

30p \$1.50

No 85 July 1978

# ZIGZAG

SI O U X S I E



BANSHEES

THE CLASH the boys Doll by The STUDIO TELEVISION Only Ones rockabilly Results 2.3

# ZIGZAG 85

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EDITORIAL ADDRESS:-  
69A STANBRIDGE RD.  
LEIGHTON BUZZARD  
BEDS.

ADS + COMPLAINTS:  
PHOENIX MAGS LTD.  
118 TALBOT RD.  
LONDON W11

ZIGZAG IS PUBLISHED  
MONTHLY (!) BY PHOENIX  
MAGAZINES LTD.  
ADS: PHONE DAVID  
MARLOWE (01-221-7422  
OR 0865-776015)

ADS MUST BE IN BY 15<sup>TH</sup>  
OF MONTH BEFORE PUB.

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# WATCH THE MUSCLES TWITCH FOR A BRAND NEW SWITCH...

THIS IS THE FIRST ZIGZAG WITH OUR NEW PUBLISHERS, PHOENIX MAGAZINES LTD, AND SO FAR YOU PROBABLY DON'T THINK IT LOOKS THAT DIFFERENT... BUT WAIT UNTIL YOU TURN THE PAGE AND SEE THE NEW TYPE-FACE - JUST LIKE N.M.E.! THIS ISSUE IS VERY MUCH A "WAY-FEELER" FOR US BUT WE HOPE IT MARKS A NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR THE MAG (OUR 87<sup>TH</sup>!). LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT OUR INSIDES...

FIRST, THANK A BUNCH FOR YOUR POLL FORMS. THE RESPONSE WAS FAR GREATER THAN WE'D ANTICIPATED AND VERY INTERESTING. IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE NATION IS CURRENTLY OBSESSED EN MASSE WITH SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES, ELVIS, I. DURY, BLONDIE, THE CLASH AND STILL THE PISTOLS. OH! AND THE BUZZCOCKS, WHOSE 'KITCHEN' LP BEAT THE 'BOLLOCKS' ALBUM BY JUST FOUR VOTES AFTER A NECK-AND-NECK RACE. SEE, IT'S YOUR VOTES THAT COUNT (FRIENDS!) AND IF YOU DIDN'T TAKE PART DON'T EVER WRITE ME LETTERS SAYING YOU WANT MORE GENESIS, ELP, SABBATH, YESMITH OR TOM JONES AGAIN (RESULTS OF 'WHO YOU'D MOST LIKE TO SEE IN ZIGZAG' AND 'FAVE R'N'R MOMENT' WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH. THE REST ARE IN THE MIDDLE PAGES (WINNERS RECEIVE THE ZIGZAG GOLDEN EGG-CUP AWARD!)

## SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES

ARE A UNIQUE BAND (NOT JUST MUSICALLY), COS THEY BECAME ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP LIVE ACTS - AND COULDN'T GET A RECORD CONTRACT! HERES AN UPDATE ON THEM SINCE WE LAST FEATURED THEM IN OCTOBER...

## THE CLASH

ARE CURRENTLY PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO A NEW ALBUM (WHICH SHOULD BE HUGE JUDGING BY THE WAY THEY SWEEPED OUR POLL). ROBIN BANKS WAS THERE...

## DOLL BY DOLL

MYSTERIOUS, BRILLIANT, PRACTICALLY UNKNOWN, DOLL BY DOLL ARE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BANDS I'VE HEARD FOR A LONG TIME. WE ALL GO OUT ON THE LIMB ON THIS ONE!

## TELEVISION

JOHN TOBLER HAS A WORD WITH TV'S TOM, AND ALSO CONTRIBUTES AN ENORMOUS ROCKABILLY ROUND-UP WHICH WAS SO BIG IT BOOTED OUR SINGLES REVIEWS (DONE BY THE BOYS) OUT OF THE MAG!

## ONLY ONES

ARE CURRENTLY HOT AND HERE THEY ARE TALKING TO ALAN ANGER (WHO RECENTLY GOT RUN OVER - THE COPPER SAID HE COULD HAVE BOUGHT IT IF HE HADN'T BEEN PISSED AND LIMP-LIMBED!).

## THERE'S ALSO 2.3, THE QUICK AND, OF COURSE! THE GROOVIES.

AND FAVE REGULARS LIKE J. WALTERS. WHAT MORE COULD YOU WANT? love KMSxx

SIOUXSIE PIC: DEAGL RIDGERS



# THE FRONT BIT VENUE VIOLENCE

*Recent skirmishes involving management thugs v. those attending at the Music Machine, the Marquee, the Rainbow, the Bell — in fact nearly all rock venues — continue to illustrate that until we restructure our environment along lines compatible with our ideals, we will forever eat shit.*

THE fact that our projected cultural upheaval has failed to consolidate into additional lines of strategic action has resulted in the undermining and subtle upturning of the whole ideology loosely termed "new wave".

At the moment we have no real channels for positive change, and with such recent negative interplay in the very wombs of our future culture — rock venues — it is impossible to pretend any longer that we do.

We have seriously underestimated the problems and overestimated our strengths. Not only does this endanger the further progression of our music and all that is associated with it, but we could lose what we have already achieved.

We must face facts, and the fact that the venues are NOT our own is instrumental in thwarting our "art" and its potential and effect.

Physical violence towards patrons of rock music is only one of the many pernicious hardships we encounter each and every time we enter a rock venue. From the moment we arrive at the gates of what should be our palaces, we are subjected to a constant barrage of psychological violence simply because the proprietors are all too often inimical to the very values we promote.

We cannot flourish in such environs. Until the hostility that pervades our music centres is removed we are simply suffocating, our ideas stillborn.

Because the present structures are engineered to counter the very energy-freeing process that would destroy them, and because we can no longer afford to be bound up in dealing with the essentially petty problems of fighting structural deformities, we face the difficult but vital task of reappraising and then restructuring the entire situation.

What we are calling for is the removal of barriers and thus the release of energies that will make a truly productive culture possible. What might we give birth to were we free to unleash a wholly positive creative energy?

It is harder and harder these days to want to attend the concerts we once found so invigorating. Not only are current atmospheres poisoned due to ex-

tortive prices and the violences discussed here, but it must be said that the music itself is suffering from the lack of true response: action. It is ludicrous to attend events in which contradictions are impassable, and a natural boycott is already ensuing.

