murky depths of his stash-bag and slammed it into the makeshift cassette stereo system that he had so skilfully installed in the cabin of our truck.

Highly melodic music of a suspiciously psychedelic nature then proceeded to make our travels to Bradford or wherever we were going considerably less tedious and by the time I'd heard the album a few times I had made up my mind to investigate Steve Hillage and his music in more detail at some future point.

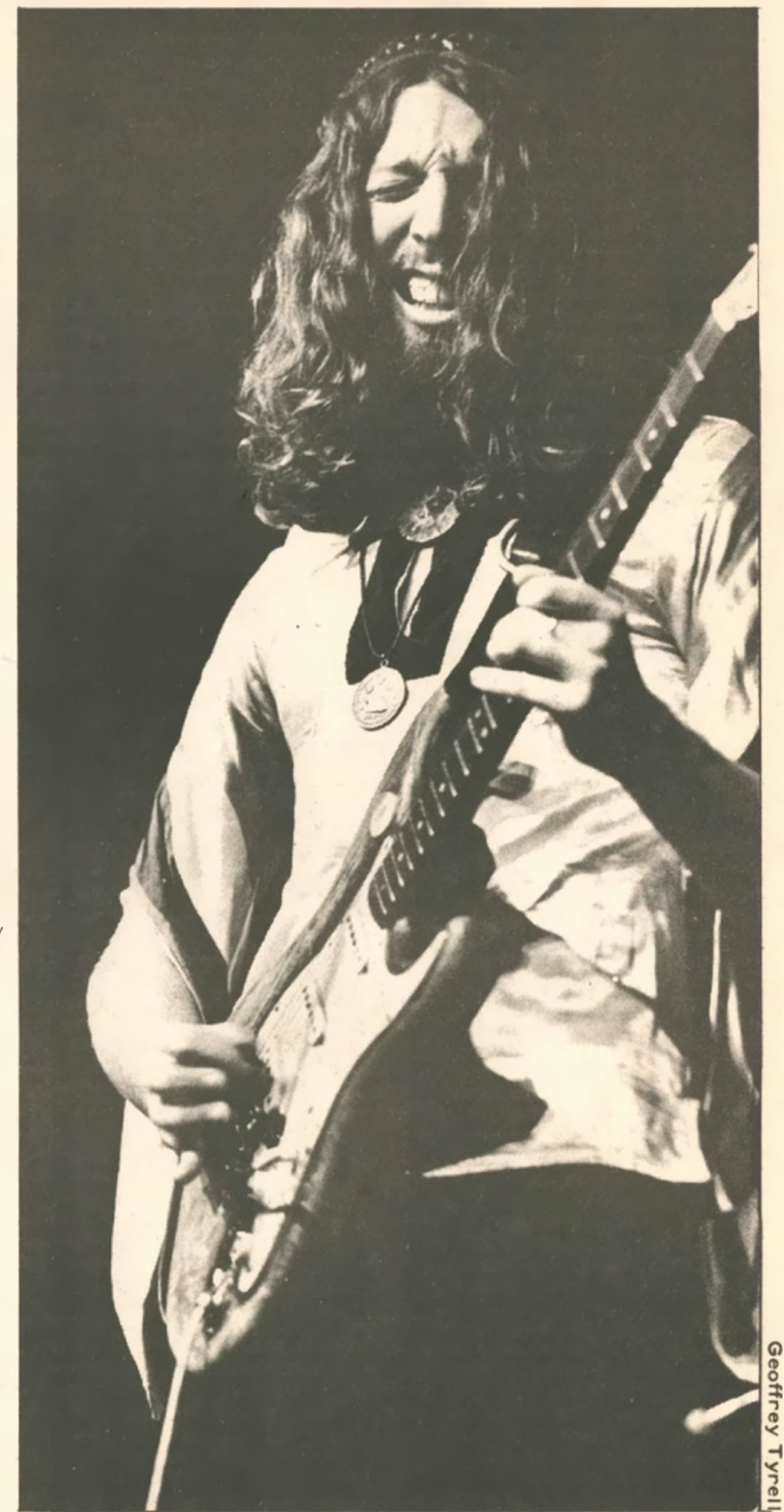
Well, you know how it is. A man has to do what a man has to do, and then there were those long evenings spent drinking "real ale" at the King's Head in Harrow-on-the-Hill, and all the sleeping I had to catch up on, and that unfinished manuscript... oh how time flies. The months fairly streaked past without me noticing them at all. Then before I even had a chance to say "Rip van Winkle", someone attracted my attention and informed me that Hillage had released yet another album, mystically titled 'L.I.'.

Discarding my by now thoroughly shabby cloak of uncertainty and lethargy, I acted like the utterly responsible human being of character and purpose I really am, and listened to the new album, interviewed Steve Hillage, and attended one of his concerts... all in the space of a month or so! Such expenditure of energy very nearly saw me to an early grave I'll have you know, but happily here I am, just about recovered, and scribbling out these notes like a reckless crackpot for the enlightenment of all you dear readers. In case you are thinking that this article will unfold into another of my mini treatises on the beneficial, humane and intellectual possibilities of popular music in the wonderful 20th century, allow me to terminate your feverish expectations here and now. This is an article about Steve Hillage (but is no less interesting for all that).

Those of you who have actually been to Stonehenge and attach great importance to pyramids and the like will obviously know that Steve Hillage was once a member of Gong, and indeed we shall talk of this period in his career at greater length later on. But first let us interrogate the man about his background and his early days as a superno psychedelic guitarist.

"I started playing guitar when I was very young. Some unseen force inspired me to pester my parents to get me a guitar when I was nine, and I started twiddling about. After a few years I discovered I could play so I started playing with the other guys at school who were into music, and from this we evolved a group called Uriel. That was in '67/'68 with Dave Stewart and Mont Campbell... we got our drummer, Clive Brooks, through a Melody Maker advertisement. We started in 1967 and were obviously very influenced by the prevailing musical tide at the time. We were the school's psychedelic band. Eventually there came a certain point when the rest of the group decided to quit school and concentrate on the group full-time; but being the kind of serious guy in the group, I didn't want to leave school. I wanted to go to university, so I left Uriel, although I continued to play with them on a part-time basis. I also did a few concerts with a 12-string guitar.

"On leaving school I went to university at Canterbury - and I had no idea that the city had its own music scene; it was purely by chance that I happened to choose that University. It's funny, but a lot of chance things have happened to me like that. Anyway, I went off to Canterbury University, and the day I arrived I saw the Soft Machine's van parked there! I thought "What, are they playing here?"... and then I found out that Hugh Hopper's parents lived on the university campus, and I eventually sussed the whole thing out. When I met them all I really got involved in the whole scene. There was a band called Spirogyra formed at the univer-



Geoffrey Tyrell





sity, and I was very friendly with them... I used to live with the girl singer. Anyway, after a while I decided that university life wasn't for me for various reasons - mainly philosophical. Also I'd got so into playing the guitar that I decided to do it full-time. I thought I'd be wasting my time if I stayed on at university, not to mention my talents. Just think: if I'd stayed on at Canterbury and evolved my philosophical outlook, I could have been a lecturer by now, in some forgotten university in Ghana or somewhere... but I decided against that, and packed it in.

"I started playing around with various musicians from Caravan and I got into jamming with people again, but because all the Canterbury musicians were already in groups I had to go to London to find people to form a group. To be honest I originally wanted to make a solo record (in fact, I always wanted to make a solo record because for a long time I've been into studio technology, but it's taken me a long time to actually learn how to use it), so I went to London, and Caravan got me a deal with their management and record company (Decca), which was very kind of them - but the deal was to the effect that they wanted me to form a group rather than make solo records. So I met various musicians and we formed a group called Khan: Nick Greenwood (who used to be in The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown) on bass, a drummer called Eric Peachey (who was in Doc K's Blues Band), and on organ, a guy called Dick Henningham (who also played in The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown for a time as an understudy for Vincent Crane when he was ill)".

Excuse me for butting in here, but I thought it might be a good place to inform you that the afore-mentioned Uriel, whom Steve forsook in order to further his education, eventually became a curious but excellent little band called Egg. Unfortunately they never attained any great degree of popularity, and their forever meagre gig-sheet left them a lot of free time, time which Dave Stewart used to spend guesting at Khan gigs, so much so that he somewhat inevitably ended up playing on Khan's debut album 'Space Shanties', which was recorded in 1971. Back to Mr. Hillage.

"There's some good music on that record, although my whole kind of vision of what I was doing hadn't solidified by then... I was still kind of searching. My lyrics were less confident - they were more kind of surrealistic imagery, strung together subconsciously, which is alright in a way - I kind of like those dreamy sort of lyrics as opposed to more carefully worked out statements. Obviously it had less power than the recent stuff I've done, but it was the first record I did and it takes a while to learn the craft."

Khan lasted nearly two years. It started around the Spring of 1971 and ended in the Autumn of 1972. "After the release of 'Sea Shanties' I became dissatisfied and decided to change the group completely in preparation for the next album. I got Dave Stewart to join permanently because Egg had gone into a decline, and I changed bass players... got in a guy called Nigel Smith. Eric was still on drums - he's a very good drummer actually. I also wrote a whole lot of new music which was much more powerful than the stuff on 'Space Shanties', and most of that eventually turned up on 'Fish Rising'".

At this point the highly eccentric aggregation of cosmic loonies known as Gong entered into the life of Mr. Hillage, with quite significant results.

"While I was doing this new music, Gong did a tour of England (this was in 1971), and I got to hear of them as a result of that. They really knocked me out because they seemed to be the sole bearers of a torch that seemed to have been extinguished practically everywhere by about 1968, and they were still going on with this fantastic mixture of psychedelic music and French dadaism. I really fell in love with the group and I was quite influenced by their records while I was writing my new music. In a way I felt as if I met them on some kind of creative plane.

"At the same time as all this the Khan situation was getting very bad. The manager thought my music was becoming very uncommercial, too Soft Machiney, so the money dried up. I got a bit down in the dumps and eventually blew the whole thing out. The day after I disbanded the group, Kevin Ayers asked me to join his band (Decadence) because I'd got friendly with him as well. So I never really stopped working". (See Canterbury Family Tree in ZZ28 which, so Steve tells me, Daavid Allen has proudly displayed on his bedroom wall).

"The day after Khan's last gig I did a rehearsal with Kevin Ayers and went on the road with him three days later, which was good. It was good to play with someone else and play someone else's music; it was good training for me. I didn't really change my guitar style although Kevin's got his own idiosyncratic approach to songwriting - which, as it happens, I really like. So I had a great affection for Kevin's songs, and at the time I needed a break from the responsibilities of looking after Khan - I wanted to hang loose for a bit, I think the term is".

Before we move on, let us just side-step for one moment and mention another of Hillage's pioneering musical activities, the Ottawa Company. (See also ZZ51).

"That was really a subsidiary project while I was doing Khan. It was basically got together by Chris Cutler and Dave Stewart

and the idea was simply to allow people to write rock music for unusual line-ups. It was a very exciting thing, and there was a lot of music written for it which was really what I'd call "new music"... it didn't owe very much to American jazz-rock, or English jazz, or blues, or anything... it was just a very original event. It was very enjoyable as well. We were able to write music for up to fourteen musicians and in a way I suppose it was a precursor of Centipede. It was just a one-off thing of about three concerts, and we were always planning Ottawa Part 2, but that never happened. It was very difficult to get together because you had to fit it in to all the schedules of all the different groups involved".

Right, back to the main gist of the story, where Hillage has just joined Kevin Ayers' band and gets to play on the album 'Banamour' (highly recommended).

"Decadence only lasted a couple of months. Kevin had already recorded most of 'Banamour' by the time I joined him, but he had a few tracks he wanted to do with me. I did 'Shouting In A Bucket Blues' which I was very pleased with - I like my guitar playing on that - and I did a few bits on other tracks. But it was all over very quickly and I went on to become involved with Gong. As I said before, I got to know them through their tour in 1971, principally because Pip Pyle was in the group and I'd known Pip since 1970 at Canterbury. When I was forming Khan he was deciding whether to join Khan or Gong, and he joined Gong because he wanted to go to France and Gong was a more appealing project all round. Anyway, I gradually met all the other people in Gong and built up a very strong relationship with them. In fact it was so strong that when it actually came to the moment when I decided to join Gong they knew it, like it was written in the sky. There was no question about it. I joined them when they were making the 'Radio Gnome Invisible Part 1' album and I distinctly remember the first time I worked with them.

"I drove down to The Manor, it was on New Year's Eve 1972 and very foggy and my car broke down, but I eventually got there at about 3.30 in the morning. I found the group in a slightly disintegrated state; people were on the verge of leaving, and Francis Bacon and Laurie Allan were behaving very eccentrically. It was really funny. I had a good time, though I didn't play much on the album... just mainly helped the group get it together. Giorgio Gomelski was there of course. Also I'd known Tim Blake for quite a while before I joined Gong. I got to know him briefly when he was working with Hawkwind and then got to know him properly through Lady June. I did a lot of work as well for Lady June before I joined Gong. Anyway, Tim joined Gong just before I did and we did a lot of jamming together, which laid the foundations for future albums like 'Angels Egg' and 'You'. A lot of that we started off at The Manor".

Now I've only seen Gong a couple of times (although one of those occasions was at the Lyceum, where they were quite superb), and I don't possess all their records (I haven't got 'Banana Moon', 'Continental Circus' or the last one), but I must admit that I've always had a soft spot for their particular brand of stoned whimsical lunacy, not to mention their sporadically excellent music... and I'll never forget the first time I met Daavid Allen. He'd obviously just finished a lightning trip round the universe and was looking slightly dishevelled and somewhat knackered, but he spoke in such a commanding and awe-inspiring manner, and with such poise and dignity that I began to think that here was no mere mortal, no common or garden space cadet. Here was a true astral traveller and one of the only real hippies in the world. I was just about to ask him if he really was 200 years old when he suddenly hooked himself onto a passing moonbeam and disappeared into the cosmos. I never spoke to him again. However, he went on to play many more gigs with Gong, as did Steve Hillage, who remembers it all thus:

"The best thing about Gong was that at its height you had like seven different people all into completely different trips, all of them with the potential of having their own bands. In a way there was too much energy there for it to be a lasting group; at certain gigs it was unbelievable because everybody was on their own trip and somehow or other it all seemed to fit together and this amazing force seemed to flow through us all. In many ways Gong, musically, represented some of the best things I'll ever do. Some of the improvisations we did were so telepathic it was incredible. Obviously we had bad nights when we played rather boring psychedelic music - you can't guarantee an A1 quality every night with that degree of improvisation, but that was part of the fun of it really.

"I played on the albums 'Angels Egg' and 'You' and I eventually left the group around October 1975, but by amicable agreement with record company and group I stayed with them, did a tour and played a bit on the next album 'Shamal'. But there was a certain moment when I decided that the group as a whole were going in one direction, and I was going in another direction, and unless I left them then and there, I would be committed to making another album and doing another tour for the next six months. So I decided to leave".

And so began Steve Hillage's solo career and his subsequent

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rise to guitar hero status. No artist ever embarked on a solo career more prepared and more full of optimism than Steve, as he already had his first album 'Fish Rising' in the can and loads of ideas for future projects.

"I recorded 'Fish Rising' at the same time as Gong recorded 'You'. In fact Virgin had offered me a solo album deal before 'Angels Egg'. They'd heard about me and Khan and were interested, and also there was a time when we did a lot of gigs in France without Daevid Allen who'd gone off for a kind of rest in Spain, and Virgin heard some tapes of that which were called Paragong, and they liked that a lot. So it was just a question of finding time to do my own album, and in the end I decided to do it concurrently with the record 'You'. In fact I overestimated my reserves of energy to a certain extent - I got really tired. I did most of 'Fish Rising' in the summer of 1974, but I didn't have time to finish it until January and February of the next year, which in some ways was nice because it gave me time to consider it, but in other ways it was a bit of a drag because it broke the organic flow".

Although it isn't as powerful or inventive as the subsequent 'L', 'Fish Rising' (Virgin V2031) is nevertheless and extraordinarily imaginative and accomplished album. Released from the rather communistic restrictions of Gong, Hillage's guitar work takes on a more expansive mood and is altogether a complete revelation. His sense of melody is also most appealing as is the album's pre-occupation, inferred by the title, with fish.

"When I was a young lad I was a nature freak. I was into collecting all sorts of things, and eventually I graduated from grass-hoppers and slow-worms into the aquatic realm, and I got into water beetles, dragonflies, sticklebacks and then gudgeon. I really got into big fish... I wanted to see them and communicate with them, and I became a very keen angler because although angling to a certain extent is a bit cruel, the only people who seem to know fish backwards are anglers. So I decided to concentrate my nature-loving tendencies on fish. And then after I got into music and started playing through echo boxes, which I started doing at university, I became involved with this idea of playing sort of "fishy music", underwater music. I started getting into creating this imaginary underwater world. So when I joined Gong I achieved the distinction of being the successor to the role of the Submarine Captain. I kept chatting about all these underwater things, so Daevid said "Right, you must be the new Submarine Captain", which is part of his whole mythology - I think it's based on Captain Nemo.

"And at that time I'd always been interested in what I call esoteric philosophy - symbolism and occultism and all that. I group that all together under the word 'esoterics'. I discovered that fish have a lot of symbolic importance - they represent sexual energy, the Piscean Age, the early Christians, and all kinds of things. So I decided to try and blend it all together on three levels: me as an artist with a deep interest in fish; the technology and mechanical act of playing "fishy music"; and the symbolic importance of fish. Although 'Fish Rising' isn't all watery music, that's the basic element".

I don't think that an inordinate amount of copies were sold (not as many as there should have been anyway), but 'Fish Rising' did definitely "create a buzz", as a lot of trendy pratts in the music business would say. This "buzz" was further amplified when, in order to record his next album, Steve went to Woodstock and started work with that other great optimist of our time, Todd Rundgren. Although their collaboration yielded nothing but total success, both artistically and commercially, their introduction to each other was slightly less than orthodox.

"Well obviously I'd heard the fellow's name, but I thought he was a pop singer because all I'd heard was 'I Saw The Light', which is a great song, but it's a pop song. Then while I was doing some Gong gigs a few of our more enthusiastic followers brought us a load of Todd Rundgren records and said "This is the American equivalent to what you're doing. You really ought to get into them". And then Todd Rundgren did a tour over here in '75, and they went up to him and gave him all the Gong records and said "Here's the European equivalent to what you're doing. You really ought to get into them". And previous to that Roger Powell (Utopia's computer, synthesiser and keyboard player) had really liked 'Angels Egg' and was very fond of Gong - he'd known about them for years. So eventually I wrote to Todd Rundgren, told him I'd like to meet him and said I thought we were on a similar kind of trip. Also I'd heard the record 'Initiation' which I really liked. Then Virgin, seizing the opportunity, asked Todd Rundgren if he'd like to produce me.

"I hadn't even spoken to him, and I thought he only produced people in order to buy more video gear, and he wanted a lot of money. Which is in fact the truth. He's totally wrapped up in his own work. He works incredibly hard, and he basically works for Utopia. He enjoys producing but he really only does it in order to finance Utopia. Anyway, it all fell together because he'd just moved his studio out to the country and he was looking for somebody to kind of test it out for him. So he worked out a very cheap deal with Virgin and I toddled over there with a few songs

and we got the record together. It was a great experience and it all happened very smoothly without any fuss. I really think Todd's production work is so great. I'd say he's got the psychedelic ear, definitely".

I seem to be the only one on the Zigzag staff, besides probably Kendall, who holds any great affection for Todd Rundgren's music (Ed: this might be true), and the same no doubt goes for Steve Hillage (Ed: categorically not so). However, after careful consideration I would venture to suggest that only retarded plankton of the very lowest intellect and a few nameless pop music journalists could conceivably fail to appreciate the considerable merits of Hillage's second album 'L'. Apart from four exhilarating original compositions, including the monumental 'Lunar Musick Suite', there are also quite stunningly impressive interpretations of Donovan's 'Hurdy Gurdy Man' and George Harrison's 'It's All Too Much'... all embellished and beautifully engraved with Todd Rundgren's unique production work. 'It's All Too Much' in particular will, I'm sure, be eventually regarded as an indestructible classic and the supreme example of 1970s psychedelic music.

Coincidental with his visit to America, Steve also rediscovered the urge to form a band and do some more live work.

"When I left Gong I still wanted to do some live gigs, but I didn't intend to form a band. I was thinking of borrowing National Health for a bit. But then when I was in America I went to see some Utopia gigs, enjoyed them so much, and it got me back in the mood to go out on the road again... so when I got back home, I began to toy with the idea of forming a group and eventually I decided to. And then, having made that decision, things started happening very quickly".

The band which Steve formed and which gigged remorselessly and so successfully throughout the last three months of last year consists of Colin Bass on bass (ex-Clancy), drummer Clive Bunker (ex-Jethro Tull), Basil Brooks on synthesiser (ex-Zorch), guitarist Christian Boule (ex-Clear Light Symphony), Phil Hodges on keyboards, and Steve's lady Miquette Giraudy on synthesiser and percussion. Quite a varied bunch, I think you'll agree!

"I had a vague feeling that everyone was kind of guided together. Like when we started rehearsing it all felt right and very friendly. We've got a very good astrological balance in the group: the keyboards, bass and drums are all earth signs, and the synthesiser and glissando guitar are all air signs, and I'm fire and water, so it mixes very well. In a way it allows me to be in the forefront without stepping on anyone's toes".

What's glissando guitar?

"Glissando is an extension of bottleneck, I suppose, but you actually rub the strings with a roughed-up metal rod and it sets them oscillating, and you get all these wonderful resonances coming out. You never quite know what kind of harmonics are going to come out - it's a very magical sound. Daevid Allen actually worked it out from rough beginnings and Syd Barrett also used to do something like that. Daevid applied the Gong mythology to it and called it a Radio Gnome Transmitter. It's also a way of getting the optimum out of echo boxes and phase boxes. The ultimate glissando I suppose is when every resistor in your electric circuit is singing. Daevid and I have this project where we want to make the glissando orchestra with six or even eight guitarists playing in glissando harmony".

