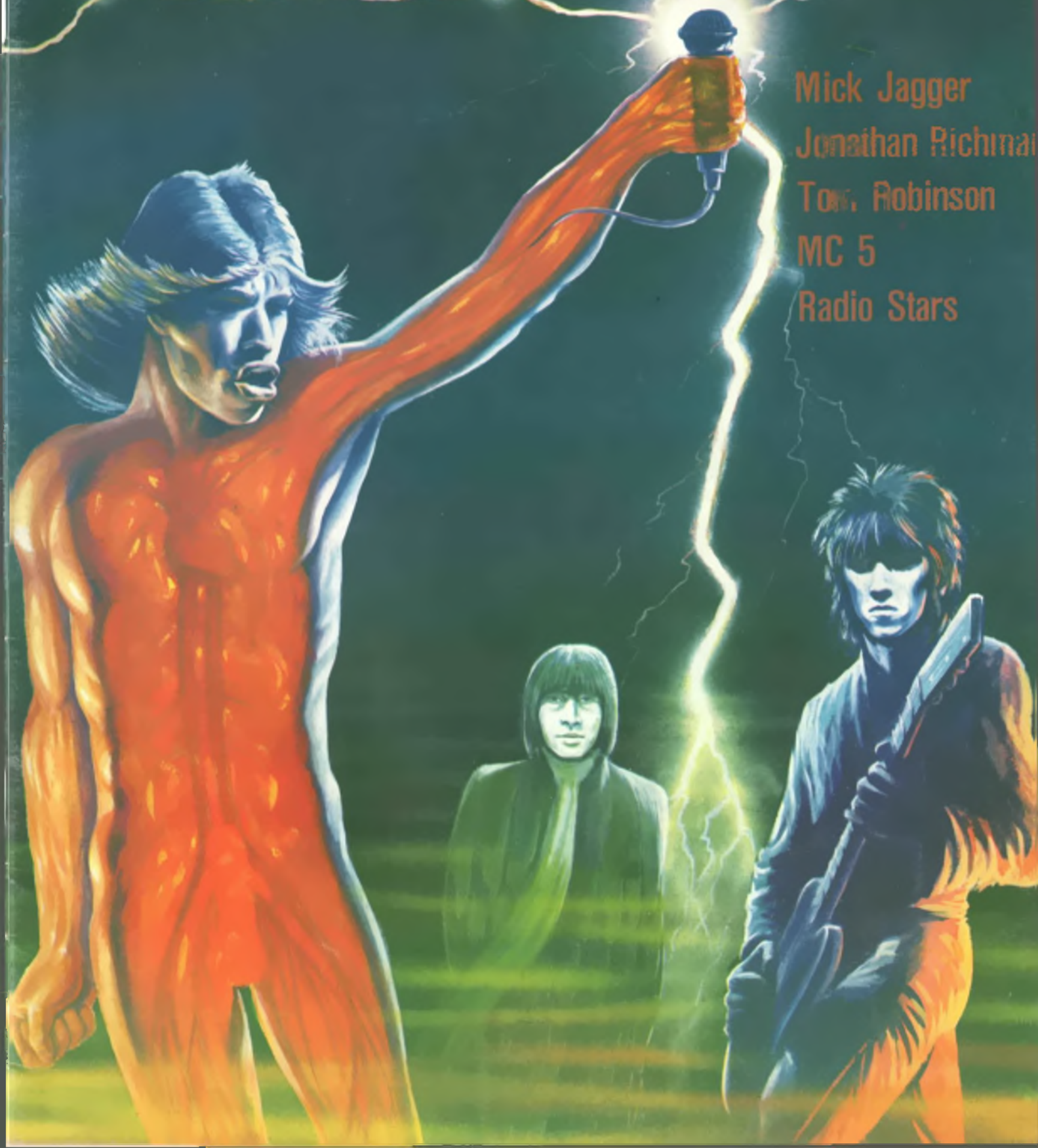


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No 78 NOVEMBER 1977

ZIGZAG

Mick Jagger
Jonathan Richman
Tom Robinson
MC 5
Radio Stars



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'STUFF YOUR CHEAP COMMENTS 'COS WE KNOW WHAT WE FEEL!'

HI ZIGZAGGERS!

This last month has been one huge
CRACK, with some great gigs (notably the incredible BURNING
SPEAR and three-in-one-night from the incomparable SHAM 69!)
And there's even more to come! (Oh and didja hear The Sits on Jukebox?)

This month we've tried to be a bit different. Not a
safety pin in sight. As I said last month we really want
to get the best of all kinds of music in here and it
seems we're more or less exhausted the good "Punk Rock"
bands, after our initial three issue binge! Yeah, we've
gone over the top the other way but so what, as long as
it's good. (Watch out for next month's issue - for all the
way!) Right, as the cover is a bit bare of names, top these:

MICK JAGGER

Well, we still gotta survive, what?
Initially, I thought Robin Pike's
interviews got closer to the Real
Mick than most of the weeklies. Took Robin who's a teacher three
years exhaustive labour to get it... see the fruits of this on p. 6.

JONATHAN RICHMAN

One of the most individual
and funniest, geezers in
rock, Jonathan consented to be interviewed after years of silence...

TOM ROBINSON

Currently soaring up the charts
with "2-4-6-8 Motorway" is Tom
and his band. We present two views of the TRB, including
that of our very own John Walters.

MC5

Rob Tynor, singer with the Detroit trail-blazers,
found time to talk to us during his recent visit.

RADIO STARS

John Tobler delves into the complex
past of Martin Gordon and Andy
Ellison to unearth the story of
this hot new group. Everyone
from Sparks to John's childhood appear
Ex-Winkie Phil is back, playing with
Mick Ronson. Robin Banks reports...

PHIL RAMBOW

ALTERNATIVE T.V.

are the group formed by Mark Perry.
They are ver-r-ry interesting, and Danny
Baker knows. (PS. But we lose his thing ->
I ain't got enough room to put
DWIGHT TWILEY in big letters, but he's
here. Have fun! KRIS xxx



THE FRONT BIT

Just a word in your collective ears about a scummy little venue name of the BELL in Pentonville R.O. near KINGS CROSS.

The BELL has just recently opened up it's doors to PUNK/NEW WAVE acts. I'm not sure it's such a good thing..

I went along there to see the SUBWAY SECT on Saturday 22nd October...this ain't a review of them...it's a complaint...about the behaviour of the bouncers. I was witness to a sickening display of several of these hired thugs beating shit out of ONE kid who was half the size of any of them.

The incident happened when someone let off a banger in the pub...some 'lady-friend' of the management merely pointed a finger at who she thought was responsible and three gorillas swooped...

Whether the boy in question actually was responsible is beside the point completely. NOTHING justifies the treatment that this kid received.

He was approached by one large gentleman in a brown shirt who after a brief exchange of words began to drag him away from the bar...the bouncer was joined by two or three of his confederates who began punching the victim...as I said, he wasn't exactly

a big guy and he was offering little if no resistance. On the way a large pane of glass in one of the doors got smashed...I didn't see what happened here, but I was later told that the kid's head had been pushed through it. Since he was unconscious for three-quarters of an hour and had to be taken to hospital for treatment of cuts...(I don't know how bad)...I'll let you draw your own conclusions...

There was a lot of noise outside and 3 or 4 bouncers returned with blood on their shirts grinning and patting each other on the back. They left the kid lying outside on the pavement.

People who tried to go out to him were not allowed back in and when I tried to look out through the door I was hastily ushered away.

Sometime later an ambulance arrived and the kid was taken to hospital. Needless to say the arrival of the ambulance was followed by a swarm of cop cars.

They were still waiting outside when the place closed.

Now I'm calling for a complete boycott on this place and any others like it. Any place where a bunch of gangsters thing they can make a quick profit out of booking 'PUNK' bands because it happens to be the latest

money-making proposition.

Venues that a year, even six months ago, would not touch 'PUNK' acts are now opening their doors to them. These kind of venues are run and staffed by people who are totally unsympathetic to 'PUNK' in general but are nevertheless willing to forego their prejudices when there's money to be made. So if places like this continue to operate with such a total lack of consideration for audiences, then it's just another nail in the 'PUNK' coffin and more of our money going into some business man's pocket. Now if those business men can provide a decent service for the money we give them then that's O.K. but if being half-murdered by a bunch of heavies (or indeed having to watch it happen to someone else) comes as part of the evening's entertainment, then I'd sooner not bother. ...I shall certainly not bother to go to the BELL again, I don't care who plays there and neither should you, even if your favourite band is on...cos' if the band you love book into a shithole like the 'BELL' then they don't deserve your support.

The 'BELL' has only been open for two weeks booking 'PUNK' acts every Saturday night. So far the only bands to have played there have been A.T.V.

and Subway Sect both great favourites of mine, and in all fairness, I think neither band knew what they were letting themselves, or their audiences, in for. My advice to the management of the 'BELL' is: either clean-up your policy with regard to 'PUNK' or don't bother...Just stick to the Pub Entertainer of the Year contest.

This one incident merely served to highlight the fact that we are ALL being exploited and manipulated by the capitalists of this world every time we attend a 'PUNK' concert. So remember next time you see a kid getting beaten-up by bouncers...you paid the management to get in and the management pays the bouncers.

Someone told me the kid's name was Henry and I'm writing this because when he needed it most NO-ONE (including me) lifted a finger to help him...so for all the good it'll do Henry this is for you...get well soon.

Steve Walsh
STOP PRESS: I heard the other day that Henry was STILL in hospital and his head injuries are so bad his life is in danger, at least his brain. Is this what it takes for someone to realise the seriousness of the bouncer situation. Every major London gig I've been to recently has been witness to disgusting display of Nazi-influenced audience control techniques. In other words the kids get beat on usually for just doing what they paid several quid to get in the hall and do - see the group and ENJOY 'em. Not have the pleasure of some gorilla using your head as a punchball. Who can do something? The halls, promoter. Us? Whatever happens is too late for Henry.

KN

Helen Cherry



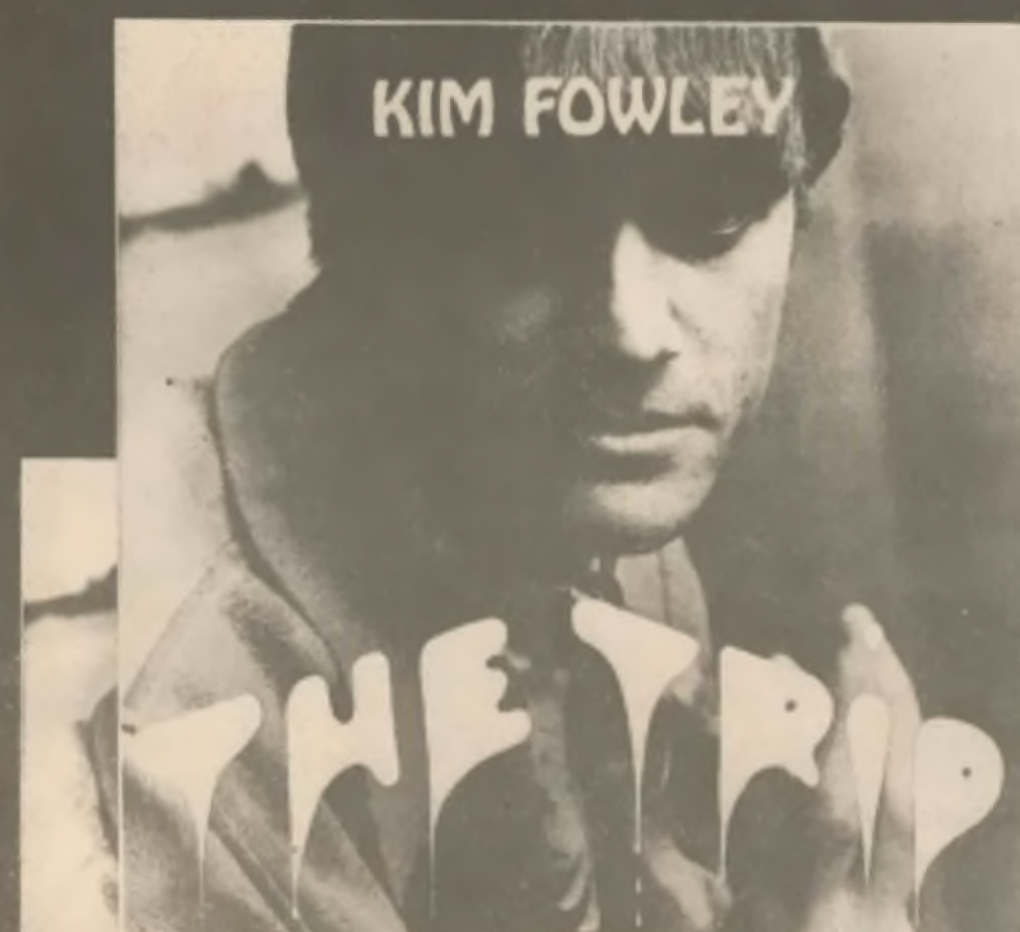
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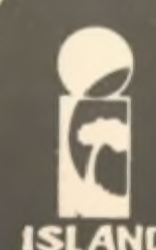
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JAGGER

The conversation took place in London during October, 1977. I am indebted to Leslie Perrin, his secretary Anthea and to Adrian Roach for their kindness and help.

ZZ: Could I ask you about your early life?

MJ: Yeah, but I've got great holes where the memory doesn't function. I can't remember very much.

ZZ: Do you have brothers and sisters?

MJ: Yeah, I've got one brother. He's still about. He's four years younger than me. I think he's acting in Scotland at some theatre, I dunno where.

ZZ: I believe you were born in Dartford. What sort of a place was that?

MJ: Where I was born? A very working class area. It's mostly middle class commuters and people who work in local factories. I was born at the working class end, and we lived there until I came to London.

ZZ: Your father has been a physical education instructor?

MJ: He's a teacher.

ZZ: Was he that when you lived in Dartford?

MJ: Yeah and then he became a lecturer and they live in Kent now. He's been a teacher all his life.

ZZ: Did your mother ever have any connection with theatre at all?

MJ: No. Her brothers were kind of mad. The previous generation, my parents' generation, had that kind of Victorian thing where everyone in the family played. Her brothers were

older than her. She played and sang a bit, you know, but they all played more than her. They were all older than her and the older part of the generation was all much more musical.

ZZ: You had lots of uncles I suppose who played things.

MJ: They played pianos and accordians and sang in churches and I had one who was a preacher. But I never saw much of him.

ZZ: You mean he was ordained?

MJ: No, a street-corner preacher on a soap box.

ZZ: 'The End is Nigh'.

MJ: Yeah, one of those.

At this point tea was served and a plate of biscuits produced.

MJ: Bring out the broken biscuits! Woody had this girlfriend. We said to her 'what do you do?' She said, 'I work in Woolworth's'.

That was interesting because I used to have a girlfriend who worked in Woolworth's. So I said 'what counter do you work on?' She said, 'Mick now with falsetto accent', 'broken biscuits'.

Great line. We found it wasn't true. She was a model. She was putting us on!

ZZ: I wondered if your parents were interested in theatre or music?

MJ: Not at all. Absolutely totally negative towards theatre. I never knew that they ever went to a play unless it was Oklahoma or something. And they never had a record player. They never used to listen to music on

the radio - but it didn't worry me a lot.

ZZ: Did you have piano lessons?

MJ: No. Nothing like that at all. I was totally discouraged. I was to 'study hard and be a good boy.'

ZZ: Was your old man strict?