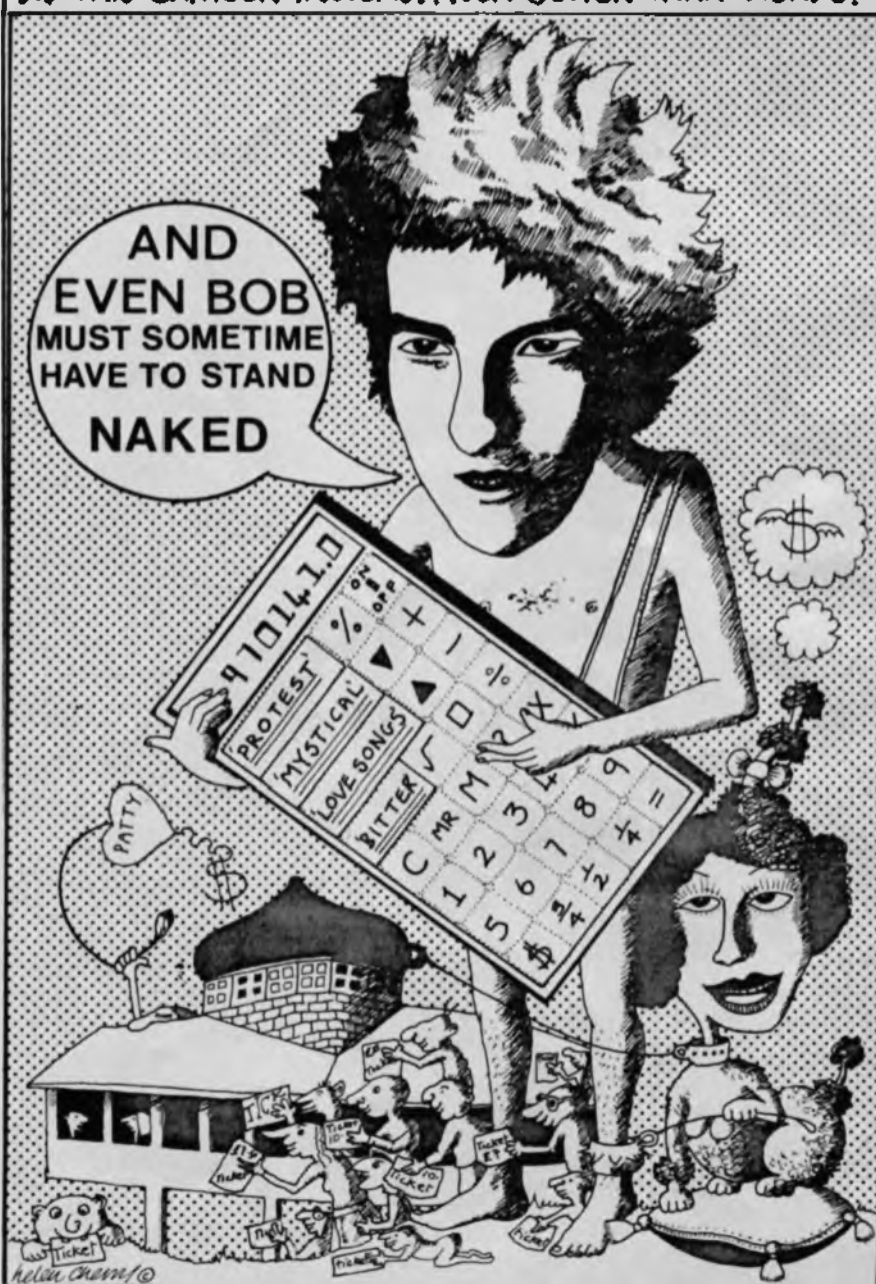
We must turn to the immediate task of creating centres according to our needs. The problem seems vast, but so

did the problem of replacing the old wave with the new. We DID create alternative, responsible music, and we SHALL create alternative responsible centres.

The ultimate goal is the supplanting of all obsolete models with new models for tomorrow and tomorrow.

Robin Banks and  
Annette Weatherman

WE'D LOVE TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BRING YOU A REVIEW OF BOB DYLAN BUT IT SEEMS WE WEREN'T DEEMED "IMPORTANT" ENOUGH TO GO... BUT HELEN CHERRY DID THIS CARTOON INSTEAD. MUCH BETTER THAN WORDS!





DEREK RIDGERS

"I CAN'T wait to get into Polydor and run wild 'round the secretaries and throw all their typewriting paper and get their ribbons twisted. They hate us 'cos we're not like a record company band. They make comments about us but it'll be great, we'll make it so much hell for them!"

Siouxsie and the Banshees may have become another conquest for the Polydor empire but no way are they gonna sit on the Director's knee and slobber eternal thanks in his ear. They anticipate battles, a lot of pressure and already, as Siouxsie says above, are getting the office workers' backs up with their no-pandering behaviour.

The Banshees' agreement with Polydor gives the group complete control over ads, packaging, track choices... everything. They wouldn't have signed otherwise — that's why it's taken 18 months to get a deal.

First release will be a single out next month — "Hong Kong Garden" — with a special on the 'B' side. Their debut album — which will be produced by the band — is scheduled for the beginning of October. They'll record everything they know, "and just decide what goes on and what stays off".

This is good news for a lot of people. The Banshees roared off with the "Best Unsigned Band" title in the "Zigzag" poll with only The Slits in the rear-view mirror. Now, the group are well aware that a lot of this acclaim is Press-fostered cult epidemic — people like the Banshees before they've even heard 'em, having just read and seen the pictures of Siouxsie. On the other hand, bootleg vinyl made up of the now legendary John Peel sessions was selling at twenty quid a go, and just before the Polydor signing Banshees' manager Nils Stevenson and Peel producer John Walters sat down and seriously talked about the possibility of releasing the Banshees on the BBC label. It was possibly the threat of this prospective action which galvanised Polydor into talking business. Now the group are gonna be stable-mates to the Bee Gees rather than "The Best of the Weather Forecast". We'll be able to see if the public really wants Siouxsie and the Banshees invading the comfort of their own home.

Last time the Banshees appeared in "Zigzag" was October, when they were still gaining momentum and improving at an alarming rate, seeming to play the Vortex at least every week to small, stunned crowds, shell-shocked by their uncompromising point blank stare. Their harsh polar readings of songs like "Carcass" (the butcher who fell in love with his meat), "Love in a Void" and "Captain Scarlet" were away from the norm in those punky times of not-dead-yet 1977, but as the group got better (musically, that is — visually and as an idea they were always great), the crowd got bigger until they found they could successfully cope with the Music Machine and Rainbow 'round about Christmas.

In the first half of '78 any Banshees' gig in London saw endless queues; their following was that of a band with successful singles and an album under its belt, 'cos don't forget all this time Siouxsie and the Ban-



STEVENSON

SHOXSIE-SHOXS

KENNY MORRIS

JOHN M'KAY

STEVEN SEVERIN

shees were contract-less. Not for want of trying, either. They were repeatedly let down at the last minute for the stupidest of record company reasons. It was a situation like there's never been before and hopefully there never will be again. As our multi-million pound music industry saw inadequate that a band with its own ideas of doing things but enjoying mass popularity is unable to find a vehicle to get its music on vinyl and into the hands of those fans? A few weeks ago, when BBC Records seemed the only way, it looked as if the answer would have to be a resounding YES, and the purpose of this article and having the Banshees on the front page was to draw attention to this fact. Suddenly, though, it's like someone turned on the lights and the companies have woken up in the middle of the night. Hello Polydor.

So, our original "Sign the Banshees!" theme is switched to "The Banshees have signed!" and we meet at a wine bar opposite Soho Park to talk about it, amongst other things. Eventually the conversation, which takes place on a park bench and in a pizza restaurant, goes on for three hours as the Banshees warm to certain topics. Present are the whole band: Siouxsie Sioux (vocals); Steven Severin (bass); Kenny Morris (drums); John McKay (gtr).

ZZ: How do you feel now you've finally got a deal?

SS: It hasn't registered yet really. It's been so long without a deal that until we actually get into a studio and exer-

cise our authority we won't realise we've signed. So many things have happened at the last minute when we thought we were going to be signed, and then it happens that they're not willing to give us what we want. That's being going on for a year and a half, something like that. For instance, RCA said we weren't compatible with their other artists.

ZZ: Huh! Why?

SS: Well, they obviously think that John Denver and Iggy get on, but not us. I don't know, it's just an excuse. We had those sort of answers all the time. It was just baffling. "Well, we're sure you'll sell records but we don't really like you, we don't like the name," or something. That goes for Virgin as well, they were as non-committal as anyone else. They just want bands like XTC and Magazine, that's like a package deal for them. I'm not splitting hairs but it's a safe bet with those sort of hands. Apparently avant garde but still safe.

ZZ: Didn't the fact that you could sell out the Music Machine and the 100 Club mean anything?

SS: No, 'cos they didn't turn up or were too drunk to know.