Having seen them in action at the Hammersmith Odeon shortly before Christmas, I can vouch for the group's excellence, and it looks as though they'll be undertaking more live work in the months to come, so go and see for yourself. Also in the pipeline, of course, is a new album.

"I've got lots of ideas for things to do and I won't decide what to do on my next record until I get down to it. I'd quite like to connect my next album in some way to the mystical traditions of Britain. Eventually somebody's going to do that, so I might as well do it... and do it in an adult way. I found Rick Wakeman's King Arthur thing a little... well, I suppose it was entertainment, but it wasn't really art".

The incurable cynics and (Gawd help us) punks among you may well have been misled before now into believing that Steve Hillage's music and his "esoteric philosophies" are just a load of dope-inspired hippie nonsense that belong back in 1967, when it was a lot cooler to walk around wearing velvet loons, beads and a tea cosy on your head. But frankly, I don't believe that his attitudes could ever have been any more relevant than they are today. While most other art forms, and popular music in particular, seem to be increasingly fascinated by the idea of unimaginable violence and destruction, I personally find it rather reassuring when someone as genuine and talented as Steve Hillage chooses to extol the good old fashioned ideas of peace, love and understanding.

"I try not to go over the top; I try not to be daft. Obviously there's a lot of shit in the world, and there always will be until the Golden Age, if the Golden Age ever comes. It's a kind of optimistic pessimism... you know that things aren't going to work out the way you want them to, but nevertheless you aren't going to mind".

Andy Childs



*"I've spent my whole life in clouds at icy altitudes"*



Los Angeles, California:

Sankey Phillips and Dave Wilson report.

Joni Mitchell rarely gives interviews these days - on the grounds that she doesn't see any point in them: "I don't have anything to say that would explain any of my works more clearly", she says. Well, that's a matter of opinion; if she were willing to comment on some of her songs, maybe we'd be spared some of the preposterous interpretations and observations by critics. What I find more interesting at this point in time, however, is not her output so much as her route to the stars... how she started out on that road which led her to that stratum of untouchable fantasyland where she no longer has to mix with mere mortals.

The stories behind the songs are her own business - and at this stage in the game, one can understand her desire to "keep her goldfish bowl as translucent as possible"... but she was quite prepared to discuss those early days in fairly specific terms - though her effusiveness faded rather swiftly when the conversation approached Mr. Crosby and Mr. Stills, those refugees from famous LA bands, who grew so much closer in her presence during 1968.

Since your editor is so obsessed with the need to supply as much background trivia as possible, let me just jot down some biographical details before the interview starts: Joni Mitchell was born Roberta Joan Anderson on November 7th 1943, which makes her 33 years old now. Her original intention was to become a successful commercial artist, but her studies at Alberta College of Art in Calgary were distracted by the plinking and plunking of guitar strings. Folk music. She learned to play with the aid of a Pete Seeger 'How to play guitar' record, and her paintbox began to gather dust. Her first gig was at a coffee house called the Depression. Now read on:

ZZ: I'm primarily interested in the early days - how you got started. How do you feel about a potted autobiography?

JM: Well, I was born in Fort McCloud, Alberta. I moved from there to a small town in Saskatchewan called Maidstone, then on to North Battleford and on to Saskatoon. I was always pressured by my mother to be involved in music; possibly

because my father played in bands when I was small - you know, marching bands and things like that. He played the trumpet.

I was always more interested in painting than anything else, though, and I went off to art college... and every summer, my cronies and I used to go up to the lake and sing around the campfire - you know, unaccompanied songs.

One summer I decided... Oh! I remember. I went to a coffeehouse to hear some jazz, because my friends were interested in jazz and I was kind of curious to find out what it was all about - I was still a rock and roller, teenybop go-to-the-dances-on-Saturday-night type. Any way, that night there was no jazz, there was this terrible folk singer. I didn't enjoy it at all, but I kept going down there... And I found there were some things I liked. I liked a group that was very Kingston Trio-ish; they were local, and they were very amusing - it was really funny to hear comedy in music. I wanted the leader to teach me how to play the guitar, but he wouldn't, so I went out and bought myself a ukelele, because my mother thought that guitar... she thought that guitar music was sort of associated with country and western, which was sort of hillbillyish - so she said "No guitar!"

ZZ: So you got a ukelele instead?

JM: That's right... and I plunked my way through most of that summer. Then, back at college, I started playing in a club with Peter Albling - he and I became the house acts. That was in Calgary, Alberta, and it was the first professional gig either of us played. Peter went off and became Mycroft of the Times Square Two, and I began to struggle around the clubs, and I also moved to Toronto, where I got a part-time job. And it was at that time when I met my husband, Chuck.

ZZ: Do you remember when this was?

JM: That was in May of 1965. Well, Chuck and I moved to Detroit and worked as a duo for a while, and we stayed around there until Tom Rush came along and sort of encouraged us to get out of Michigan. So we went to New York and played the Gaslight; we didn't do all that well. We drew a few interesting people, but nothing really startling.

So we got out of Michigan and went down

to the Carolinas, and found out that South Carolina was too far south; I refused to work there any more. North Carolina was very nice; we met a lot of interesting people - very nice service people - which gave me a whole new point of view on the war. I know a lot of really nice, a lot of really tragic, and a lot of really gung-ho soldiers. A captain who owned my guitar before me wanted to give it to me, because he thought I was better than Peter, Paul and Mary. He used to come in every night and get drunk and say "Oh, you're better than Peter, Paul and Mary". So I bought the guitar from him at a very, very, very good price. Love it dearly.

ZZ: When did you start working as a solo?

JM: Around the end of '66.

ZZ: And when did you start to write your own songs?

JM: Well, I wrote one song in Calgary; I don't remember what it was about, but I wrote it for Peter. I don't remember how it went, and I'm sure he doesn't either. The next one I wrote was 'Day After Day'. I wrote that when I went to the Mariposa folk festival in August 1964. Then I wrote 'What Will He Give Me' in November of 1964, and didn't write anything else until the following April when I wrote a song called 'Here Today And Gone Tomorrow'... and maybe one or two more; like I had one called 'The Student Song'. I guess I had written about five songs when I met Chuck.

ZZ: Was there any common theme?

JM: In the early ones. Love Lost. I met a wandering Australian who really did me in. As a matter of fact he continued to be the theme for a lot of songs that I wrote. I used to find it really difficult to write Love Found songs! My earliest 'real true love found' song was 'Dawn Treader'... but Love Found songs were difficult to write, primarily because they really take a lot of confidence, not only that you are in love, but that the other person is in love with you. Otherwise you're afraid to say all the things that you want to say. It's a standard thing. You don't want to look foolish and commit yourself to all these things. So I didn't, at that time, have very much... the way my head was working I didn't have very much to write about.



I was sort of relatively contented.

ZZ: It was Tom Rush who eventually drew the folk audiences to your songs when he recorded 'The Circle Game' and 'The Urge For Going'... can you tell us about those?

JM: I wrote 'The Circle Game' about Neil Young, who was a friend of mine at the time. He was lamenting lost youth at 21! He had decided that all the groovy things to do were behind him now, he was too old to do them; suddenly he was an adult with all the responsibilities. He had been told all his life that all the things he wanted to do, they said "Wait 'til you're older". Now he was older, and he didn't want to do those things any more. So that was the idea for one song.

'The Urge For Going' I wrote after the second Mariposa I ever went to...

ZZ: What exactly was 'The Mariposa'?

JM: A folk festival which was held in Ontario every summer. The first one I went to, I went solely to watch... but the second time I went, I was a performer. That was the first year I was married, and that was a very bad year... it seemed to be full of drunks and people looking for action rather than music - so I was pretty unprepared.

I wanted to do all my own material; I didn't have much variety. I wasn't very good, and I had a lot of trouble with the audience booing and hissing and saying "Take your clothes off, sweetheart!". Things like that really shook me up because I didn't know how to counter or how to act. I thought I'd bombed; I wanted to quit and I was really desperate. On the way back, in the car I wrote a line that said "It's like running for a train that left the station hours ago; I've got the urge for going but there's no place left to go". What I really meant was that the folk movement had died at that point, and that the music I loved had no audience left... it was futile and it was silly, and I may as well quit.

So then I forgot about the line, and then one day I was cleaning out my guitar case, which is usually full of scrap songs, lyrics I've started - and I came across that piece of paper. I used to clean the case out every so often, and read all the notes over - and I would sometimes find something where I couldn't even remember what the original thought was... but the line would stir up a whole fresh idea, completely new. That's what happened with 'Urge For Going'. I wrote that in August, and the next thing I knew it was September, and then October. I was really cold, and I was saying "I hate winter and I really have the urge for going someplace warm", and I remembered that line. So I wrote 'Urge For Going' from that.

ZZ: And Tom Rush happened to pick up on it?

JM: Actually, Dave van Ronk was the first. I met Dave and Patrick Sky in Winnipeg in September or October - I had just written it, so it must have been October. They were doing a Canadian television show called 'Sing Out', and I thought that once again... it was sort of following Mariposa, I was shaky and thought I was awful and amateurish and I wasn't growing fast enough. And I could feel how good my peers were; I could feel how amateurish I was, and I really needed encouragement. They didn't give me any as far as I could see. Van Ronk was saying things like "Jon!, you've really got groovy taste in clothes, why don't you become a fashion model?" And Patrick Sky was saying "It sucks". But Dave did like 'Urge For Going' and he asked me for it, I remember. I wondered what ulterior motive he had in mind after saying all those dreadful things to me. "He must just want to laugh at it or something". I was that insecure about my writing. I really thought it was awful.

ZZ: (As far as I know, Van Ronk didn't record it until his Polydor album in 1972.) But Tom Rush recorded it first, didn't he?

JM: Well, when Tommy took it, he had Judy Collins in mind. He took it to her and she apparently didn't like it, it just didn't

excite her enough to do. So he didn't know what to do, and he learned it in the meantime. And I got a letter from him one day saying I'm going to do 'The Urge For Going' I don't think it's my kind of song, but I'm going to try it anyway. And he had beautiful success with it.

So then, Tommy really started it. He opened doors. The Philadelphia circuit... I probably never would have... I was running out of clubs to play, and there wasn't very much money where I was playing and everything. And the only way I did work was through Tom. He'd go into a club and he'd stand up there and sing my song, and build me up and people would get curious, you see. So he really opened up a whole circuit for me. That's where I grew and through experience got some other ideas, lived some other things.

ZZ: And then the ball started rolling... all sorts of people began to record your songs - all before your first album...

JM: Right. Buffy Sainte-Marie did 'Circle Game' and 'Song To A Seagull'; Ian & Sylvia did 'Circle Game'; Judy Collins did 'Michael From Mountains' and 'Both Sides Now' - and they were also being done in England by people like Fairport Convention and Julie Felix. She was doing quite a few of my songs, not very common ones, but peculiar ones I'd forgotten... she got them off old lead sheets and tapes.

ZZ: What, to you, is the trademark of your growth? What is the change in your writing that indicates to you that you're writing better songs now than you were before?

JM: Now, better is a point of view. My mother and a lot of relatives will think I'm more ambiguous. I think I'm a better poet now, and my melodies are much more complex. The music is, and this is a dirty word to use, much more intellectual. It's more complicated, it has more meat to it. So things like 'Carnival In Kenora', which is just a pretty little courtship song that people like - I'm not writing any more like that. I get halfway through them and I realize they're not saying anything, and I throw them aside. I have more philosophy in my songs; it's not really protest, it's more contemporary. If a historian read into it, he would see more of our time in my music now.

Before it could have been anything. While I was married to Chuck, what topics did I have to write about? I was limited in writing short stories, character sketches of people in love, for fear that people would say "Listen to that song, there must be something wrong between them"... you know what I mean. You have to be very careful not to give the opinion that you're running around. At least, I always did, and now I have no-one to answer to, no-one to be afraid of offending.

My songs are very honest, they are very personal, extremely personal. Sometimes they really hurt to sing. Some nights you really get into them, and they really take a lot out of me, which is something music never did before.

ZZ: You do seem to make heavy use of "symbolism" in your music. I've noticed that every once in a while a symbol will recur.

JM: What?

ZZ: Dreams, for instance.

JM: Are you talking about early stuff or later stuff?

ZZ: Earlier stuff... and wasn't there a bird symbol that recurs?

JM: Seagull. The first album was called 'Song To A Seagull' and I used that as a continuity. I found that 'Song To A Seagull' was a summary of all the songs I'd ever written.

ZZ: Do you work consciously with symbols, or do you become aware of them afterwards?

JM: I think you do afterwards. I think it is subconscious. Just as a songwriter steals from his own melody. Like, if you want to get technical, Kurt Weill's stuff... you can pull 'Mack The Knife' out of almost

any melody of his. It repeats itself. Like, Donovan got hung up and used a really strange thing. It wasn't really a symbol, just a word. He used "silver bicycles" in two songs. That's a very strange image to use in two songs, and I think when you put it in, you're not really aware... maybe he was.

There's a friend of mine who uses doves a lot, Mark Spoelstra, he uses doves and gun images a lot, negative gun images. I use dreams a lot; I thought I could say certain things in dream images that I couldn't say in factual things... but now I'm writing more as a narrator, more matter-of-factly.

ZZ: When did you make that transition? After the first album?

JM: Well, 'Both Sides Now' was probably the first song of that new phase... and then I went through a period when I got into stories - like I remember I wrote a song called 'The Gift Of The Magi', which was just one of O'Henry's short stories done as a poem and set to music... and 'The Pirate Of Penance' was just a story.

ZZ: Well, are they just stories, or are they personal?

JM: Which?

ZZ: The songs you're talking about... the ones on your first album.

JM: Well, 'I Had A King In A Tenement Castle' was a very true story from my own life, but I did it in the form of a fairytale. I guess you could say that my songs from that period were usually personal if they were in the first person.

ZZ: What about 'Nathan La Freniere' - that is a song which always intrigued me.

JM: He was a New York cab driver; he really existed. He drove me to the airport one day. (NY cabbies have to display their name and photograph prominently on the cab) I wrote most of that song on the plane. It relates to my feelings that day... just exactly my trip from the door to the airport.

ZZ: Do you find it easier to write about relationships from a distance; like a guy becomes inspiration for a song only after he's gone?

JM: That depends.

ZZ: On what?

JM: (Silence) You spend any time with a person and you soak up some of them - but generally it doesn't come out until after you've left them... it's just a sort of delayed reaction. Often I don't feel their presence or what they've given me until a long while later... until all the confusion of leaving them is gone.

ZZ: Were you always a Dylan fan?

JM: I was what was known as a "late Dylan fan". At one time I was almost anti-Dylan, and I made a lot of enemies going around saying... I thought he was putting me on, I couldn't accept him. It's a trait of mine. I used to more outspoken; now I'm more noncommittal until I really figure out what they are saying. The thing was I shared no experience with Dylan at that time, so the thing was, I thought that a lot of his stuff... the things I thought were ambiguous and were not written honestly, I find out now were just the things I had no idea of at the time. So as I experience some of his experiences, or bring some of my experiences to his music... it's like I always thought Shakespeare was really wordy and weird, right until I went to Stratford and saw a man who recited Shakespeare like it was really 20th century. It lost all that super-drama stuff that really turned me off, and it flowed like 20th century English, and I understood it. So it's the same thing with Dylan; now every time I listen to him, the things that I thought were just words for words' sake make sense to me.



## TWO STONES BUSTED! DRUG SQUAD RAIDS WEEKEND HOUSE-PARTY

Dateline: Monday 20th February.

Miraculously, considering the fame and publicity value of those involved, it was only yesterday - a full week after the event - that the news reached the national press: Mick Jagger and Keith Richards had been visited by police officers and may face charges in connection with the possession of drugs.

The visitation took the form of a full scale invasion of Keith Richards' country home, Redlands, in West Wittering, Sussex. Fifteen policemen and women, armed with a warrant, took part in the raid.

One of the two newspapers which broke the story was the 'News Of The World', which only two weeks ago insinuated that Jagger was associated with regular drug binges, by portraying him as a frequenter of the Moody Blues' infamous parties at Roehampton. Jagger strenuously denounced their allegations, both on the Eamonn Andrews Show the same evening, and in the next day's (Feb. 6th) 'Evening News', where he was quoted as saying: "I want to make it quite clear that this picture of me is misleading and untrue. The matter is now in the hands of my lawyers".

Yesterday's 'News Of The World' report, however, contained no names, and only the scantiest information: "Several stars, at least three of them nationally known names, were present at the party, which was held at a secluded country house near the South Coast".

Surprisingly, it was the straightest of

all papers, 'The Sunday Telegraph', which scooped the issue and revealed the salient details: "Police have raided the country mansion of Keith Richards (sic), one of the Rolling Stones pop group, in West Wittering, Sussex, and searched the house and all the people present for drugs. Among some 12 guests at the weekend houseparty was Mick Jagger, leader of the group".

The Telegraph reporter, Peter Gladstone Smith, went on to describe the house, purchased by Richard last year, as "a thatched mansion surrounded by a five acre lawn and moat".

Despite the instant furor created by these revelations, the West Sussex police were only prepared to issue the following statement earlier today:

"On Sunday evening, February 12th, police officers from West Sussex entered premises in the Chichester area under the authority of a warrant issued under the Dangerous Drugs Act. As a result, several persons were interviewed and certain articles were brought away from the house".

These "certain articles" are known to have included various substances which are now being analysed in Scotland Yard's forensic laboratories - and if summonses are to be issued, it will not be until such tests have satisfied the Public Prosecutor that the police have a strong case.

It is understood that apart from the two Stones, Robert Hugh Fraser, 29 year old director of a modern art gallery in Duke

Street, and Jagger's girlfriend, singing star Marianne Faithfull, were among nine persons searched and questioned - but at press time neither the Rolling Stones nor a representative from their management were available for comment.

The Backpacer will keep you abreast of developments as they happen.

## HENDRIX ON THE MOVE

There can be little doubt that Jimi Hendrix is the most sensational and talented new rock star to emerge this year. His first single, 'Hey Joe', smashed into the Top Ten this month, and orders for his debut album, to be rush-released as soon as administrative details can be completed, will guarantee the newly formed Track label a flying start.

Hendrix, still only 22, has already had a chequered career. After 16 years of life in his home town of Seattle, Washington, he joined the Airborne Division of the US Army, but, as he says "a little less than a year later, I squeezed my way out by breaking an ankle and hurting my back. Then I tried being serious about my first love... music."

"One of the Isley Brothers heard me



Our visual reporter captures the dramatic moment when our gallant men in blue leap into the room and apprehend the miscreants.



playing in a club and said he had a job open. Sleeping between them tall tenements was hell - rats running across your chest, cockroaches stealing your last candybar, so I figured "Yeah, I'll gig". But I got tired of playing all the time in the key of F, and turned in my white mohair silk suit and patent leather shoes".

When an R&B package show, comprising B.B. King, Chuck Jackson, Solomon Burke, Jackie Wilson and Hank Ballard, came through town, Jimi got a gig in the back-up band ("I learned an awful lot picking guitar behind those guys every night") - but in Atlanta, Georgia, he left the show to audition for Little Richard's band.

"I copped the gig and worked with him all over the States, finally landing in Los Angeles - but I quit his band partly because of a money misunderstanding and partly to rest. I played some gigs with Ike and Tina Turner while I was in L.A., but I decided to get back to New York.

"I had all these ideas and sounds in my brain, and playing other people's music all the time was hurting me... but I had to work, and I jumped from the frying pan into the fire by joining Joey Dee and the Starlighters.

"After sucking on a peppermint twist salary I had to quit and began playing with a jukebox band, and finally quit that too, with nothing but a 'wish' sandwich (two pieces of bread - wishing I had some meat between). Finally I formed up with three other guys under the name of the Blue Flames".

By this time the Animals, who'd enjoyed a string of hits since 'House Of The Rising Sun', had broken up - leaving Eric Burdon to form a new group, and bassist Chas Chandler in New York to "do some tidying up" with manager Mike Jeffreys... and a friend persuaded Chas to pop down to the Cafe Wha in Greenwich Village where there was "a fantastic long haired coloured guitarist".

Chandler was flabbergasted and approached Hendrix after his set. "I believe you would be a sensation in Britain", he said, "If you agree, and I want only you, I'll pay your fare to London, look after you, and manage your affairs".

Having no contractual obligations, Hendrix threw in his lot with Chandler and Jeffreys, who moved him to London and installed him in a small hotel, where he was "regarded as a sight of wonderment".

Hendrix: "Between us we picked out two of the best musicians we could find: Noel Redding from the Loving Kind on bass, and Mitch Mitchell from Georgie Fame's band on drums... and we became the Jimi Hendrix Experience. We're in the charts, and we're on the road... and I'm going to make certain I don't fluff it up this time".

## JOE MEEK DEAD AT 34

Joe Meek, man behind the Tornados' mammoth selling 'Telstar' and many other hits, was found dead with shotgun wounds in his North London studio on February 2nd.

Although he had been hitless for over a year, he always believed his sounds would make a dramatic reappearance in the charts.

Meek, one of the most successful and pioneering independent producers, wrote and produced 'Telstar', which sold over five million copies worldwide in 1962, and he consolidated his triumph with more hits by the Tornados, Heinz, John Leyton and the Honeycombs.

Said Honey Lantree, drummer with the Honeycombs: "He was such a brilliant man... it's a tragedy".

Meek's small studio flat in Holloway Road was known as 'The Bathroom', but he always refused to move anywhere else. "This old dump has been lucky for me", he once said.

This issue of Backpacer was researched and put together by Mac Garry, Kris Needs, Shannon Bodine and Tom Baker.

## BEATLES: NEW SINGLE

Dateline: Feb 11th.

Both sides of the new Beatles single will be played on 'Top Of The Pops' next Thursday - the eve of the record's official release - and a specially prepared film clip will be screened. Meanwhile, the pirate radio stations have not been slow to register their approval of the disc: Radio London has claimed first airplay of both sides, and Radio Scotland claims to be the first station to have the record at number one in its chart.