MJ: Very strict. He was strict. He's not so strict now! He's not so strict with my daughter. I said to him; why aren't you stricter with her like you were to me. So he said, 'Oh well, I wasn't that strict with you'. I said, 'you bloody were!'

ZZ: I get a picture, then, of you living in Dartford in a pretty middle class or working-middle class family without any stimulation in musical terms or anything.

MJ: How did he do it? Picked it up later. Not at school either. There was no theatre there or music really - only the choir.

ZZ: Were you in the choir? Were you in operas and stuff?

MJ: No just religious music really and Madrigals. We used to do Madrigals.

ZZ: So in a sense you had a slight classical training in music.

MJ: I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't say I had any training really. I never could sing harmony and I still can't.

ZZ: Looking back on it, would you say that you had a happy childhood. Was that a happy time?

MJ: No. Not really. It was very frustrating. Of course, there were some nice moments in it but it was very restricted and frustrating especially around that area. It was really awful. You just made the best of it.

ZZ: The family had parts which were good?

MJ: Yeah. At best they were vaguely together. The family were pretty close which gives you a feeling of security.

ZZ: Did you rebel at school?

MJ: Yeah. A fair amount. I also worked very hard. I didn't like the whole system of school and the way it was run. That was before anyone had thought about putting into words any kind of interest that the kids would have in what they were learning. What they wanted to learn. Everything was superimposed upon them.

ZZ: There was no creativity?

MJ: Very little until we got to sixteen or seventeen, and then we were allowed a little more freedom.

ZZ: What did you study?

MJ: At school - History, English and French.

ZZ: English - was that especially of interest to you?



CHUCKIE DAVES

MJ: Yeah. I was always interested in that.

ZZ: You went to L.S.E. didn't you?

But your main interest was English?

MJ: And History, but I did Economic History at L.S.E., and all kinds of other things that I didn't like very much. I didn't like L.S.E. either

(laughs). It was really awful. It was in an odd period. It was a sort of period of fallowness. The political activity was very low.

The curriculum seemed very stultified. I just wasn't interested in the subjects very much. So I left.

ZZ: To me, the LSE has a reputation in the political studies and economics area which is second to none.

MJ: It is very good in a certain way. What I actually meant was that the politics of the College came alive again in 1965 and it was probably very interesting to go there then when they all got locked up for weeks.

But it wasn't like that at all before. It was really quite a boring time there. I enjoyed myself the first year and the second year I was just too interested in music. I wasn't

interested in studying any more; I was just too interested in music. I wasn't interested in studying any more; I just couldn't be bothered. I was just too interested in playing.

ZZ: When exactly did you first meet Brian?

MJ: In 1962. At Ealing. I was at the LSE.

ZZ: I must have known him about two years before that.

MJ: He was coming up to London about then wasn't he?

ZZ: That's right. He used to stay with Alexis Korner over the weekend and he used to play in a jazz band in Cheltenham.

ZZ: How would you describe him now looking back on him as a person? I always remember him as a very interesting person.

MJ: Brian used to be kind of strange, I guess. He was very sensitive, hyper-sensitive. And God knows what else. He wasn't very well balanced I don't

think. That's not any sort of criticism of him. In the beginning he was very enthusiastic. But he had a very funny side to him you know.

Obstinacy. A sort of Welsh obstinacy I would call it.

ZZ: I remember him as having very different moods. He could be very charming. In fact one time at Christmas - I always used to work on the Post Office at Christmas...

MJ: Me too.

ZZ: ...you had a bike and were given a round. Well I had half the round and Brian had the other half.

MJ: I used to do the parcels. It was too cold outside (laughing).

ZZ: We had this round and he used to live in the Matherley Road and we had the round that included Matherley Road, so he could do his half of it and then snake in home, spend a couple of hours at home and then go and sign off

so that he got a couple of hours overtime without doing anything for it.

I remember Christmas Day, because we used to deliver on Christmas Day, - he was really friendly, and happy.

And yet at other times he could be diabolical. We happened to do Chemistry in the same group at school.

He didn't like the teacher. Not at all.

MJ: He was very charming sometimes. He had a sort of penchant for making rules and policies with the band which we just didn't like at all. He wanted to do certain sorts of thing definitely and lay down certain rules and I'd

had enough of rules and I didn't want to hear rules in the band.

ZZ: So, from what you say, there was a bit of a clash of personality.

MJ: Yes, I think there was. It wasn't very obvious at the beginning. He was very shy. If you get the shy person



COURTESY OF MRS. PERRIN

then suddenly the shy person in a certain kind of mood becomes this other type of person who wants to make all the decisions that you don't want to know about. But he was quite a good hustler. He used to hustle around and wouldn't be put off, and he used to write letters couched in sixth form prose to jazz critics in the papers. I read some of them the other day. They're hilarious. It was funny because he played jazz and everyone else in the group didn't like jazz at all. We didn't even know how to play it let alone like it. He used to play these chord things on the guitar which we couldn't play and we used to laugh at him. It was quite difficult to do really.

ZZ: From what you say, you still think of him from time to time.
MJ: Yeah, I do. Especially when you hear an old track. He was a very distant sort of person towards the end of his life or even before it as far as I was concerned. Very distant from me. At the beginning we all lived together, but he grew very distant from me. He went through all these things that I just didn't understand but, which I understand more now. I was very naive. I didn't understand what he was doing. You know, dope and all that. I just didn't see it. I still think it's wrong. I do.

MJ: Do you really?
MJ: Yeah. For a person like that it's definitely wrong. For other people it's perfectly all right.

ZZ: How do you know which you are?
MJ: You can tell. You can just tell. Brian was obviously getting screwed up. He wasn't a stable person. Unstable people shouldn't take dope that gives them psychotic states. Like acid or cocaine or heroin. I don't know if he took heroin. You shouldn't take those. It obviously wasn't doing him any good. Some people can take those things. He also took everything to excess. His body wasn't that great either. It was out of condition. Obviously it was going to affect him. It affected his playing first and then mentally he went downhill.

ZZ: You say you weren't so aware of it at the time.
MJ: I wasn't taking LSD when he was or taking cocaine. I'd never tried them. I certainly never took them in the way he did. In the excessive way he used to take them. There was no point in it. It didn't get you anywhere.

ZZ: Why was he doing it do you think?
MJ: I dunno. Some people take things because their lives are so painful. But I don't really know if that was true in his case. Maybe it was. It's usually true. To cover pain.

ZZ: That's certainly one way of looking at it. I wondered if you felt any sense of responsibility because he did go so very far.

MJ: Yeah. Everyone did - in the band and outside it. But there's very little you can do for people it appears. I've just seen a lot of people go like that and you can worry and you can say to them and you can cajole them and you can hide dope and you can do everything but it doesn't make any difference. If the person wants to do it, they'll do it. Or they'll just stop it and start drinking.

ZZ: So when he died you didn't really feel a sense of blame yourself, which is quite common when people die whom you're close to.

MJ: Not blame. One wished one could

have done more I think. When people die one always regrets having arguments with them. But that's only natural. You think 'that terrible night when I was rude to him'. But so what, you're rude to everyone once in a while. I didn't feel guilty about it. I was a bit shocked because it was the first time anyone close to me had died I think. Since then so many people have died, that it's kind of got weird. When you're quite young and no-one around you has ever died - ever. Especially of your own generation. Maybe your great-grandmother. But if the first person of your own generation around you dies it kind of hits you rather hard. You think, "hmmmm, that's strange".

ZZ: Did he die or do you think he was murdered?

MJ: I can't really say. I've no idea. I've no access to any facts. There was no indication that he was murdered. I don't think - certainly as far as the police were concerned.

ZZ: Perhaps we could talk about your interests. It seems to me that as an artist you have a very much wider range of interests in what, for the want of a better word one might call 'The Arts'. You say how you were interested in English at school and I think that in the history of the Rolling Stones your own interest in theatre is quite clear. Are you really interested in acting?
MJ: Yeah. I'm interested in going to plays and acting and movies and shows. I don't go to an incredible amount of what we might call straight theatre. I go to some. I think I'm stuck with a strange form of entertainment - musical entertainment. Off-Broadway things with music that I like.

ZZ: Are you thinking of something like "Chorus Line"?

MJ: Yeah. I like things like that. I don't like regular musicals particularly. But I like dance a lot. I like ballet a lot.

ZZ: I like to talk about that. Have you had any classical training at all?

MJ: None at all. I can't dance a step. I can't dance a waltz - it's pathetic, I remember trying! (laughs)

ZZ: You've never been to class.
MJ: No. I never went to class. I'd love to have gone, but I would have had to start very early. It's pointless thinking about it when you're twenty years old - well it's not

pointless but you're not going to get anywhere. I just couldn't stretch.

ZZ: Are there any dance companies you especially like? The American Ballet Theatre?

MJ: Yeah, they're good. I got a feeling that some of the black companies aren't as good as they used to be. I'd rather watch Baryshnikov dance. I don't particularly like straight classical ballet. I love to get those dancers when they do modern things, which they don't do very often. They're very stick in the mud about the pieces they do.

ZZ: I would have thought Baryshnikov was an exception in that respect.

MJ: He is a bit of an exception. I've been watching him quite a lot lately. I saw him in Toronto. I got to know him quite well. He's very sweet, good fun. Baryshnikov I've known for a long while - since the early sixties. So I got interested in ballet through him.

ZZ: What sort of stuff do you read?

MJ: Everything. I read all kinds of books. I read a lot of popular novels.

I never used to read like that. I read popular novels in one night, really quick. The other night I read this thing called, 'Interview with the Vampire', by this lady. It's really good. Quite strange - very strange. Then when I finished that, the same night I read whatever it's called by Len Deighton about the Battle of Britain. Then there's this strange tale by this woman of thirteenth century Japan called Geriji. It's the first woman's novel. It's a very strange story about this man who's the Emperor's son and all these love affairs. It's a very interesting and strange book. I used to read only non-fiction and I've just got into this thing of reading fiction lately. Anything a bit trashy. Not that those books are really trashy. They're not as bad as whodunnits.

ZZ: Do you have a favourite novelist?
MJ: I don't really have one. I must think about it for a minute. I don't really have a favourite novelist. I don't think. I haven't really read enough novels. I've only just started reading novels.

ZZ: Could we talk about films? Performance is being shown in London again now all these years after it was made. Could you say anything about that film?

MJ: I never saw it actually. I only saw it in bits and pieces. I never saw it when it was finished, I dunno why. I just couldn't be bothered. After you've done it, you just don't want to know.

It was a very intense thing to make. It was very interesting and it was very intense and very personal. It was very much a group effort, the dialogue - one was given a lot of improvisation which was interesting because I'd never done anything before like that. It was great fun but it was very hard work.

ZZ: Did it leave its scars?

MJ: Ooh no.

ZZ: But, "very intense", I would have thought that sort of thing might have been a bit heavy.

MJ: Oh no. You get it out of you. It gets out of you. When the film is done it's just done and the scars are on someone else. On the public that watch it!

ZZ: And you worked with Luc Godard didn't you.

MJ: Yeah. But I didn't have a lot to say to him. He was a man of few words.

ZZ: I can imagine. He's a very left-wing man.

MJ: He's a very political person.

ZZ: Presumably he came to you did he?

MJ: Yeah.
ZZ: He could see in some way the Rolling Stones as a portrayal of anarchy?

MJ: I dunno what he saw, I dunno what he was up to really. I don't think he knew what he was up to himself half the time. He was just going to do a scene in the studio and just cut it, along with whatever he'd want. ZZ: There was a hassle wasn't there over the editing?

MJ: It was nothing to do with me it was all to do with the producer. Whoever he was. Cowdrey's son, Michael Pearson.

ZZ: Could I ask you about the Rock and Roll Circus, because I went to some of that and I should think there's some very interesting footage



somewhere, tucked away.
MJ: Yeah. Pete Townsend phoned me up and wanted to use some of it being that he's making this movie of all the Who's old stuff. He wants to have a look at it and I'm going to have a look at it with him. I haven't seen it for years. It was interesting but it never really fell together so in the end I knocked it on the head.
ZZ: You didn't like it?
MJ: Something about it wasn't right. We tried to do it too quickly and with not quite enough money. It was a bit ahead of its time - about six months or so.
ZZ: The new record I like very much. Particularly the El Mocambo side, 'Crackin' Up' especially. This is a track that's not been recorded before, how did you come to happen on that?

MJ: John Lennon suggested it to me! (laughs)
ZZ: Perhaps he's cracked!
MJ: No he did. I said "maybe I'll do it", and we just played it like that when we were messing around in rehearsals. That was about a year later. We did a lot of songs that night. Those four particularly come out better than some of the other unrecorded ones. We did a whole mish-mash, and we recorded new songs that I wrote that didn't come out so well because we didn't have long enough rehearsal. So we just picked those four.
ZZ: You have occasionally done almost impromptu numbers on stage. I saw you in Leicester. The second night in Leicester in '76, when you played with Eric Clapton. He came on at the end.

He was reluctant to play as far as I could gather.

MJ: Yeah. Sometimes he is, sometimes he isn't.

ZZ: But you do occasionally just pick up things on the spur of the moment.
MJ: Yeah. It's better in a small place. That's quite a small place (Leicester Granby Hall) in a way, so it's much easier to do in that kind of place. Throw in things.

ZZ: You find it good doing small places? That place in Leicester didn't have any security or anything like that and it was a bit echoey.

MJ: Ramshackle. An English barn. There was still quite a good atmosphere I thought though.

ZZ: It was lovely. I was down the front and there was no security and we had a really good time. The contrast with Earls Court was enormous. Could we expect that you might do some more small halls?

MJ: If we do out-of-London dates that's the sort of places that everyone plays in. There's nowhere else. I don't think you can play a three-hundred seater Club only because there's probably a few thousand people who're going to come, so those people are going to be pretty pissed off when they don't get in. You could play the Club as well if you felt like working hard.

ZZ: Could you play a 1,250 'stander' Club in Aylesbury?

MJ: Yeah. Oh yeah. Is that your club?

ZZ: That's right.
MJ: I suppose we could. There's nothing to stop us.

ZZ: Looking forward to the band going on the road again. Because the buzz of a smaller venue is so good is it possible that you might be able to come down from the 20,000 seaters to that sort of level?

MJ: Yeah. I think there's nothing wrong with that. It's a good idea.

Robin Pike



THE STONES, AYLESBURY, 1964.

THE SECRET LIFE OF THE MCS

AND THE RESURRECTION OF ROB TYNER



Rob Tyner, now fronting a new MCS after about four years away from the stage, was recently in this country to check out what's going on here - and he was very impressed.

Because he was partly here to write a piece for NME Rob couldn't talk to the other music weeklies. But he found time (about an hour) to talk to Zigzag, not least because he wanted to answer back the prison letters from former MCS mentor John Sinclair, which appeared in Zigzags 75 and 76.

For me it was great to meet the geezer who'd taken part in two of me favourite ever albums, "Kick Out the Jams" and "Back in the USA". It was a bonus he turned out to be a sharp articulate bloke, bubbling with rock'n'roll energy and enthusiasm. He talked of the past, present and future, and was especially enthusiastic about London 1977.

(By the way this interview took place about an hour after Sham 69 had been forcibly stopped from playing on the roof of the Vortex cafe and Jimmy had been arrested for trying to give people a good time. With the brandy on hand for the nerves we kicked off on the subject of police interference...)

RT: ...the one difference I've noticed between American police and British police is the British police say 'please' before they kick you in the arse. The tactics are the same, just a little bit of difference in approach.

I've seen constantly things happening here that had their roots back in

the States a long time ago. Dig; We went through a pretty heavy political period in the late 60's - early 70's. I was right smack in the middle of it. ZZ: Did you get a lot of harassment then?