SS: The disgusting thing about record companies and A and R men is that they're on a wage, to do whatever they want really. If they go to gigs they're just in the booze part drinking away and if they get drunk they say it was a good gig. It's amazing, they're just so lax. There's not nearly enough scouts or anything to see if there's anyone

new.

ZZ: Do you think that, in a way, you've been an example of how inefficient and stupid record companies can be?

SS: Yes. Exactly.

KM: Where's the A and R man's power for a start? When they've bothered to come and see a group and they go back to the Man Upstairs and tell him they're convinced you're worth looking at and should be signed, and sometimes the Man Upstairs just doesn't wanna know for some mysterious reason. The sort of people who you have to put up with who come to the gig to judge you! That guy, Dave Dee, people like that — where's their taste and judgement? I think he said something about us like "Punk's dead". How can you answer a thing like that even?

SS: We've also shown up a lot of hands as well. Maybe if they'd said "No, we don't want you to control us, we've got ideas of our own" ... we've either shown that they're weak or they haven't got anything in their head that they want to control — and that's the most important thing. It's the bands themselves that are just as much to blame. We all know it's a business to those kinds of people and the best thing is to take advantage of them.

ZZ: So you think bands pander to their companies?

SS: Well, it's a vicious circle. They pander and the businessmen think "Well, we can get someone that can do what we want or we can take a risk and get someone that think they know



what they want." Plus the fact people in the business are old and most of them are reflecting on what was great ten years ago or they're just in it as a business to sell on "Top of the Pops" or something.

ZZ: But this time about a year ago every "Punk" band under the sun was getting signed up, all the shit. Didn't you (as one of the good hands I might add) get companies after you then?

KM: Yeah, but any deal they offered us was just insulting.

SS: It was obvious they just saw every-one as something that would last a year, and we were so insulted that we turned them down all the time and I mean, what's happened to those bands that signed up a year ago?

ZZ: Do you think the companies were scared of you.

SS: Yeah, like the music business hasn't progressed as much as books have. Take it that way. Why shouldn't it, it's just another art form and it should have progressed, but it hasn't. It's just stayed stagnant for about ten or twenty years. There's lots of brain-washing. Just think, our commercial competitors are the Bee Gees! We're fighting against the euphoria point of view — people just see a gig or a record as a release to not worry about everyday things. We're bringing out everyday things in not so colourful ways.

ZZ: You said you made sure that your contract gave you a lot of control but don't you think Polydor are going to try and shove you in the glossy market?

KM: Oh, they'll try, I'm sure they will. All the fun of the fair's to come!

ZZ: Do you foresee a nice, long battle?

SS: Well, yeah, I mean I think we don't exist if we don't have something to fight against.

ZZ: It must be a great temptation for Polydor to try and thrust you (Siouxsie) forward as a figurehead like Debbie Harry has been.

SS (with I-knew-that-was-coming grin): Yes, yes, yes! I think every record company we've come into contact with wanted to do that but we were aware of it. That's how we could stop it. It's like it's a barrier. If it's a girl — "Oh, she's just flogging an image, she hasn't really got anything to say" — and they like that. Whereas if they think she's competition for someone else, if she's got as much there as anyone else, more so, then they don't like that. Everyone's so conditioned to think men say this and girls follow behind or just look pretty.

ZZ: What sort of reactions have you been getting at gigs now? (Shocked silence was often the case in the early days.)

KM: We still get a lot of shell-shock but sometimes we get mass hysteria.

SS: Huddersfield was like the Beatles. At the front they were crying! But we've come across a lot of . . . like in Durham, round Newcastle and that, I just despise it so much when up north — and even in London — there's a sort of patriotism with a plot of land. It's like a lot of people went there just to say "Piss off you old slag. Newcastle Punk rules!"

KM: They think we're proud of London but we don't feel attached to anywhere, anything, anyone. They've got

this terrible chip on their shoulder.

SS: We hate London as much as anywhere, let's face it, you can do a lot more in London but there's no point being patriotic about a plot of land. But they're just boneheads. Narrow-minded. . . Or else you get the jet-set elitism and everything. It's still just as bad to like something for the sake of it because it's so decadent, dahling.

KM: We don't get that much any more. The Ants have taken over! I hated all that. There seemed to be a little feeling at the time that it was trendy to like the Banshees, and the Elite would like them because they weren't signed and all that kind of stuff, and that's really awful.

SS: But it's really important that whatever gig we do, it doesn't matter what odds there are that they're all idiots out there or whatever, there's always a few that get something out of it. They get a feeling across — and that's why we do gigs.

ZZ: How do you want to affect audiences then?

SS: Just want them to question certain things really. So many people take so much for granted.

KM: It's really sad. You see loads of little kids and most haven't seen you before and they've come liking, loving you, already, and all they've done is read the papers. The papers said so. It's bad.

ZZ: How do you think you'll cope with success?

KM: Yeah, a lot of people are going to stop having a trendy look at the Banshees for the wrong reasons. They're gonna go the other way as soon as we get signed, you can see it. One journalist will pick up on anything and stick the boot in and another one will think, "Oh yeah, that's what we'll do this week, too." It won't affect us at all.

ZZ: You think people will start accusing you of selling out?

SS: We've always made it quite clear that we would sign if we got what we wanted. We'd have signed ages ago.

KM: It's going to be even more of a challenge the fact that we've been signed. It's not stepping into a bed of roses like an outsider might think. Completely the opposite 'cos there's gonna be more problems, more pressures.

STEVE: We've always aimed to get into one of the Big Five companies. Everybody else got signed up but hardly anybody got into those five companies. Most of the bands signed to silly companies like Decca and Pye.

SS: I can't understand bands that are in love with the idea of being underground. If they've got something to offer why don't they make it appear on the television or radio. It's like a sort of love relationship that "if we remain underground we'll have some credibility." If we got to number one on "Top of the Pops" it'd be a great achievement. It is starting and is what we're striving for.

KM: Some people have often said things like "How come you've had all this trouble and a group like Devo hasn't?" The fact is Devo are such a comfortable package. It's all there, all their strangeness that isn't. It's all dead comfortable.

SS: As much as they're trying to go against what's normal they're making

rules and taboos for something that's abnormal, which is ridiculous.

STEVE: If you take all the hype away and take what all these groups put on vinyl, even that is just rubbish.

ZZ: "Sounds" put you in their "New Musick" supplement with Devo and all them. . . .

SS: Oh, it's always with Wire and XTC. XTC are a joke band. They're comedians and I don't like comedians, not realised comedians. I think the best comedians are people who don't know it.

ZZ: Do you wanna go to the States yourselves?

SS: We could've gone and done CBGBs and Max's, two sets a night and be like a real job over there, a residency. We didn't want to do that 'cos, for a start, those places are clubs and they attract the sort of elitist part that think "Oh, they're so wonderful, they're from London! Look at their clothes and make-up!" We want to go over there and do big places 'cos we work in big places, I think. We're not a Club Band, I don't think. We come across if you look at us as a whole. We did the Ally Pally because it was something different. It wasn't a Rock Venue, and I think a lot of bands should explore lots of different places to do gigs. It's so disgusting just doing the Rainbow, the Marquee, Wembley. They're either too small or too big.

ZZ: What about some of the new songs?

SS: Well, the words are getting more complicated. One's called "The Staircase (mystery)". It's a waltz and is about an unsolved mystery.

Sioux shows me her exercise book with words written in. The more recent stuff is indeed more involved, and "The Staircase" is a mystery. . . .

*I was standing on the landing  
now I'm standing in the hall  
Looking up  
Won't someone assist me  
Solve the mystery  
Somebody assist me  
arrange the symmetry*

ZZ: Do the words always come first?

SS: The words are normally written about four months before the music.

JM: The music doesn't actually go with the words. I usually sit at home and come up with a few things, but they always relate to the lyrics afterwards. It depends on how Sioux or Steve feels about the music to go with the verse.