Yes, the Beatles are back with a bang and, contrary to speculation, their future as a group seems as positive and solid as ever. In fact, this week it was announced that they had signed a new recording contract with EMI for a further nine years. Since 'Love Me Do' was released in October 1962, the Beatles worldwide record sales are said by EMI to have topped 180 million. Publicity for the double A-side single, 'Penny Lane/Strawberry Fields Forever', is an aerial impression of part of Liverpool indicating (so it is said) the homes of each Beatle.

Early reaction to the record seems to be diverse: NME's reviewer Derek Johnson calls it "the most unusual and way out

single the Beatles have yet produced", and Manfred Mann's first impression was that 'Strawberry Fields' was "manufactured and over-clever".

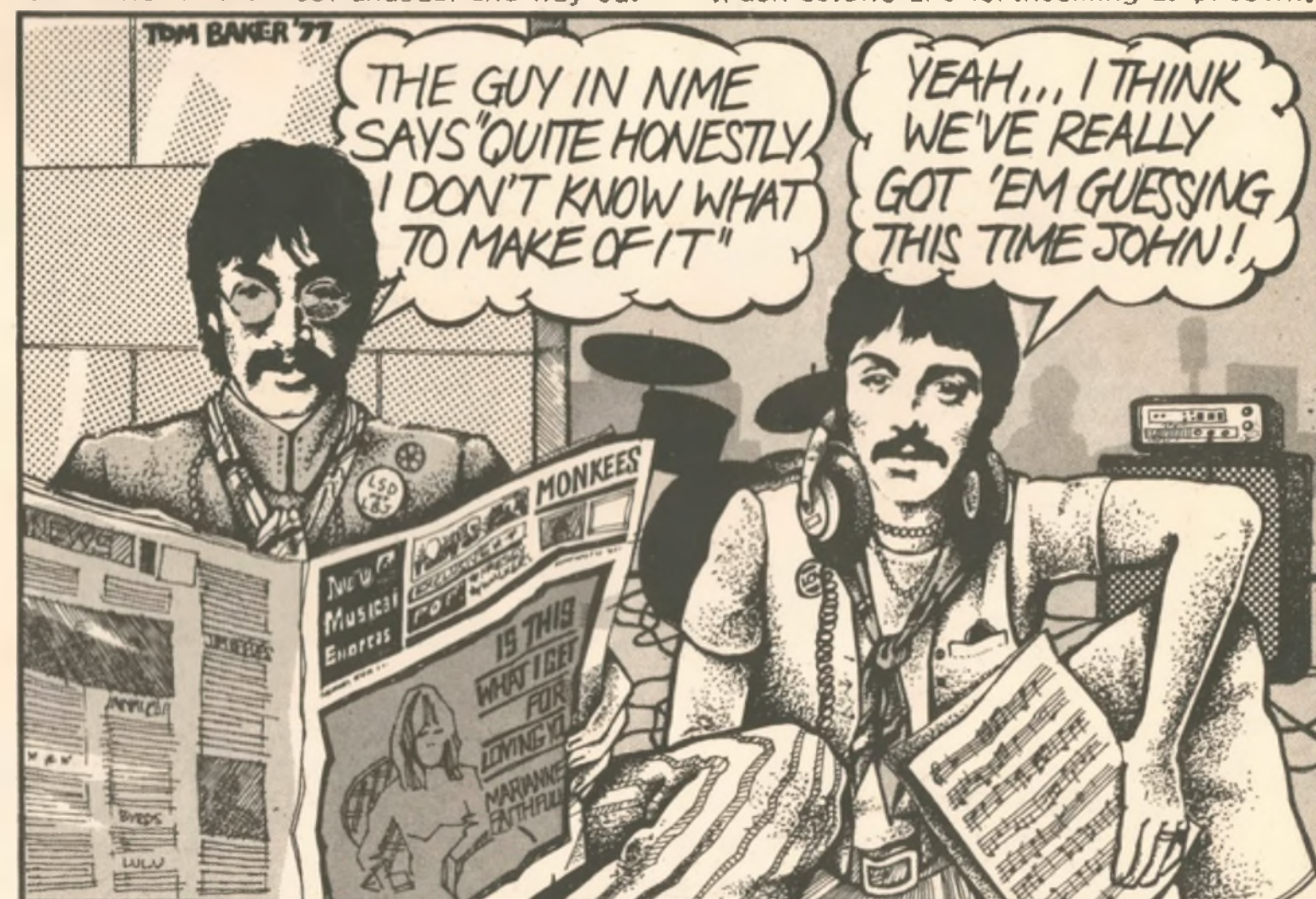
Former Beatles publicist Derek Taylor, now living and working in Hollywood, was enraptured by both sides: "Penny Lane" is the most requested song on the air in Los Angeles this week, and it is also the best. It is the best of the best of the best group in the world".

"Penny Lane" is a lovely shining song, so light and up and on and full of reds and yellows and blues. It almost reminds me of Noddy In Toyland. Purity, almost. Almost".

"The imagery is so clear that people here so far from England can feel the rain, can see the banker with no mac, can share the conversation in the barber's and read the tattered copies of the Illustrated London News on his wooden benches, can see their reflections in the gleaming fire engine".

"Strawberry Fields" is beautiful too. I find it unbearably sad and full of pain".

The Beatles are currently in the studios working on their next album, though no track details are forthcoming at present.



## • BITS AND PIECES •

There is some doubt as to whether the Who's Top 5 single 'Happy Jack' will be released in America. Apparently it is "considered too advanced for their unsophisticated ears"... Their last single, 'I'm A Boy' made a rather poor showing on the U.S. charts... Ex-Yardbird Jeff Beck has formed his own band with Ron Wood on bass, Rod Stewart on vocals and Ray Cook on drums. Next month the band will be touring Britain on the Roy Orbison/Settlers/Paul & Barry Ryan package show (which starts at Finsbury Park Astoria on March 3rd), and they hope to have a debut single, produced by Mickie Most, in the shops to coincide... Jefferson Airplane make their first trip to New York this month, when they play Stony Brook University on February 18th, and the Cafe A Go Go for two weeks starting Feb 20th... Two weeks after the Rolling Stones refused to suffer the indignity of mounting the revolving stage after their bill-topping appearance on the TV show 'Sunday Night At The London Palladium', comedians Peter Cook and Dudley Moore closed their act on the same show by placing cardboard effigies of the Stones, constructed by cartoonist Gerald Scarfe, on the revolving rostrum... George Hamilton IV's version of Joni Mitchell's 'Urge For Going' is now high in the American country & western charts... Bob Dylan has reportedly signed with MGM Records on a 5 year, 5 million

dollar contract. Another Albert Grossman act, Ian & Sylvia, have also signed with MGM - for an undisclosed figure... David Blue, together with his band The American Patrol, is touring clubs in the New York/New England areas to promote his debut album, released on Elektra last month... According to Crawdaddy magazine, the most exciting new group on the West Coast is San Francisco's Moby Grape. Every record company in America is after their signatures. Meanwhile another San Francisco band, the Grateful Dead, have signed a very strong contract with Warner Bros.: they will have total production and artistic control over everything they release... The Move are currently in the studio recording a follow-up to 'Night Of Fear'. Producer is Denny Cordell, engineer is Gerald Chavin, and assistant sound engineer is Eddie Offord... The Mamas & The Papas have been forced to cancel their projected British tour this month: her doctors have advised Mama Cass, who is expecting a baby in April, not to travel by plane...

...Monkee Micky Dolenz and sidekick Michael Nesmith, here on a short visit, went on a shopping spree to Carnaby Street. Mike, however, was not impressed: he thought the mod styles were "Distasteful"... the Byrds latest single, 'So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star', is their wry comment on the Monkees' instant success... The Misunderstood are advertising for a new vocalist. He must be "between 18 and 21, have good looks and personality, and be able to stamp his own character on the group's performance..."



Pacific Artists & Island Records present

# Michael Nesmith

Nesmith's considerable band of admirers can only be pleased that some of his long unavailable material will now be able to reach a much wider audience in this country. By the time you've heard all of Michael's work you'll be truly amazed that he isn't Beatle-sized and if the word is spread perhaps that could happen soon. If it does it'll be well deserved.

John Tobler.



•AND THE HITS JUST KEEP ON COMIN'  
ALBUM ILPS 9439 CASSETTE ZCL 9439



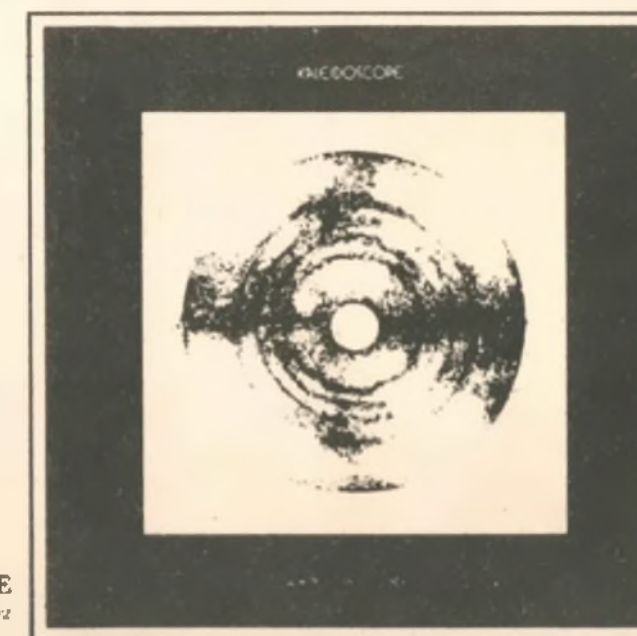
•PRETTY MUCH YOUR STANDARD STASH  
ALBUM ILPS 9440 CASSETTE ZCL 9440



THE PRISON  
ALBUM PAC 101  
Includes full colour book. Note available

# Kaleidoscope

The band was generated from the Los Angeles music scene of the mid 1960's and headed by master musician Chris Darrow whose whiskey-soaked vocals gave the band their highly distinctive sound. Re-formed in 1976, the band plays mainly good time music laced with old rock 'n' roll numbers that will delight its many fiercely loyal followers and recruit a legion of new admirers in this country.



WHEN SCOPES COLLIDE  
ALBUM ILPS 9462



The new Michael Nesmith single  
'RIO'  
WIP 6373

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# "Everything I know, I know from records. I don't live in a place where the neighbours are playing fiddles, I live in the city."

When Ry Cooder nipped into London at the end of 1972, we cornered him for a chat which focused on his interpretations of dust bowl and depression songs, and the article springing from that discussion can be found in Zigzag 30.

When he nipped back, 4 years later, to finalise the details of his current European tour, we thought it would be a good idea to try for a broader picture of his career. John Tobler, the stumbling encyclopedia, takes up the story:

Just before the solstice which Mr. Tull sings about, I was fortunate enough to meet Ry Cooder, who was over here for the afternoon during a visit to Holland. To attempt to subject him to the sort of detailed interview for which I gather I'm becoming infamous would have been ludicrous, so what follows is a series of question and answer extracts from our conversation. I hope it makes sense to you, and fills in one or two of the gaps which punctuate the man's career.

ZZ: At some stage you studied with John Fahey, I believe...

RC: No, I never studied with him. He's a friend of mine, but he had gone to the length of taking a degree in ethno-musicology, specialising in American folk music, and was somewhat of a scholar...is...among other things that he is. So he had a lot of familiarity with these blues records as he studied them as music, as theoretical music, as written-down-type music, in order to be writing papers or whatever he was doing. So, on occasion I would say to him "Since you've spent all this time, what in the world is so and so doing on this record? Do you know what this is?", because I was pretty young, and he had spent all this time with these records, and he seemed like a good guy to ask. But I never studied with him. I maybe spoke to him on occasion about things, and he, being a nice person...we used to sit around, watch television and talk about blues music, let's put it that way.

ZZ: Was there ever any question of you being on Takoma?

RC: Certainly not. By the time he had Takoma I was on Warner Brothers, and it didn't seem to have anything to do with one or the other. Takoma was originally an outlet for his own music, really. Since then it's become something else, I guess. But when he started with Takoma, it was just to record himself under various pseudonyms and funny nicknames and things.

ZZ: Was the time you were seeing him before or after the Rising Sons?

RC: Oh, it's hard to say. I mean, my memory's bad for years - what year I did this, and what year I did that, but I guess it's all more or less concurrent in the sixties that these things were taking place.

ZZ: How did you come to meet Taj Mahal? (who led the Sons).

RC: Oh that...well, as far as Taj goes, we had a mutual friend, and Taj came to L.A. sort of on the road, you might say - drifting along, travelling - and we got together having mutual interests, and played together, and we ended up calling it the Rising Sons, because everybody had a name for everything and in those days, if you played together, you called yourself something...natural enough. So we called it that and we played together, and it was kind of fun, you know, it was recreational, and it went on for a while. Actually, it was surprising it went on for as long as it did. It was a fun thing, you know, kind of fooling with it.

ZZ: Didn't you make an album which wasn't released?

RC: We made tapes enough for an album. You wouldn't have called it an album, but they have a lot of tapes, they exist somewhere. They're not good, but they're funny - today it would be an oddity. I don't know if they were really any good, though - I have a feeling they weren't.

ZZ: How long was Ed Cassidy in the group?

RC: He was in the group for a while. It's hard even to call it a group. I hate to give it that name. We played together, a bunch of us from different areas and backgrounds, but it was just a very unorganised thing. Ed Cassidy was something of a jazz drummer down in Venice hanging out with beatniks. I knew him from another guy who was the bass player of the group for a while, and played West Coast jazz music with him at that time, at the end of the beatnik era. Ed was playing with us. It was very loose, you

know...it was just that there he was, we had this guy that was bald.

ZZ: And I gather that not long after that you met Captain Beefheart. Were you ever in his band?

RC: No, I wasn't. I knew him because I'd run into him from time to time, not knowing anything about him. He was a guy appearing on the periphery one night in a place, and started talking to me. One thing led to another, and he said "I have a group, and I'm called this, and we do this, that and the other thing". He was preparing to make an album, and he asked me if I would play with him, and I said OK. That lasted about two weeks - there was very little reason for us to play together. He had entirely different musical interests. In other words, he was interested in what he was doing in a sort of self-expressionist kind of way.

ZZ: Did he try to teach you how to play, as he has claimed for many subsequent musicians?

RC: He did teach people to play what he wanted them to play. That isn't to say he taught them how to play, if you understand what I'm saying. He would get guys and tell them to do this or that - whether they could play or not, he would instruct them. But he didn't tell me anything, except he wanted me to play some notes. He was a note person, like the Japanese. I mean, very truthfully, in a selection of notes he wanted this and he wanted that. How you did it wasn't important, it's just that he wanted a sound.

ZZ: Fascinating.

RC: No, it's not so fascinating, it's just that he had this exact idea of something. Because he'd look at music in this real un-linear way. The guy at that time seemed an odd person to me, like a circus figure, a carnival sideshow guy who's entertaining for a while, and then I began to be less entertained by this spectacle, so I just decided to continue doing what I was doing without him. Which was nothing at that time, but I couldn't see that we had any future together; and besides, he ran a pretty militaristic routine, and everything was very brownshirt-like with him. But I think that 'Safe As Milk' is a nice record.

ZZ: Then I believe that Jack Nitzsche entered, or perhaps re-entered your life, and you did a lot of things with him...

RC: Yeah, that proved to be very good. He was interested in a lot of these folk styles that I knew, blues things, and we did some good things together, and that worked out for a while...in so far as he was a good producer, and he was in a position to hire me. I was eternally grateful for any opportunity to play, and it was good training in the record studio, and you can always profit from that.

ZZ: Was this on things like Randy Newman?

RC: No, that's much later. Nitzsche was involved in some of those Newman things, but basically he wasn't. Basically he was doing some other kinds of different things.

ZZ: For instance?

RC: Well, I don't really remember anymore. You do so many things that you forget. Except there's a couple of things, one being this film score that we did together, which was this movie 'Candy'. The thing was scrapped and never used, but it was quite a good filmscore. Then he took some of those ideas and applied them later to 'Performance' film score, which was also quite good, though not as the one for 'Candy'. Those tapes exist somewhere, they're quite amazing really, but I don't know...that was very nice. The film score thing turned out to be very interesting and challenging. Fun. It was one of the better things that I did with him that ever surfaced. Lot of stuff you do, you never hear of it again.

ZZ: What about Paxton Lodge?

RC: What's that?

ZZ: The Elektra place up in the hills.

RC: Don't know that.

ZZ: Which you and Nitzsche were supposed to...

RC: No.

ZZ: Jackson Browne and Ned Doheny...



RC: No, not me. I wasn't there.

ZZ: No, you weren't there, but they made some tapes there, and the theory was that you and Nitzsche were supposed to clean them up. In about 1969.

RC: I have no recollection of that. That may be true, you know, but I just don't remember it.

ZZ: Was the Everly Brothers at this stage?

RC: Oh well, I don't know. Staggerwise you got me with all that placement of things, but at a certain point in time the Everly Brothers needed some help. They weren't doing anything in particular to speak of, and me and Lenny Waronker and Jack Nitzsche sat around trying to figure out what to do, and we came up with the idea to do some blues with them. They'd never really done any blues, and we did some really neat things, and I don't remember if they ever put them out or what happened.

ZZ: Not the 'Roots' album?

RC: No no, not that. This was after that. I suppose...some singles type things...very good, a couple of great things. And I really don't think that anybody liked it, and no-one had any strong feelings about it, and I don't think it ever got put out. I have some demos at home of that stuff. It's great stuff, really way ahead. Could have been good - it was a good try, anyway.

ZZ: Did you work with Harper's Bizarre?

RC: No, never.

ZZ: There are rumours that say you did.

RC: Rumours! I hate rumours. I love to dispel rumours. But Harper's Bizarre...now there may have been something, but if you'd call it to me, I could tell you yes or no.

ZZ: Well, I don't know...

RC: It seems like by the time I ended up working with them they

were already over with, there was no more Harper's Bizarre, so I'm sure there wasn't anything there.

ZZ: How about you being one of the original three people who demold 'Willin'?

RC: No, that's out. Where are you getting all these things, by the way?

ZZ: Various features that have been written about. How about the first Crazy Horse album?

RC: Nitzsche called me up, and I went up and played. Nice - some of their stuff was kind of good.

ZZ: Arlo Guthrie - just from time to time?

RC: Yes. Well, we're friends - when it's feasible for us to work together, we generally do...having some mutual interests.

ZZ: When Warners signed you, you weren't exactly going to be a new Rolling Stones or Everly Brothers for them, and the same is true of Van Dyke, of course. Do you think that it may have helped you that you had a lot of friends at Warners?

RC: Yes, it's a good possibility that that's so. It's hard to understand at this point, but I did so much work for Warner Brothers that I suppose it was kind of natural for me to go on and be signed as an artist. It was a natural progression, and a good opportunity for me, obviously, to make some records and do something.

ZZ: According to my information, your first two albums are 90% about the depression...the dustbowl thing. Why are you interested in that?

RC: Everybody says that, but it's not really true if you look at those albums. If you take a look at any of those records, you'll see that what is there is a mixture of songs. What seems to be the repeated theme is the depression, but that's because that theme sticks out, and it's so unusual in pop music that it does stick out. But the fact of the matter is that people have been

# Into The Purple Valley Of Romance And Adventure With Ry Cooder....





writing songs about money and about poverty and all that forever, but there is something very cohesive about those "depression" songs, they all have a kind of focus that's unusual, it seems to me. They have a kind of clear sightedness about the fact that those people were in a situation, and they turned to music as an expression of it. You got a lot of good writing from that. It was a period when there was very little else to do, and music was a natural expression of it, and a guy like Woody Guthrie...he sort of surfaced as being the greatest product of the harem, more or less, sort of like that.

Black people have been writing about a perpetual depression for ever, it seems like, but during the real depression everyone was caught in the same boat, so it seems like a lot of songwriting ended up being popular - man in the street type populist music. It didn't start there, but it really came together during that time. So I like a lot of those tunes - to me they have a lot of insight, they're graphic and timely in a way, they don't get old. There are some of them that do, and I haven't recorded those too much. There are some that are obviously talking about some particular aspect of the depression that no longer would mean anything to anybody, but a song like 'How Can A Poor Man Stand Such Times And Live!' is not going to become archaic, or 'How Can You Keep On Moving!' has always got some relation to something that goes on, because the situation has never really changed very much.

Things seem to change in the United States, but really people are having the same problems they always did, what with the economy being the way it is. If it's not hillbillies being busted up by vigilantes, it's grape strike people...the chicanos, you know. It's the same situation, the same problems, it's just that the personnel changes a little bit, and then of course the public's perception of it changes, so nobody imagines they're in the thirties any more, but they know that the economy is in a pretty strange shape. Those songs have always seemed to me to be right around the corner now, more than ever, really.

ZZ: But the location's changed - we're talking about California being the promised land, which it eventually wasn't.

RC: Yeah, and of course now a lot of that boycotting activity is in California, in the same places, with the same companies that the vigilante song Guthrie wrote was talking about. It's the same bunch of people, whoever they are...really it ends up being the same story, and you can look around and see that that's so, and if you read the newspapers you know that it's so. Guthrie wrote that song 'Plane Wreck At Los Gatos' about how they shipped the "deportees", as they called them, back over the border; and the plane crashes and they all die. Same kind of thing happens, you know, buses go off the road...and so these things never stop. Maybe there isn't anybody making up dustbowl songs, but that can always happen.

ZZ: How did the dustbowl thing happen, the physical part?

RC: Who knows? I mean it seems that the plains were over-grazed from bad farming habits, the topsoil was becoming loose and dehydrated, and the wind came up, as it will, and blew it all away...after like two hundred years of over-grazing and no crop rotation. It's a fragile topsoil structure, so that all of a sudden it reached its fatigue point, and the wind came along and it all just blew away. You know, a lot of that land has never recovered and probably never will...it was damaged. So don't ask me exactly how that happened. It's so many complicated things, but what really did happen was...I heard this record of Woody Guthrie actually talking about a dust storm and what it was like, and that song 'So Long, It's Been Good To Know You'. You see, the fact of it is these people thought the world had come to an end...here comes this black cloud, covers over everything, you can't see your hand in front of your face, you really had no understanding of it. These people didn't know that one thing led to another. They just saw the sun disappear, you couldn't see across the street, it was black, and dust was everywhere. That was it, and they all figured 'Well, it's happened...so long, it's been good to know you'. These are all fundamentalist people pretty much and they took it as a sign, and everything just fell apart for them. And they all came to California to work in the aeroplane factories ultimately, because there was a war on.