RT: Oh yeah, yeah, we were harassed a lot the time. They'd pull the plug, tell you you were too loud, try to stop you any way they can. It's kinda like...the idea of the new wave is to send up the establishment. Its motives are strangely familiar! We learn the hard way in the States that, man, you gotta be careful about this shit. It's kinda like, he who fights and runs away will survive to kick 'em in the arse tomorrow. But confrontation situations do not work with the authorities as you know. Confrontation is their job. That's why they are there and they will do it. They are fully equipped and fully prepared, fully trained to handle any and all crowd situations. Their obstruction is sanctioned by the government authority; your obstruction is illegal.

I remember when I was here last, nearly six years ago, it was real sleepy. The hottest thing around was Slade and the farthest-out thing you could do was stomp your feet to their music. There was nothing like we see here and at that time I was walking around with skinny leg pants and pointed shoes and I had my clothes held together with safety pins under my arms - they were all torn and falling apart because we didn't have any money. I was just walking around in the street and thinking, "how in the hell am I gonna reach this audience." We were just too hard. Now we would be looked on as middle-of-the-road but in those days we were the maniac fringe. We were faced with the situation where we were, stylistically speaking...I hate to say this it sounds so dumb...ahead of our time so to speak. We tried to change people's musical and social beliefs too quickly and too radically; then there's this vast social backlash that happens. The cops don't wanna know about it because they have to change their attitudes about everything. They like everything pretty much as they've got it, pretty much because they've got control over it, and the government don't want you to do it because it changes everything. You're talking about a new social order, and I know that new order sounds a little ominous. There's always been this resistance to change, especially when it comes to rock'n'roll for some reason.

ZZ: Why are you in this country? RT: First and foremost to do an article for NME. Also, it'll be published in CREEM back in Detroit. Plus I'm here to promote the re-release of the antique MCS albums. Those are part of my history. They asked me to come over and help promote that, which I feel is the right and proper thing for me to do. Plus, I'm here to check the scene out, and I tell you man, I read in a recent NME that the Scene is really a drag, really dead compared to last year, dead and decadent. I don't care what they say, I've gone round and seen this and the thing that's happening here, even if this is death and destruction, is better than most of the places I've been. It's way more exciting, everything's happening at such an exciting level.

ZZ: What sort of stuff do you play? RT: Yes, a really powerful band. It's called the MCS, not the new MCS, it's just the MCS. I have a band that is composed of Robert Gillespie on lead guitar, Bill Wimmell on lead guitar, Mike Marshall on bass and Ralph Serafino the bruiser on drums. They're all very young kids that I met in Detroit and I'm absolutely honoured to play with them.

I can't imagine being bored here. I used to be bored here an awful lot... I sort of dreaded coming back here to tell you the truth. Before I left the States I used to say, "Oh my God, back in the tubes and things...everybody so laid back." This was the stereotype I had. After being away for quite a long while I expected things to be basically the same.

I came back to probably...right now is the most exciting time I've ever had in any city that I've been to ever. The bands are really great, and the scene is really cooking. Even though you always want optimum and heavy value, but hey look, I don't think anybody should spend time putting this down. Just be out on the street and digging. That's exactly what I've been doing. I'm so excited and frenzied about this thing that I'm on the edge of a burn-out because of it. It is just so exotic to me and exciting that it's amazing.

I've seen really shitty bands too. I've made it a point to see really shitty ones so I wouldn't just breeze in and see the elite and write that up and go home with some inflated idea.

I like this scene because the bands have a real odd sense of humour. They don't take themselves seriously. In the American Press they're portrayed as dangerous lunatics. If say the Pistols went over there that's what they'd be up against at first, but, see, then you get down to the level of appeal and content. Seriously, as a person that's been in that situation, the politics...we (The MCS) came over here on a political vibe. That was part of the appeal in the antique days, a political thing.

American politics don't translate well but they translate better than British politics to the States. UK politics do not translate in any way in the American context because this is a constitutional monarchy; we are something else.

See, people's view of London in the States is tinged with the old romantic thing, so quaint and so cute. They can't imagine there's death and destruction and violence in the street. I think Detroit of today could take a whole lot of lessons from London at this point.

ZZ: Is there a scene going on in Detroit?

RT: Yes, but our bands, out of necessity, are much more professional units. They're not media constructs, or cults. They're hard-working groups who go around and punch their arses out in the bars, who fight for those gigs and make their bread. Everybody tries to be real sharp and real showy; that's exactly what happens throughout the mid-west. Historically speaking, people in the mid-west, which is a gigantic chunk of the market-place of the world, for rock'n'roll anyway, really dig shiny pants. American music is sort of the old style.

ZZ: You've got a new band, right?

RT: Yes, a really powerful band. It's called the MCS, not the new MCS, it's just the MCS. I have a band that is composed of Robert Gillespie on lead guitar, Bill Wimmell on lead guitar, Mike Marshall on bass and Ralph Serafino the bruiser on drums. They're all very young kids that I met in Detroit and I'm absolutely honoured to play with them.

ZZ: What sort of stuff do you play?

RT: It's exactly the same concept, exactly the same sort of power, but the content is a little bit different. OK, so the original MCS came out of America in the 60s and we mirrored that whole vibe. This new thing... out of necessity we must mirror what's going on around us. In order to do the Five correctly you must do that, mirror things. The content is a little more in the pocket, and a little more musical, a lot more musical than the antique MCS. The thing that's different about this is it's way more melodic. Not in a gentle sense. The melodies that we use are strong melodies, like in the old days there was a tendency to shy away from doing melody, it's too cissy or something - but not when you have strong melody. Over the years I've...I don't want to sound pompous or anything...I've been studying rock'n'roll for years, inside out, and I'm beginning to know what makes it happen; what sort of elements there have to be for there to be the rock and the roll. The concept of it, rock'n'roll, rock and roll, rock and rolling, feel the pulse behind it. I'm beginning to be able to formulate these things in my head. I finished a single last night with the Rods... ..here's the deal. I met the Rods at Chelmsford Festival, which was the most dismal place in the world to meet anybody. I met some real great people in a real bad context. I met the Rods - Chalkie Davies had offered my services the day before to introduce the band. They said "yeah!" so I went out and said "OK, you folks, ready to rock'n'roll? I give you the drag strip rumble of the Rods." They came out and pulled it off. To me as a...I mean, I'm a semi-punk daddy but I'm a rock'n'roller basically. I really get off on the Rods. I know it's not fashionable but I don't give a shit. They asked me to come out and sing "Back in the USA" with them, so, who am I to pass up going out onstage. So I did, and that was the most fun I've had so far. I've had a lot of fun in England on this trip. It's been a great education...but the high moment was going out with the Rods.

ZZ: Are you gonna come over here with your band? RT: Yes. The timetable looks like this. I go back and we do two gigs in Toronto. After that we're gonna come back and play all round Detroit for a couple of weeks, then we're gonna do part of the mid-west, then New York and LA.. Then we'll try and come back over here.

ZZ: Why did the original MCS split up? RT: Uh well, you know how everyone always says "Well, there were musical and personal differences?" I'm not copping out on that one. Personally to me it got to be a real damn drag and a bore, and as a matter of fact as soon as the chemical problems started happening...I mean, I was disgusted by it. Everybody dabbled in it except me because I'm not into hard drugs at all, because basically I'm pretty much for hearth and home myself. That's where I write my music and stories and stuff.. I have other things in my life that interest me but in some ways the rock'n'roll lifestyle is very unsatisfying emotionally. While your up on stage it's really great, it's really satisfying but it's

the filler bits that can be a drag. To my mind the old band's problems became insurmountable even to the music, and when they told me we were gonna come back over here I said "I'm not going onstage with the combination again".

ZZ: Was this round about "High Time"?

RT: No, this was after that, the thing dragged on for a long, long time. I stayed with it because I really believed in the idea, but the offstage problems became so bad it was becoming an onstage problem.

ZZ: Was it just drugs or...?

RT: Well yeah, but that precipitates a lot of problems. It intensifies it, to my mind, and I closed my mind to it for a long time. There came a point when I couldn't face anymore. I couldn't go out as who I am and sell what was purporting to be an all-powerful thing. Just out of respect for the audience I couldn't return here and lay that on them. I just decided to take time off the stage and get myself together.

ZZ: So what have you been doing since then?

RT: I've been a gentleman of leisure I haven't worked. What happened was I came back to the States with just a tiny amount of capital, and it happened I was being handled by an incredible lawyer, and he said "Give me your money" I said, "Look, this is the end of the line for me". He said, "It's not, don't worry". He made about three or four incredibly stupendous moves and put me in a position where I could get myself back together again. I took my time, stayed away from it for a while, and it was painful to stay away from it cos I don't dig being away from the stage, but I did it cos I knew I had to do it. I put together a band about a year and a half ago - just as an experiment to see if I could do it cos I always wondered about it all the time.

ZZ: So how did you change?

RT: I kinda got...I don't know if this is the right word...got resurrected. I was like almost a sinner, totally burnt out from...you know the stage act we do is not easy to do. It totally takes it out of you. I was like getting by on two or three cylinders by the time I got home. I just threw myself in the arms of my family and said "Help!" they just said "Go in the other room and write everything you want to." So I kinda got resurrected, you know, and see I started raising dogs and stuff.

One day I took my big white dog down the alley. It was early in the day, I was half asleep. I looked down the alley, this funky little alley behind my house, a real wreck. It was morning in the Spring, the sunshine had come, the whole alley was just bursting out in roses, and like all of a sudden I said: "Wow, dig this!" There's this incredible view. I thought, if that's possible it's cool for me too. So when I copped out, some-how or other the thing got resurrected, and musically speaking I'm really, really happy about it, the happiest I've ever been in my life. You don't know what I'm talking about because you haven't heard the tunes and stuff but I do get people bouncing off the walls. It's not like here though. People here jump up and down, people there headbang a lot. It's been a while since people in Detroit

have been headbanging, but they do for this band!

People come up to me and throw their arms round me and say "Thanks, man!" That's really cool - like I felt it was an idea whose time has come. See to me the MC5, it's like an idea. It's not individuals. I mean, I reserve the right to be there, ride the herd out, make sure it's cool. Other people in the old band tried to do it and they could not do it. There were a few gigs played by Fred, to try and capitalise on it, but they didn't have me to ride herd out and make sure it was right, cos like I feel very strongly about the MC5. I'm serious about this, in terms of its tradition and its legend. I would never ever try to harm that or try to water it down in any way, therefore I have chosen only the finest musicians that I've ever heard to be in this thing. And I pay 'em too much. I make 'em sure that every time they go out on stage they hold this thing as tight as possible, hold it up twice as high, because they have to, you know, because we fight the old band's image every day. We're two minutes late and people say, "Ah, junkies", you know...

ZZ: Your name right now is very much connected to the old LPs, what with them being re-released.

RT: I'm not resting on my laurels. I can't, there's no way I can, because...see, I call it "the Thing". The MC5, to me, is "the Thing". It's like an emotional thing with me, and it's like the thing is crying out to me and saying, "Look, do it right, just once". And I say "OK", and then we'll put it out to pasture and I'll go ahead and do what I wanna do.

ZZ: Do you still like the old albums?

RT: Yeah, I like 'em. There's an amount of pain that goes into listening to 'em, specially "Back in the USA". It's a very painful album to me.

ZZ: Yeah, John Sinclair talked about that album in his letters from prison...did you see those?

RT: Yeah, I saw that. I was totally aghast when I saw it. The worst thing that he said about us was we liked to drink and carouse. To me that's like being normal American boys, you know. I mean, look man, that letter...I read it when it came out and it was sorta like we weren't allowed to do anything but smoke grass or be into the revolution, but we were giving all the bread to Sinclair and he wouldn't buy us any grass! Seriously, we were all eating rice and he was taking people out for steak dinners, plus every night we would go and play and people would say, "Listen, I sent away two bucks to get the badges and the press kit and photographs and stuff, when's it gonna be mailed?" He didn't take the shit, we took it. We came to find out later on that the bread just came in and that was it. There were a number of different scams going on. This is the story that never got out. I always promised myself I would never tell that story but since this reprint came out I figured it's only fair, because, he says that very letter has re-surfaced again to make a point, y'know, for a reason, I'm sure.

The deal is that, my opinion is that John Sinclair...right now it's not even cool for me to put him down because he's not exactly a charismatic figure anymore, he's not the charismatic maniac he was...but in order to get the historical record straight I

must say this; and that is that John Sinclair I invested with a lot of power and a lot of people and I believe that sincerely he abused that power and he abused the people to, in our name. He gave us a bad reputation and that letter proves it. I feel that taken in its historical context you can take a look at it and see that the worst thing he could say about us was that we wanted to carouse and hang about with women, and if that's bad then put the cuffs on, take me away, it's cool.

ZZ: Sinclair wrote that you lost your total energy thing after "Kick Out the Jams" and just made a straight rock album with "Back in the USA"...

RT: See, that was the progression but there's one little thing that he left out. That is in between the time he wrote that letter and the album came out, just before he wrote that letter, we stopped giving him all our money. It was a period of self-determination for the band. For the first time we said; "Look, this is all crazy. We've given him a tremendous amount of money over the years", and, personally I saw none of it, and no-one else in the band saw any of that. Not that the money was that important but hey listen, there are things in the world that cost money, like shoes, f'rinstance. We never had any of that stuff and we were pulling in a tremendous amount of money at that time. We had weekends where we'd make three or four grand. That doesn't sound like a lot of money but when it's not going in your pocket...

That is what prompted John to write the letter. He was really pissed off when he lost his mealticket. It's all sort of between the lines. There was a four or five month period when we didn't see him, and it was just like "send him the money, send him the money", constantly. He was totally bleeding us dry.

ZZ: So basically he ripped you off.

RT: Well, I believe that that's not the major issue. I think that the people got ripped off. That to me is the most important thing. That is something I can't defend. Be that as it may, it's years and years dead and here it surfaces again, and that's why I want to make mention of it and, this may sound self-serving...but, one of the reasons the MC5 never reached their correct audience was because I was never listened to and the Thing has asked me to do it again and do it right, and that's pretty much what I'm doing and, like, I don't care about the past. I love the old albums; they're a chronicle of where I've been, but that's just the past. We're not talking about that anymore, there's the future and I'm gonna try and do it really good. If I don't I'm just gonna go back to raising dogs. That's cool. I wonder if it's gonna be forever but I just wanna give it one real good shot, and if I can put a gold record around the Thing's neck and let it go off to the pasture some place then I'll feel good about that. Then I can go about the business of my own...

At this point Rob had to rush off to see to his NME article. Both he and I could have gone on for another few hours 'cos we both know we only scratched the surface of what went on with the MC5. Still, as he says, that's the past. Let's hope he is right about the future.

Kris Needa

HEARTBREAKERS

NEW ALBUM



TOM ROBINSON BAND

Tom Robinson's blue jacket is pinned to a nickel-chrome Ford badge. He has never worked on an assembly line. It's his simple decent ambition to own a four-door silver fox J registered Ford Cortina Saloon. The Southend Man is motorcyclin' till you make him rich. There must be lots of his six foot one inch body sticking over the handlebars of his customised Yamaha XL 125 but he wears his 59 bikers' club badge with pride. He wears his Gays Against Fascism badge with hate. His songs aren't the pathetic weepings of battered "poofs". He's a man. If he was in a police line-up I'd say John Thaw was the gay. Only one song "Sing if you're Glad to be Gay", is overtly Gay in hearence. He don't wanna prosletise homosexuality. It's only Rock 'n' Roll, he says. I don't believe. He just might convince Britain it is a homosexual State.