KM: We're dying to get working, start getting some stuff down on vinyl before it rots. We're thinking so far ahead of what we're doing at this time because we've been supplying everything and getting nothing back, and so it's like we're there with a vengeance almost. We're racing ahead in our own minds, we've got to record an album, we've got to put these songs down . . . but they won't lack the strength they ever had.

"Switch" is another new song. Siouxsie's words deal with people swapping jobs and the disturbing results. Like most Banshees lyrics it doesn't state but drops oblique hints making it all the more creep-creepy. . . . (I think "Switch" is some of the best words Sioux's come up with). . .



Different lives  
in different places  
familiar problems  
same old faces  
Shuffle lives  
into wrong categories  
cross the wires  
and fuse humanities  
Watch the muscles twitch  
for a brand new switch  
Scientist GPs  
with patient guinea-pigs  
curing their headaches  
with drastic side effects  
Switch

Doctor rectorates  
condescending from on high  
for all hallucinators  
See druggist in the sky  
Switch

Vicar experiments  
but 'tis blasphemy  
This missing thought of progress  
as the mark of devilry  
Watch the muscles twitch  
for a brand new switch

People walk  
and even talk  
People listen  
then they halt  
Something blows up  
won't come down  
Scattered muscles twitch  
too late to switch!

Switch . . .  
they're dying to switch . . .

(Siouxsie-Siouxsie: "Pure")

"Mittagerzen" is a Banshees song much misunderstood — "used" whenever the old Nazi-chic shtick is dredged up against them. It was for shock-show.

OK? but the group are genuinely interested in that period of history, and "Mittagerzen (Metal)" is a tribute to John Hartfield, an anti-Nazi propagandist of pre-war Hitler days. He had to leave that country. . . .

It's ruling our lives  
there is no hope  
thought I'd drop a line  
the weather here is fine  
but day and night it blares  
commanding through loudspeakers —  
Metal is tough, metal will sheen  
Metal won't rust when oiled and  
cleaned  
Metal is tough, metal will sheen  
Metal will rule in my master scheme  
(Siouxsie-Siouxsie: "Pure")

The chorus is from one of Goethe's speeches, hence casual misunderstandings.

ZZ: You do seem to have been misunderstood quite a bit all along, right?

SS: It's when they're confronted that they try and twist it into something they don't have to understand, they don't have to confront it. They have to twist it to suit themselves.

STEVE: We'll have the lyrics on the album so we should be able to clear a lot of things and go on from there.

SS: I mean, early lyrics were simple, but even then with those simple things it's nothing different. It's just explaining what is around you, and people still feel the need not to realise that. They try to make it, "oh, it's a quaint little imagination they've got", or something, but it's not. It's not decadent or anything.

ZZ: Did you think you'd get as big as this when you got the proto-type Banshees together at the 100 Club Festival?

STEVE: No.

SS: No, I think that's the most important thing. The first thing we ever did publicly was so spontaneous and not with a view in mind that we'd get a contract. I mean, so many bands go out with equipment and everything really worked out but it's worked out in the same way that everyone else has worked it out. The times we'd be headlining places and have bands support us and we'd borrow their drum kit 'cos their equipment was better than ours, you know, all that sort of thing. It was ridiculous, but it shows that that's not the important thing about a band.

ZZ: You were practically the first ever Pistols fans so were you disappointed when they split?

SS: No, I was disappointed with them a long time before, the way they went. I could never work out if it was a selfish point of view, because the time they were at the 100 Club, there was hardly anyone there for a start and they offended a lot of people as well. Then it got so acceptable and they began to accept it themselves as well. I don't think it was selfish. I think it was just as well they split really.

ZZ: You seem to have overcome some of the problems which beset them, like being shunned by record companies.

SS: It all depends if we explode really. If everybody starts liking us then we're going to find it very hard!

Kris Needs

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BBA059	SELAISIE NO. 2
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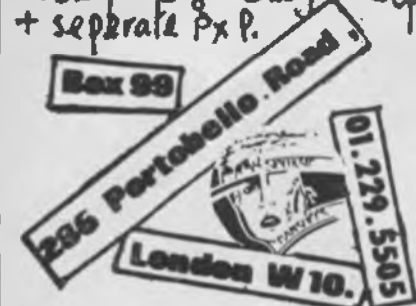
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BBC064	BLACK SLATE
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# DRUG STABBING TIME

## CLASH STUDIO REPORT

MICK Jones raises a quizzical eyebrow and addressing nobody in particular demands, "Whose gonna play me at pool then? For a quid...?" The ensuing silence is deafening, but eventually a "victim" is coerced into combat. Two minutes later, as Jones deftly pots the black and collects his almost inevitable winnings a fleeting smile crosses his gaunt features. Obviously the idea that he can combine the arduous task of recording the band's long awaited second album with the occasional piece of ace hustling is one that he finds amusing. But The Clash are here to work, and that is precisely what they've been doing over the past month or so, and under the auspices of ebullient American producer Sandy Pearlman and engineer Corky, they are rapidly approaching completion of an album that this writer believes will see them even more firmly established as one of Britain's premier rock bands. The Clash have been working up to sixteen hours a day, and with Jones and Pearlman pursuing the perfection that both of them always seek in anything they are involved with, the end result is not only going to come as a major surprise to any of the band's detractors, but to some of their many fans as well.

In simpler terms the band have always been more than one step ahead of any of their current contemporaries, and the songs on this LP take them far beyond the confines of a movement that they themselves were so instrumental in founding.

The Jones/Strummer song writing team have been revelling in an orgy of creativity of late, and songs like "Drug Stabbing Time," "Groovy Times," "Guns on the Roof" (an ode to The Clash firearms charges), "Stay Free," "Safe European Homes," and "Operation Julie" (a seathing attack on the recent acid busts and the subsequent horrifying sentences) are just some of the results. Other songs that are up for inclusion are "One Emotion," "English Civil War" and "Last Gang in Town," the latter of which you may already know. In actual fact, the band have a surfeit of material, and all the songs are of such a high standard that it is going to be very difficult to decide exactly which ones to hold over for the

future. However, that decision is best left to Jones, Strummer and Pearlman although in my book, of the last three, "English Civil War" and "Last Gang in Town" are musts.

With all the backing tracks completed, the onus is now on Joe and Mick to provide vocals and overdubs, a slow, gruelling process for the pair of them, though thankfully, from the vocal takes that I've been present at I can say that at last it seems Joe has made a full and very welcome recovery from his recent bout of throat trouble. His voice now seems to have recaptured the raucous strength it had in his 101ers days, and this is indeed good news for everyone connected with the band.

It is interesting to note that other regular visitors to the studio have been a film crew. They have footage of The Clash live onstage, at their various court appearances and in the studio, and the end result is to be a full length feature film that will eventually go on general release. As is well known by now, it is virtually impossible to work with The Clash unless one is "accepted", and it says something for the people involved in the filming that there have been virtually no confrontations as yet. The crew have adopted an almost surreptitious role, and that fact in itself would seem to suggest that the end result will be footage of the band at their most natural, with no posing or play acting for the cameras. Another point to note is that the same crew who are working with The Clash at present, had the winning entry in a recent Cannes film festival, so this is going to be no home movie.

At night the studio takes on an eerie, dreamlike quality, and the tiredness and strain of getting everything as right as possible is evident in all the faces present. Clash roadie Johnny "whose round is it?" Green, aided and abetted by both Paul Simonon and Nicky Headon relieve the pressure by having a spontaneous competition to see who can rearrange the lounge furniture in the most unexpected style. Johnny, a tall, gangling, stork-like figure comes out just about on top. His marginal victory is celebrated by a rapid swoop on the drinks machine, and another can of lager can be added to the prodigious





quantities that he consumes every night. Such activities as furniture piling are all part of everyday life with The Clash, and in fact they were ejected from a previous studio because Nicky decided to bring his motorbike in and ride it around, and Paul felt that the tropical plants looked better upside down!