ZZ: It's very odd when you hear a version of that song by someone like the Black & White Minstrels where it's all backslapping jollity.

RC: Yeah, fun, fun and games. That always struck me as being kind of incongruous. I wouldn't have sung that song that way, that's for sure - there's a certain "music is therapeutic", but still, that's a bleak picture. What that song actually says has a certain amount of irony, but it isn't fun, that's for sure.

ZZ: On the second album, you do 'F.D.R. In Trinidad!', which has always struck me as being a song which is capable of several interpretations...a totally ironical song...

RC: Well, it must be, because people down there, being so smart

with their topical music, they have that twist to everything. There's a twist to it, obviously, in the last verse where he talks about making the world a safe place for humanity. It's hard to say. I mean, I think that was an optimistic time. They were really excited about the fact that Roosevelt went down there, and it was probably a very important event, but the guy who wrote it must have had some ideas about politicians and the idea of conferences and speeches, and what that all adds up to. You have to look into the history of it.

ZZ: It's interesting that both you and Van Dyke should record that song, but then you're both interested in music from the fringes of America. Did you do it before him, in fact?

RC: Yeah. I first heard it from my wife's uncle who had a 78 of it, and he brought it out one day and said "You might like this song", so I made a cassette of it. I actually gave it to Van Dyke, thinking he'd record it, but he never did, so I did - then he did. That's my version, so...I don't care, what the hell difference does it make?

ZZ: Where did you find the traditional songs that are on the second album, like 'Billy The Kid'?

RC: That's an old cowboy song. It was on a record, all those things were on records. That's the way I learn songs really, I guess. By and large.

ZZ: Rather than in more recent days, when you've actually been to Hawaii?

RC: But everything I know, I know from records, because that's where I start. Because I don't live in a place where the neighbours are playing fiddles, I live in the city, so naturally I get an idea from a record...which may lead me to a place, but I start with a record. That's the only way I know how to go about doing things.

ZZ: Could you explain the sleeves of your first two albums? Because they're very obviously yours, and no-one else has ever done sleeves like that...

RC: I don't know, I just get an idea which comes into my head, and I go out and do it. It's like anything else, you don't have a particular reason to be that way. Honestly, I mean, there's no explanation for it - I just saw that trailer and it looked like a nice object. That wasn't my idea, I didn't intend for it to look like that. I just said "Let's at least take a picture of this trailer, because it's so unusual". So that's an unfortunate version of what the thing really looked like. It was much more interesting than that, but that's the best we could get.

ZZ: Is it like a caravan?

RC: What it is, is an old airstream trailer that was somewhere in L.A....it's like a house trailer, but it's real old, very old, very beautiful, a fantastic object. That's not really where we found it - that's a dry lake (in the picture).

ZZ: And one presumes the second LP sleeve is symbolic of the thoughts in the minds of the dustbowl people moving from Oklahoma to California?

RC: No. That's what people presume, but it didn't occur to me until someone said it. I just had the idea of using those set paintings. You see those clouds, for instance - that's a very large set painting; the inside of the street is a very large set painting...Hollywood movie sets, you know.

ZZ: A painting?

RC: Yes, and then the back is too, so I said "Well, here are these set paintings, they seem very nice and they are large, and with good old-time movie key lighting you could create a pretty good record cover" and then, of course, we did. So it doesn't have to be anything to do with content really at all. It's just that there is a mighty nice yellow car and a nice set painting, and it does coincide with the music in a kind of loose way. It was just something that when I realised they had those paintings I just thought "Well, let's go down and do something with them", and that was as far as I thought about it really. Then it ended up being a matter for conjecture, which isn't really my business - that's just for other people to decide, but I just enjoyed doing that. See, it's fun, it's like having a picnic...just a little party, really.

ZZ: How did you get the rian on the front?

RC: Oh, that's a rain machine. It's not falling on us, we're dry as a bone. That's how they used to do that stuff. I learned a lot from doing that. The lighting, the whole thing, you know...it's all created, it's nice. It's a big hose with a nozzle on it that makes it appear, then they back-light it. See, the light comes from behind so that you see your rain, otherwise you wouldn't see it.

John Tobler

To be continued.

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2nd  
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3rd  
City Hall  
Newcastle

4/5th  
Apollo  
Manchester  
(formerly ABC)

6th  
Odeon  
Birmingham

7th  
Empire  
Liverpool

9th  
Gaumont  
Southampton

11/12/13th  
HAMMERSMITH  
ODEON

14th  
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## ELECTION MALPRACTICE, ARSON & RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION IN THE OLD MARKET SQUARE

As Mick Jagger was to say a few days later: "I never like to miss a good court case". Which explains why, on a cold Monday morning at a time when I'd usually be dozing lightly between crisp sheets and toying with the rich vista of possibilities offered by the coming day, I'm standing in the middle of Aylesbury executing a strangely arthritic entrechat in an attempt to ward off frostbite.

The tip-off call from our informer at the County Court had only come through 36 hours earlier, just as I was debating, over the last of the crate of Jack Daniels, whether or not to extend the Christmas rest and relaxation by a few days more. It transpired that the whole deal was being kept very quiet, and when I rolled into the Market Square - half expecting to see hordes of fans battling for seats in the tiny courtroom with scoop-hungry Fleet Street hacks and revenge-crazed grey men - only a small handful of pressmen and half a dozen kids shared my advance knowledge.

Aylesbury's Market Square and the early 18th century County Hall and court complex which extends its austere bulk across the eastern end have seen their share of outrageous scenes down the years.

During the eighteenth century, for example, they played host to events which gave Aylesbury an unenviable reputation as a byword for corruption and perversion of the political process. Candidates for office regularly bribed voters at elections, or hired thugs to exercise discreet persuasion, and rioting between rival factions was a fairly common occurrence.

The lid finally blew off that caper after the parliamentary election of 1802, when a gentleman with the very apposite name of Bent not only employed the town crier to announce when and where he would be handing out the cash and proceeded to buy off 271 of the town's 450 registered voters, but also posted thirty heavy Irishmen on the steps of the County Hall as a little extra insurance. Investigations by a parliamentary committee almost led to the disfranchisement of the borough, but after all... boys will be boys, and at least that system of election guaranteed that only the privileged classes could afford to become MPs.

More recently, however, the town has quietened down. The last bit of genuine excitement in the Market Square was seven years ago, when a bright young lad walked into the police station and announced that he would set fire to the County Hall if they didn't release his mate. They wouldn't... so he did. The lad casually entered the premises of Jones & Cocks, tucked around in Silver Street next to the semi-legendary Dark Lantern (a solitary island amidst a hostile sea of redevelopment), and purchased a gallon of paraffin, which he used to douse one of the courts (having first removed the bible to a safe place) and turn the place into a fat plume of smoke and flame.

Quite a large crowd gathered in the Square that day to watch the building reduced to a hollow, smouldering shell... but that was entertainment. After all, they could, and indeed did - restore the Hall to its original splendour; but this... this is an affront to all that the citizens of Aylesbury, and almost everywhere else, hold sacred.

The populace of Aylesbury tends to move itself about either by public transport, company Cortinas or H-registration Minis. They do not drive round in chauffeured gold Rolls Royces, so when such a vehicle pulls up in the Market Square on the aforementioned chilly morning, it attracts considerable attention. What can it be?... Starsky and Hutch calling in at the Bell for morning coffee?... the latest John O'way publicity stunt?... the Prime Minister on his way back to Chequers after a night on the tiles at Yeoman Cottage?... it sure as hell can't be the mayor showing off his new limousine, because the council is doing all it can to elbow him out of office.

In fact an almost tangible tremor of shock runs round the gaping company when from the depths of this sumptuous vehicle steps something that bears more resemblance to a revitalised corpse than a human being. Harassed mothers in the middle of their shopping and earnest executives on errands are momentarily paralysed as they attempt to come to terms with the sight. Has the world gone mad when a creature such as this can live surrounded by all the trappings of luxury, while decent, hard-working folk have trouble keeping up the mortgage payments, and can't sleep at night for thinking about the latest wave of price increases at Sainsbury's?

# KEITH COMES TO TOWN



## DEATHS-HEAD IN THE DOCK... CULTURE SHOCK IN THE COURTROOM

Even I was taken aback by the man's appearance. I've read all the articles about Keith Richard aka The World's Most Elegantly Wasted Human Being, and I've felt the hair on my neck twitching as my eyes widened over passages from the Scaduto and Greenfield books, which leave little of the Stones' lifestyle to the imagination; I've seen hundreds of pictures of him, and seen him in the flesh maybe fourteen times in as many years; and I've heard any number of colourful rumours regarding his indulgences... but I was still taken aback by the surreal, ghastly aura surrounding the man.

So how can the jury be expected to react to the sight of him sitting there in the dock? One moment these twelve upright and responsible burghers - nine men and three women, most of them at least over thirty - are ordinary citizens, presumably leading relatively normal lives, and then suddenly for three days they are plunged into a lifestyle where people stick metal tubes up their noses for the purpose of inhaling powerful drugs, and consume pieces of paper impregnated with a substance guaranteed to warp the psyche irrevocably or prompt the unfortunate victim to leap from an upper storey window.

They are taken on a guided tour through a world where dirty, immoral, debauched layabouts work for a mere two months of the year, and spend the rest of their time jet-setting between California and the Swiss Alps, or driving about in Bentleys and gold Rolls Royces; where men, who no self-respecting person would offer houseroom, can become fantastically wealthy on the strength of an unlistenable racket on electronic instruments; and where young boys and girls - maybe even their children, for Chrissakes! - fling garments, and even themselves, at this walking deaths-head, and proffer gifts.

Surely this can't be the world they know? Their collective experience has not equipped them to deal with this sort of thing... so they sit numbly, doing imitations of how they imagine Robert Redford would react when invited to examine the phial of cocaine and the offending blotter of acid... looking intense and perplexed as they are asked to envisage the scenes at a Rolling Stones concert, where many thousands of young virgins, screaming to be violated by these monsters, are struggling to break through a wall of security guards, going completely apeshit in an effort to get within touching distance of this man they see before them.

This man? This man - sitting frozen, covering his vulnerability by quietly fiddling with his boot or his handcuff-style bangle, his black velvet suit contrasting eerily with the pallor of his face - an idol? Heaven preserve us all, for surely Armageddon is nigh and angels of wrath will come to lay waste the earth when such things can be!

The jurors attempt to absorb and assimilate this information as it is presented to them by the prosecution and the defence... attempt to wrestle some coherence and logic from the welter of contradictory evidence, but it's all way outside their sphere of reference. The only concrete evidence is a couple of photographs taken of Keith during a concert at Leicester, showing him allegedly wearing the same chain in which the coke was found. The jury keep looking at these photographs, clinging to them like a ship-wrecked man to driftwood, and eventually convict Richard on the strength of them. They find him innocent of the LSD charge, however... though quite how they come to the conclusion that half his testimony was therefore reliable, while the other half was presumably adjudged to have been bullshit, is unclear.

We're jumping ahead of ourselves, however. This sort of subjective fantasising and generation gap paranoia have no place in responsible journalism... what is required are the facts, pure and simple. Quite what the facts have to do with a case where preconceptions were paramount, and which swayed dramatically between heady emotions and near terminal tedium, I'm not sure... but here they are, more or less.



## DAY ONE: DRAMA ON THE MOONLIGHT MILE... THE FACTS REVEALED

As soon as Richard has entered the courthouse, accompanied by a smartly dressed woman who looks as if she's probably the same age as him but whose head obviously breathes the air of a completely different corner of the universe, I make my way up the broad staircase to Number One Court.

I've already been inside once this morning, compensating for my lack of formal press credentials by spending five minutes chatting with the elderly, be-cloaked gentleman standing guard on the press box. At the time it seems like an unnecessary precaution, but by the afternoon, when the public gallery is bursting at the seams, I'm glad I've guaranteed my access.



Once I've settled myself in a seat at the end of the gallery nearest to the judge's chair, with a fine view of all the critical parts of the court, I realise that Richard is already in the dock, flanked by policemen (presumably in case he tries to run amok and rape the judge or manhandle an antagonistic witness, as these drug abusers are wont to do), and the barristers, solicitors and diverse minions are lined up in opposition across a large green baize table.

The prosecution counsel, a Mr. Bruce Laughland, is a smallish, dapper man, with a face that suggests he puts business before pleasure. A far more impressive figure is Richard's counsel, Sir Peter Rawlinson QC... tall and distinguished, the sort of man who could convince a jury of his client's innocence by merely looking at them. Sir Peter is an ex-Attorney General - nothing but the best for a Rolling Stone, especially when their working career is supposedly jeopardised by the charges against Richard.

Enter Judge Lawrence Verney, ex-Harrow and Oriel College Oxford, and now resident a stone's throw from here; a man with a local reputation for having little sympathy with drugs, long hair and the like... people used to reading reports of his decisions in the Bucks Advertiser feel the tension twisted even tighter. It's a little known fact that this same gentleman has a whole wardrobe full of caps won as a result of his services to the Welsh international Squash Racquets team. Richard and his salvage crew are unlikely to get anything off-the-wall past this guy!

The prosecution gets first crack at the jury's credulity, and Mr. Laughland proves to be as precise and economical in manner as he is in appearance. Six witnesses and one piece of written evidence are covered with the minimum of fuss, and his case is over by one o'clock.

The three policemen, who were called to the scene after Richard's Bentley had been forced off the M1 a few miles from the Newport Pagnell service area on May 19th last year, and who found the blotter of LSD in the inside pocket of his jacket, and the cocaine in a chain pendant lying on the floor of the battered car, are called in turn.

The prosecution's questioning is very straightforward, factual and often repetitive, and the real fun only comes when Sir Peter gets his chance to cross-examine the witnesses. He makes much play on the flimsy grounds for the original search, the decision not to take any blood or urine samples, and the omission of any searching or questioning of the other occupants of the car - Richard's seven year old son Marlon, an American called Sessler, and two unidentified American women.

The officer who had made the initial search, one PC Sibbert, conducts himself very confidently and fields all Sir Peter's questions without undue difficulty, but right at the end of his testimony, he allows his android efficiency to slip for a moment and makes a pointed ad-lib about Richard having no alternative but to deny knowledge of the chain and the LSD.

As soon as he's let the remark out he knows it was a mistake. Sir Peter literally leaps across the well of the court, demanding that he repeat the statement, and PC Sibbert's authoritative front cracks and crumbles like an old house before the demolition man's Kango-hammer. He blushes and stammers and eventually recants, but the good impression he's been making is completely wiped out. First point to Sir Peter.

The drug squad officer, Detective Sergeant Bull, who carried out the full strip search at Newport Pagnell police station, fares even worse. The omission of the tests and the ignoring of the other passengers are remorselessly emphasised by Sir Peter, and all the unfortunate copper can do is to say he didn't think such procedures were necessary. "And you're a detective sergeant?" Sir Peter booms, as if astounded that such an incompetent bungler should even be entrusted with the scouring of the station urinals. Exit D/S Bull flustered... and Sir Peter goes two up.

The rest of the witnesses for the prosecution are swiftly dealt with. The forensic scientist who had done the analyses tells us what we already knew, and which wasn't in doubt anyway; written evidence from the Leicester Mercury photographer accompanies the all-important snaps; and - would you believe - the Thames Valley Police Force Antiques Officer informs us that the chain and pendants are "of nominal value only", except for the vinaigrette, which is Victorian silver and worth about £150. (He looks up the date on the hallmark in order to confirm that the piece was turned out in 1872.) The inference, of course, is that it's hardly the sort of item that would be thrown away by a passenger, or lost without their realising it.

The lunch recess comes with the tension considerably relaxed, and most people thinking that the police evidence regarding the actual ownership of the dope is a mite flimsy, and that Sir Peter has done a good job in sowing a whole seedbag full of doubts in the jury's mind. It looks as if it's all going to be pretty clearcut, and Chalkie even volunteers the opinion that it will be all over within the day. General excitement is only maintained by the news that he - Michael Phillip - has arrived hot-foot from Los Angeles, and is even now consuming a pie in the Bell, next door to the courthouse.

Back we go, and indeed there he is, looking well jet-lagged and a bit nervous on his buddy's behalf. Wearing an avocado suit and multi-coloured tie, and carrying a briefcase, he actually looks far more presentable than the man in the dock, whose black velvet suit, ruffled white shirt and matted hair only accentuate his dissipated appearance. (This is a situation that is remedied for the remainder of the trial... Jagger wears a variety of informal attire, while Richard at least has a collar and tie, and has paid some attention to his coiffure.)

By now the word has spread quickly, and there's far more of a rush to get into the public gallery, where Jagger sits right next to Robin Pike, with his chin in his hands, watching attentively as the defense case begins.



## KEITH TAKES THE STAND - NO SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

Sir Peter opens with a lengthy preamble, in which he reminds the jury (rather fruitlessly, really) of the importance of putting aside preconceptions and prejudices. He then calls the first witness for the defense... and it's good ol' Keef himself!

Two and a half hours later, when Richard leaves the witness box, Sir Peter must be questioning the wisdom of letting him testify on his own behalf. While he is being cross-examined by his own counsel, Richard doesn't do too badly, but the mere act of putting him up there in front of the jury and making him speak must have done the damage... even a hermit who'd been out of contact with the world since 1950 would need no more than a few moments to reach the conclusion that this is not a man unacquainted with any drug stronger than Anadin.

He sways a lot, frequently has to cling to the front of the box, speaks in a low mumble so that the judge is constantly having to ask him to speak up, and answers most of the prosecution questions in one or two syllables - which is probably the best thing for him to do, but hardly creates a convincing impression when kept up for about an hour.

The most embarrassing moment comes at the end of the cross-examinations, when Judge Verney asks Richard to measure the tube on the chain and his own little finger, so that the lengths may be compared with a similar object in the incriminating photographs. It's an apparently simple task, but one that Richard has great difficulty in accomplishing.

He does get in a couple of good lines, however... (that's "lines" as in script). When asked what his role as lead guitarist entails, he replies "It means I make the most noise" (a statement almost unanimously misquoted by the diligent men from Fleet Street); and when Mr. Laughland wants to know what the other occupants of the Bentley did after it had swerved off the motorway, crashed through a fence, burst through a hedge, and bounced over the corrugations of a deep-ploughed field before coming to a shattered rest in the outback of rural Buckinghamshire, Richard volunteers the information that "They woke up". I find this terribly amusing... Judge Verney is not entertained.

Biggest laugh of all, however, is when Mr. Laughland is in the middle of a particularly intense piece of questioning about other people who had been in the Bentley during the European tour, and Richard is being a bit vague about it all. Mr. Laughland is becoming irritated by the constant pussy-footing. "Who was responsible for driving the car to Stafford?" he demands to know. "Jim Callaghan", is the answer, Jim Callaghan being one of the Stones' road crew, and the ripple of amusement that goes round the court is a release of apprehension rather than a wave of spontaneous guffaws. Unfortunately, however, I get a sudden mental flash of a strange scene involving a very wasted Keef, lying across the upholstery of his car, being chauffeur-driven by the Prime Minister. I start to snigger and giggle uncontrollably like Dennis Locorriere, attracting the steely gaze of the judge, and I have to concentrate very hard for a few moments on the deadpan face of one of the policemen by the dock before I can recover my calm.

The basic gist of the defense is that the chain/coke could have been left or dropped among the accumulated debris in the car by any number of people in the course of the tour; and that the jacket/acid was just one of a large wardrobe of almost identical jackets used by the Stones and several of their road crew while travelling. It was his ill-fortune, Richard testifies, that he happened to grab that particular garment for the journey back from Stafford.

Richard's spell on the stand, and the uneven showing he's made, have really brought the case back to life, and outside the court the atmosphere is a combination of jangling excitement and attempted cool as the onlookers make their feelings known. Some people are now talking in terms of Richard ending up being carted along to Aylesbury Prison before being shipped off for a two year stretch on the Isle of Wight, and wild rumours are circulating about the other witnesses due to be called by the defense. Honest Ron Wood as a character witness??? That has got to be seen!

As soon as I get home, I start re-reading Robert Greenfield's fascinating book 'A Journey Through America With The Rolling Stones', a blow-by-blow account of the Stones' '72 tour of the States. It's very hard to relate the distant, almost mystical figures at the eye of that rock'n'roll hurricane to the two guys who have been sitting only a few feet away all afternoon.

Of course, it would happen that instead of some positive influence on the jury, like a screening of 'Twelve Angry Men', the television during the evening is jammed solid with the reports of the terrifying escalation of drug incidence in London. Both Nationwide and News At Ten have lengthy items on the Gerard Street Chinese Heroin Scare, as exposed by the Sunday Times, and we see Det. Inspector Luff, boss of the drug squad, feeding us horror stories of "enough heroin to keep 120,000 addicts, the equivalent of more than a capacity crowd at Wembley Stadium, happy for sixteen days".

The Lord only knows what effect the picture of a Cup Final crowd composed of raving junkies will have on a set of jurors who look as if they've never even listened to Simon & Garfunkel, let alone 'Dead Flowers' or 'Sister Morphine'.



## DAY TWO: YESTERDAY'S PAPERS PARANOIA IN THE PRESS BOX

The Tuesday morning papers give the case plenty of space, especially the crappier tabloids. "Rolling Stone Keith and the Cocaine Sniffer", the headlines shout, "Rolling Stone Keith Sniffed Cocaine". The press revels in the case like a dog with a favourite rancid old bone that it keeps burying and digging up... all the double standards and pre- and misconceptions come out, and suddenly it's not just an interesting trial or a novel entertainment any more, but the old 'us and them' showdown. You either dig the Stones and the world in which they are, to use Sir Peter's word, "non-pareil", and feel that it's up to them what they choose to snort, smoke, swallow or shoot; or you think they're a menace... a bad example at the very least.