Tom's been to Liverpool. Three years ago. Cafe Society was the band. He has been in the music industry about three years. Cafe Society was accoustic. Tom does not believe homosexuality is accepted by the State as normal. "There is a backlash building up against the popular liberal attitudes of the past." Will it ever get to Third Reich proportions? Hitler stamped German gays with triangles. Ask John Tyndall. What does Tom think of the Sex Pistols? "They're the most important Rock and Roll band in the world." He is very serious when he says this.

Tom never gets male groupies. "I haven't had sex for two weeks." But, as Sounds readers know, he was thrown out of a bed and breakfast dwelling cos a female would not leave without fucking him. "I was wanking next door" says Brian (Dolphin) Taylor, the heter-

osexual drummer. What New Wave bands have ever discussed Sex? All Generation X can say is that they are Above Love. (Damned are aroused.) Tom hasn't got a boyfriend at the moment. Before becoming a musician he was in a State home for Children with Emotional Problems. He was sent there for committing a crime. He refuses to specify. TRB signed with EMI for £150,000. This time next year he'll be 28. His star sign aint A-Queen-ius. He is positive EMI's publicity system is not supporting TRB's progress because Tom is one of those. "They're only interested in bands like WIRE." Ray Coleman, Editor (married) of the Melody Maker was at Eric's to see TRB play, and interview Tom. "You'll really like them", he said. "Wasn't everyone a fan of The Beatles", he added. But much later, and to a different question.

Tom's ambition is to own a Cortina. TRB do a song called "Grey Cortina". The author has written "The Cortina 1600 E Robbers". Tom asks: "Are you into cortinas too?" Painted on a wall in Liverpool is the inspiring message "We are the 1600 E Robbers - Catch us if you can." "Defiance of the Police. I'm gonna put that in my mag," Tom says. Tom's mag is a pamphlet published for the Autumn/Winter period of this year. The Fall of 77.

"Power in the Darkness" is a TRB song. A great protest. Is protest futile? Not this man's. I wear my Tom Robinson Band clenched fist Badge and like the yellow colour with the black. Will TRB go the same way as the Strangers? Were they ever going anywhere? TRB's songs are all written by (can's say. Authorship in dispute). TRB protest against the limitations the Establishment places on individual freedoms. "Right On Sister" supports the struggle of Women. The chorus bores me stiff. I'm not a sexist bastard. "We're Not Gonna Take It", is "for all those bastards out there."

"[I hate sincerity]", says Tom. He doesn't know what it is, says TRB's roadie running out of the dressing room. Everyone laughs. Tom discovered sex when he was four. He recognised it was different, I should write. Tom likes Bowie a lot and genuinely wants to see him perform live again. Sing if you're Glad to be Gay. Can you take a police truncheon up your arse and still feel Proud? That's what the song is about. Tom says to me: "Homophobia". I say to Tom: "I have gay friends. Can they write to you if they have problems?"

Tom says: "Yes. c/o Lindy Cooke. 25 Montpelier Grove, London, N.W.5. But don't get the wrong idea. It's not the Gay Lonely Hearts Club. If anyone wants posters, badges, biogs just send an s.a.e. to Lindy. The bigger the envelope the more goodies they'll get."

Did Tom have two parents? "No I had three. That was the problem." I support the Liberal Party. "You'd Better Decide Which Side You're On", is a TRB song. The Left to the left, The Right to the right. Take sides for the Great British Civil War. Is the concept so fantastic? Everyone's talkin' about it and that's not so far from action, is it?

TRB fight Fascism in all its forms. The pop fan will be persecuted as severely as the Gay. "It's still a campaign. If I was to kiss you or him there would be shocked people." The normalisation process has some way to go before Tom achieves that level of acceptance. It's just another side of love. But he isn't the Gay Crusader. Do homosexuals choose motorcycles because it is a solitary form of transport where they can be alone with their problems?

"No - I think they choose bikes because the two-up riding position is so comfortable."

Laughter. In "Martin" TRB play with Dolphin's drumbeats. The song is Just William '77 Style. Borstal for taking and driving away and beating up the boys in blue but my brother Martin always visits me." Is it autobiographical? I don't know. TRB will the next great influence.

When Tom played Liverpool in Cafe

Society the gig was headlined by Barclay James Harvest. "But if I mention that it'll do you down," I said. "Good. I'm not bothered." he said.

TRB's tour atmosphere is the friendliest I have ever felt. If Male Love reduces Man's primal competitive urges, the relaxation levels are probably due to the conflict fall-off. "I Shall Be Released" is the B-side of TRB's first single. Dedicated to George Ince, serving 15 years for a crime some say he did not commit. As the sign says: George Davis Was Innocent OK?

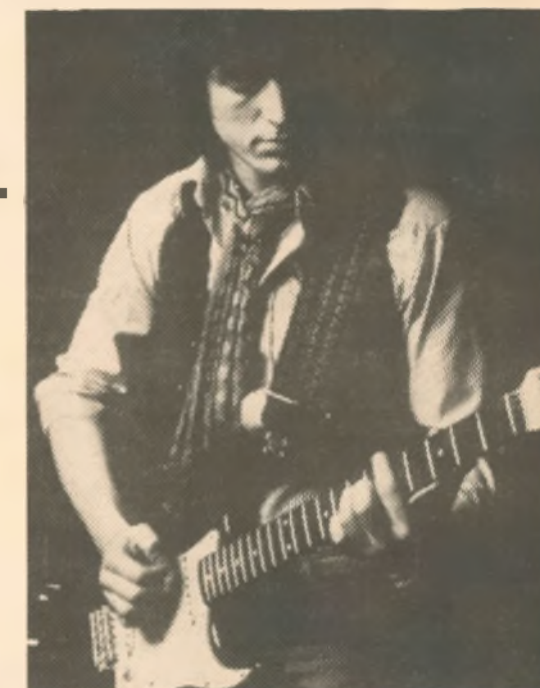
Tom's not a bondage freak. His costume is white nylon shirt and white Dunlop pumps; black flares; striped tie.

In London Tom was mobbed by adoring fans unable to contain their affection for the singer. In Liverpool there was no such squeeze. No one wanted to rub anyone up the wrong way. However, Men who had arrived with secret faces discovered the courage to tell someone about a difficulty in their Personality, after seeing Tom on stage. As men cannot give birth we shall never know who fell in love with someone new.

Andrew Courtney



He's worked with Eric Clapton.
He's worked with John Entwistle.
He's worked with the Doobies.
He's worked with Tim Hardin.
He's worked with Glen Hughes.
He's worked with Tony Visconti.



He's Alan Ross. At 23, he's now working for himself.
Does this make him a boring old fart?

His solo album: 'Are you free on Saturday?' Produced by Tony Visconti.
See him on tour with Sutherland Brothers and Quiver. EBONY EBY 1000 Marketed by RCA.



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- 1st: A NIGHT OUT WITH M. BLACK OF NORWICH
2nd: A NIGHT OUT WITH M. BLACK IN NORWICH

Anyway, (hee hee) so I go to see the Tom Robinson Band (hoo, hoo, hoo) no - look - so I (heh heh) - no, listen - I said to one of the fans 'That's a nice dress' and he said he'd made it himself (heh, heh, heh - hefty chaps at the back choke on pints) no - listen - popular? - what a crowd. (snigger, snigger) I'll tell you how crowded it was there were fellows going into the lavatory two at a time (HAH HAH - blue rinse woman at the bar has to be helped out) Anyway, so there was this Paki...

I mentioned the Tom Robinson Band in the last edition, feeling that they might be a rather ordinary bunch who had attained some prominence by championing gay lib but suggesting a further visit. During recent days a great many of my chums have been suggesting that the Tom Robinson Band are not only going to be big, big, big but there has been some talk about the boys being the first lasting thing to come out of the new wave.

Now hold on there! It's time for a major critic to look at these johnnies. Unfortunately Derek Jewell was busy so I went. Firstly, they are certainly popular. There was a queue outside the 100 Club and inside fans and critics were soon close packed - a bit too close in some cases. Even MM editor Ray Coleman was there and after I'd lifted him up to see what was going on, he began to take copious notes on the back of an envelope - a sure sign that the media was going with this act. But what was there to see? Firstly the band is competent but ordinary. They played with great confidence the arrangements behind Tom but there was no sign that any of them were particularly special. They simply provide backing for T. Robinson's vocals - like Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas. Tom's voice isn't too hot either. You've only got to hear the record to realise that he

could be the singer who brings back talking records. What has he got then I hear a strangled cry from the back (sound of irate reader M. Black of Norwich emitting strangled cry). Well, he's a good old fashioned

Well, he's a good old fashioned show biz personality. He communicates with the audience, facially acts out the songs and smiles. Jesus, he doesn't half smile. You can tell that he not only wants to be a star but that in his head he's been a star all his life - just waiting for this moment to arrive. It's not my cup of tea but you've got to admire the good old fashioned entertainer - I once saw Max Bygraves and although I'd like to tell him where to stick his pink toothbrush I must say I've never seen anyone work an audience better and frankly, that's what Tom's stage personality is about. His other asset is his songwriting. I don't like it much but, as I write, the band's first single seems to be zooming to the top and his act is unusual today in that it includes several genuinely good tunes. The famous 'Glad to be Gay' had everyone (well nearly everyone) singing along and another popular favourite was 'Martin'. In this one Tom goes into stage cockney and sings a sentimental ballad about 'Mar'in' (missing out the 't' as in the well know saying 'black footballers ain't got no bo'le' - bottle being a London expression for courage) This seemed to be a popular favourite with the crowd who sang along with it but to me it was a perfectly pleasant pearly king style music hall song which would not have disgraced the aforesaid Max Bygraves' act. Those around me who I assumed to be homosexual cheered it to the echo. Do the words 'No-one has a bruvver like Mar'in' have hidden homosexual implications or is this the start of incest-rock - I hope not as my sister is currently in South America and anyway is married to a rather fit sort of a chap.

This brings us to the ideology behind the work. It's very noble to champion minority groups but to me as I pointed out in the last edition, it's no better to say - this work is by a Jew and therefore good than to adopt the Nazi line of 'this is Jewish and therefore bad'. The homosexual element is irrelevant to me. If I met Tom I would say 'Best of luck in the business old chap, put it there!' - 'No, not there, that's just being silly nobody's laughing.' (Hee, Hee - M. Black)

Tom's not just keen on the gays (what an inappropriate name when those you know are so often doomy hysterics with a tendency towards muffed suicide) but all minority groups and he sang and spoke in their favour and against the establishment and the police. This may be unfashionable but while I don't doubt that they are not in the least Dixonish, I feel that the law do more good than harm and I'm afraid, by definition, the police force attract right wing, straight authoritarians. Still, I wouldn't fancy a blatantly homosexual policeman putting his hand on my arm and saying 'Come-alongame'. And it would look silly in court. 'M'lord, I was mincing along in a westerly direction'.

(This has gone far enough, writes M. Black. In the old Zig Zag there were no jokes questioning the sexuality of rock artists. Names like Tobler and Frame set knees a-trembling along the new frontier. When the Stewart Boys, John and Al, rode into the saloon it was, 'according to sex, you drunken wrecks, you drinks or f***s with me!' (and we were gentlemen enough to leave the asterisks in that word as the Melody Maker still does!)

Anyway, I really don't have anything against homosexuals. For instance, although the Liberals are a bit wet, I felt that they lost my credibility when J. Thorpe had to step down over those allegations. The sex lives of Thatcher, Heath and Wilson (Tony that is) are of no interest - well a lot of interest actually - but no relevance politically and if Tom is after a world where that sort of thing is unimportant then jolly good. There does, however, seem to be some difference between 'the love that dare not speak its name' and a club full of people, some of whom I know to be happily settled in hetero relationships, bellowing out in unison that they were glad to be gay. There was enough bright eyed fervour there, not only to get it accepted but to make it compulsory. I hope all this isn't going to catch on. Imagine a club full of people devoted to halitosis-lib. I once met a musician who claimed that his sexual kick was to excrete over naked women but luckily he never tried to base his act on it. What would he have called the group? The Debonairs?

Seriously though Tom, if there's one area (and there are many) where homosexuality isn't a drawback it's showbiz. There are record companies, publishing houses,

agencies, groups and even clubs where to be hetero is a real disadvantage. I've seen, if you haven't, vacancies arise for European coordinator or some such and to nobody's surprise a pleasant youth with too much after-shave and too little experience is suddenly brought in to fill the role. You're in the oppressed minority that could go a long way in the pop biz.

To sum up then, although I don't believe that Haile Selassie is God, I like Bob Marley and I hope that people can accept the talents of Tom Robinson without the feeling that they have to be an oppressed minority. Tom could easily be the Tommy Steele of the Seventies - and write his own material. I'm sure I belong to a minority myself when I say that his work is of a high quality but more suited to the world of the Trems than that of the Pistols. The future of rock and roll he ain't.

Talking of the future of rock and roll, after Bruce Springsteen's theatrical impressive but artistically unconvincing London show, it was me who said, 'They promised us Jesus - gave us Billy Graham'. I have subsequently heard that this line has been quoted in the US CBS headquarters. While coming out of a preview of Scar Wars I was asked what I thought and wittily said 'Startrek with Wombles' only to have this quoted back to me subsequently - rats!

I wandered but recently into the gambling club Crockfords (where Capitol records happened to be holding a 'do' for Bob Seger). While taking a turn at the tables I spotted our editor Needs looking terribly under the weather 'Get your copy in quickly fatty, I'm going into show business' he cried airily - or as airily as a man whose round white face is sinking rapidly under the table. I expect that he was just rehearsing for the act - 'The setting moon over Mandalay' or some such Imperial tear jerker. I believe that he's now partnering John Otway around the halls - being new to the game I suppose that Needs will have to be the back legs.

(Well, just time for a joke eh? cracks M. Black)
If you insist - did you hear about the Sex Pistol who sat on his safety pin.
(The news of that chap's dilemma has yet to reach me.)
Well, he was PUNKTURED to death!
(Sounds off - as M. Black slapping thighs and reaching for handkerchief to wipe away tears of happiness.)
(Sounds off - as of Sid Vicious running up stairs carrying fairly heavy sharpened object.)
(Sounds off - as of J. Walters hastily knotting together sheets and preparing to lower himself from the thirteenth floor of Zigzag House.)

John Walters

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LOWRY



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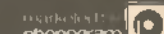
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PIC: ADRIAN BOOT

Jonathan

I know it's been a hectic year full of surprises but if anything 1977 will go down as the year Jonathan Richman (a) Got in the Top 20 with the classic "Roadrunner"; (b) Came to England and did four remarkable gigs; (c) Agreed to do interviews after a long, legend-stoking silence.

Add those up and it boils down to Jonathan Richman receiving the large scale acclaim he's deserved for some years, as well as becoming a Real Human Being for his fans on this side of the Atlantic.

You can safely say there is NOBODY else doing anything like Jonathan. He's created his own unique music and image in a way that's totally natural. He's being himself (which is too much for some people!)

He's been called everything from genius to fruitcake which is often a wafer-thin borderline, anyway. I don't think the former applies cos he's as sharp as they come, but with his own highly-personal attitude to how he'll live and cope with the Modern World. As for being a genius, I dunno. What I do know is that Richman writes funny, catchy songs which capture the essence of rock'n'roll, and has a way of performing them which is disarming in its simplicity, sincerity and warmth. Oh, fuck it - he's good fun, and makes me grin a lot. And I can think of few geezers to emerge this decade with his talent and potential.