Meanwhile Joe Strummer reclines on a sofa, keeping one eye on Scotland's dismal World Cup showing, while with the other expertly skinning up. We had all sat around and watched his chat show debut in which he acquitted himself rather well: certainly winning hands down in the colour stakes with his brilliant canary yellow shirt.

A more serious matter is the fact that both Headon and Simonon (and Banks! — Ed.) are on bail for the now notorious gun charges. This has been a constant source of albeit suppressed worry and concern, and they have already appeared in court on three different occasions, and this despite the fact that they elected not to be tried in the Crown courts in the hope of getting the whole process over with as soon as possible. It is unfortunate that the matter

cannot as yet be gone into in any great detail as it is of course still sub judice, but there are certainly some rather disturbing aspects to the whole affair. The careers of two young men (Simonon of excellent previous character) could be jeopardised, and the whole matter has already taken its toll on both the drummer and the bass guitarist, not to mention the other two musicians involved, Steve and Peter Dinklage. The continual problem of police harassment of rock musicians, or indeed any members of the "counter culture" is one that I would like to deal with at greater length in a future issue; but it is almost an understatement to say that The Clash have had more than their fair share of this sort of treatment. At present both Headon and Simonon face very heavy fines, and there are less well known side-effects of a lengthy, drawn-out trial, e.g., continual "verbalising" from certain police officers involved, this specifically designed to lower resistance levels at any further "close encounters". Indeed, it is only recently that all the accused have had their bail conditions altered. Now at least they don't have to "sign on" at

a police station once a day.

Back to the studio, where the seemingly endless business of getting all the tracks completed continues. One of the numbers that already hits you right between the eyes even at this early stage is "Groovy Times", an instantly hummable tune of almost anthem-like proportions, and guaranteed to keep you awake at nights simply because you can't dislodge the haunting chorus line from your brain. Another track that immediately stands out is the poignant "Stay Free" which is quite certainly one of the best songs written for years. Similar in its lyrical conception to the CRB's ever-popular "Martin", Robinson himself has already admitted that it beats his own composition hands down. But then, all the songs that I have heard so far are sheer musical dynamite, and I'm sure that they will only improve with further hearing. This second album means one hell of a lot to The Clash, and they have put one hell of a lot of effort into it. Me, well I can't wait to actually get the finished vinyl on my turntable. And that is where it will be staying for a long, long time to come.

Robin Banks



# TV TUBE HEART

TELEVISION'S TOM TALKS TO TOBLER.

ZZ: I get the impression that the first album was the album that the record company wanted you to make and the new album is more the album you wanted to make. Any truth in that?  
TV: Um, There was no pressure from Elektra to make any kind of album really. They just have some confidence in us that the other labels didn't. We had four labels interested in us after three years of playing around New York, and some guys immediately start talking about producers, and who we shall do a record with. Elektra's attitude is so much freer than the other guys. No pressure.

ZZ: One of the things that I read about you was that you confiscated a tape recorder from Lou Reed at one of your gigs. Is there any truth in that?

TV: Yeah: That's absolutely true (laughs)! That just comes out of bad experience with other people selling tapes. I just can't figure out why he wanted a tape of us, basically. What's this guy coming down to this for to make a tape of some band for? There's so many unscrupulous people in rock'n'-roll, let's put it that way. The whole thing is like some kind of unscrupulous art.

ZZ: You mentioned you had a difficult experience previously, and I also read that that may have had something to do with your Island demos, which you detected certain parts of perhaps appearing on a Bryan Ferry album.

TV: Actually it wasn't a Bryan Ferry album, it was the Roxy Music "Siren" record, which is probably the same thing as a Bryan Ferry record. But, who really knows? There were just little things in there, little lines, lyrics here and there. It's not major upsetting stuff.

ZZ: You mentioned that Elektra didn't really pressure you to do anything but I have read that you had a slight alteration with them about which tracks should be singles or something. Is there any truth in them.

TV: No, there's no truth in that. See, Elektra's broken up all world wide. We don't know what's going on in England. If they put out something as a single, I don't really care, I'm glad they put out a single. In the States they don't put them out at all really.

ZZ: No, I just read that was in the context of you having a pretty hard time recording this album because of various things which were happening, like your leaving your management and Richard Lloyd being sick for a while. Was it a struggle to do this record?

TV: It wasn't a struggle. We took the time to do it because we wanted a better sound quality, which takes a lot more time to get, and a lot of stuff was arranged in the studio, basically, um, because I don't have a piano or anything and I can't play very well, I didn't have time to rehearse — if so, I just made up parts in the studio and played them till I got them right. We took more time in that sense. Also a couple of those tunes were more or less written in the studio. In other words, trying out a part and if it didn't work, trying out another one. Not wasting time but you'd be able to hear things better in the studio than you can in a room where four people are playing

all the time.

ZZ: You changed your co-producer for this album. Was there any particular reason for that?

TV: Just wanted a different sound. Whoever you work with is going to get you a different sound, because, you know, everybody is unique, everybody gets there different sound.

ZZ: So what's this guy John Jansen been before?

TV: I'd never heard of him before. He was just suggested to me by a guy in Blue Oyster Cult who'd worked with him. He was good, easy to work with. He did a Supertramp record. I think he did "Crime of the Century". He may have worked on "Lisztomania", something like that. He's worked on all sorts of little stuff and hasn't been credited. As a matter of fact he mixed the Meat Loaf record that's out but I don't think he got credit for that.

ZZ: It seems from reading the British Press — of course I haven't seen the American Press — that you're experiencing some kind of backlash. Do you feel anything about that?

TV: I don't feel it. I mean, I've seen it happen to other acts. That happened to Patti Smith here. I even saw it happen to Lou Reed if I'm not mistaken. It's just that the British Press tends to pan what they previously liked, plus most of the writers on this new record aren't what I'd call writers, they're just sort of these excitable personalities, do you know what I mean?

ZZ: Well put. The record is, in fact, considerably different from "Marquee Moon". It seems on a brief acquaintance, more relaxed. The intensity seems to have left to some extent. Are you aware of that?

TV: I don't know if the intensity's left. I think it's just . . . firstly, there's

no point in making the same record twice; second, the first record was done as a live record and it has a live feel to it. All live records have a certain intensity. They all have a particular sound quality which I think lacks a lot. Hurts. Relaxed? It is more relaxed, I don't think it's any less intense really. The songs are different. The songs are sung how they should be sung. You don't sing two songs the same way. Some call for different deliveries, so to speak.

ZZ: The urgency of the first album is only here a little bit in "Foxhole", I'd say.

TV: I don't know what you mean really.

ZZ: Well, you really sounded very concerned when you were recording the first album. The songs came out with a very definite edge to them. Some of these, I like them just as much, they're not so gripping in their way, I don't think.

TV: Well, they're not so gritty! Everything's more orchestrated on this record. There's a lot more ideas in it. It takes a lot more time to get a hold of it. The first one was very immediate. It's like a live show — you like it or you don't, it's immediate. This one's a lot more detached. It takes a lot more time for everybody to catch what's going on there in any given point on the record.

ZZ: You've introduced your own keyboard playing. Have you been doing that for a long time?

TV: Yeah, I've been doing that since I was six. I really can't play. I can't play on stage 'cos I hit so many wrong notes!

ZZ: I've read that the record's called "Adventure" and there is a song of the same title and it's not included on the

album. How did this happen?