Ten years might have gone by since the infamous Redlands bust, when Jagger and Richard were first dragged onto the dirty slide under the public microscope, on incredibly weedy charges which were later quashed, but the gulf of understanding between Keith Richard and the people who read of his appalling exploits in the Sun, or indeed his supposed peers on the jury, still gapes as wide as the Grand Canyon.

By the time the Rolls Royce draws up outside the County Hall for the start of the second day, kids are skipping school and college to get glimpses of the great men, office workers are looking in during their breaks, and the number of media people present has doubled. NME has been the only pop weekly to be represented from the start, but it's now joined by Sounds, in the person of Barbara Charone, Melody Maker ("first with the news") doesn't appear to be interested - and indeed doesn't even mention the case until two weeks after it's over.

As Richard gets out of the car and walks up the steps of the Hall, a queue of old folks waiting at the nearby bus-stop look at him as if he's the Venusian with two heads and a long tail who jumped on Dr. Who last Saturday, and they cluck and tut with consternation. "Oooh, don't he look awful!"... "It shouldn't be allowed", etc. etc.

The defense in fact winds up with disappointing celerity. Alan Dunn, who has been with the Stones since 1967 and is now their transport manager, expands on the picture of chaos and pandemonium at a Stones concert, and explains how security problems were especially acute at the Stafford concert - implying that anyone could have got backstage and put the acid in the coat pocket. He also tells of the arrangements made for getting the Bentley from place to place, and asserts that a large number of people apart from Richard had travelled in it. However, under cross-examination by Mr. Laughland, he admits that the car would probably have received some sort of internal cleaning during that time, whereas Richard had said that it had only been given a run through a car-wash.

Next is Ian Stewart, the Stones' piano player from way back when, but now their equipment manager. Ian turns out to be the most impressive witness of the lot, seeming more relaxed and self-assured than even the 'professional' police witnesses. He doesn't have anything of immediate relevance to the charges to say, but he fills in further details about the scenes at a concert and the Stones' modus operandi with an easy confidence that is probably instrumental in making the jury that crucial bit doubtful about the ownership of the jacket and the acid therein.

The final piece of evidence comes in the form of a written statement from the Operations Director of West Midlands Security, and merely underlines the particular difficulties at the Stafford gig, and the strong possibility of unauthorised persons gaining backstage access.

Before the summing-up begins, the judge poses two questions on behalf of the jury. One asks for a full list of the property found in Richard's jacket, and the other requests an explanation of the small patch sewn onto the coat - although it's frequently pointed out, especially by the defense, that the jacket on display is only similar to the one worn by Richard on the night of the bust and is not necessarily the same garment. Sir Peter consults his minions, and discovers that the patch is covering up an ink stain... the fact that the patch is in the green, red and gold Rastafarian colours, and that there may be some connection with the "fiere looking man with shaggy hair" (Bob Marley) on the T-shirt sported by Richard in the Leicester photos doesn't seem to occur to anybody. Just as well, probably.

The prosecution summing-up, like the case, is very linear and precise. Mr. Laughland dwells mainly on the photographs and the alleged chain, meticulously pointing out similarities between the chain in those shots and the one found in the car; and on the fact that when asked to turn out the contents of his pockets at the service station office, Richard produced everything except the piece of folded paper containing the acid.

Only at the end of his hour long address does Mr. Laughland allow himself the slightest hint of the impassioned outbursts habitually employed by barristers on TV, when he lists the coincidences strung together by the defense in tones of rising amazement and contempt. His face takes on the appearance of a surprised and enraged bee, as he concludes with the observation that "The implications of this case are such as to stretch credulity beyond the breaking point". He sits down dramatically, and I'm half tempted to applaud, but am interrupted by the judge

announcing the lunch recess.

As the court empties, I notice for the first time that Jagger is back again, this time in the company of several other persons. The diminutive figure of Barbara Charone (aren't I gracious?... I mean short, really), confidante to the stars, follows in his footsteps; there's a swarthy American who turns out to be Ron Wood's manager; an older, sickly-looking gentleman who I assume, correctly, to be Les Perrin (the Stones' PR man); and a tall, gaunt man with sun-bleached hair and moustache, who looks strangely familiar. I later discover that this is John Phillips, who has flown in from L.A. with Jagger... I am deeply impressed.

Over lunch in the adjacent Bell - which used to be a very pleasant pub until they changed its old world charm for a cross between a working men's club and a dentist's waiting room - I'm joined by Pete Frame, who has been coming in and out of the trial at various junctures, and with our tongues loosened and our wrath fuelled by liberal quantities of fine old brandy, we speculate at length on the thousands of pounds from public funds and the hundreds of man hours that are being expended to bring the case to court. Quite what the benefits of bringing the prosecution are, remain a mystery: the fine subsequently imposed on Richard will in no way cover the cost of the case; Richard himself was obviously less than cowed or repentant after the verdict; and in the eyes of his admirers he merely emerges from it all as a hero martyr figure.

Returning to the press box early, I'm sitting quietly in the almost deserted courtroom trying to refocus my brain sufficiently to take note of the afternoon's proceedings with some vague degree of discernment, when a sharp-faced woman with a forbidding fixed smile, bustles along the length of the box and dumps herself next to me.

She puts her hand on my arm and leans across conspiratorially, and for a fleeting moment I contemplate shrieking for help, falling on the floor as if flung there by this just-maddened Amazon, and generally creating a scene... just to see what everyone's reaction would be.

I don't, of course, and gradually realise that she's pumping questions about the trial at me for all she's worth. She seems especially interested in the activities of the various TV teams, and it soon becomes clear that she's from one of the companies and is trying desperately to get abreast of the action.

She is under the impression that because I look like a "rock'n'roll person", I must be on intimate terms with Messrs. Jagger and Richard, and therefore able to secure her the interview that she's been sent to get. I hastily disillusion her, and she rushes off to hassle someone else. At the end of the day she is seen running round the Market Square in pursuit of Jagger's car, bleating frantically.

Hardly has she departed when another person arrives and goes through a not dissimilar questioning routine. This time it's a very efficient-looking young executive type with a BBC folder clasped proudly under his arm. He writes down the salient details in an enormous BBC book, and then promptly falls asleep for the rest of the afternoon.

By now the court has refilled, and far from having gathered my faculties back into some kind of alignment, I am just a tiny bit out of it, as Sir Peter gets on his hind legs and starts a lengthy speech which puts all his red herrings back on display. As a logical, factual summing-up it's not the greatest (although to be fair, he isn't exactly overburdened with prima facie evidence), but he's certainly got the thespian side of his gig together.

It all looks mildly ludicrous through my eyes: Sir Peter (at least three of him) waving his arms about, raising and lowering his voice in the appropriate places, putting his facial expression through the whole range of emotions, and periodically throwing the photographs onto the table to demonstrate his disregard for them... this powerful, influential, highly qualified figure going through the ridiculous charade of trying to convince all these other po-faced old buggers that his client (who even with a touch of make-up to improve his colour looks as if he's knocking on heaven's door) might not be the owner of these pathetically small quantities of dope.

My musings are cut short by a more pressing line of thought. A strong stirring in my loins tells me that Nature requires my almost immediate exit from the arena in the direction of the little boys' room. Unfortunately this means making my way all along the row of Fleet Street representatives, and already Judge Verney's patience has shown signs of wearing thin at the constant noise and movement in the press box.

Chairs bang, floorboards creak, feet shuffle and oaths are muttered as I stumble and blunder my way to the door, catching one man a nasty crack on the shin and inadvertently butting another. It sounds like the most appalling cacophony to my befuddled ears, and at any moment I expect the judge's strident tones to send several burly policemen hastening to drag me before the bench to be reprimanded.

Happily I escape unhindered, and return just in time to hear Sir Peter saying "No man must be acquitted because of his name, but neither must he be convicted because of it"... ah, stirring sentiments indeed - almost as good as the Gettysburg Address.

Kris Needs, who's a news-hound for the local paper when he's not going over the top at Flamin' Groovies concerts or socialising with Sid Vicious, says that Judge Verney is a man who doesn't like to miss his afternoon tea and crumpets; so it's no surprise when he stops the show at 3.30, leaving his final words and the Big Crunch until the next day.

Jagger leaves the court hurriedly, trying to escape the crowds both inside and out, but as he reaches the foot of the steps, he finds that he's got there before his car and sets off on a short run round the Market Square, pursued by a mob of photographers and fans, before John Phillips (who seems to be Jagger's only concession to the need for security) drags him clear.





## DAY THREE: HYPERTENSION AND HALLUCINATIONS

Wednesday morning sees the biggest melee yet on the steps of County Hall, and getting inside is almost as hard as it must have been for those voters running the Irish gauntlet 175 years ago.

The star performer for the day is Judge Verney, who's only been given a few lines thus far, but now gets his big speech as he reviews the evidence and directs the jury on points of law. He takes about an hour, and spends most of that time highlighting the irrelevancies, coincidences and omissions in the defense case - the non-appearance, for example, of potential witnesses like the valet in charge of the Stones' tour wardrobe, and Jagger himself, who was right next to Richard in the Leicester photographs.

At 11.30 the jury goes out, and another case involving a rather dowdy looking woman charged with an enormous list of petty thefts is brought in. Normally the processes of law fascinate me, but this item looks like being just a little too tawdry and sad after the jet-set highlife and razamatazz of the Richard affair, so I wander into the lobby to join the general discussion and speculation.

Les Perrin, making a rare public appearance, stands surrounded by the Fleet Street Gang, telling stories from his long and varied career in the wonderful world of showbiz. They're actually very interesting, but the sycophantic side-splitting indulged in by his audience reduces the scene to the level of the Monty Python Oscar Wilde sketch.

Jagger and Phillips both wander about, chatting with various aides, and Jagger, who has been impressively down-to-earth and approachable ever since he arrived, also socialises with the awe-struck kids and signs autographs, even putting his mark on one young lady's leg. Jagger, in fact, seems the least on edge of almost everybody there.

The wait drags on, and when a woman starts carrying plates of food into the jury room, it means that the verdict won't come in until after lunch, so the hospitality of the town's taverns beckons.

The crowd outside, however, has swelled to such proportions that a policeman has been put on the door to prevent unauthorised access. The bobby in question is a youngster of the smug-and-unflappable-behind-his-newly-acquired-authority variety, and he doubts my journalistic status, suggesting that I will almost certainly be unable to get back inside the building should I leave.

This is clearly a desperate situation. On the one hand I've no intention of missing the final showdown, but at the same time I'm experiencing a severe craving for revitalising refreshments of one sort or another. An outburst along "You ignorant scumbag, do you realise who you're talking to... I'm a personal friend of you Chief Constable's daughter... I can destroy your career with a single phone call!" lines may unnerve the bastard sufficiently, but it could also be a mite risky. Instead, I fix him with a fine big smile and ingratiate myself with a little "Well done, officer... it's good to see someone carrying out their duty so conscientiously in these troubled times. Unfortunately my credentials were confiscated while I was in the hands of Ethiopian rebels recently, but I'm sure you can appreciate the importance of my seeing this story through to the bitter end... the public at large must see these swine get their just deserts", and it seems to work. He even greets me with a grin when I return an hour later.

When the jury comes back, the whole thing's tied up with quite anticlimactic speed. We've hardly got settled in our seats when the foreman is announcing the decisions. "Not Guilty" on the first count, and suppressed gasps, squeals and applause break out in the public gallery; but the second verdict of "Guilty" is greeted with a stunned silence. Not many people had allowed for a split decision in their predictions.

Detective Sergeant Bull suddenly materialises in the witness box giving the antecedent history, revealing how Richard "a composer of popular music of variable income", has a previous conviction from October 1973, when he was found guilty of possessing cannabis, cannabis resin, methaqualone, methadone, pethedrine, caffeine and diamorphine, plus assorted fire-arms.

Sir Peter now leaps to his feet for the final time to make a plea for clemency, pointing out the "grave consequences" that could ensue from the conviction for both Richard and the rest of the Stones. The squashy champ is reminded that he is "dealing with a musician and artist who is non-pareil in his field", and he then retires to consider the sentence.

The five minutes before he returns must be the worst of the week for Richard, who sits with head bowed, not daring to look up at anyone. The atmosphere is so taut by the time Judge Verney slips back into his chair that it almost seems probable he'll whip out the black cap.

How would that go down with the citizens of Aylesbury? What would happen if he came out with "Keith Richard, it is the sentence of this court that you be taken from here and hung by the neck until you are dead"? There hasn't been a public execution in Aylesbury since 1845, and the balcony at the front of the County Hall used for that purpose has been dismantled long since, but it wouldn't take long to rig up a makeshift gibbet. With Gary Gilmore bringing capital punishment back into vogue, the town could probably generate a useful tourist income from the event. The Chamber of Commerce would love it.



You won't be surprised to hear that no such thing happens. Judge Verney merely delivers his brief knuckle-rapping address to the prisoner, and as he announces the £1000 fine, Keith allows himself a broad smile.

As he does so, a curious incident enacts itself at the back of the court. John Phillips has been standing with Jagger in the well of the court watching anxiously, and as sentence is passed, he seems to make a remark that Jagger takes exception to, and finds himself on the receiving end

of a brusque reprimand. Jagger has hands thrust deep in the pockets of his checked jacket and chin jutting aggressively, while Phillips wears a somewhat sickly, embarrassed expression, trying desperately to retrieve the situation. As they leave with Keith in the back of the Rolls Royce, however, they seem to have recovered their good humour.

As soon as the main protagonists have departed, a veritable convoy of vehicles sets off in pursuit - the press because Les Perrin has promised to arrange a conference for the TV cameras and newspapers, and everybody else because... well, if you've skipped school or work to follow the action, you may as well follow it all the way.

After waiting in sub-zero temperatures for the best part of 90 minutes while Keith debates appeal possibilities, I'm beginning to wish that I'd either resisted curiosity's urge, or taken the precaution of donning thermal underwear. To distract my mind from the gradual petrification of my body, I get into conversation with the junior edition of Margaret Thatcher who's been at Keith's right hand throughout the trial.

It transpires that she's the solicitor's wife, and is there to look after "the social side of things". This, it would appear, is basically a synonym for looking after Keith's welfare and presentation during the three days. Getting a fully-clothed Keef to any place, let alone a court of law, by ten in the morning is apparently no task for the faint-at-heart or easily traumatised.



Louise Pearson

The press conference, which finally happens in the Regency-style pavilion across the road from the Bell, is a fairly unseemly shoving match, with lots of rude men jostling each other and shouting the same inane questions over and over: "Are you glad it's over, Keith?"... "What about America, Keith?"... "Have you a message for your fans, Keith?" Keith just stands there, festooned with an enormous scarf, answering most of them with "I dunno" or "I don't think anything". He does proffer the opinion that "The verdict was a good old British compromise", but for much of the time he is content to let Jagger do the talking.

"Have you spoken with Anita, Keith?" "Yeah, I rang her and told her". "Did she say anything?" "Ah nah", interjects Jagger, "She was completely silent throughout the conversation".

Tony Parsons crawls across the large table that the pair have been backed up against by their zealous interrogators, and reaches a position where he's close enough to bite Keith's earlobe off, should he so choose. "What are you going to do with the chain?" he demands. Keith seems startled, and takes a moment to answer: "Uh, it ain't mine, so they can do what they like wiv it". He then tells another reporter, who asks whether he's going sever his connections with the drugs world, that he is never taken drugs.

It's all too much for me, and I slope off towards the door. Outside I find John Phillips, who seems equally unimpressed by the behaviour of the people inside, and looks as if he wishes he were back on the sunny beaches of California. We exchange a few words that I can't even remember, they were so trivial, but seeing him there reminds me of one of his songs, released almost exactly ten years ago as the B-side of 'Dedicated To The One I Love'. It's a little thing called 'Free Advice', and as I turn my collar to the wind and step out to the road to hitch a ride home, I find myself singing it... it seems apt.

"A bit of free advice; we'll tell it to you now.  
If you've got some habits some people don't allow,  
Be cool, be clean... if you know what I mean.

We've all got our ups, we've all got our downs;  
Some of us are careless and leave them laying around,  
Be neat, discreet, and keep your ear to the ground.

Everyone has had a loved one who's far far away  
And if you don't want to take that trip some day,  
Be cool, be clean... if you know what I mean".

Paul Kendall

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# HAPPY-GO-LUCKY ME!

Continuing from last month, we pick up the Jackson Browne saga at the moment when he had just got involved with David Geffen, who had taken over the management of his affairs and found him a publishing deal.

ZZ: What were the circumstances leading up to the recording of your first album?

JB: Well, when it was time to start thinking about a record, we thought there would be no problem about getting a label, but David was concerned about getting a suitable producer.

I wanted Denny Cordell, who wanted me to be on Shelter Records - but Geffen was about to set up his own company, and at a certain point, Denny Cordell realised that if he produced me, the album would probably wind up on Asylum - which would not have been in his interests, because he should really be putting all his efforts into his own label...so that never happened, and he pulled out.

Then I found this engineer, Richard Sanford Orshoff, who I met when Johnny Rivers was recording one of my songs... and we seemed to have similar thoughts, so we decided to produce my album between us.

ZZ: Didn't selecting the material for that album present a bit of a problem, with five years worth of songs to choose from?

JB: It simply comprised the songs which I thought were my best at the time. One of them, 'Something Fine', was written for a girl I was staying with here in London. She moved to Amsterdam later... I saw her over there earlier in the tour. 'From Silver Lake' was about Greg Copeland. Those songs are for people, very much. Sometimes they're for several people that I've known, and sometimes they're about a relationship I might have had where the same kind of thing has happened with more than one person.

'My Opening Farewell' was about a girl I knew during my Paxton Lodge period - that was one of the things I wrote up there - and 'Jamaica Say You Will' was for another girl that I knew. The Byrds cut it first (on the 'Byrdsmania' album). I went to the studio to show them the song, because they liked it, and we cut a track with me playing piano... though I don't think it was the one used. I cut most of the album while the Byrds were on tour, otherwise I'd have got Clarence to play on more of it, but he came back and played on that one track.

Listening to the album again, I think it could have been much better if I could have worked closer with Clarence - he was just one of the greatest cats that ever walked... a fantastic person. When he died it was a serious personal loss to so many people.

ZZ: Why did you pick out the particular session musicians that you did?

JB: Because they were the best guys in town... and they still are. They were playing with James Taylor, who'd just done an album with Richard Orshoff - and we both agreed that they were the best. I was just so bashful about having a drummer as great as Russ Kunkel playing on my album, and he sense this, and came out and told me that he really wanted to

play on it.

Those sessions were the first time that Craig Doerge played with Russ and Lee Sklar. Lee found him playing on a Tom Jans/Mimi Fariña session... he'd been in Rosebud with Judy Henske, John Selter, David Vaught and Jerry Yester.

Albert Lee had played on some of the sessions that I did here with Denny Cordell. I came over in the earlier part of the year to do the Festival Hall with Laura Nyro, and I ended up staying for three weeks! Leon came to town a few days after me, and we had a few sessions with Chris Stainton, Jim Gordon, Jim Keltner, Matthew Fisher and Albert Lee - and I got him to play on the album. He's a great guitar player, one of the finest country players around... James Burton likes to play with him!

ZZ: I think 'Rock Me On The Water' has always been the song on that album that's intrigued me most...

JB: That came from what Zevon calls my "apocalyptic meaningless period". That was the first song I wrote at the piano... in my apartment below Glenn and J.D. The night after that, I read that water is the universal symbol of birth, re-birth and sex... this was in a book by Joseph Campbell, a four volume work on mythology. I thought "What a coincidence", because that's what I thought it meant too; so I immediately stopped reading that book, figuring that if I got very premeditated about it, it would be a drag.

ZZ: 'Doctor My Eyes' was a big hit for you off that album, (it entered the Top Ten in the States in March '72), have you ever had a hankering to repeat that sort of success?

JB: Some other people wish I would, but I don't. Record companies hope you'll sell singles because it makes their work a lot easier. They'll say "Please... you get these gold albums, but no singles. Give us a hit single and we'll rule the earth". The commercial success of the albums is nice, but it's not something I think about. I think there comes a time in making an album when you hope that it's good and that people will like it, but when it's done and gone, it's like post-natal depression. It's outside of you, it's no longer in you, and you feel a certain loss.

ZZ: I suppose it must have been round this same time that the Eagles were doing their first album. How come they did 'Take It Easy' before you?

JB: Yes, during the recording of my album in the late summer of '71, the Eagles were just coming together and were also getting ready to make an album for Asylum. Glenn came by the studio one day when I was working on this new song during a break in recording, and he liked it. Then he called me up a couple of days later to see if I'd finished it, because he was interested to hear how it had turned out - he wanted the Eagles to record it.

As it happened, it wasn't complete, and I didn't intend to put it on the first album... so I tried to finish it, but I couldn't seem to get with it, and I gave it to Glenn to see what he could come up with.

He did it, and I really liked what he brought to the song. Anybody who has ever travelled around the United States has been to a Winslow, Arizona, and it's a really strange town... there are six Chinese restaurants there, and nothing but Indians and rednecks, all of whom eat this Chinese food! (This stemmed from the fact that Chinese people were used to build the railroad.)

He really arranged the song - wrote the Winslow verse, stretched the chorus, and they did it really well. His influence on the band at the beginning was the evenness of his phrasing and his working things out... like Jack Tempchin's version of 'Peaceful Easy Feeling' is not very much like the Eagles' version at all.

ZZ: Why was there such a long gap (Oct. '71-Oct. '73) before the release of 'For Everyman'?

JB: Well, it was finished a good three or four months before it was released - so that cuts the gap down. In fact, I waited almost a year before I started work on it - and then a scheduled tour interrupted its completion. I thought it would be done in time, but I miscalculated... so we missed the correlation between the tour and having a new album in the shops - same as we did with this last album too!

ZZ: There's no producer credited for the album.