It came as little surprise when the Richman gig I managed to catch - the second night at Hammersmith - turned out to be one of the most enjoyable of the year. Two hours of pure fun, surprises, rock'n'roll and the odd bit which did touch the old ticker.

Jonathan Richman is outside fashion trends and accepted musical values. He took the stage clad in white shirt tied "South Pacific" style at the waist, huge, baggy sailor's strides and an equally large grin, which matched with his newly-grown pencil moustache - presumably to make-up for the newly-shorn hair - made him initially remind me of Errol Flynn boarding the galleon he'd just captured. The Grin alternated with a look of intense, wide-eyed sincerity.

He was flanked by the Modern Lovers: Leroy Radcliffe, who boasted a Seeds haircut and big-bodied guitar; new bassist Asa Brenner, who looked like he plays on Carly Simon albums; and newish drummer D. Sharp, who with his white-rimmed shades, beret and short hair, looks like a cross between Captain Sensible and the human fly.

The Modern Lovers provided a skeletal, sometimes barely-audible backdrop to Jonathan's simple, rhyme-at-all-costs lyrics which start at boy meets girl and end up on the Martians' fave ice-cream flavour. They performed songs from all three albums - "The Modern Lovers", the collection of Velvets-influenced demos recorded in 1971; "Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers", five-years-on, a radical change of style and the de-electricification debut with a new Modern Lovers; and "Rock'n'Roll With the Modern Lovers", the latest offering which sees our hero heading even further into his simple, de-amplified world while encompassing a gamut of styles including reggae and Chinese love songs! There were also some new songs which I'll probably be on the next one - "I'm a

Little Aeroplane", "Cookenhaken" (I think!) and "Little Dinosaur", which sees Jonathan on hands and knees as a prehistoric beastie who is coaxed from dejection by his friends the flies!

He established a great rapport with the audience, acknowledging some of the continuously shouted stream of requests and refusing others with a curt-but-kind "Nope!" Sometimes he played a neat sax, other times (too rarely for my liking) a devastatingly original guitar, including a cruising solo on "Roadrunner". Most of the time he concentrated on singing, sometimes dispensing with the mike altogether - and you could still hear him!

It was a great gig, but even as I was watching it I never thought a week or so later I'd be asking the elusive Jonathan himself about it. Yeah, at last he'd consented to do some interviews. In Holland he agreed to do a press conference - and as Jonathan says, the barrier between that and an interview is pretty slim, and the latter is a much less fuck-upable situation anyway.

So there we were, half a dozen or so Jonathan-fan writers, sitting in Berserkley's Kingston office, recorders at the ready, while Mr. Richman sat cross-legged on the floor, did calisthenic exercises, drank fresh orange juice and ate fish'n'chips in the sitting room.

He wouldn't talk about things he didn't want to, was direct, cheerful, eager to please and laughed a lot. Like his Abominable Snowman in the Market, "a real nice guy". We only got half an hour each, but I could've done with half a day to really feel I was getting to know the real Mr. Richman - so there are a few gaps. But I was grateful for half an hour. We'll begin...

How are you enjoying it in England?

JR: Good!

KN: Happy with the gigs?

JR: Yes...like, it's hard for us in a hall that big to know what it sounds like. We play quietly enough onstage so we have a pretty good idea what they're hearing but it's always different, what we hear onstage is different. In Holland we played before a dancing audience a couple of times and that was fun.

In the beginning all we played were dances. Do you know what a mixer is? A mixer is a college social kind of dance. That's all we played in the beginning, in teen centres, and high school dances and college dances. If anything makes me uncomfortable it's having the people in sit-down places. But theatres are fun to!

ZZ: Is this your first visit to Britain?

JR: Yes, it is.

ZZ: What do you think of Britain?

JR: Like I told someone else, I want to see the countryside next time. I saw Richmond Park, and my favourite thing I've seen around here is Richmond Park. I'd love to see the forests and stuff, and greens and clearings. The Robin Hood country. That's what I want to see!

ZZ: There seems to be a very country-ish - not country'n'western - but open-air feel to your music now.

JR: Yeah, I think that's pretty right what you're saying but we still do

"Roadrunner" and "I'm in love with the Modern World" too. See, even when I wrote those old things I still would have loved to have gone around to the country. More so now actually - I'm more excited now about going around to forests and stuff.

ZZ: Do you think you've changed a lot since then?

JR: Sure I've changed. Loads of ways. That was when I was 19. Now I'm 26. Think of how you've changed.

ZZ: Yeah, I've changed!

JR: Right! So I did too! (laughs)

ZZ: Part of that change was going from being an electric band to a more acoustic sound, right?

JR: Yeah, Yeah, sure.

ZZ: You just wanted a more natural sound?

JR: Yes.

ZZ: How did you learn to play Saxophone?

JR: When I was 14 I played it a little. Before that I took clarinet for three years and then my father told me you can play saxophone real easy if you play clarinet so I decided to take that for two years. That was alto, but then I first bought a tenor sax two years ago and started playing it again.

ZZ: You played it really well - I didn't know you played it...

JR: THANKYOU! I knew people would be surprised.

ZZ: Do you think you surprise people?

JR: I KNOW we surprise people. I don't have to think it, you can see it! (laughs)

ZZ: You like doing that.

JR: YEAH!

ZZ: You must listen to a wide variety of music?

JR: Yeah, we all do. A load of stuff!

ZZ: Has it always been like that?

JR: Past three years.

ZZ: Before I s'pose it was obviously 50's and...

JR: No, I started listening to 50s at the same time actually. Like before I could hear it on the radio but I really started getting into that about the same time I started to get into the other. I've been listening to loads of stuff.

ZZ: What did you listen to in the early days?

JR: Velvet Underground and the Stooges. Those two more than anything else. Over and over again. And the Kinks too.

ZZ: Did you see any of those bands?

JR: Yeah, I saw the Kinks in 1970. I saw the Velvet Underground all the time. Loads. And I saw the Stooges a few times.

ZZ: Were you in New York then?

JR: Yeah, I moved to New York when I was 18. But the Velvet Underground did more playing in Boston than they did in New York so that's when I got to see them a lot.

ZZ: Where do you live now?

JR: Just outside Boston.

ZZ: Do you write songs a lot?

JR: Yeah. Sometimes, sometimes not for a long time. I'll make up the songs. I can do that.

ZZ: Why do you sometimes sing without a mike?

JR: Doesn't it sound better?

ZZ: Yeah, it sounds unforced and natural.

JR: Feels that way. To me nothing sounds better than a voice. If you gotta use equipment, fine. If you can do without it, why not?

ZZ: Are you gonna take the acoustic approach any further, or augment the group? How d'ya think it'll go?

JR: Um...WAIT! You didn't see any acoustic instruments on stage.

ZZ: No but it's a very acousticky sound...

JR: Well we don't play loud but we're playing electric!

ZZ: Can you tell me about the rest of the band? You've got a new member...

JR: Yeah, Asa. He joined us over the summer. He's from the Boston area too, I knew him years ago. We needed a bass player when Curly left to start college. We needed someone and Mathew said the right guy'll walk in, and he did.

ZZ: How about Leroy?

JR: I called up a disc-jockey friend of mine two years ago when I was looking for...anyone. I needed guitar, bass and drums. I said "D'ya know anyone?" He said, "Yeah, there's a guitar player downstairs", I said "Put him on the phone will ya?" He said "Yeah", and Leroy spoke, and I said "Hi! I'm looking for a guitar player. Why don't I bring my guitar over and we'll play together." And he said "Good", and so I did, and we played together every day! (laughs)

ZZ: And D?

JR: D Sharp. Always call him D Sharp. He likes that! (laughs) Well then we needed a drummer in the summer of '76 and then we'd been rehearsing in and we'd been rehearsing in this place and it was his place. And his girlfriend said D Sharp needs a gig. I said "Good, we need a drummer. Let's try out D Sharp!" (laughs) Pretty easy, huh! I love 'em!

ZZ: You seem to have an empathy. Do you do a lot of rehearsing?

JR: Yeah, we do rehearsing but sometimes we'll amaze each other. In Amsterdam the other night Leroy and I both...y'know "South American Folk Song"?...we both...there's a part where we both do the lead together. We both double up and do the lead together. And we both left out a certain thing. We usually play do-do-do (sings relevant bit). I think we went...something unusual, we both did it at the same time and both stared at each other in shock. We do that about every two months. Amazes us!

ZZ: You did "Wimoweh" when I saw you.

JR: Yeah, someone just called it out. People were yelling things and someone yelled out "Wimoweh". Said "OK" (laughs)!

ZZ: Do you like that feedback from people?

JR: NO I HATE IT! I like everything rigid and forced!

ZZ: You'd prefer it if they didn't call out?

JR: It'd be very easy to arrange wouldn't it? All you'd have to do is fix the set! Then people would call out and it'd be to no avail and they'd stop calling out and then we'd have it just how we wanted it, right? If I wanted it that way would it be hard? (laughs) In fact, it would be easy, all you'd have to do is walk around and you'd see it every day! It's not that hard to get if you wanna do a fixed set you can do it! (laughs)

ZZ: Do you find people try and get you to play all loud like you did on the first album?

JR: Yeah! All they have to do is yell out and they find out what they get! (laughs) They'll yell out for

some songs and they might get 'em. They'll yell out for others and they'll know there's no way. They'll yell out for a third song and they'll get "yes sometimes but not tonight". Y'know it depends on what mood.

ZZ: You seem to be a very happy bloke d'ya think you're getting happier.

JR: Yeah.

ZZ: The first album seemed a bit dark...

JR: Definitely, you can say that.

ZZ: Why d'ya think you're happier now? 'Cos you're doing what you really want to?

JR: Ye-ah, and I've got more people who love me. I feel more loved now than I felt then.

ZZ: Right, 'cos stuff like "Hospital" seemed a bit morbid...

JR: Right, I've had more satisfaction lately than I used to have. I've had more love.

ZZ: What do you mean? You've got a girlfriend, or what?

JR: I won't tell you exactly what I mean but I'll tell you that things have been better. Ha ha!

ZZ: It shows in the difference between the first and second albums. It seems like you've had a weight lifted off your shoulders.

JR: Yeah, well it is. It was, it really was.

ZZ: Do you like children's songs?

JR: Yeah, well I like songs that are easy to sing along too and, I like songs anyone can understand. Some children's songs I like but a lot of 'em I don't.

ZZ: Do children like you?

JR: Yeah. Once, there was this seven or eight year old boy who asked me "Do you play the same songs for adults?" (laughs) I said "Yup, just like for you, same way!" See I don't like songs that talk down to children. I think if a song's good enough for a child it's good enough for a so-called adult, so that's why in a way I wouldn't make a distinction. To me they're just songs. See I remember when I was a kid I didn't like what I was supposed to like. I loved rock'n' roll when I was five years old. I just loved hearing things like "Venus" by Frankie Avalon, the melody. I just loved pretty melodies, y'know. So people told me I was supposed to like one thing but couldn't fool me, I knew what I liked! (laughs)

ZZ: Didn't your parents think it was weird you liked rock'n'roll then?

JR: Well, I didn't start listening to the radio until I was eleven and by that time they didn't think it was weird. I just had a transistor radio attached to my ear all the time, and they knew that that's normal. That was no big deal, a lot of eleven-year-olds have them. I would drive around on my bicycle with my transistor radio on.

ZZ: That's how "Roadrunner" was born is it?

JR: Sure! Yes, I was always riding on my bike to different places. It isn't just the fact that it's a car, it's the idea that I'm exploring. That's the important thing. And also it isn't whether there's a radio on or not. It's that I'm alone, all alone. I'm exploring. Here's an eleven-year-old on a bicycle seeing industrial parks for the first time, just driving by them and wondering what they were, and getting off the bike, seeing if



Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers at Hammersmith Odeon.

PIC: ADRIAN BOOT

there was a place where I could get something to drink if it was hot... just exploring by myself. It's a lonely song, it's a song about being alone.

ZZ: So how old were you when you actually wrote it?

JR: Eighteen, but when you say wrote it, it's always been different each time too. I didn't sit down and write it. I just started to make it up, and I didn't add the "radio on" part till later. (Suddenly Berserkley's Eugene enters room bearing huge plate of Jonathan's current fave food - fish'n' chips. Our interviewee leaps about going "Yeah!" and "this is wonderful!" That's one thing he's really gonna remember about his first trip to Britain. From now on everything he says is punctuated with munches and swallows. Jonathan sure likes his food! I decide to ask...

ZZ: Why have you suddenly decided to do interviews again?

JR: I think it was like this: we did press conferences in Holland, right, and the barrier between that and the interview is very slim so Matthew just said, "To hell with it! Let's do it!" So we're taking our chances. I just don't like being misquoted and stuff and taking things out of context I'm just sick of it and I'm afraid of saying too much. But I think I can control myself. I don't think I've told anyone anything I'd be bugged by. You see, if anything's real dangerous I'll just avoid the subject altogether! (laughs) so I haven't got much to lose.

ZZ: Are you enjoying it?

JR: Yeah, I love it! I've always liked it. It wasn't that I didn't like doing 'em. I love talking about stuff if people get on the right subject. It's just I wouldn't like what I'd see after we'd finished talking.

ZZ: Yeah, they print the answers not

the questions.

JR: Yeah! Right! That's a good one! That's one I hate! See, for example, if someone asks my opinion on something and they don't print the question people will just think I'm blabbing on about some group or something and I'm trying to put someone down, but they don't realise that someone had asked me for 20 minutes and I finally gave in and said, "Well, if you really wanna know, I think..." Like it was not obvious someone really wanted to know something, you know what I mean? I hate that. Okay, so we'll just trust people and whoever fucks up we just won't do anymore with, that's all (laughs).

ZZ: Okay! How was the last album recorded?

JR: All in an echo chamber, all cut at the same time live in the studio.

ZZ: What about the songs?

JR: Some of them we'd done for a few months, some of them we did for the first time right there. "Rocking leprechauns" was about the first time we ever did that.

ZZ: How long did it take to record?

JR: Three days.

ZZ: What about the album before that?

JR: That was done in a standard studio, also mostly live except the background vocals were overdubbed.

ZZ: That was your first album for a few years.

JR: Right, so I thought I'd do an acoustic album that time too but we didn't know how to get a good sound in the studio, I thought we'd better use the electric instruments until we could figure out how to do it better. To me it's not acoustic if it's with electric instruments. It may be clean but that's not the same as acoustic. To me an electric guitar is an electric guitar. I am aware that on that album you had Leroy playing a biq,

full-bodied electric guitar, you know, it gets hard to say, but to me it's an electric album just like any other.

ZZ: Did you record an LP with Warner Brothers that didn't get released?

JR: Yeah.

ZZ: Is it still in the vaults?

JR: I don't know what happened to that.

ZZ: Why they didn't they put it out?

JR: They didn't feel it was up to their sound quality level for one thing and they knew the group was gonna break up.

ZZ: And they wouldn't have a marketable product..

JR: Right.

ZZ: Are you aware of the scene going on over here?

JR: I'm becoming aware of it. It's different than in the States. Someone was explaining to me, I didn't realise how different it would be but...it's functional. I can see why when I hear what people are complaining about in the songs. It isn't just people randomly talking about frustration. It's something that is happening in their lives.

ZZ: Is there anything that you really want to achieve?

JR: There's a kind of communication with an audience that I love but I don't wanna talk about it.

ZZ: You seemed to have communication with the audience when I saw you at Hammersmith!