TV: The song is about two years old, in fact we played it on tour here last year on a couple of dates. We recorded it and it didn't come out with the kind of strength we wanted on the record, although the title fit the album. Also the length of the album is what it was. If we'd put that on there the grooves would have closed up and the sound quality would have been out the window. We may never release "Adventure". After two years of playing it you tend to drop things. We used to have a repertoire of 50 songs, and you just drop them after a while because you get tired of playing them and you don't feel like recording them.

ZZ: It's noticeable to anybody that's blind that all your records are pressed on funny-coloured vinyl. Is that anything to do with you?

TV: No! That's nothing to do with me! We just come over here once a year and find out all this stuff!

ZZ: When you first came over last year the whole New Wave thing was obviously right in the middle of its path to destruction and you and Blondie and the Ramones and Talking Heads were the first hands that came. Did you ever really feel any affinity to any of those bands?

TV: I don't feel any affinity to any band. There's things I like but it's dangerous to feel too much affinity because it just becomes a thing where people pat each other on the back. That's not to say there's any personal dislike for musicians or anything, it's just that I think to maintain you've gotta keep yourself out of the market place in a certain sense.

ZZ: 'Cos all the others that I've mentioned have been touring here fairly frequently since that time.





TV: I've heard that myself.

ZZ: It seems, in fact, that most of the New York bands of the current era are better received in Britain than they are in America. Has that been your experience?

TV: Yeah, that's been true, but England's always been more interested in what's going on in New York. They don't seem particularly interested in what's going on in California. There is some sort of affinity between New York and London. I'm not sure what it is. It might just be, uh, the love of the individual or something, I don't know.

ZZ: You actually started CBGBs, you convinced the man to open it for music. Do you think that was a good thing in retrospect, apart from your own point of view?

TV: Yeah, it's a real good thing. It just opened up New York really, as a place where, regardless of the quality, people could work. The fact that it was successful meant four other clubs opened up in New York and are still going.

ZZ: The track which is on this album which is your favourite is "The Dream's Dream". Is that true for a start?

TV: Actually, that is my favourite track.

ZZ: This is not a track one might have anticipated coming from Television, but that's the name of the game, isn't it?

TV: I don't think people are gonna be able to anticipate us. I mean "Johnny Jewel" doesn't sound anything like our first record. I don't mean that in a self-congratulatory kind of way. The band has very wide interests, you know.

ZZ: But "The Dream's Dream" is a kind of . . .

ZZ: Orchestrated. That's all it is. Like "Marquee Moon" or "Johnny Jewel" or something, only orchestrated. There's more instruments, more happening. It's like sex. When you're sixteen and you first have sex you don't do much but by the time you're twenty-one you're doing more!

ZZ: It's very brief lyrically, and it almost sounds like part of the 'sixties, which is a thing which I think somebody said in one of your reviews, which is not fair, I suppose, but the 'sixties on the West Coast produced that kind of length . . .

TV: Oh, I see what you mean. Alright, the Doors. Love . . . I think the length doesn't matter, it just depends if it's successful on its length or not, whether it builds or whether it's hypnotic. There really are two choices, unless you're doing some conceptual work where your noise changes or something. John Cage or something.

ZZ: How do you, as the leader of the band, remain democratic in (a) the songwriting, and (b) the guitar solos?

TV: Um (laughs). Any band that has a leader, whether it's Creedence Clearwater or the Velvet Underground, with those bands there was one person behind the whole thing and people who liked the whole thing. Then there's other bands where there's teams, you know, the Beatles and the Stones being the two examples. It's hard to say how the whole thing happens. There's never been arguments about guitar solos, about who should have this one or that one, and there's never been any point

where someone's come in and insisted on doing a song they've written. I think it's bands develop unspoken understandings about things basically. ZZ: These songs, you said some were written in the studio, so they haven't had time, like the first album's songs, to develop.

TV: Almost all of them developed in the studio. "Foxhole" was something we'd done live. "Careful" was something we'd done live. The rest of them we hadn't done live.

ZZ: Do you think it lessened their appeal or impact, the fact that you hadn't played around with them in various situations for a couple of years?

TV: I think it made them difficult to record because the whole band wasn't completely familiar with them.

ZZ: Is there anything you intend to change in the band at this stage? You've made a very good start, you've carved into lots of markets and you've had hit records of greater or lesser size. It would seem that you're the kind of person who doesn't want to stand still at all. . . .

TV: We can't stand still, we're just that kind of group.

ZZ: One of the obvious ways you could change would be, for instance, to add another member. Has that ever occurred to you?

TV: It's occurred to me to add keyboards but it's not economic. If we got to a Led Zeppelin level we might add a keyboard player to fill out the sound.

ZZ: So you're not playing monster auditoriums yet in the States?

TV: No. We have offers when we go back to play some big places in the

Mid-West, but our record isn't out there. I don't know what our following is in the States. I've never seen a royalty statement in the States.

ZZ: This is why you left your management, isn't it?

TV: Yeah it is. One of the reasons.

ZZ: Your colleagues in the Patti Smith band were unwilling to talk about this because they left too. I gather.

TV: Well, all I can tell you is, we did an English tour last year, and never really saw any money for it and I still can't get to the bottom of where it went. If it was the promoter he wouldn't have been able to pick up other acts so I just think it was our management. It's a real common story. You don't think you'd sign with someone like that but you just don't know. Then you find out.

ZZ: I gather that you're about to change the non-original aspect of your set from "Knocking on Heaven's Door" to "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town". It seems a very peculiar choice!

TV: Well, you haven't heard us do "Ruby" yet, but we didn't get time to rehearse it so we won't be able to do it this time. Everybody has their doubts. I say "don't worry"! "Ruby's" a good song, it just needs a few lyrics changed round, and it needs a totally different management. But the basic of that song is there. It needs a little work, a different approach.

John Tobler

For all these and a great deal more...

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# Doll by Doll

*I pushed a penny in the toilet door  
then I quickly stepped inside  
to some graffiti and a greyhound paper  
and the gentle thought of suicide  
a razor blade would make the perfect  
bride*

("The Perfect Bride")

"WE'RE Doll by Doll. Sorry if you thought the Yachts were playing tonight. It's a thing called dishonest promotion. Last night we played at a place called Holly's in Silvertown, which is near the Royal Victoria Dock, in the dockland of East London. The drummer has a fractured jaw and a lot of stitches, and the lead guitarist has a few teeth missing. Between us we've just under 300 stitches, so we're not going to play too long a set tonight."

The words to the small High Wycombe crowd are barely out of his mouth and Jackie Leven is leading his still shell-shocked-and-battered band into the staccato intro of the opening number. For the next hour the band clings on like desperate men to a raft but manage a stunning set. Pain killers help but sheer bottle wins the encore.

Afterwards, manager Bruce (just "Bruce") collects the paltry gig fee which, as usual, will go straight to the Philadelphia Association, an outlaw charity which gives asylum to mentally-disturbed people who society has labelled "MAD" but would rather sort out their own problems.

Doll by Doll are no ordinary band — as will become even more apparent later. They're the first new group I've seen in the first half of '78 to get me excited again. A much-needed antidote to writing becoming another routine day-job.

This group occupy a real life cess-pit where few choose to wallow. They

make sneering punk posturing look cissy, other weak trends superficial and much of the rest redundant. Doll by Doll (the name comes from a poem by e. e. cummings — the man who "invented" no capitals in verse — called "the enormous room") are working on the edge of their minds, in their music, lifestyle, emotions. It's not easy — but then they don't want it to be. They could be signed-up with a big advance, counting the money from gigging most nights a week. Instead, they hold back and have various day-jobs in order to live while money for playing goes to charity. They steadfastly refuse to break the principles they set themselves — they'd sooner pack it in.