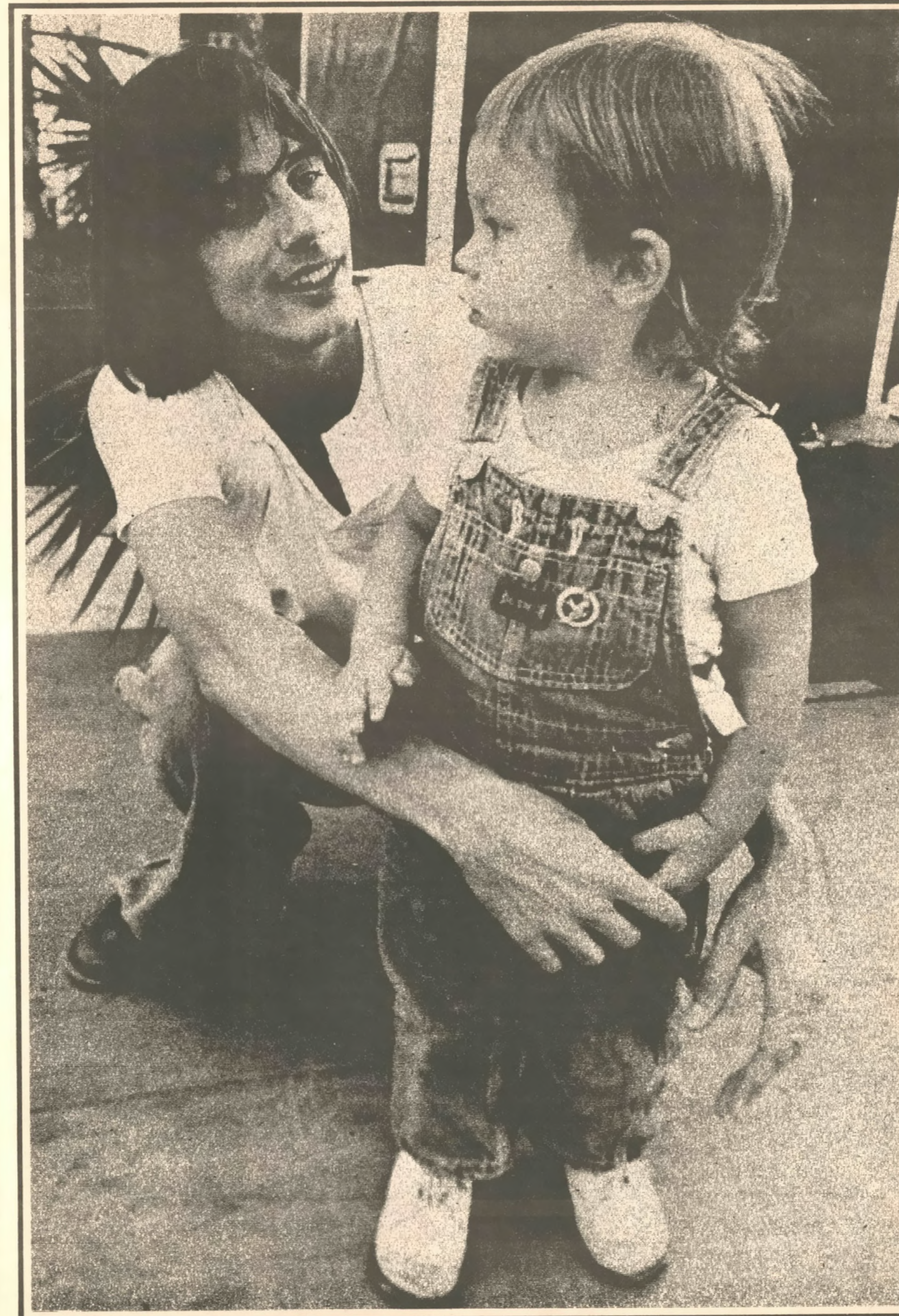
JB: It was just me and the engineer. On the first album, the engineer is credited as producer because that was our deal, but apart from 'The Pretender', I've always done the albums in the same way - in conjunction with an engineer.

ZZ: Where did you discover David Lindley, whose made a major contribution to your music since that album?

JB: I didn't discover David Lindley! I used to see him playing with Kaleidoscope at the Ash Grove in L.A., and I actually asked him if he'd help me to record if I ever got the chance; but the first time we actually played together was when Jimmie Fadden from the Dirt Band brought him down to my dressing room at a Troubadour gig I was doing - I was opening for Linda Ronstadt, in fact. I'd heard him playing several times by then, but that was the first time he'd ever played with me... he played his fiddle and I sang 'These Days' - and it just blew my mind. I was only playing that song because people wanted to hear it - but when he played along, it was the first time I'd really felt it for years. I really connected with it again.

ZZ: You credit Gregg Allman with the inspiration for the arrangement on your recording of the song...

JB: Yes, he recorded the song on his solo album ('Laid Back', which came out in '73). I ran into him at an airport in 1973, I guess, and he told me he remembered the song from when I first wrote it, in the days when the Hour Glass were in L.A. and we used to see quite a bit of each other... and he told me he'd cut it. Then we met up again soon after and he played me the tapes - and I really liked the way he'd done it. It reminded me that it was a good song after all.



## JACKSON BROWNE

*The past chronicled, history untangled, rumours expounded, myths unravelled, legends probed, wild tales explored, flimsy documents examined, exaggerations refuted, mis-reportings explained, words ungarbled, and facts unjumbled*



When I said he inspired the arrangement, obviously it isn't his arrangement, because I don't sing like that...notice I said 'I don't', not 'I can't'. The fact is that I can't of course, but I wouldn't mind if I could.

ZZ: Actually, of all the people who've covered that song (and there are quite a few: Nico, Tom Rush, the Dirt Band, Ian Matthews, Gregg Allman, etc.), the version I like best is Terry Melcher's.

JB: Terry is really great. He was trying to make his own album for years, and even as a producer he was often fighting for the leading role. I figure that he should have been making his own albums all along - he's that good. I used to go by and see him, and he had some very unusual versions of other people's songs...a lot of them used to come out with Stephen Foster type chords. He really stamped his own impression on the songs he did. That song has been done in so many different ways - people relate to it in many different ways.

ZZ: How did Elton John come to play on 'Red Neck Friend'?

JB: Geffen brought him by! It was the first time I'd ever met him, and he was really great, real good fun. You see, I imagine - if the truth be known - that Geffen thought it would really count for something if Reg Dwight made an appearance on the album. Geffen's idea was to credit 'Reg Dwight' with the piano playing so that it would cause a buzz...you know...nudge nudge, wink wink!

But Elton didn't have a work permit - he was over on a holiday, and we couldn't give him a credit...so we called him Rockaday Johnnie. I just asked him if he could play in a similar style to Jerry Lee Lewis, really rip it up - and he did exactly that...he really made the song stand up, gave it a real meaty, non-studio-player feel - drove it right down the road!

ZZ: While on the subject of links with famous persons...was the title track about Crosby? (David, not Bing).

JB: Not exactly. I started writing it on his boat - when he and Graham were making an album. I used to hang around the studio and stay on his boat. He sort of inspired the song, though it's not really about him. It could be about him, but it's not.

ZZ: The Eagles were doing 'Desperado' that same year...how closely involved with that were you? You helped write the 'Doolin Dalton' theme song...

JB: That started back in the Echo Park days. A lot of the Eagles' first album, and 'Doolin Dalton' and 'James Dean' came out of an all-night session we once had. We had bogarted ourselves a free night in some shitty out-of-the-way studio, which was totally frustrating because the engineer didn't really have himself together. Actually, we were just fucking around, and we probably weren't any more together than he was, but we came up with those two songs that night, from just being high and singing lines at each other.

You see, I always thought that J.D. and Glenn should have called themselves Doolin Dalton, rather than Longbranch Penny-whistle...I thought that was a much better name.

ZZ: But weren't Doolin and Dalton a pair of unsuccessful bank robbers?

JB: Sure, that's the meat of that whole 'Desperado' album right there in that song...four men ride out and only three ride back - that sort of idea.

ZZ: Wasn't Warren writing stuff like that around the same time, in songs like 'Frank and Jesse James'?

JB: That's the thing: Warren had Frank and Jesse James already written, and he almost shit when I told him the Eagles were working on a 'desperado' concept, because as well as 'Frank and Jesse

James', he had just finished 'Desperados Under The Eaves'. In fact, he sang me that song, and I sang him 'Desperado'...he almost went nuts! Warren and I refer to that as the night of the Waco Bloody Mary...we just got really out of hand.

Warren was mad because the Eagles were getting their Desperado stuff out before he did...because even before he wrote 'Desperados Under The Eaves', he'd had the title in his head for years. In fact, he had wanted to call his Imperial album ('I Wanted Dead or Alive') 'Desperados Under The Eaves' - and the original idea for the back of the sleeve was a picture of him with his hat pulled low over his eyes, holding a glass of wine, and leaning up against the wall of the building, sheltered by the eaves...

ZZ: People say that the concept behind the Eagles' album was yours...

JB: Well, there were several similar types of song around, like Warren's 'Frank and Jesse James' and J.D.'s 'How Long', and even 'James Dean'. They had a sort of timelessness, and as we kicked the idea around, it became the cowboy movie idea that became 'Desperado' - one of my favourite records.

ZZ: That's you lying in the dirt on the back of the sleeve, right? (Jackson is the one on the far left, almost unrecognisable with a beard and moustache.)

JB: Yeah...real dead. That's kind of spooky, isn't it? You'd never catch me riding a plane with those five guys!

ZZ: I shouldn't think there's much likelihood of that now Bernie's gone.

JB: Actually, those guys were involved in a couple of serious near-crashes in planes. Once they were in a plane which touched down and then bounced 18 feet sideways because of the wind...and Joe Walsh was in a similar thing. Brian Garofalo told me about it.

ZZ: What sort of effect did the success of the first two albums have on you? Did it become more difficult to write new songs, knowing that they would attract a lot of public attention?

JB: Well, you get the impression that you know what it was they liked about you, and you try to do it again. You just fall into a bunch of pitfalls and it takes a long time to get yourself out of them. I think my foremost problem was that it got very important to write heavy songs. I mean, I never thought they were heavy when I wrote them, but gradually I got the impression that they were by the way people related to them. That's a bad connection - I'm taking someone else's word for them. That's what fame does; it's a crusher.

ZZ: But you must have been aware when you wrote it, that something like 'For Everyman' was hardly standard 'Boy meets girl' pop stuff...

JB: Sure...I think the whole fucking thing is coming down. I think it's all over. Seventies, eighties, nineties, what does it matter? The way things are in this world, the fact that people live in square rooms, and they go to bars and shit...you know, I used to think it was so lame to go to bars, but now I go to bars. On the other hand, the moment is everything. I can't deny that I'm from Southern California, and I dig going to get a beer. I wanna get high, I wanna enjoy it, I don't wanna pretend I'm a spaceman. Fuck that shit...I'm just what I am, and that's however good it is.

That's why I respect someone like Elton John...because he's kept going, because he thinks it's a joke. I admire him for being a pop star. I don't want to do that, but he does what he does, and then there's who he is. He just wants to jump over the piano in his neon hot-pants...no pretence. "They want me to be a pop star? OK, I'll do that". Dylan did that too. "You want a mysterious whatever...I'll give him to you".

ZZ: Didn't you actually meet Dylan around

the time of 'For Everyman'?

JB: Yeah...I was playing at the Roxy in Hollywood, and I was talking to this guy during a break, and somebody comes up behind and says "This is Bob Dylan". I turned round, and he suddenly looked like a monolith. He looked like Easter Island. He was wearing a fucking fur cap, held got his shades on, gloves and a coat. I just looked at him and said "Hi", and he gave me this sort of imperceptible nod of the head, and I thought "Jesus Christ, excuse me!" And I split. I didn't know how to deal with it. There it was - that mouth, that jaw, those eyes, that inscrutable presence. It scared me to death...I went next door and got a drink.

ZZ: But on the other hand, establishing that sort of mystique...which, in a way, you have done too - doesn't it set you up for misinterpretation? Do you read the things that are written about you?

JB: I don't get to see them all. It's stupid, I should stop doing it, because if I don't see the point of reading what gets written about other people's music, I don't see how I could possibly be happy with what gets written about me. I think it was Glenn Frey who said that writing about music is like singing about football. I read this thing the other day that was so stupid...

ZZ: Which paper?

JB: Mmmm...I'm not saying.

ZZ: Does it bother you when reviewers and critics try to get deep down inside you, and interpret your message for the world at large?

JB: Junior psychologists...it's sick. I don't know who gave them a license to practise, but it's rank. I hate having someone trying to exercise their intellect on me. Especially people who are outrageously complimentary, just beyond reason, just incredibly flattering, but way out there...wrong about so many things. You do something that the guy doesn't like and he feels let down, the things that he thought were true are no longer true...you're no longer doing this thing that you never did do in the first place. Maybe I open myself up for that by writing about what I write about, but these amateur psychologists, these junior shrinks...they're a pain in the ass. They just go off at a tangent and they never come back.

ZZ: So do you find it a real drag having to do a whole series of interviews like you're doing while you're over here?

JB: I don't really mind doing it, because I don't think that people in England have read a lot about me, though writers and reviewers have evidently read a lot of things that have been printed in the States.

The thing is...I've been doing three or four interviews a day for the past five days, and everybody has got a different opinion. I hear someone say one thing, and I think "Gee, maybe they're right"...it's really hard for me to gauge that kind of thing.

I was reading the 'Forthcoming Events' section of some paper, which had a brief evaluation of me, and it said that although the tunes were a bit doomy, I was alright. All this talk about me being 'apocalyptic'...it isn't my word - it's one of those phrases that people latch onto so they can refer to something without having to get into it at all.

John, Paul, Pete & Ringo

Next month, we conclude the interview with a discussion of the 'Late For The Sky' and 'The Pretender' albums. Grind your teeth as Kendall is frustrated by the Browne wall-of-silence; gasp with wonder as Frame is told of 36 hour sessions with Lowell George; laugh as Jackson declines Tobler's offer to produce his next album!

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## WALTERS GOES TO THE PANTO



*She blushed. "I really must go.  
Mother Superior will be frightfully cross."  
He smiled to himself, locked the door and reached  
for the Kenwood Chefette....*

It doesn't go on like that, it's just that our editor always takes the first bit and blows it up into big letters and makes it the title and I thought it might drag a few more customers in - sort of a loss leader. I would have preferred to start with an "Elvis To Visit Britain" style sensational eye-catcher, but even though you'll be reading this in February, this is my post-Christmas piece, and frankly nothing much has happened. That's why critical observers of the scene devote Christmas to compiling lists of their top albums of the year, and so on - there's no wrecks and nobody drowning, in fact nothing to laugh at at all, as Stanley Holloway put it.

The music business spends the festive season drifting from one record company party to another, knocking back warm gin and tonics from plastic cups until enfolded by merciful oblivion.

Waxie Maxie invited me to join some rockers at the Charly party at a pub in Hammersmith and promised that two strippers would perform. I couldn't be bothered to go and, apparently, neither could one of the strippers, although one did turn up at the CBS do. I had had a couple of fruit cups and was about to wander out into the street when a dusky maid trotted out onto the dance floor and began to prance about to the accompaniment of a Stevie Wonder record. I've always enjoyed Stevie's music, so I climbed onto a chair in time to see the lady bounce onto a disco speaker and take all her clothes off. She then produced a chiffon scarf and began to coil it round herself. "Come madam", I cried, "This is hardly the time to be coy!", and then, after failing to persuade any member of the audience to join her, she ran off in a huff.

The rest of Christmas was mainly Morecambe and Wise and cracking nuts. I bet all you cost accountants and librarians out there wish you were in showbiz, eh?

Actually, I did make one rather noble effort to do something in the traditional festive spirit, and incidentally to combine it with my interest in the wonderful world of pop. For his Xmas Treat this year I decided to take John Peel to the Intimate Theatre, Palmers Green, to see Tony Blackburn in 'Jack And The Beanstalk'. We decided to take in a matinee as we didn't fancy jostling with crowds and ticket touts at the five o'clock performance, although the lady on the phone did say that plenty of seats were available for either show - "Unless there's a sudden mad rush!", she added cryptically.

The box office girl did look at me rather strangely when, with Peely peering over my shoulder, I bought two adult tickets, and the lady in the buffet looked even more startled when we insisted that she desist from arranging packets of crisps and bottles of pop and to pour us a couple of light and bitters. Soon there seemed to be a fair sprinkling of tots and grannies in the place so we decided to take our seats. I had purchased tickets for

row D in the circle, but The Intimate Theatre was so intimate that row D turned out to be the next to the back row. I had asked for circle seats particularly as the poster advertised not only Tony Blackburn, but an on-stage appearance of Arnold.

Now I'm not implying that in the wide spectrum of pop/rock radio there are any serious rivalries, but if Tony spotted a rival disc jockey in the stalls who knows but that at a secret word of command ("Slay, Arnie!") the beast might come careering down the aisle and go for the jugular. As a regular listener to the Archers I know my rights, and I'm pretty sure that I could have the animal put down for jock-worrying, but then what if Peel went down with rabies or foot and mouth? I'd probably have to try and wheedle Bob Harris away from the Old Grey Whistle, and I'm sure that none of us want that, do we.

The overture was struck up by the Rex And Jean Lear Quartet with, I assume, Jean on the electric organ and Rex on drums. Now I know you Zigzagers are sticklers for line-up information, but I omitted to find out the names of either the youth on bass or the lady pianist, but I'm sure that when ZZ commission John Tobler to do the Rex and Jean Lear story, all will be revealed around episode seven.

When the villagers of Merrydale came on to mill about in the traditional manner it was obvious that there might be a bit of a snag as they were only four in number, and four villagers have to mill about pretty determinedly to be convincing, and the problem was compounded by the fact that two of the villagers, Tina and Sharon Enticott to be precise, doubled as the cow. Despite the rather budget-based appearance of the show, the predominantly pre-school audience seemed happy enough and oh-no-he-Isn't enthusiastically. We, however, had come to see the star.

T. Blackburn played the part of Cuddles, a role unfamiliar to me. He came on in the dark, on a scooter with a torch tied to the handlebars. He was dressed in a white shirt and a sort of red jumpsuit. One might have expected this, as the programme gave Tony's hobbies as water-skiing, music and casual clothes. He told a joke about Father Christmas committing suicide which fell rather flat with the kiddies, and then wisely moved on to singing "I Was Born With A Smile On My Face" accompanied by the Lears.

The arrival of Arnold turned out to be a bit of a downer. I hope I'm not shattering too many Zigzagers' illusions when I reveal that Arnold is in fact simply barks on a tape cartridge (I wonder if Donald Zec's old job's still going), and as Peel put it, the sight of Tony dragging a piece of tape round the stage on a lead should satisfy any student of the bizarre. After a couple of rather frightening barks over the public address system, however, a small person in a sort of brown zip-up dogsuit came on







on hands and knees.

I had hopes that there might be more in the show for the student of rock theatre, but I'm afraid that the nearest it got to our end of the spectrum was when Jack embraced Princess Jill and gave us a rather piercing rendition of 'You Are The Sunshine Of My Life'. Apart from that, the musical highlight came just before the interval when Jack put a foot on the beanstalk and seemed disinclined to go higher as it began to swing round rather precariously while the entire cast waved Union Jacks and sang, rather enigmatically, 'There'll Always Be An England'. Although I wanted to stay on and see the giant, and scene eleven promised a singalong with Cuddles and Arnold, Peel began demanding another ice-cream and kicking the seat of the child in front, so I decided to knock it on the head before the second half.

A more promising rock/theatre project, I felt, would be the Genesis Rainbow reopening concert, but this was not to be. Although Phil Collins seems to be a jolly nice chap (in fact they all seem jolly nice chaps), I have never come to terms with their music, which I can well believe was conceived in a British public school. Like most groups in the fashionable British style there is a determined, humourless, earthbound quality to both music and lyrics which makes them sound to me like Nazi rock groups. And don't tell me that it's all very complicated and difficult to play. I can only reply like Dr. Johnson in similar circumstances: "Madam, I would it were impossible".

However, to return to the theatrical theme, Genesis now seem to have largely abandoned the bits of business which Peter Gabriel masterminded. They do give us a burst of dry ice every twenty minutes or so, but filling the stage with simulated smoke now seems a compulsory part of every group's act. Schoolkids forming a group today probably buy a smoke machine before they invest in a drumkit.

They also used the latest expensive toy, the laser. I did hear that on the night I saw them the lasers weren't working properly and I must admit I'm not sure what a laser is. Even so, I'm always somewhat bemused when halfway through the number considered to be the highlight of the show a hard beam of light (or whatever lasers produce) starts to flash round the roof of the Empire Pool or Earls Court.

Groups aren't always the best judge of what's good for them, and I'm afraid that few people now dare tell them that just because a new piece of technology exists, they needn't necessarily work it into the act. I remember talking to a chap who roadied around the world for the Beatles, and he could carry all the gear on and off himself, and complained when McCartney wanted to incorporate electric piano on stage. Yet I feel that the day is not far off when at the climax of Ricky Farnesbarnes' 'Armageddon Suite' the stage will be filled with miniature TV sets, or new, improved electric fires, or there will be a demonstration by Ricky on the Spudicence Potato Peeler. The only time I felt that the use of the laser added anything to the act was when the Who finished their Christmas show with the usual 'See Me, Feel Me' bit, and sent out shafts of green and red laser light which produced a dramatic reaching out feel from the stage.

Actually, I suppose that 'Tommy' is about as good a vehicle for some sort of theatrical exploration as rock has produced, and I speak as one who saw Paul Nicholas, Sonia Kristina and Marsha Hunt open in 'Hair', and Jack Good and P.J. Proby in 'Catch My Soul', not to mention the infamous 'Isabel's A Jezebel'... but that's another story. The attraction of 'Tommy' which, like 'Tubular Bells', has only still to be performed on ice, must lie in its obscure meaning. Keith Moon told me that he for one had no clear idea what it was about until Ken Russell explained it to him.

'Tommy' cropped up again when I arranged to meet Nik Cohn, rock critic of the New York magazine, author of 'Rock From The Beginning' and 'Rock Dreams', and an acquaintance of mine since, as a schoolboy, he used to ask awkward questions during some evening classes that I was giving some dozen years ago. We met in 'The Intrepid Fox' in Wardour Street as it's handy for the Marquee, and I always hope to catch a glimpse of Basil Brush. He startled me by telling me that while doing his tax exile stint in New York he had not only remarried, but had married Arfur, the Teenage Pinball Queen. And here rock history begins.