JR: Mmmm, it was starting! (laughs)

At that point my half an hour was up. I could've done with ten more 'cos Jonathan is one fascinating bloke, NOT as silly as he may seem, and with a uniquely untainted view of things. He knows what he wants and now he knows how to get it. His last words as I left the room: "Tell the next one to bring the vinegar!"

Kris Needs

THE Radio Stars STORY!

STARRING! ANDY ELLISON,
MARTIN GORDON, JOHN'S CHILDREN
SPARKS, JET, THE NICE,
MILK 'N' COOKIES, THE STARS
AND JOHN TOBLER...

Great name, and both their records so far have also been pretty neat. There's an imminent album, and a third 45 coming out about the time you read this, and that obviously makes this lot one of the more active bands around. On stage, there's still a certain lack of clarity, but it's hardly noticeable because of the action, mainly led by Andy Ellison, who has had ten years as more or less a star. The theory is that Kris will be talking to him about John's Children, in which the late Mr. Bolan played guitar behind Andy's vocals. Listen to Andy and you may wonder who actually originated the bopping elf voice...The other two members of John's Children should be mentioned here, John Hewlett on bass and Chris Townson on drums, because they'll be making cameo appearances in this story, which is about Martin Gordon, who has shared several adventures with Andy, and is also in Radio Stars.

Martin came to music having been a technical author. "Writing manuals about how to stop oil tankers blowing up at embarrassing moments". Although he's got GCEs, that seemed quite a responsible job, but the reason for taking it ('my sixth job in four weeks') was that his desk came complete with a telephone, and on that very instrument, Martin offered his services as a bass player to Sparks.

Ron and Russell Mael had just arrived in this country with John Hewlett as their manager (see above), and needed guitar, bass and drums to back them. "I went for an audition, but I had long hair then, 'cos I was suffering from post hippie. We talked for a bit, but I didn't hear anything for eight weeks, when they phoned up out of the blue, by which time I'd had my hair cut and made a more favourable impression". Of course, the advertisements by which Sparks acquired their first British backup group were inevitably in Melody Maker, although the Maels later claimed that they got the group as a result of the fact that the Kennedy clan (John F., Bobby etc.) were great fans of Sparks, and had invited them to a party where an unknown band (Martin +2) were playing songs from the two Sparks/Halfnelson Bearsville LPs. A somewhat typical piece of overstatement, it might be unkindly thought.

The other two engaged at the same time as Martin were Dinky Diamond (real name Norman, and more recently a promo man for Private Stock, although he was thinking of getting back into drumming), who, according to Martin, had played in cabaret bands in Germany, and Adrian Fisher, who worked for the Robert Stigwood organisation in some fairly lowly capacity, but had also played in Skid Row with Gary Moore, and been in the short lived Toby, which was Andy Fraser's post Free band.

While I find it difficult to enthuse about the latter day Sparks, I must confess to being wiped out by "This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both Of Us" in 1974, and it still sounds pretty much a killer single. It had reached my ears that the particular and very distinctive sound of Sparks had been something to do with Martin... "I was involved very heavily - my thing then was arrangements, and neither of the Maels are accomplished musicians, so they brought me the songs, and I'd pretty much arrange them single handedly. I totally arranged that first hit, all the gaps and everything, and it was all done in rehearsals, so by the time we went into the studio, it was already there. When I

joined the group, I was told that it was to be a co-operative thing, and Ron told me he was looking for a writing partner to do a Lennon/McCartney, unquote".

But as soon as the single was released, and after one appearance on Top Of The Pops, Martin was fired. "We were rehearsing, and I was playing my Rickenbacker bass, which I'm very fond of and has got a distinctive sound, but they got this funny idea that they wanted me to use a Precision bass for live appearances. I was very dogmatic in those days, and I just refused, and said I'd rather not be in the group if I couldn't use my own bass. But I gather that they weren't too happy with my level of contributions to the group, because I was definitely involved in it much more than Dinky or Adrian, and suggested musical ideas, which seemed to jar with them. So they got Trevor White on guitar and Ian Hampton on bass, who would do as they were told for the required amount of money. Trevor was brought in to replace Peter Oxendale, who had been on keyboard".

Oxendale is sometimes credited as Sir Peter Oxendale - the rumour used to be that he acquired the title when he went to audition for Sparks, and when asked his name replied 'My name's Peter, but you can call me sir'. According to Martin, this wasn't quite true. "When they asked him his name, he said 'Here you are, here's my card', and in typical Oxendale fashion it said 'Peter Oxendale B.Mus., L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M.' and all this stuff' (which refers to formal musical qualifications, you understand) and somebody said 'Ere, you should be Sir with all these bleedin' initials'. 'Another piece of Oxendale trivia I'd heard was that although he played keyboards in the band, the Maels considered him too ugly to appear with them in full view on stage, so they hid him behind a curtain. 'Well, no, because he never actually appeared on stage. But when we did live rehearsals, they stuck his Hammond right at the back behind one of the PA columns so you couldn't see him. So at the end of every number, Peter used to troll out from behind his organ, and wander up to the middle of the stage to ask what number would be next, just so that his girl friend, standing at the back of the hall, could see that he really was playing with Sparks. Sort of sums Peter up pretty well..."

Having been in Sparks from September 1973 until May 1974, and appeared on the only (so far) significant album that group has made, Martin put an ad in the papers indicating his availability, which was answered by Chris Townson, who at the time was in Jook. "They were another John Hewlett brain child, and when Chris first phoned me, the idea was that we should carry on with the Jook idea, because RCA were interested". Jook, for those who might not know, were a "1970's John's Children", who had several singles on RCA, and were quite highly thought of briefly in 1974. A report in The Rock Marketplace (father of New York Rocker) indicated that an abortive line up of Jook was to include four of the five original members who became Jet, which is the next group in which Martin was involved. "When I'd get together with Chris, he said 'I've got this old friend who used to sing with John's Children. Why don't we go and meet him? So we went down to this pub, and Andy (Ellison) appeared. Neither he nor Chris had been in the business for several years, although Chris had

been in Jook for a few months, but Andy turned up wearing some sort of green labourer's anorak, and I remember wondering what I'd let myself in for. Anyway, it worked out - I went round to his house and listened to all his records, and I really liked them. Then we tried out a bunch of different guitarists, and eventually I phoned up E.G. management and got Davey's number."

Davey O'List was an original member of the Nice, along with Keith Emerson, Lee Jackson and Brian Davison. He played on the first Nice LP, 'The Thoughts of Emerlist Davjack', a particularly dumb title which, as you've no doubt observed, was made up of portions of their various surnames. As a stage whisper, I've heard a rumour that he's quite possibly the character in chapter four of 'Groupie', whose 'genitals were compact and beautifully symmetrical', but of course, I feel that such scandalous nonsense should be treated with the contempt it deserves. Davey O'List was also an original member of Roxy Music, but I suppose we shouldn't hold that against him - after all, he never recorded with Ferry's fantasy group. However, O'List also was enlisted to play on various Ferry solo tracks, including 'The In Crowd', which was where Martin heard him, and noted his potential to a point where O'List became Jet's guitarist. At the same time, unbeknown to Martin, Jet was acquiring a keyboard player in Peter Oxendale. "I phoned up E.G. to get Davey's number, and they called my answering service to give me his number. Meanwhile, Peter also phoned me up, picked up all my messages, and arranged to meet Davey himself. So it was never actually decided that we were going to have a keyboard player, there just was a keyboard player..."

The now complete Jet recorded three demo tracks, which were "Desdemona", perhaps the most famous John's Children song, plus two new compositions, "Start Here" and "My River", which eventually appeared on the one and only Jet LP. We made loads of copies of the tape, and Jamie Turner heard it and liked it. Jamie had worked for a short lived record company called Firefly, who were distributed by A&M, but he did know Mike Leander, and so did I. It all happened amazingly quickly, within about two weeks of us forming."

Jet signed up for management, publishing and recording with Leander's Company RAM (Rock Artists Management) whose major client was one Gareth Glitter, although Martin was the only member of Jet to have met Mike Leander when the group signed. RAM were thus empowered to sign the group to whatever record company they liked, and chose CBS. "Jet was a totally independent third party, but the main reason why it all happened was that we were all completely broke, really in a serious situation, and I said to RAM 'Can we have some money?' and they said 'Yes, £30 a week'. I'd put my tongue in your mouth for £30 a week!"

Jet made their one album in 1975, produced by Queen's wonder producer Roy Thomas Baker, who has also done a fair number of far less worthy things, including a diabolically bad Scandinavian group called Gasolin'. With Jet, though, he didn't do a bad job... "That was a strange situation, because somebody at CBS phoned Roy up, and said 'Can you get them to sound like Sparks?' whereupon Roy said he didn't want to be involved at all if it was being done on that level." When the album 'Jet', came out, it sported a highly striking sleeve, and with a line up boasting two ex Sparks, two ex John's Children, and an ex-Roxy Music, it looked pretty good to everyone involved, including myself, because I was press officer for CBS at the time. Nine of the eleven songs were by Martin, plus one by O'List ("My River") and one Gordon/Ellison/Townson collaboration ("Whangdepootenawah"), and not unreasonably, since Martin had apparently "invented" the sound, it was not too distant from the original Sparks vibe. The best track to my mind is "Nothing To Do With Us", which was later released as a single which even CSM tipped to be a hit, but unfortunately it didn't happen perhaps due to a rather savage editing job.

But almost immediately things began to turn a little sour. First, Chris Townson broke his leg playing football, resulting in an extremely silly photo session where the group were unable to sit down because Chris's leg was set straight so that it stuck out in front of him. More to the point, the group's support spot on the Hunter-Ronson Band tour was far less of an advantage than it might have been, as the stand-in drummer didn't know the songs or arrangements as well as Chris. Then Davey O'List began to behave strangely. "In the beginning, he was always very good, but he did start to have his off moments when he was totally unpredictable, and eventually the off moments began to outweigh the



MARTIN GORDON TODAY

good moments. On those first demos we recorded, he was playing really amazing guitar, but he never recaptured it. I remember once we played at the Mayfair in Newcastle, and he had a wah wah pedal. We all went out for the first number, 'Tittle Tattle' and he turned round to switch his amp on and got his lead wrapped round his legs. This was just as we were doing the intro, so we had to play, and he was desperately, frantically trying to get unwound, and he fell over and got totally tangled up. Then, at the end of the number he grabbed the microphone and said 'What are you doing? Why are you starting the number? I'm not ready yet', which went out over the PA. Total collapse of stout party."

Another of the tracks on the Jet album was called "Brian Damage", and although it wasn't written with O'List in mind, his deterioration was such that Andy Ellison finally used to introduce him as "our star guitarist, Brian Damage."

The Hunter-Ronson tour was actually the nearest Jet came to the big time, and certainly on the gigs that I saw they went down very well, with a young lady from Newcastle removing all her clothes on the stage, so moved was she by the beauty of the music.

While Martin agrees that they did register with audiences, he doesn't have happy memories of the tour. "Jim Toomey, the stand-in drummer, was a little unpredictable, to say the least, so that wasn't very good, and there was Peter, who could never get his synthesizers in tune, so they were permanently flat, while Davey was always a semi-tone sharp, and you could hear Andy wavering, depending which side of the stage he was on, singing different keys to go with whichever instrument he could hear loudest."

Then CBS dropped the band, after which RAM also decid-



JET AT THE MARQUEE (WITH IAN MACLEOD ON GUITAR)

ed to let the band go. By this time, O'List had received his slouching orders, to be replaced by Ian Macleod, who had in fact been a potential original member of Jet as rhythm guitarist, but was excluded at Leander's suggestion. By October 1975, things had pretty much ground to a halt with the band about fifteen months old. The first to leave after O'List's sacking was Oxendale, who went "to further his musical career" with the Glitter Band. While we're on the subject, Peter old chap, should we happen to meet at a reception again like the one after Ian Hunter's recent concert, please refrain from introducing me to drunken members of the Glitter Band who use me to prevent themselves falling over, OK? Oxendale was last seen at the Hammersmith Odeon as part of Hunter's rather pathetic band earlier this year...Jet limped on for a while, rehearsing and doing demos for a second LP which unfortunately was never released. However, John Hewlett briefly re-entered the picture, and after hearing what the group had been doing, arranged for studio time at Island, where the now four piece Jet put down four tracks, among which were early versions of "Dirty Pictures" and "Sail Away", which eventually became the first Radio Stars single. At that point, Island began to lose what little enthusiasm they ever had, and Jet took its final flight, he wrote poetically.

Martin, meanwhile, had remained in touch with John Hewlett, who devised a plan to bring one Ian North to England. If you didn't already know, North was the guitarist, keyboard player and main writer for a fine little band called Milk'n'Cookies, a four piece, with Justin Strauss on lead vocals, Sal Maida on bass and Mike Ruiz on drums. There's rather more to the story, but it should be left for another time - suffice it to say that the group came to England in late 1974, and made an album for Island produced by Muff Winwood. A single was released, "Little Lost And Innocent", and the band were in this country promoting it around Xmas 1974. It was looking good for a chart placing until the group did a radio interview in Scotland, when they slagged off the Bay City Rollers, a move not guaranteed to increase their popularity. The album wasn't released until 1976, when Ian North managed to get Sire Records interested, this finally forcing Island to release it, by which time the group had broken up. For what it's worth, Sal Maida had come to England and played with Roxy Music at some time, Mike Ruiz had become a dragstrip driver, a subsequent bass player, Jim Gregory, has played on most of Donna Summer's jolly fine records, and Justin Strauss changed his name to Justin Time, but soon changed it back...

It's a good album if you don't have anything else specific in mind, by the way. So Ian North came over, and got together with Martin Gordon, and they began to look for drummers. Eventually, one Paul Simon (not a small Jewish person) fitted the bill best, and also introduced his brother Robert. This strange quartet played a gig supporting Ultravox at the Nashville, before Martin decided that he wasn't keen on what was happening, and in January of this year, was back on the streets. In the meantime, he'd also been in touch with Andy Ellison, who briefly rehearsed with Milk'n'Cookies as an experiment, but found that only Martin was in favour of joining the group.

Meanwhile, Andy had been taking around the four demos that had been recorded at the end of the Jet era, and finally met with success when he took them to Ted Carrol

at Chiswick. Ted apparently liked the songs, but initially felt he couldn't help. "He assumed that we wanted to do it on a big level like we'd done with Island and CBS, and he said 'We can't afford to do that'. But we convinced him that we just wanted someone who was interested in our music, and that finance didn't matter at that point, because we didn't have any money anyway, and we'd continue to have no money but at least we'd have a record out." Of course, the prototype group only consisted of Martin and Andy at that point, so it was necessary to find a drummer and guitarist. "Chris (Townson) remained in Jet right up to the end, but he's got two kids and a wife and a fridge and all the rest of it, so he's got to have a regular income, which I can appreciate. But it's not much good being an rock'n'roll drummer and saying 'Look, I've got to have fifty quid a week, otherwise I can't do it'. You've got to have people who are prepared to commit themselves to a certain extent without money. It's unfortunate, because Chris is the greatest drummer I've ever played with, and he'd be ideal for Radio Stars." Only comparatively recently has the drum position within Radio Stars been successfully sorted out - Paul Simon played with the band for a while, and Jim Toomey worked on a few dates, but the permanent man is one Steve Parry, a Canadian.