On stage souls are bared, nerve-ends jangle and emotions run riot . . . it can be too much for a crowd who just wanna boogie the night away — but you can do that too (sort of).

On the surface songs are "catchy" and rock along great, nodding at Springsteen, Lou Reed, classic rock'n'roll, the guitar interplay descended from Quicksilver and re-modelled by Television, Dylan . . . but it's thoroughly shot with outer-limit intensity and an unnerving unpredictability which'll catapult you cowering under your seat as Jackie, a huge, bearded half-Romany Scot, is suddenly left intoning unaccompanied intimidation over menacing double - echo firing - squad drumming ("Butcher Boy").

Sometimes the tension builds to crackle and burst, or the sound gets heavy and claustrophobic, other times dense-textured and melodic. Never less than attention-grabbing, often mesmerising . . . there's something about this group that goes beyond simple sound barriers, most apparent when they take off, which is frequent, and you feel your

head and heart strain to go too. It's almost overpowering, when every member (there are four) of the group is peaking and pouring every ounce of passion into a particular ear-popping passage . . . like the final screaming rush of the deceptively-titled "Palace of Love", which recalls nothing so much as the searing orgasmic glory of "Heroin" crossed with "Sister Ray" at its most crazed, guitarist Jo Shaw doubled over his AC30 scraping agony from his tortured guitar. By the relentless steamhammer crunch-coda the three front-men are all in various stages of death-agony approximation to the stage floor, Robin Spreafico on his knees nursing his flat-out bass like a shivering fallen war comrade. This electrifying four-minute moment brakes with a smashed-glass feedback howl, and there's a stunned silence before the enthusiastic applause, which seems so silly after THAT.

No histrionics though. Doll by Doll members strain at the seams of the emotional jigsaw they're carving on yours and their brain-plates but they're equally capable of pure inventive musicianship, aural green fields for wounds that won't heal, won't come to heel and form the often harrowing backbone of Jackie Leven's songs of love, hate and the confusion in between. Sometimes the emotion will falter, like when you try and talk and cry at the same time. "We're not afraid to show our weaknesses as well as our strengths." Normally bands sing and play at the same time, or just the latter, rarely only the former (cept in hold-your-nose folk dens). Not so, Jackie. No matter what smoked-out buzzing of audience or response, Jackie will sing the first verse of "An Honest Woman", unaccompanied . . . and wait as long as he feels like it before bringing the band in on the second. (Nobody moved at



High Wycombe.) And if they want the sound of guitars and drums the song punches its way out in a cliff-hanging web of all feedback great and small and a wired rhythm-minefield of stop-gap drumming by David McIntosh. And that's just the music. . . .

Doll by Doll have done about 80 gigs since their first ever last October (including a merciless slog 'round the London pubs). "I don't think we've had an indifferent reaction yet. That's one good thing."

That can be down to a lot of things -- maybe the intense, unnerving music, the something in the air when they play which neither they nor I can define and don't want to, or Jackie's theory that the group show people a side to themselves they'd sooner forget, ignore or shy away from. Or don't know about. And rub their face in it. Mental disorder is out of order unless a publicity scaffold like for Mr. Pop. Maybe that's why the group got done over the night before High Wycombe. The dockland disco-drinkers weren't in favour of the new-fangled reality invading their local and didn't like what appeared in the mirror. . . .

With drummer Dave bruised, shocked, stitched and jaw fractured and Jo shaken and up all night at the hospital for chest x-rays and a smashed mouth it was touch'n'go for that night's gig when we met Jackie and Jo in Aylesbury just after closing-time. They were gonna gamble on stage adrenalin getting them through with pain-killers blanketing the aches.

Jackie himself escaped injury: growing up in urban bottlegrounds like Newcastle and Glasgow taught him the strategy of rucking -- he went "on holiday" for it. He knew that going in

would have been kamikaze madness for the whole band and maintained an unconcerned detachment, despite the mental torture of seeing his mate lying bleeding as he stepped over the unconscious figure.

"It was definitely set up to be an intensive care job. *Very* nasty. About thirty of them and six of us. It stopped at a kicking but there's no doubt that if all of us had waded in to help the three who were being smashed (Bruce suffered a badly-split head, amongst other things), then the rest of us might have ended up floating in the dock."

But Doll by Doll made the gig, and not surprisingly reckoned they were below par (you couldn't tell . . .). But right now I reckon they are the most important band stalking the dirty boards of our gig circuit.

At the moment the group will play at almost any place that'll have 'em. ("We need to do a certain amount of work because of the intensity of the set we've got. Otherwise we'd probably kill each other.")

I first saw them play at Aylesbury's Acne Club, a small, dark pub back-room which they took by the throat. The impact propelled me to bash out the stop-press rave-view in last month's "Zig Zag" (believe it or not, the first one they've had in 80 gigs, many in the Smoke). An interview had to follow (also their first).

Me and Acne-promoter Mark Elston, who first told me about them, bumped into Jo and Jackie in the graffiti-spattered Aylesbury subway where they filmed the tramp-kicking scene in "A Clockwork Orange". They immediately tell us about last night, having come almost straight from the hospital.

The interview location is a house in

downtown Aylesbury. We've been there a few minutes when Melanie, one of its lovely inhabitants, bursts in heart broken -- a cab has just run over Rizla, her white cat. The group are cat-people and this has a decidedly dampening effect. After waiting in vain for a hopeful vet-verdict, and a bit more, we start. . . .

Although Doll by Doll formed last August, Jackie and Jo, who are both 27, tried to work together three years ago when they were both living in Dorset. For various reasons it didn't happen, so Jo went off to Germany and woke up the Hamburg club scene with his single-handed hard rock. He met Bowie and Iggy and found out why Berlin is such an In place -- "There's a lot of very good songwriters there who aren't gonna do any business, and they're worth nicking a bit of stuff from. I know that for a fact -- I've seen it in operation." Jo also did a spot of playing in New York at the Electric Lady Studios (including a session with Chairmen of the Board).

Jackie was also a solo artist. He toured Europe "and had nervous breakdowns supporting bands like Nektar", doing "more or less a stand-up Lenny Bruce-style rant interspersed with really hard songs".

But he *needed* a band for what he wanted to do. A vehicle. Most of the songs in the current set are his. Each member makes an equal contribution to the sound but at the moment it's Jackie who's the lynch-pin.

"I do feel quite dictatorial in a way, with the band, but it's a mutual thing. They tell me things, I tell them things. It's basically group therapy in the strictest sense.

"I've got a lot of material, Jo's got



a lot of material. We're doing mostly mine at the moment, but it's purely because the initial idea and initial concept was mine and it's basically got to be put over in terms of really strong, solid hinge-type songs, but it's not something I intend to keep that way. The idea is that we get to a certain point in terms of success and the strength of my own ability to hold it together and from then everyone can take off and do exactly what they want. I just want to create the initial platform."

Jackie's songs are vivid, intensely personal and betray a wounded, turbulent past — prison for violence, three marriages, mental pressure — "I've been on the line a few times." Shattering disappointment and bewilderment run free in the slightly surreal Dylan-meets-Reed landscapes but there's an inherent sense of, uh, romanticism, which only serves to heighten the pain and desperation. He ain't wallowing in the mire, it was his life. . . .

*Once I thought I married a lady  
she turned out to be a dangerous bitch  
but she taught me that one man's self  
expression  
Was another man's nervous twitch  
The people in the street are insane  
they freeze when they're hit by the sun  
the last thing that they want is a real  
live person  
to rob them of their fun*  
("Cold Storage")

*I love stealing fuck magazines  
and tearing them apart  
Last night one exploded  
and a page blew in my heart  
and as I looked to see which picture  
wound my mortal wound  
a woman who had twisted me  
was drowning in my blood*  
("The Palace of Love")

That's a bit real that last one, right? Jackie is laying open his life. Small wonder performance is sometimes so harrowing. He says every time he is struggling to get something out, and feels let down if he doesn't. Apparently I've yet to see that happen.