Arfur was a figment of Nik's imagination. In 1967 he met this Canadian chick who was about fourteen and impressed him by her tomboyish good looks and a manner somewhere between Cagney and the as-yet-undiscovered Tatum O'Neal. He had always held that success in the field of popular culture had more to do with style and promotion than talent, and set out to prove it. He determined to launch the girl as something, and eventually settled on Arfur the Teenage Pinball Queen. He dressed her as Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm with a Malcolm Allison hat, put the story around that she was the world pinball champion just in from the States, and in less time than it takes to tell, the media were beating a path to his door.

She gave a series of national press interviews, full of 'I live clean and shoot clean' lines, was the cover girl in 'Queen' magazine, and appeared on 'News At Ten' scoring outrageous scores. Nik tells me that this last feat was achieved by fixing the machine so that it gave her an endless supply of balls ('One phrase in his

latest piece aptly sums up the work of your so-called columnist", writes a Regular Reader. "Why oh why is this space not given over to an analysis of the work of John Stewart's roadie, which I'm sure would interest many readers?"). He couldn't accept the TV offers to guest on the Eamonn Andrews or Dave Allen shows as she might be asked to play, and she couldn't. The best media story to come out of the affair came when Nik and Arfur went to meet a national showbiz columnist in the cocktail bar of a posh London hotel. The head waiter refused to admit Arfur because of her dress, whereupon the journalist stepped forward angrily and, pointing to the figment of Nik's imagination, said "Do you realise who this is?"

Nik has long been a mate of Chris Stamp and Kit Lambert of Who fame, and they were pretty excited by the whole thing. It was suggested that they might arrange a world championship pinball match at a restaurant in which Chris' brother Terence Stamp had an interest...called, I believe, The Trencherman. Chris Stamp had a mate in Tottenham who agreed to be the opposition and was to present himself as an American imported challenger, Johnny Ace. It was obvious that if 'Johnny' opened his mouth during press coverage of the event there would be a tilt, therefore there would be a pinball wizard who was deaf and dumb. Before it was all settled, Arfur went off to France, everybody got bored, and it all fell through, but about a year later a challenging, spiritually probing work called 'Tommy' came out.

Nik thought that he ought to have a look at the punk phenomenon and was pretty distressed to find that he was unable to accompany me over to the Marquee where I had been invited to see Alberto y Los Trios Paranoias and, more interestingly, new punk rave Dog Sick. Admittedly I had only seen Dog Sick referred to obliquely in the gossip columns, but here, I felt, was a chance to get in on the ground floor. Here, I assumed, must be a band who, as symbols of working class rebellion, would make the Pistols look like the Tremes. After all, New York punk's all very well, but it's obviously middle class art school based when a group can be called Pere Ubu, a reference to the birth of the theatre of Outrage in the late nineteenth century. I hope Sid Vicious neither knows nor cares about this.

Anyway, I was somewhat deflated to find that Dog Sick are a fictitious group invented by the Albertos. Ha, ha - very satirical. I suppose rock satire is a form of rock theatre, but for some reason it isn't usually very successful. The Bonzos were patchy but at least funny, whereas I've never got a lot of pleasure out of Scaffold, Grimms, and Cheech & Chong. Satirical rock usually boils down to somebody imitating Hendrix and shouting "Bum!" The Albertos entertained the crowd, and I don't think you'd be disappointed if you booked them for your rugby club social, but sure enough somebody imitated Hendrix and there were lots of cries of "Bum" and other four letter words.

Popular music as we know it and theatre don't mix readily, and I was not averse to missing the first playback of 'Evita' in favour of some indifferent fisticuffs at the Empire Pool. The show looks like being a highly successful unstaged opera, (Dog Sick, Arfur, Excerpt From A Teenage Opera - is the day dawning when, for the price of a ticket, we can stay at home and read reports of events thought up by the likes of Harvey Goldsmith, Robert Stigwood or Peter Grant?), but I haven't managed to plough through all four sides of the album yet. Listening to it, I don't suppose Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd-Webber have gone through all of it.

In fact I've worked with Tim a few times, and he's a genuinely knowledgeable enthusiast in certain areas of pop/rock, and you'd never believe, to meet him, that he could perpetuate Jesus Christ Superstar. (Sure you don't mean "perpetrate", John? - Ed.) Still, it's nice to see some of pop's millions going to a pleasant chap. Peel claims that Tim and Andrew brought him an early form of JCS, and after hearing it - being concerned with the future development of pop - he could only advise them to give up. They, of course, went on to fame and fortune.

This story may be slightly exaggerated as Peel is inclined to pad things a bit. He once told me that he had an aunt who struck up some sort of liaison with an arctic explorer and lived in a flat full of huskies. When pressed, his brother Frank did concede that she might have kept an alsatian for a time.

They never seem to do decent new musicals these days. They always seem to be a reworking of an established theme. 'Catch My Soul' was 'Othello'; we've had a rock 'Two Gentlemen Of Verona'; and this summer I saw 'The Black Mikado'. I've seen both Japanese and Zulu versions of 'Macbeth', and TV recently gave us a re-run of 'Carmen Jones'. Currently in the West End is a version of 'Cinderella' with an all black cast called 'I Gotta Shoe'. Apparently it started out as 'Cindy Ella'. It gave me a great idea for a fashionable, hip Christmas show which could be a real money spinner. How about a traditional theme which incorporated apres-office party queeziness and was performed entirely by fish? I would call it 'Salmonella'.

Little known facts about John Peel (hobbies: music, casual clothing and co-education) number four. His introduction to showbiz came at a Liverpool panto when Frankie Howerd enticed the eight year old Peel onto the stage to sing 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Was A Bear'.

John Walters

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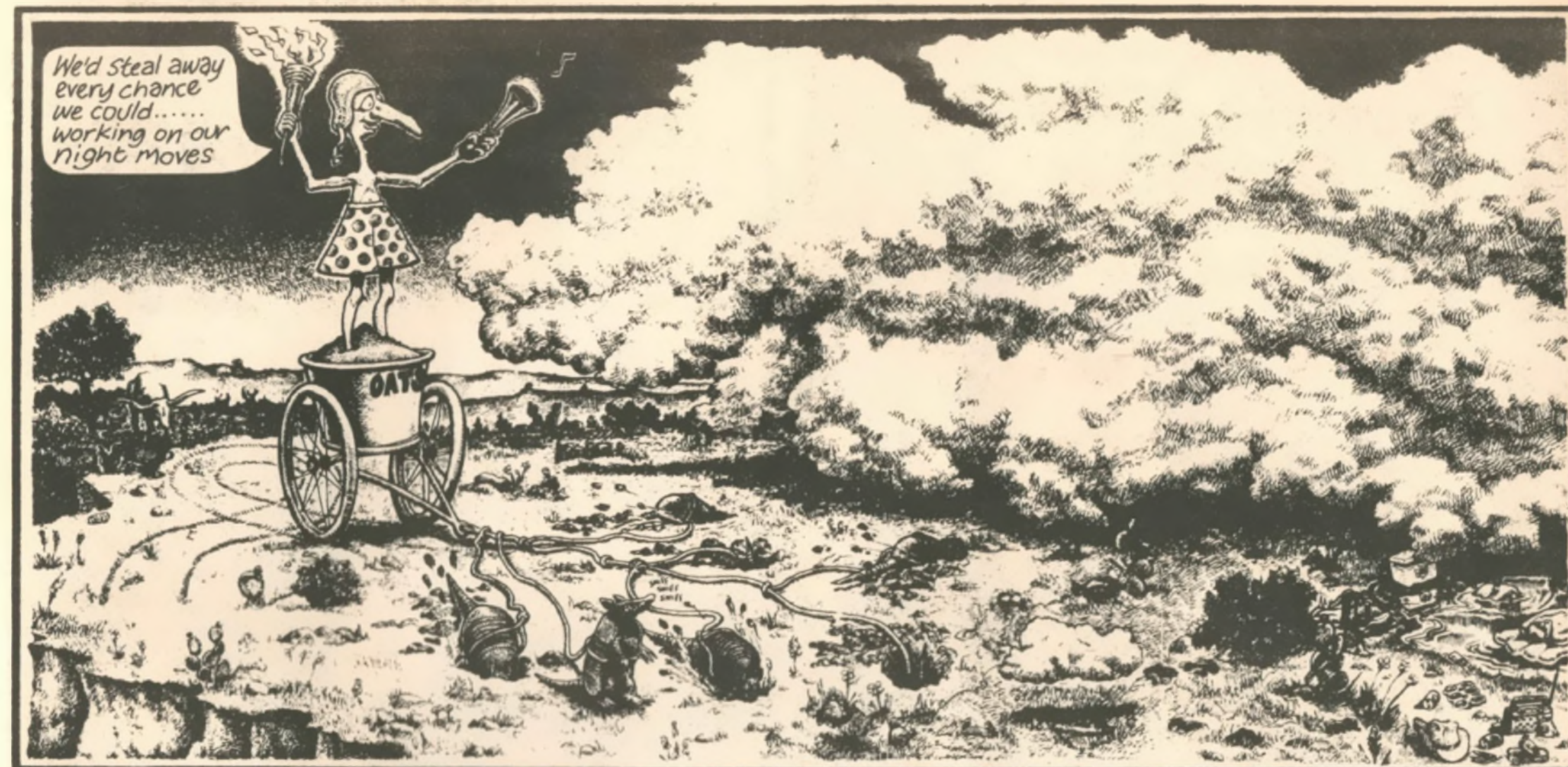
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## R · E · V · I · E · W · S

'Low'  
DAVID BOWIE  
RCA RS 1108

Well, this is probably the strangest thing Bowie has ever recorded. First listen was a real shock... and I've come to expect surprises from this bloke.

I think the album's previous title 'New Music - Day and Night' is more apt. This is certainly new music, and sides one and two are as different from each other as day and night.

Perhaps I'd better do a little explaining. Side one consists of seven songs - short, strange and obscure. But it's side two where the real weirdness lies. It's almost totally electronic. There's no words, just deep, eerie chants of overdubbed Bowie voices. The whole effect is as chilling as deep space.

Bowie has gone right out on a limb with this album. He'll probably lose a bunch of fans, but I admire him for having the courage to put it out. He could have cruised on churning out Ziggy Stardust Part 22 forever, instead, he battles on, donning new styles and guises, widening his scope and improving all the time. And that's part of the reason he's so exciting... you never know what he'll get up to next but can rest assured he won't stay trapped in the same bag, regardless of how successful it may be.

Since 1972, we've had the futuristic rock fantasy of Ziggy Stardust and Aladdin Sane, the horrific 1984 crumbling visions of 'Diamond Dogs', a 60s tribute in 'Pin-ups', the plastic disco of 'Young Americans', and lastly the futuristic funk and melodramatic love songs of 'Station To Station'.

'Low' is different again, but I'm already beginning to believe it's one of his greatest achievements.

Playing with Bowie is the rhythm section he used on his tour last year: Carlos Alomar (rhythm guitar), Dennis Davis (drums), George Murray (bass). There's also ex-Beggar's Opera guitarist Ricky Gardener and veteran British rocker Roy Young on piano. Oh yes, nearly forgot Eno. Yes, that Eno. He's obviously had a lot of influence on the impressionable Bowie, who is now firmly into electronic music and synthesizers; a craze fired by the fact that Bowie has been living in Berlin for some time and inevitably taking in a lot of Krautrock. I must point out I normally wouldn't touch a Tangerine Dream record with a pogo-stick, finding them ponderous, pompous and boring. Bowie seems to have gone more for the mechanoid rhythms and electronic quirk-

ness of Can... on side one anyway. But there's a lot of Eno in there too.

A word about these synthesizers, a real active stranger to Zigzag's pages. Normally I hate the things, find them unnecessary and annoying, especially when used by people like Yes to create 20 minute whining noises which pass as solos. But I don't mind when they're used effectively... like on this album.

The electronics suit Bowie's cold, mechanical aura which he's had ever since the days of Ziggy. This is his chilliest yet.

Side one starts and finishes with instrumentals - 'Speed Of Life', a simple, bold theme over headcrunching mid-tempo beat; and 'A New Career In A New Town', which after a short pastoral intro roars into a dense wall of sound dominated by Bowie's harmonica playing. These both sound like movie music, which brings me to this theory I've got about much of 'Low'. These two tracks and most of side two would have been ideal for Bowie's weird film of last year 'The Man Who Fell To Earth'.

The whole of side two is other-worldly and disturbing - just like the film. Maybe it's part of the missing soundtrack Bowie was supposed to have written and recorded, but which never made the film. After all, it would be a waste if that never saw the light of day. (The sleeve depicts a scene from 'TMWFE' too.)

Some of the tracks on side one sound like ideas laid down on impulse. Take 'Breaking Glass', for example. Co-composers Murray and Davis lay down a leaden, reggae-ish heartbeat before Bowie weighs in with a deep, croaky vocal which is partially buried in the backing (as it is on a lot of the tracks). In less than two minutes it's over.

There's a touch of Syd Barrett in the verses of 'What In The World', but it harks back to 'Young Americans' in the chorus. All the same, it has a bubbly, lunatic feeling, helped along by Eno's chattering synthesiser.

RCA are going to be pushed for a single off 'Low', but the bouncy, futuristic disco beat of 'Sound and Vision' will probably make it the most likely candidate. There's a long instrumental section before Bowie enters, harmonising cleverly with himself.

I've got to mention the drum sound. It's one of the best I've heard. Dennis Davis sticks to a compulsive, thrashing beat which is to the fore in every track.

'Always Crashing In The Same Car' is the nearest the album gets to a slowie. It's a bit Ziggy-ish with loony, stretched

guitar and the straightest Bowie vocal on the LP.

Lyrics are kept pared down and simple. I get the impression Bowie was so pre-occupied with discovering new noises that he scribbled out the words at the last minute in the studio. Take the chorus of 'Be My Wife':

"Please be mine/Share my life  
Stay with me/Be my wife".

Side two is a completely different kettle of Bowie. I could attempt to describe these four tracks - 'Warszawa', 'Art Decade', 'Weeping Wall' and 'Subterraneans', but wouldn't do them justice. They're eerie, spacey, shifting, pulsing and weird in a disturbing sense.

I've got to emphasise that this isn't some bloke tinkering indulgently with a bunch of electronic toys. These tracks have definite rhythms and melody, I just haven't heard anything much like them, 'specially 'Subterraneans', which is a creeping monster. Can't see the disco people who grooved to 'Young Americans' going much on this, though.

There's no words, just deep, eerie chants like a bunch of monks serenading the monster from 5000 feet beneath the earth in a tube station. Really it's overdubbed Bowie. The effect can freeze your intestines.

Now I'm surprised that I dig side two of 'Low' almost as much as I am by the music. Put it down to Bowie's genius, magic touch or whatever. I just like listening to it.

Anyway, it's good to see Bowie aimed at the future and not recycling past glories. 'Low' is a gamble which succeeds. Dunno what his fans will think but, whatever, Bowie has once again shaken up the scene in his own inimitable way - and more power to him.

At least give 'Low' a chance.

STOP PRESS!! Since writing the above, I've seen the pretty mixed reception given to 'Low' by the rock press. It appears to be the most controversial Bowie album yet, even beating 'Young Americans', and most of the critics seem to dislike it. Well, I listened again a load of times, bearing in mind points made by these slagger (like it's the sound of nothing, etc.), and still reckon it's one of Bowie's best - original, weird, heavy and truly creative. I just like the way it sounds, so there!

N.B. Ian McDonald's epic review in NME revealed circumstances behind the recording: contrary to my theory, only one track - 'Weeping Wall' - is from Bowie's 'Man Who Fell To Earth' soundtrack.

Kris Needs



**'Moving Targets'**  
**FLO & EDDIE**  
CBS 81509

Flo and Eddie are one of my favourite groups. Saw them last year and they put on one of the best shows ever. And funniest too. Their albums can't capture anything like their brilliance and their scope, and it must be pretty frustrating for them to have to come up with the sort of "commercial" album that CBS no doubt require. Their last, which wasn't released in the UK I understand, was a mixture - some studio stuff (the best of which was 'Rebecca'), plus some live humorous stuff from their act, which didn't come across as well on wax.

This new one has no jokes, just songs. First track is called 'Mama Open Up', which is a dynamite song about the anguish of the pop game, and, of course, they know all about that.

As the Turtles, one of the five greatest American sixties groups, Flo (Mark Volman) and Eddie (Howard Kaylan), spent years chasing fame. Had hits and misses, good times and bad, got as far as playing for Tricia Nixon at the White House about the same time as they were up to their butts in an eight million dollar lawsuit. You can see their story is Zigzag 25, and Hot Wacks 7 and 12 (the current one, where they discuss this record).

'I Am The Walrus' creeps in around the end of the song, and a lump of instrumental out of Mott's 'Half Moon Bay' suddenly cascades through the title track. Boz Scaggs imitations swoop in too. They've always been masters of parody, and they always keep abreast of everything that's happening in rock... they read the papers, hear all the new records. Their knowledge of rock history is more encyclopaedic than Tobler's. In their imitative skills and grasp of rock eras, they are without peers.

'Mama Open Up' is great - but the best song they ever did about life on the road was called 'Another Town'. I saw Mark sing that song three nights running down at the Roxy last summer: it was the only quiet spot of their act... just him and his Telecaster, all truth and sincerity. After the noise and bedlam of the rest of their show, he suddenly stood alone - and it was one of those magic timeless moments I'll never forget... cut right through to the hard chick's heart.

(They recorded that song on their second Reprise album, but it wasn't a patch on the live performance.)

The other two songs I like best here are 'Keep It Warm' and 'Eleanore'.

'Keep It Warm' is about the compromises of rock life, the degeneration of things that were once hallowed. Only five years after the decade burned out, "the sixties" has become as clearly a defined era as "the thirties" - and the song examines the transition from the sacred sixties to the sluggish, struggling seventies, when most people are selling themselves - some by choice, some of necessity.

'Eleanore' is faster than the masterful original they cut as the Turtles in 1968 (a top tenner and their penultimate smash) and it's rounder sounding and cleaner too, but much less urgent. One of the greatest barefaced rhymes in rock too: 'et cetera' and 'Better'.

The original sounds really crude and primitive in comparison - it's a great example of technical progress. A Joe Wissert production, it was very imaginative with that plunked piano, the theremin or whatever in the second verse, and that exuberance that the Turtles always blasted out. On the new one, every drum is miked up and mixed with precision. On the old one you can almost see where the microphone was plunked in front of the kit.

Great singers, those guys. Great singers. Are Slik as good as the Turtles were? Are the Rollers as good as the Critters? Are Guys and Dolls a patch on the Lovin' Spoonful? No, no and no again... but I think Smokie are kind of good, in a manufactured sort of way.

Don't think all that much of the sleeve - even though it displays great attention to detail. It's a rifle range stall at a funfair - where you fire guns at moving targets

(mostly ducks, for some blood-brained reason), which you have to knock down. This one has Popeyes, ducks, camels, dogs, swans, what are those?... chickens?, bullseyes, a boxing match, candles and their big faces. It's also got a moving neon rifleman, lifting his gun and firing at a target. Flo and Eddie is written in neon lettering. Unlit neon lettering. If they get a hit, it'll probably light up.

The production, by themselves, their manager (Skip Taylor) and the Who-weened engineer Ron Nevison, is classy. That is, it has brass on it. And it has parody on it... scattered about in unlikely ways and places. Mature, sophisticated and graceful - as opposed to their stage act, which is precise, but brash and coarse. Of course, it takes a discerning ear (like my own) to appreciate this stuff.

If Flo and Eddie ever get back on the road and get over there, you'd be a horse's ass to miss them. Mark's tambourine routine says more than a dozen Rod Stewart concerts.

(Hey Mark - I know you read Zigzag. Next time you're in Frisco, come see me. Ken Barnes has my number).

Sankey Phillips

**'Luxury Liner'**  
**EMMYLOU HARRIS**  
Warner Brothers K56334

A classically conceived album for one such as myself - two songs by Parsons, one by the Louvin Brothers, a Rodney Crowell, a Mrs. Guy Clark, a Townes Van Zandt (very much in the Guy Clark mould), and an Emmylou/Rodney collaboration (like 'Amarillo'). Then there's the Hot Band, as hot as ever, with Albert Lee proving that he's at least an adequate substitute for James Burton, if a rather faster picker, and on occasion a bit more upfront, plus a few great support musicians like ace harp player Mickey Raphael (the best thing about Willie Nelson's band, for my money), dobro dynamo Mike Auldridge from Washington heroes the Seldom Scene, fiddler Ricky Skaggs, and Herb Pedersen and Dolly Parton on backing and sometimes sharing lead vocals.

The anticipation produced by the above is generally equalled by what's in the grooves, and sometimes far exceeded, as on the opening title track, where a very authentic Sun-style backing is spearheaded by Albert Lee taking a couple of solos much a la his classic 'Country Boy'. Then 'Poncho and Lefty' is an excellent gunfighter ballad type song, taken from an album with the exaggerated title 'The Late Great Townes Van Zandt', which interestingly also contains a Guy Clark song 'Don't Let The Sunshine Fool Ya'. 'Making Believe' has Herb P. playing Gram Parsons' role on a dyed-in-the-wool country duet, while Auldridge and Skaggs play the beautifully obvious before the appropriate cliché heralds the return of the vocal.

'You're Supposed To Be Feeling Good' is Rodney's song, playing heavy on the phaser to produce a spacey backing track under Emmy's pure vocal. It's not quite as instant as the brilliant 'Gain Control', but it'll grow on me, I'm sure. On the other hand, Susannah Clark's 'I'll Be Your San Antone Rose' is totally contagious immediately, and will destroy me when I see it live. The best side I've heard this year, and likely to stay in the top three.