Finding a guitarist was easier. "We'd lost touch with Ian Macleod at the end of Jet, but during the Ian North period" (North's British band, by the way, was known as 'Ian's Radio'), "I used him to play guitar on some demos I was doing, one of which we re-recorded for the 'Stop It' EP. With that nucleus, Radio Stars went into the studio and recorded their first single, "Dirty Pictures"/"Sail Away". "It's the same rhythm track as the demo, and Chris is playing drums, but we re-recorded the guitars and I remixed it. Ted suggested doing a picture sleeve, so we pinched the idea from an old Goons book with Barbara Goalen (?). I don't remember her, but apparently she was the Face of '55 or something, and there was this great sequence of photographs where the Goons are standing up against a blank wall with eyes right, and there's Barbara looking slinky. Then Milligan cracks up and crawls towards her, and then the others do, and this goes through in sequence until they're all lying on the floor together. I thought that was great, so I got my girlfriend Kelly St. John to tog herself up in suspenders and naughty bits, and we did it."

Actually, the sleeve is for once a perfect foil for the record inside, and both are very good. The major problem was that with a title like "Dirty Pictures", it was difficult to get airplay, and the lyrical content didn't help either. "Everybody was too frightened to play it because of the lyrics, but they're silly, it's a joke. You're meant to go 'Ha ha'. It's really silly, because it's obvious that the record's done tongue in cheek". In fact, our own, our very own cuddly John Walters programmed the record on his show, and no doubt he did the same for the "Stop It" EP, which contains such so far undiscovered gems as "No Russians in Russia" and "Box 29" ("The story of someone who falls in love with a box number - a correspondence love affair"). No doubt he will also play the third single, the title of which will be "Nervous Wreck" (backed with "Horrible Breath") and the first album, due in November, and to be called "Songs for Swinging Lovers".

Everything that I've heard of Radio Stars so far I've enjoyed, and without putting them on the spot (and putting my own head on the guillotine) I reckon that there are few groups around with as much potential as this bunch. If they're in your vicinity, I respectfully suggest you check them out - it's considerably more constructive than killing sheep by burying them in the ground and pulling their heads off.

John Tobler

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PHONOGRAM

gabba gabba hey?

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THE RETURN OF



ADRIAN BOOT

PHIL RAMBOW

Phil Rambow's conversation possesses the same intensity and energy that his band radiate so effortlessly on stage. It's a pleasant change to speak to somebody who you know means everything they say. Yeah, a bit of honesty is totally refreshing on the current scene, and Rambow supplies it not only in his conversation, but in his songs as well.

If you caught any of his recent Nashville gigs (with Mick Ronson on lead guitar, then at the very least you'll be glad that Phil has eventually got it together to gig after such a long absence. If you possess any sensitivity or even just a sense of hearing, then the fact his new material is vastly superior to that of most of the other bands playing regularly at present will not have escaped you.

Thinking back to the Winkies, it becomes pretty obvious in retrospect that Phil was even more of a driving force than one suspected at the time, and although they were never a band that really meant a lot to me, I always enjoyed their gigs.

September and October saw Rambow making a cautious but confident return

to the scene, The Rochester Castle at Stoke Newington was the launching pad, used mainly to give Phil an idea of how receptive a present day audience would be to him and to his new material. He needn't have worried. In the audience and clearly enjoying themselves were contemporary giants like Mick Jones, Joe Strummer and Glen Matlock. If a nod of approval was wanted from the 'new wave' then Phil Rambow had got it. Next step was the Nashville, and it was there that he revealed the ace up his sleeve. Mick Ronson. This was a masterstroke and the fusion of two talents like Rambow and Ronson proved to be a bigger attraction than anticipated. The Nashville was packed, and the atmosphere could have been cut with a knife. This was essentially a "first gig" for the band as it now stands, with Dave Drill (one of the best bass guitarists I've seen for years) and Laurie Jellyman on drums, plus the two guitar giants.

Although some of the potential of such a line-up was not fully exploited, it was clearly apparent that this band has so much ability, all that is

needed is a bit of time. Despite that, the band really rocked, Ronson's guitar work adding fuel to the fire of Rambow's unique vocals.

Later that week I found myself cloistered with Phil in a tiny room not far from Chelsea Bridge. As I've already said, Rambow's conversation is as intense as his music, and instead of a formal interview (who needs that bollocks anyway?) we decided just to have a chat over a bottle of wine. Main things to emerge from the conversation were that Ronson is to become a permanent fixture in the band, and that it is planned to spend part of November in the studios, cutting a single. Phil explains that although it is a very loose kind of arrangement, with no party stipulating anything, it is hoped that the band as it stands now will stick together for quite some time. The free and easy set up suits them all, and although Phil is well aware of the transience of everything, he is optimistic that, for a while anyway, they will continue gigging and recording with one another.

At the Nashville gigs, the band were



aided and abetted by two chick back-up singers, one of whom is Ronno's sister Maggie. It transpired during our conversation that Maggie played a large part in bringing Rambow and Ronson together, acting as a kind of go-between. Although the two had known of one another for a very long time, it took several chance meetings and Maggie to eventually get them playing together. Phil is still refreshingly pleased they eventually made it.

One of the most important things about Phil Rambow is the fact that he is not only capable of writing really great music with melodies that are infuriatingly hard to forget, but he also manages to couple these tunes with lyrics quite stunning in their originality and perception. One of the numbers they do on stage is entitled "Prime Time". It portrays accurately the artists dilemma when faced over and over again with the opportunity of "selling out". You know, should I scrap a bit of my artistic integrity to become a cult figure for a while? Rambow phrases it with an elegant eloquence that can easily be overlooked when concentrating on the bands live performance.

"Prime, there always comes a time
When you feel in fashion for a
while
Used and just a bit confused
You feel you must mix passion with
style

And it's over and over
You primp and fuss
To be in prime time"

Another verse from the same song
makes it even simpler,

"Prime, a very, very thin line
Separates the single from the whole
When you've gought and sold a
thousand times
It always seems attractive to sell
your soul"

But what puts it all into perspective for me is a little story Phil tells me just as I'm leaving. Apparently only a few weeks ago, Rambow and a friend were playing their guitars very loud and a group of neighbourhood teds gathered outside the window. They started heckling, and Phil thought for a moment that he was going to have his windows put through. So what does he do? He simply turns his guitar up some more and bursts into "Johnny B. Goode" followed by "Reelin' 'n' Rockin'". And within those few minutes the hostile crowd outside his window was dancing in the street. If that doesn't say something about Phil Rambow, then I don't know what does.

Robin Banks

Even across thousands of miles of trans-Atlantic telephone cable and several time zones Dwight Twilley exudes excited confidence. He's sure the time has come for he and his band to break out and let loose on the world the sound he spent about eight years knocking into shape and perfecting with high school buddy Phil Seymour.

The early steps were a Stateside hit single in mid-1975 called "I'm On Fire", which was followed eight months later by acclaimed debut album "Sincerely".

The album showed Twilley to be a writer of instantly memorable finely-honed pop songs with a knack of putting 'em over with highly-individual if a bit over-produced style on vinyl.

The new album, "Twilley Don't Mind", is, quite simply, one of the best this year. It just keeps getting better every time I play it. Now the sound is harder, punchier, vocals still swathed in echo, but the qualities which made "Sincerely" so good - strong melodies, killer hooks - are here, 'cept matured and more effective than ever. The arrangements are often near-brilliant, 'specially the beautiful, dreamy "Sleeping", or the single, "Trying to find my baby."

The album's bleedin' magic! Ever since I heard "Sincerely" last year I've thought DT was an important talent and jumped at the chance to talk to him on the long-distance 'phone (ignore all that trumpet-blowing bollocks in 'Sounds' last month about "you read it here first"). They may claim to have planned the flag of discovery in Dwight's buttock but regular followers of the Zigzag Top 30 last year will remember "I'm Losing You" a beautiful track off "Sincerely", riding high for weeks amidst other extolling of the album's virtues. Still, we're not the sort to boast...).

"Hi, this is Dwight!" came the voice on the other end. He was speaking from his Tulsa home. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, about ten o'clock in Leighton Buzzard, where I unfortunately was.

Dwight was midway through a U.S. tour which had just done the West coast and was preparing to head east. It was going just fine, keeping up the momentum started by the new album "The people are really responding, we're doing well all over."

We kicked off by talking about the new album, which was recorded in Los Angeles.

Dwight: "I really like the new one. We spent a long time on 'Sincerely' - about eight months. We had to finish it when 'I'm On Fire' was a hit but there were lawsuits going on with the record company so we had nothing to do but sit around. So we kept on working on 'Sincerely', overdubbing. It was done in five studios with different engineers (some of it was recorded in Trident, England). We decided we wanted to do something normal for our new one. It was recorded in just one place at one time, fast - it took two months. We hardly did any extra tracks. We wanted to do less overdubbing, get a more natural sound. We're really happy with it."

Dwight and Phil have, up until now, been the only official members of the Dwight Twilley Band. For roadwork and recording they now have their own

bass player, a bloke called Bingo Sloan (I think that's what he said!) and long-time DT band guitar-player Bill Pitcock IV is now a permanent member. Dwight and Phil play the other instruments, Phil on drums.

In classic rock storybook style Dwight and Phil met at a matinee showing of "A Hard Day's Night" while they were still at High School in Tulsa, which Dwight describes as "smack dab in the middle between LA and New York, caught up in the middle with the music passing through."

They started playing together at home, the proverbial garage band. But parents' money meant they could work on their sound in the comfort of their own little demo studio. It was here they were bitten by the recording bug and though they met in 1969, it was Thanksgiving Day, 1974 when the two buddies felt ready to enter the Big Studio - a 16-track - and make their first record, "I'm on Fire", which came out in April, 1975 and hit big.

Dwight: "We were pretty serious about recording. We've always been serious about recording good pop records. We wanted to make hits. A lot of groups rush into recording but we were prepared. We waited a long time before we tried. There's lots of things we could have done but we waited and got good playing together. We were so into making records we did no work at all. When we came to do it, it was a natural thing."

Dwight admits they're more of a studio than live band, which probably accounts for the criticism I once heard levelled at them, which is they're a bit clinical on stage, reproducing the records note for note. The only fault with their often breathtaking records is that they're sometimes a bit too clean and cold.

Still, minor grievance. We can't say what they're like on stage 'cos they haven't done any gigs here yet. When, when, when, Dwight?

"There's something in the works right now...I would love to come over. I have a feeling we'd do well there."

Yeah, you probably would...although it seems a little if Dwight ain't quite aware of what musical revolutions are going on here...and for that matter, in his own country. 'Specially New York. Viz:

"We're trying to aim for the kids. No-one's doing that (see!), and that's not the object of rock'n'roll. It's for kids. Everyone plays to old people with beards. We are trying to make music for the kids, but make it acceptable to older people too."

Well, Dwight's certainly doing that, but I wouldn't say he was alone. Still, continue Dwight.

"We're fed up with the old groups. We're trying to re-establish the young, wild element of rock'n'roll. I find the record business, live gigs, radio stations, every angle, in my mind, more adult orientated. There's not a record for the young. Great records are hard to do."

"We've been together for a long time. We learned how to become producers. It takes a long time to learn. Now we can do it like brushing our teeth!"

Right Dwight, but you'll see a few things when you come to Britain... still, you can't blame the guy if he spends all his time closeted in the studio. He's got some right to be confident 'cos let's face it, he



Dwight Twilley Band

DOES make great records. He reckons he looks right to be a teen idol too, and would love nothing more. The Twilleys are doing some Saturday morning TV shows in the States, "to steal some of Dick Clark's audience. There's a lot of clowning around then a group plays to a small audience."

Dwight can see his face gracing bigger screens too: "We'd like to make a film, a modern 'Jailhouse Rock'...it hasn't been done. There's not really the band to do it. Our music would be adapted and I think we look right for it."

Dwight really rates Elvis, plays the man's records all the time at home. "I can't listen to the Beatles 'cos they've been heard so much. Elvis had more hits than the Beatles. It's funny when he died...I was telling people it was time for an

Elvis renaissance. People only talked about how fat he was but his music was great."

Right now, the Twilleys would like another hit single. The follow-up to "I'm On Fire" another catchy love-song called "You Were So Warm" didn't do it. The title track from the new LP has been released on 45 in the States. It might.

What about the next album? Will it continue the harder-rocking direction of "TDM"? "This leaves us open for the next one. It'll be a crazy record. It's obvious. The first took a long time. This one we did quick. The next will be crazy, out of hand, weird. I'd like it to be a double album."

Fine by me. Try and hear the new album, it really is a goodie. But don't believe Twilley don't mind if you don't.

Kris Needs

A.T.V.



PHOTOS BY
H. MURLOWSKI

ATV TODAY: MARK; CHRIS, TYRONE...



ALEX FERGUSSON CHRIS BENNETT MARK PERRY TYRONE THOMAS

ALTERNATIVE T.V. TREE....

I HAD ONLY THOUGHT ABOUT WITH ONE
BAND BEFORE - NEW BEATLES, WITH STEVE
WALSH AND TYRONE THOMAS.

ALEX HAD BEEN WITH
THE NOBODIES WITH

SAMMY CARRINGTON.

JOHN HAD BEEN WITH

CHELSA AND GENIX.

MARK HADN'T BEEN (STILL A FRIEND)

WITH MUCH I DON'T THINK.

AFTER MICKY FAILING TO TURN
UP FOR REHEARSALS WE DECIDED
TO GET A NEW BASSIST. I'D WORKED
WITH TYRONE BEFORE IN THE NEW
BEATLES. THIS LINE UP WAS VERY
GOOD. FIRST GIG WAS AT BRIGHTON
WITH THE ELECTRIC CHAIRS - 4/4/77.
THIS LINE-UP RECORDED 'LOVE LIES LIMP'
WHICH WAS RELEASED ON S.G. RECORDS.

ALTERNATIVE T.V. #1 APRIL 77
TO MAY 77.
MARK PERRY VOCALS
JOHN TOWE DRUMS
ALEX FERGUSSON GUITAR.

I MEET ALEX IN ROUGH TRADE RECORD
SHOP. IN MARCH 77. THROUGH APRIL
WE WORKED IN THROBING GRISTLE'S
STUDIO IN HACKNEY. WE MEET JOHN
AT THE ROUNDHOUSE, JUST AFTER
HE'D LEFT GENERATION X AND
HE AGREED TO HELP US OUT ON
DRUMS. MICKY SMITH JOINED SOON
AFTER AND WE PLAYED OUR FIRST
GIG IN NOTTINGHAM 6/5/77.

ALTERNATIVE T.V. #2 MAY 77
TO JULY 77.
MARK PERRY VOCALS/GUITAR.
JOHN TOWE DRUMS.
ALEX FERGUSSON GUITAR.
TYRONE THOMAS BASS.

ALTERNATIVE T.V. #3 AUGUST 77
TO OCTOBER 77.
MARK PERRY VOCALS/GUITAR.
ALEX FERGUSSON GUITAR.
TYRONE THOMAS BASS.
CHRIS BENNETT DRUMS.

WHEN JOHN LEFT WE HAD A MONTH'S BREAK
BEFORE FINDING CHRIS BENNETT WHO WAS A
FRIEND OF TYRONE'S. WE PLAYED AN AMAZING
FIRST GIG AT THE BUKE PUB IN DEPTFORD
AND THEN TOWARD SCOTLAND WHICH MADE
ALEX VERY HAPPY. AFTER THE GIG AT
EPICK CUB IN LIVERPOOL WE DECIDED
TO LOOSE ALEX BECAUSE WE WANTED TO
CHANGE THE MUSIC. SO HE WENT.
(DEPTFORD PUNCIY).

WE GOT DENNIS ALMOST
STRAIGHT AWAY ON BASS
AND MOVED TYRONE TO
GUITAR. AT FIRST I
DIDN'T THINK DENNIS
WAS ANY COP BUT AFTER
THE BELL GIG HE WAS
3RD PERMANENTLY.