Side two starts with the only jarring feature, this album's 'Jambalaya'. Like that old chestnut, I've heard 'You Never Can Tell' at least twice as many times as I'd like to. Doubtless it's selection has something to do with different conceptions of corniness here and in America... After that, it's straight back on top with a duet by Emmy and Dolly on 'When I Stop Dreaming', a Louvin Bros. song. When will we be able to buy Louvin Brothers records? Mickey Raphael blows a blue storm here too, before moving to bass harmonica for the call and response 'Hello Stranger', which is highly ethnic as befits a Carter Family original, and goes out like a barn dance. 'She' comes next, the latest instalment in the continuing tradition of bringing GP to the audience he deserved, and which Emmy lou inherited. Sign off is 'Tulsa Queen', which as Allan Jones (who

is a great friend of mine, by the way) (I've got better things to do than listen to your problems, Johnny boy - Ed.) noted, shows off the Hot Band's ability to perfectly mesh the melody instruments in a continuing and fluctuating pattern.

This, boys!n!girls, is a record you should have, and soon, because it is just fabulous, and will readily slide into the category labelled 'classic'. An aural delight such as few are capable of providing.

John Tobler

Please do not edit without asking me, you butchers. (Ed.: A butcher's job is to take a large, unwieldy body, cut off the worthless bits and remove the offal, and cut or rearrange what's left so it's fit for public consumption... an' dat's all we're doin', baby.)

**'Dirt Silver & Gold'**  
**THE NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND**  
United Artists UAT 9802

The September 13th 1975 edition of Billboard Magazine, the American music industry's Bible, carried an interesting and revealing supplement on Colorado - "a growing music environment" - which contained, amidst a spread of photographs of that most picturesque state, a good deal of fascinating information on the Aspen Recording Society, and more especially The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. The Dirt Band's manager William McEuen explains that "the Aspen Recording Society, founded in 1972, is a National and International Music Production Group concerned not only with achieving the highest standards of recording and presentation of our artists, but also with the human dimensions of contemporary music and film production". Admirable intentions without a doubt, but I can't help wondering if there are that many people among today's record buyers who really appreciate a policy of such care and quality, and who are willing to invest in a superbly packaged and very expensive triple album such as this one. I would very much like to think that there are.

The Aspen Recording Society have yet to release anything that, aesthetically, is less than totally satisfying, and because the attainment of such quality is expensive and time-consuming, their output has been somewhat less than prolific. For example, the Billboard supplement contains a list of "Aspen Recording Society albums available for distribution" and includes a live double album from John Hartford, solo albums from each of the Dirt Band members (Jim Ibbotson - 'The Road Can Rule You'; John McEuen - 'The Mountain Whipporwill'; Jimmie Fadden - 'Sleeping On The Beach'; Jeff Hanna - 'Bayou Jubilee'), and no less than three triple albums from the Dirt Band as a collective unit, counting this one. (The others are 'Will The Circle Be Unbroken Vol. 2' and 'Jambalaya Vol. 1') How long it will be before those records finally see the light of day can only be a matter of the remotest conjecture, but what we can be reasonably sure of is that they will maintain the very high standard, both musically and in presentation, that the Aspen Recording Society has set itself over recent years.

The NGDB's previous album to this one, 'Dream', received a surprising amount of harsh criticism from people who should have known better. Admittedly it was an ambitious and highly eclectic undertaking for what many people still foolishly regard as a 'country music band', but for me it worked beautifully. In terms of their own image it presaged a subtle but very definite move (coupled with the shortening of their name to simply The Dirt Band) away from straight or traditional country music (an association almost irrevocably forged with the classic 'Will The Circle Be Unbroken') towards a more contemporary, 'commercial', but no less enjoyable standpoint. Their next album of newly recorded material promises to provide much needed authenticity to the somewhat strained and very vague category of 'country rock', but meanwhile for those of you whose Dirt Band collection is incomplete



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and who aren't millionaires and can't fill all the gaps, this three album resume of their recorded career would seem to represent a thoroughly sound investment. Even those of you who possess their last five albums (all on UA) will want/need it for the selection of material from the pre-'Uncle Charlie' albums, which are all now deleted, and the eleven new and/or previously unreleased tracks.

Throughout their career, the Dirt Band have never relied too heavily on their own excellent songwriting capabilities, and have made valuable and sympathetic contributions to many old country standards, as well as attempting (and unquestionably succeeding in) their own interpretation of some of their contemporaries' best known numbers. A summary of their recorded work would therefore be incomplete without the inclusion of 'Mr. Bojangles' (Jerry Jeff Walker), 'Some Of Shelly's Blues' (Michael Nesmith), 'House At Pooh Corner' (Kenny Loggins), 'Randy Lynn Rag' (Earl Scruggs), 'Livin' Without You' (Randy Newman), 'Cosmic Cowboy Part 1' (Michael Murphey), and 'Honky Tonkin' (Hank Williams) at least. The relative paucity of traditional material is due to the fact that only five tracks are culled from 'Will The Circle Be Unbroken', and only 3½ of them could really be counted as traditional.

As a quick guide to album's composition, side one is taken up with the now unobtainable material and includes such interesting artifacts as 'Buy For Me The Rain' (which was their first single and a hit, selling over a million copies), and a Jackson Browne song, 'Melissa'; side two is composed of the highest grade recordings taken entirely from the marvellous 'Uncle Charlie and His Dog Teddy'; side three is a mixture of stuff from 'All The Good Times' and 'Will The Circle...'; further examples of their musical prowess from 'Will The Circle...' and four tracks from 'Dream' make up sides four and six, plus the lone representative from 'Stars And Stripes Forever' (Cosmic Cowboy Part 1); and the new material constitutes side five and also overlaps into sides four and six.

Of the new or previously unreleased work, six tracks are purely instrumental, Earl Scruggs' 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown' and Doc Watson's 'Doc's Guitar' among them. The other five debut songs include a typically lush and melodic Eric Kaz offering 'Mother Earth (Provides For Me)', and a very fine number called 'Jamaican Lady' written by someone with the splendid name of David James Holster.

I suppose I could go on indefinitely trying to describe the contents of this album with more acres of convoluted prose without really getting very far, so I will call a halt and sum up.

The (Nitty Gritty) Dirt Band are one of my very favourite American music combos, and if you engage yourself sufficiently with this album, or any other of theirs for that matter, I see no reason why they shouldn't become one of yours. The superb quality of their music goes without saying, but the quality of their presentation and their merchandising methods is a lesson to the rest of the music industry. The album says all that, and more. If you happen to have a mere £8.25 to spend on records at this stage of the year I could recommend no better buy. (You even get a very tasty poster of the cover artwork - it's a picture of the safe door of the Ute City Banque, Aspen, Colorado - thrown in for good measure).

Andy Childs

'Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers' Shelter SRL 52006 (Import)

While Chalkie Davies and Tony Parsons, from NME, were staying at Yeoman Cottage during the Keith Richard trial, Parsons asked if he could hear the new Tom Petty album. None of us had even heard of it. We assumed the "underground buzz" which must surround it, hadn't radiated out to North Marston yet. (Parsons settled for 'Loaded' by the Velvet Underground).

Kendall brought back a copy next time he went to London.

Judging by the sleeve, Petty is the star

of the show, and he's a cross between Mick Ronson and James Dean. The Heartbreakers, four in all, would appear to comprise two musicians and two glamour pussies. On the face of it, one would not expect a great deal, in terms of talent, from a crew like this - but one can't judge a book by the cover, so let's slap it on the old Goldring, and see if they're any use. Volume crisp.

Some hours later: Interesting. Producer Denny Cordell's reputation may have slumped somewhat of late, but one should never discount the imaginative magic of his sixties smashes... and sure enough, a major plus here is the strength of the production and the Midas touch of the mix.

Unfortunately, I don't think Mr. Petty's songs are quite up to it. The potential is there, and the feel has been caught, but after several listenings, only one number, 'American Girl', really jumped out at me as having any lasting substance. There again, the fellow might not be seeking lasting substance.

My constant playing of 'American Girl' prompted Shannon to ask if "old McGuinn had managed to get up off his arse again", and that remark will give you a clue as to the style of these particular Heartbreakers.

They, and Mr. Petty especially, seem to share that longing for the good old days of the sixties, before popular music got lost in a web of complexity and erudition: they know the value of a fat chord, a 12-string, and a whoppy snare-drum. They also know about the Byrds and Buffalo Springfield, Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran. They're as raw as the Rockets, moving in the direction of the Raspberries and Space Opera, and the songs are all admirably short.

This is a good album, better than 90% of albums around, but it's not the one I've been waiting for. Petty and his bandoliers have undoubted promise, but for my money, if I want to hear music of this style (and I often do), I put on one of the incomparable Big Star albums, or maybe the under-rated Dwight Twilley Band - also on Shelter, released here last year.

Mac Garry

And now over to Kendall for a second opinion:

Thank you. I played this record almost incessantly for about three days before lending it to the Yeoman Cottage Mafia, and was completely knocked out by it. From start to finish it gave me that spine-tingling sensation that only the greatest bands/singers create when you first hear them... which puts Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers in the same category as The Beatles, Dylan, Steely Dan and only a very few others.

Obviously it's ludicrous to start making direct comparisons like that so early in their recording career, but the potential is very definitely there. For me, Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers have the almost indefinable magic that separates the greats from the merely very good.

I agree with Mac about the excellence of Denny Cordell's production, and naturally the group's strong affinities with the sixties is a clear plus for anyone who's fondest musical memories come from that same era. Well-produced plagiarism doesn't make for five star albums, however, and the group's forte lies in Tom Petty's songs and their arrangement/performance thereof.

The songs themselves, both lyrically and musically, follow a well-tested formula, and are basically pretty simple... but then aren't nearly all the best rock songs? They fall roughly into a 50/50 rockier/slower categorisation, and after repeated plays the moodier, more keyboard-based numbers like 'Luna' and 'Breakdown' seem to be the more lasting, although the tougher 'Stranger In The Night', with its remorseless rhythm section, stuttering backing vocals and shadowy murder story, is my current fave rave.

Many of the things that apply to the music of Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers also applied to Big Star, whose failure to get more than the most token recognition borders on the obscene. Hopefully this record will not take a similar short-cut to the great Bargain Bin In The Sky, because

it is superb! Forget the dinosaurs with their classical qualifications and sci-fi technology, and forget the safety-pin bandwagon... the future of rock'n'roll lies with people who can consummate a happy marriage between urgency and spontaneity of the sixties, and the increased musical standards and greater technical experience of the seventies. Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers do it in spades.

Paul Kendall

Excuse me... I think I'd better have a little lie down.

'Dancer With Bruised Knees' KATE & ANNA McGARRIGLE Warner Bros. K56356

The McGarrigles' first album was probably my favourite of all last year's bumper crop, so it's almost inevitable that its successor should have trouble living up to expectations.

Ostensibly there's no reason why it shouldn't be as excellent, allowing for the advantage of surprise that the first one had... Joe Boyd's production, as ever, is a model of clarity and restrained good taste; the McGarrigles run the gamut of their various influences with consummate ease and grace; and the various backing musicians perform the carefully wrought arrangements impeccably - particular instrumental honours go to Richard Davis' bowed string bass in 'Southern Boys', and the recorder duet between Anna and Chaim Tannenbaum which give the medley of traditional French songs at the end of side one a mediaeval gavotte flavour.

Also featured are several members of the band that Kate & Anna brought over last July, sister Janie on organ, and the unlikely person of John Cale, who adds some nice marimba touches to Anna's poppy 'Be My Baby'.

The album is well programmed to bring out the variety between the slower songs, like Kate's 'Southern Boys', and the sprightlier mood of something like 'The Biscuit Song' or Anna's 'Naufragee Du Tendre' (written with Philippe Tatarcheff, and the third song on the album in French). It also highlights the switches from the fuller, fairly straight arrangements of the title track and 'Naufragee', through the folkier, more ethnic French medley, to the simplicity of the slow songs - 'The Walking Song', 'Southern Boys', and 'Kitty Come Home' - which are based on stately piano chordings.

Which all adds up, more or less, to the same sort of contents as on the first album. Where 'Dancer With Bruised Knees' does fall slightly short of its predecessor is in its basic material.

Whereas 'Mendocino', 'Heart Like A Wheel' and a couple of other songs from the first album leapt off the vinyl and went straight to the heart of the listener, nothing on 'Dancer' is anything like so emotionally involving. A mother's love for her child, the delights of a walk with a close friend, redneck wooing techniques and domestic bliss after a long, hard day are all very well as topics, but they don't really compel a personal response - at least, in this context they don't.

The sisters' songs are still very specific, and no doubt very personal, but while most of the first album was also universally affecting, listening to 'Dancer' makes you feel more like a Peeping Tom than a confidant. Perhaps that's because the songs are about specific people or happenings, rather than feelings.

A carping criticism perhaps, and the album is undoubtedly a finely-crafted piece of work and extremely pleasant listening. But having seen the hallmark of genius - as born by the McGarrigles' first album - anything less is a disappointment.

Paul Kendall

Explanatory note: A last minute advertisement has caused the inevitable eleventh hour withdrawal of 'Over The Garden Wall' this month. Although we imagine that this substitution will have considerably less effect on you readers than the puffed-up author, we hope to reinstate this column next month.

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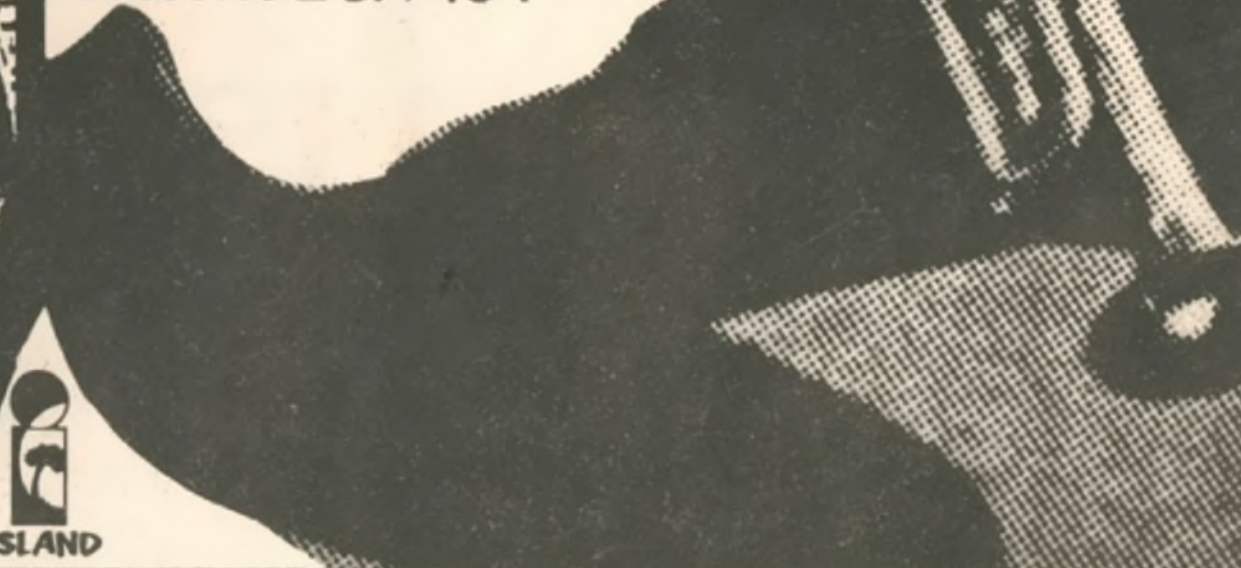
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8	1	Down To Zero	JOAN ARMATRADING	A&M AMLH 64588	3
2	2	The Fuse	JACKSON BROWNE	Asylum K53048	3
4	3	Special Love Song	DELBERT McCLINTON	ABC ABCD 959	4
1	4	Louisa On A Horse	JOHN OTWAY & W.W.B.	Track 2094 133*	3
12	5	Do Ya	THE MOVE	Harvest SHSP 4035	2
-	6	Night Moves	BOB SEGER	Capitol EA-ST 11557	1
14	7	Talk To Me Of Mendocino	KATE & ANNA McGARRIGLE	Warner Bros. K56218	2
11	8	Memory Motel	THE ROLLING STONES	Rolling Stones COC 59106	9
-	9	Pancho & Lefty	EMMYLOU HARRIS	Warner Bros. K56334	1
7	10	Return Of The Grievous Angel	GRAM PARSONS	Reprise K54018	33
18	11	Mama Open Up	FLO & EDDIE	CBS 81509	2
5	12	Rosarita	TOM JANS	Columbia PC 34292	3
20	13	Topanga	JOHN PHILLIPS	Dunhill DS 50077	81
-	14	American Girl	TOM PETTY/HEARTBREAKERS	Shelter SRL 52006	1
24	15	Henrietta	DOUG SAHM	Texas Re-cord 108*	2
-	16	Cypress Avenue	VAN MORRISON	Warner Bros. K46024	93
29	17	Only Sixteen	DR. HOOK	Capitol E-ST 11397	14
-	18	I'm Losing You	DWIGHT TWILLEY BAND	Shelter ISA 5102	5
-	19	Born To Be With You	DION	Phil Spector 2307 002	1
9	20	Spoon River	STEVE GOODMAN	Asylum K53025	3
-	21	Heart Of Stone	THE ROLLING STONES	Decca SKL 4733	1
6	22	You Never Wanted Me Babe	FAIRPORT CONVENTION	Nondescript	4
-	23	Lord If You're A Woman	DARLENE LOVE	Phil Spector 2010 019	1
13	24	Tangled Up In Blue	BOB DYLAN	CBS 69097	20
-	25	Cry Like A Baby	THE BOX TOPS	Bell 6025	2
10	26	Desperados Under The Eaves	WARREN ZEVON	Asylum K53039	8
-	27	Holy River	SPACE OPERA	Epic KE 32117	22
3	28	Little Does She Know	THE KURSAAL FLYERS	CBS 81622	4
-	29	Hiroshima	UTOPIA	Bearsville K55514	1
21	30	Rebecca	FLO & EDDIE	Columbia PC 33554	14

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Parisian Cafe Blue  
Radio Romance  
It's All Too Much  
Some Of Shelly's Blues  
They Shoot Horses Don't They

GENE VINCENT  
THE TROGGS  
SCROUNGER  
KURSAAL FLYERS  
STEVE HILLAGE  
NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND  
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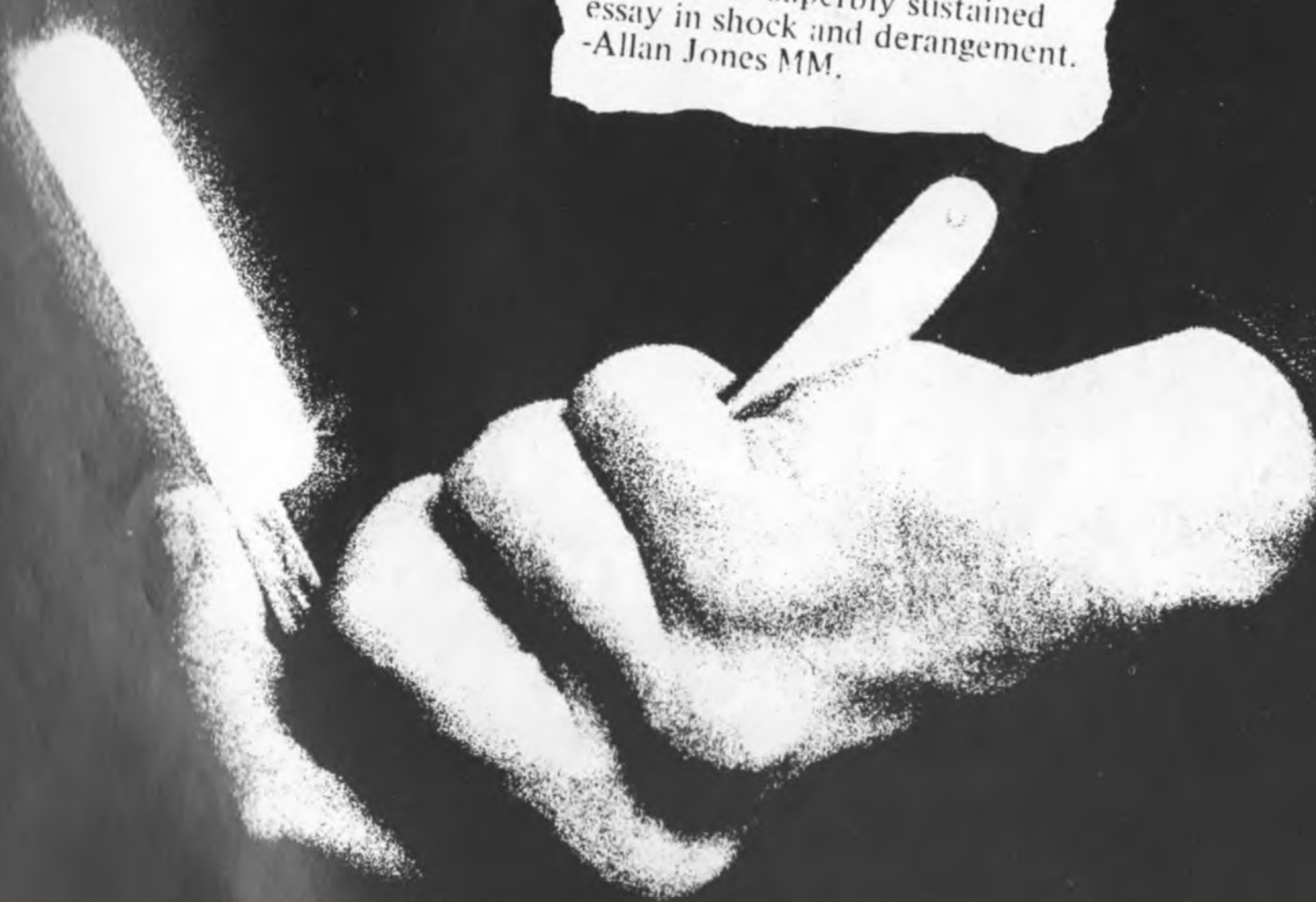
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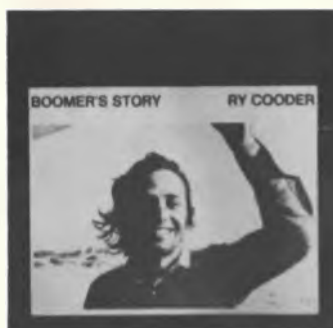
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