ALTERNATIVE T.V. #4 OCTOBER 77
TO PRESENT.
MARK PERRY VOCALS/GUITAR.
TYRONE THOMAS GUITAR.
CHRIS BENNETT DRUMS.
DENNIS BURNS BASS.

WE ARE SOON GOING TO FRANKIE AND THEN WE'VE GOT A TOUR
WITH LIAISON COUNTRY COMING UP. AND WE WANT TO RECORD
A NEW SINGLE, SOON.

GIGS:

ATV #1

6/5/77 - NOTTINGHAM.

ATV #2

5/6/77 - BRIGHTON PLY.

24/6/77 - MARQUEE CLUB, LONDON.

23/6/77 - REDDEAR, CROYDON.

26/6/77 - DEPTFORD FESTIVAL.

30/6/77 - ROKY, LONDON.

1/7/77 - ROKY, LONDON.

ATV #3

10/8/77 - THE DUKE, DEPTFORD.

21/8/77 - BATHING.

22/8/77 - EDINBURGH.

23/8/77 - PRISLAN.

24/8/77 - PRISLAN.

25/8/77 - FAWCER.

26/8/77 - DUNDRE.

14/9/77 - RAT CLUB, LONDON.

17/9/77 - MANCHESTER.

1/10/77 - LIVERPOOL.

ATV #4

13/10/77 - SPEAKEASY, LONDON.

14/10/77 - OTHER CIMA, LONDON.

15/10/77 - THE BELL, LONDON.

THIS FAMILY TREE
WAS NOT DONE BY
PETE FRANKIE...
BUT IT WAS DONE BY
MARK PERRY 29/10/77

RECORDS

ATV #2

'LOVE LIES LIMP' (SG RECORDS) FREE WITH EVERY ISSUE
OF SHIPIN LANE 12.

ATV #3

'HOW MUCH LONGER' / 'YOU BASTARD' (DEPTFORD
PUNCIY DECOZ)

REVIEWS

SEX PISTOLS - Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols (Virgin 2086)

The title says it all really. Ignore the press hysteria, dopey articles in 'Rolling Stone' and cross-country panic/fear/loathing over "those foul-mouthed Sex Pistols". This album transcends it all... and also puts paid to the ignorant bastards who still say the Pistols can't play or are morons.

Even those who know the songs from gigs'll be surprised at the sheer attack and overwhelming density of the sound - unlike a lot of groups the Pistols and producers Bill Price and Chris Thomas have got a killer sound right first time... but then I s'pose the songs have had time to mature and they weren't too proud to spend a bit of time in the studio to get it right. The result is a raging Berlin Wall of gut-wrenching power chords from Steve Jones, Paul Cook's simple and just right powerhouse drumming and the metronomic roar of Sid's bass. It's all topped with John's phenomenal voice, which can slide from spine-chilling no-feelings coldness to frenzied manic wailing. He packs the maximum punch and effect into every syllable he delivers. I've never heard John on better form than his sneering whine on "EMI", a big raspberry to the two dopey record labels who stupidly let the Pistols plop from their grasp. Think of the lost Sales Units chaps. I hope it cuts you to the bone.

Yes, this is a direct, honest, no bullshit album which contains some of the most vital rock songs of this decade, brutal, real and full of energy and passion.

There's no danger of this album being ignored so this review ain't a mission of shared discovery, but in Zigzag's case there are probably a whole lot of readers from the previous era who will not even allow themselves to listen to this album because of the name of the group. Alright I'm not saying go out 'n' buy every single by every punk rock bandwagon-jumping shit combo, but please at least listen to NMTBHTSP cos it's great music in any books, and leaves most of the so-called New Wave standing at the starting-line.

Quick, here's the tracks....
HOLIDAYS IN THE SUN: Alright, so the riff's like "In The City" but I still reckon this is a corker and easily as good as anything the Pistols have done. I love the impenetrable sound wall and John's vocals, which have to fight to be heard in the guitar-and-drum maelstrom.

BODIES: Without a doubt my favourite track, apart from "EMI". Yes, the presnet Pistols line-up can still cut it in the song-writing stakes. This track is like a punch in the chops.

It's definately the most overpoweringly nasty, maybe even gross thing the group has done. But for this subject matter - a dead end factory girl from Birmingham's sordid abortion, it's gotta be. Get these -

"Dragged on a table in a factory
An illegitimate place to be
In a package in the lavatory
Died the little baby screaming
Body a screaming fucking bloody mess"
Screamin

Screaming I'm not an animal in the chorus and ending on a chilling cry of "Mumm!" Rotten makes a searing statement against abortion
"Mummy!" Rotten makes a searing statement on abortion. More real and scary than the Pistols have ever been - a promising and reassuring pointer to the future. It also rocks like shit.

NO FEELINGS: Stage fave. A good example of how Steve Jones' guitar playing has improved (Compare this with the same track on the Spunk bootleg). Early sneering negative/vacant Pistols lyrics - "You'd better believe I'm in love with myself".

LIAR: Can't play, huh? Stop-start beat with Rotten alternating between rampant wail and sardonic sneer.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN: The reason three-major store chains won't stock the album, and are losing large sums of money in potential sales as a result. Hee Hee. This is one of the best singles of all time. Still bursts out of the grooves in all its raging majesty.

PROBLEMS: One of the best tracks and the point where if you ain't done it already you fall off the chair help helpless with delight and scream. It must be that killer-riff chord-chugging it locks into near the end. Lashes out at apathy and complacency. "The problem is YOU, whatcha gonna do?"

Side two. SEVENTEEN: "I'm a lazy sod". Very old song. The line about not wearing flares seems to have been dropped between this and the bootleg. "On my face Not a trace Of reality" is one of my favourite lines.

ANARCHY IN THE UK: Wheee! And yet another Best Single of All Time. If you don't know it I don't know where ya bin!

SUBMISSION: The ballad of the album (hee hee). About drowning so you get Special Effects and John doing a strangled gurgle. Metronomic chugging rhythm. Another goodun.

PRETTY VACANT: Yes, yes, yes, you know this one from the single too but so what if the singles are on here. Now it's like having a whole Pistols set on record. You don't have to keep getting up to change the single anyway, AND this is a great track anyway.

NEW YORK: Lashes at the New York rock scene myth, lots of Dolls-lyric hints - "I'm looking for a kiss". Solid and bitchy.

EMI: Here it is! I've already gone on about this one but have a lyric;

"It's an unlimited supply
And there is no reason why
I tell you it was all a frame
They only did it cos of fame
Who? EMI!"

AND:
'Blind acceptance is a sign
Of stupid fools that stand in line"

LET'S FACE IT. THIS ALBUM WOULD BE A MONSTER EVEN IF IT WAS MEDIOCRE, BAD EVEN. THEN THE ABOVE LYRICS WOULD BE TRUE. NEVER MIND COS IT'S A STUNNER? EVEN BETTER THAN THE BUILD-UP BUILT-UP. NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS HERE'S THE SEX PISTOLS.

Kris Needs

SPUNK - Spunk (Blank)

I dunno, I've waited for a Pistols album to play at home for about a year and now I get TWO of the bastards in the same week!

Still, I'm not gonna grumble. I got this already notorious bootleg of demos and sessions done when Glen Matlock was in the band (which means 1976, mostly the latter half) before the "official" album - the right order cos you can't half see the improvement in the group's playing and style between the two. In most cases the "Bollocks" cuts are superior although the bootleg naturally ain't got such a good sound and the versions of "Submission" and "Anarchy" on SPUNK are better, 'specially the latter where John sounds throatier, deranged and homicidal.

You get the same tracks as on the album PLUS "I Wanna Be Me", the B side of the "Anarchy" single which should have been on the "Bollocks". There's also "Satellite" but no "Bodies" or "Sun", which is a majorbummer but unavoidable cos they weren't written then.

Want this album? You might have a job but I got mine in the dynamic Dean Street Harlequin shop. Kris

GREG KIHN AGAIN (Beserkley Import BZ-0052)

It's odd that Beserkley's first hit here is by their least accessible artist. By the same token it's lucky for Greg Kihn that he's on Beserkley, because if this were on a conventional label, lots of nuds would put it down just because of it's best qualities. And those are that it's a highly professional, beautifully played, finely structured pure pop album, the sort that only Americans seem to release successfully.

The Raspberries were sometimes good at this, the Left Banke a bit, Bread on their first (mostly unheard) album, Crabby Appleton, the Rascals when they were Young, and some others.

There's no attempt to record unattrac-

tive or complicated songs, no cosmic noodling, and the guitar player (David Carpenter) plays only as much as he ought to on all but the last track, which comes over as somewhat of a safety-pinned thumb. It's a bizarre instrumental, and the only track which isn't capable of single consideration after the odd edit. I like 'Love's Made A Fool Of You' best, but then Buddy Holly's always been a fave, and most of the others don't take long to become comfortable.

I don't want to trackpick any more - just accept this as straightforward, unpretentious pop music, because when all the current furor calms down (and you better believe it will, because it always does), this is a much pleasanter alternative than the speaker-splintering stuff. Why doesn't anyone suss that the majority of punk recorded so far doesn't work at home in one hundredth of the way it works live.

And another thing - Greg and his group are smiling on the sleeve, which makes a pleasant change from the scowling oafs looking hard on most albums. Whatever this movement with which we're besotted aims to do, at the end of it I'd like to be happy. If you wouldn't, go to Russia.

John Tobler

MX-80 Sound : Hard Attack. (Island ILPS 9520)

The MX-80 Sound are from Bloomington, Indiana, USA. Last year they released a limited edition EP containing 7 songs. It came with a booklet containing lyrics and info. Howard Thompson at Island Records heard it, liked it and got them to record the material for 'Hard Attack'. It is a great album.

"There's a Thompson in England and one in L.A.,
They both want more tapes, but who's gonna pay,
Along comes Paratrooper Joe and we're on our way"

(from 'Man On the Move'.
Copyright - Island Music Ltd.)

The most important member of the band is Bruce Anderson - "At one point we were a completely experimental group. The notes and rhythms were flying everywhere. Then we noticed that whenever we got a job it was usually at a benefit and they would put us on at two in the morning. We took a vote and it was agreed that it was well beyond our bedtime. We decided to compromise and become a rock group. Now we get scheduled earlier in the evening."

Rich Stim is also very important. "I bring the instrumental portion of the song to rehearsal", says Bruce "We play it over and over until it's okay and then Rich records it on his cassette. Then he takes it home and in two or three days he has something that's passable".

The full line up is: Bruce Anderson (guitar), Rich Stim (guitar, organ), Dale Sophiea (bass), Jeff Armour (drums) and Dave Mahoney (drums). Their influences are Zappa, Coltrane, Yardbirds, Brazil '66 and Robert Shaw Chorale. All of that shows up in their work. MX-80 Sound are confused, chaotic but very melodic and very competent. If you want comparisons



MX-80 SOUND

there's the Mothers, Beefheart and Can but they jump about. The songs start and stop, some are heavy, some are light. At first hearing it could be an arty mess but there's a lot to explore and uncover. I haven't stopped playing the album. It goes like this:

'Man On the Move' - a great opener. Not confused at all, it's shifting and memorable. 'Kid Stuff' - very fast. Flashes of Billy Cobham in the drums, very jazzy. Lyrics thoughtful but boring after awhile. 'PCB's' - Amazing. The band at their best. The guitar's like Hendrix. Lyrics are totally ridiculous. 'Crushed Ice' - At this point the album is classic. Go, "It made my life so much lusher since you turned on that ice crusher!" The guitar's like a train, pushing all the time. 'Tidal Wave' - the best track on the album. Originally on their earlier EP, it's a killer. There's a great sax burst and the rhythms are as tight as a rubber t-shirt. 'Checkmate' - opens side two. Self-indulgent, Zappa-esque. 'Facts-Facts' - Best of side two. Great lyrics, well sung over plodding rhythm. 'You're Not Alone' - avant-garde. Forget. 'Civilised/Demeyes' - monotony. Lovely "civilised" voice. Tasty melody. Guitar solo. 'After-birth/Aftermath' - Mostly instrumental with a vocal ending very like Hawkwind's 'Sonic Attack'. The end. This album makes you think of art and the cold. It's very good.

Mark Taylor

THE RADIATORS FROM SPACE - TV Tube. Heart. (Chiswick Wk 4)

When Chiswick released the first RADIATORS single, 'Television Screen', a few months ago it was described by Steve Mick in Sniffin' Glue as a "Moronic mess". It was a moronic mess, a good tune but it was lost in the over-heaviness of the band. A remixed version of that single opens this album and the change is unbelievable because it's great. It's slower, well paced and you can hear all the words. The voices are on top and the quality of the song shines like a diamond. On this album the RADIATORS along with producer Roger Armstrong have performed miracles. Each song comes across as a classic, there's 13 tracks and

13 possible A-sides. The album as an album is stunning.

The first side seems to be a concept job every song being based on the strength of the media. In Dublin, where all the group come from, there's the 'Television Screen' and the 'Sunday World' (which is an Irish paper which gave the RADIATORS a bad time after a murder incident at a gig in Ireland earlier this year). They sing with the utmost conviction, even hate, in their voices:

"You're just looking for a big sensation,
You ain't talking about my generation".

('Press Gang'. copyright
Rockin' Music.)

As well as being a tasty social comment this album is a great rock album. Guitars going like the clappers, nice hooks, powerful choruses. Standout tracks are the opener 'Television Screen', 'Sunday World', 'Contact', 'Electric Shares' and the new single 'Enemies'. A RADIATOR told me that all the songs are old and new ones are better. Well, if they've got a better collection of songs than this the next album's gonna be a motherfucker.

I noticed that most of the newer new-wave bands seem to be a bit grey in terms of musical format. The productions always seem to be foggy, especially on the small independent labels. I expected that from this album but I'm glad I'm wrong. The RADIATORS have come up with the best new-wave album next to 'The Clash' because they've simply sung and played their truth. You get a fair idea of how frustrating it is to live out in Dublin, to be restricted to the TV and dopey press cover-up jobs. Even the music papers aren't any better, the RADIATORS have learnt a lot from their experiences with 'em. They wanna be heard and they're going the right way about it:

"Contact, we gotta make contact,
To you out there,
To you out there."

('Contact'. Copyright
Rockin' Music.)

Mark Taylor

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WANTED: ZIGZAGS 22, 30, 31, 34, 35, 42, 43. RECORDS: Get the Picture-Pretty Things; Mike Hart Bleeds; Blossom Toes singles; Mickey Jupp stuff. If anyone has photos and memorabilia from the British Beat era (62-66) please let me know your price paid, or if money is not your only lust I can offer a cassette by the VIPs (15 tracks) or albums: Mason Proffitt Bunte, Woxdorfer, Weg 20, 2107, Rosengarde 6, West Germany. SMASHED AND BLOCKED! A discography of selected UK pop of the 60s. An essential supplement from BAM BALAM magazine. 50p inc p&p - Brian Hogg, Flat 1, Castellau, Dunbar, East Lothian, Scotland.

HAND SCREEN PRINTED POSTERS in five colours. Wilko Johnson Captain Beefheart, The Ramones; £1.20 inc p&p. Special runs done to order. 061-205-0919. Masks Studio, Regina Mill, 30 Poland Street, Ancoats, Manchester 4.

XS - the magazine that covers everything. Send 30p to; Alternate Title, 19 Martin Close, Whitwick, Leicester LE6 4DY.

AUCTION-Bowie, Dylan, Who, Floyd, Stones, Genesis, etc. SAE lists Bridges, Flat 26, 99 Newport Court, London WC2.

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