But can audiences take such a candid keyhole look at a man's post problems?

"One thing we've noticed a lot recently is that the degree of upfront emotion turns a lot of people off initially, especially punk audiences. They find it very uncomfortable — "Hey, this guy's singing about being hurt and bewildered." But eventually you hit 'em with something that's so strong as a piece of pure rock that eventually they're back there listening, and that's the way the whole set's really designed — to catch every fucker one way, and having got them, not let them go . . . I hope."

"We do get an aggressive vibe sometimes — it's just unfortunate. We don't go out for it. I don't think we're aggressive on stage, we don't go out to cause an aggressive reaction, and I don't think the songs are aggressive in content either. I think they've got animatistic power, but it's not like strip-tease violence or anything."

The only time the group'll make an exception is by direct provocation from the audience, like at Leighton Buzzard where Jackie was propelled into one of

his venom harangues (sorry!) by a particularly noisy and annoying aggregation. It usually does the trick but one local celeb-provocator, with Jackie's name written on his forehead, "persisted in calling me a screaming cunt down my earhole" and was rewarded with a swift black back for his trouble — "It didn't hurt him, just made him realise you don't call someone a cunt who's bigger than you!"

But reactions vary in a particularly strange way. . . .

"One thing that interests us, to say the least, is we have had a few people who, as a direct result of coming to our gigs, have ended up in asylums. They send us posters and letters regularly from asylums. They say 'I saw you at the Music Machine and next day I went crazy, it's really true. It's weird. They said we colour posters and suggestions for images, and also breakdowns of our personalities very interesting stuff. We use quite a lot of their writing."

"I think it's very much that we don't compromise and we have a show that's got structure and which has got a real sense of dynamics, and if you're at a vulnerable point in your life — which has got to happen with the law of averages with audiences — and you take the whole show in, then there's no doubt it'll have the effect it's designed to have, and that it's going to turn you right round to have a look at yourself. If you don't like what you see in the mirror then it's not our fault. We're only pointing out that that facility exists, and that's why I think for the same reason we got all shit smashed out of us last night — the same sort of thing."

"We point out certain things they would not like to accept," adds Jo.

"Things that even we would not like to accept," continues Jackie, "but the fact is, we're in the band. It really intrigues us, the idea of going to see it."

"I think most of them go home feeling they've gained by regaining their sense of loss. You could say that . . . I know it sounds a bit clever, that's not rehearsed. I think that's true. I think we give people a sense of loss, but I think they have a basic feeling of admiration towards themselves that they've been able to admit it."

"We want people to face the reality of their own life. I think the crux of it is that we reduce people to individuals rather than encourage a sense of comradeship the way bands like FCB do. It's you and me as far as I'm concerned. Not US against THEM because I don't believe there is a THEM. That's what it comes down to."

Don't get the wrong idea. This ain't a bunch of rockin' shrinks or a marauding band tearing the country trying to scramble the brains of our nation's pop-heads. They wanna be real . . . and help. That's why ALL the gig money (no katty-pilfering) goes to the Philadelphia Association (NOT an American organisation like I said last month. They're based in London. Philadelphia in this sense stands for "Brotherly Love").

The PA was set up in 1964 by famous book-writing psychotherapist R. D. Laing.

Jackie explains: "All they do is:

they get any houses they can and say you had a nervous breakdown or just felt like you couldn't cope in any way at all and it was obvious to everyone around you. They're all saying 'Kris has gone a bit nuts (no sniggering back there!) better tell his folks.' There's a chance you'd get committed. What happens, here is — R. D. Laing believes it — something like a nervous breakdown can be an extremely enlightening experience rather than something which is slightly toiletish in inference, and you can go there. The houses are run on a self-governing basis. You're in there with a lot of people who have diverse reactions to the same problem. It's up to you to work it out. You can take as long as you want. It's an alternative to ECT. It's as simple as that."

And there have been no suicides. The PA is not the sort of charity that receives large government donations or Derek Nimmo TV ads. In fact.

"It's more than frowned upon. They're hassled quite heavily in quite subtle ways."

They decided to make the move when the letters started coming in from Doll by Doll fans-turned-asylum-inmates — "It suddenly seemed appropriate." They decided to donate all their gig money. Bruce had to approach Laing himself.

Doll by Doll are putting their money where their mouths are more than any other group. Okay, it is commendable to see Elton John dashing off a cheque for a few grand to some well-patronised charity but he can go home to the remaining millions. Doll by Doll will do five poorly-paid gigs a week and send it ALL off. Because of that the day sees them doing jobs to eat and at night they go home to the Malda Vale squat they all share.

"I find it a very healthy thing to raise money for them in relation to a lot of other dubious causes flying around at the moment, plus there's nobody else doing anything for these people. These people are in trouble. Big trouble."

"Sometimes there's not much but the fact is, it's money they didn't have before, and we've had the experience of playing the venue."

During the day Jackie is a necromancer. He "reveals the future through communication with the dead."

"I've got a good name with a lot of people who come and want to know particular things about their lives and their future, things like that. Because half of my family is Romany gypsy, it's just the thing that's passed through the family. It's very much word-of-mouth. I get more people than I can handle because I find it very draining."

Doll by Doll posters and badges depict a tortured face behind bars. The visage belongs to French poet Antonin Artaud, a man Jackie deeply admires.

He shows me a book of Artaud's surrealist-tinged poems and reads out a few lines: "The image of the world's madness is incarnate in a tortured man." "That's very much at the basis of my spiritual motivation."

This particular phase of the band will be wrapped up in a couple of years.

— "assuming things go well" — when another Artaud pic will be adopted as the Group Image. It was taken just before he went in for seven years' ECT — "for telling the truth. People that tell the truth didn't do well in Artaud's day. They still don't."

Jackie ain't got much time for the "casual" name-dropping of such geezers which takes place. What about Patti Smith, who's been known to mention Artaud alongside her favourite "aud"?

"He's a good name to drop but Patti Smith, I don't find what she's doing particularly healthy. I have got a sense of humour, but I'm not primarily interested in rock'n'roll as a source of entertainment. I think it's a source of information. I don't think any of us would disagree that, in a lot of senses, we privately feel that time is running out. To me, people like Patti Smith soak up a lot of people's energy, and a lot of people feel there's a limit to the energy they've got to use in entertainment and things like that. There's a lot of good, important people around . . . but don't get me wrong, I think she's okay!"

You'll notice that accompanying this scrawl are no actual photos of Doll by Doll themselves . . . only the group's self-chosen promo photo . . . why?

"There's no pre-conceived ideas about us at all that way," says Jo.

Jackie: "I think it's a better idea in a sense because to me rock music has become such a visual trip. You look at the band and you think, 'Oh yes, I can relate to this band because they've done their hair like this.' It's a lot better if they come along and they don't com-

pare what they see with this pre-conceived image. Who needs it? I don't think it's doing us any harm."

He adds: "It's very much like we're playing it all by ear. It looks as if in a lot of ways there's a devastating amount of planning and strategy and tactical experience gone into this, but in actual fact we've just played it by ear all the way."

That includes records — an obvious question 'cos they've got the potential to be devastating on vinyl — if the emotion can be caged, that is. It seems some companies have already expressed interest but they're waiting for the right one to come along.

"We're not exactly stuck. I think we're good enough to take on all-comers, which is the assumption we're working under. We're not rushing it. The right record company will come along. If they've got any sense they'll see it — it'll be apparent because, what we're doing, it's been neglected for so long . . . and I can't define what we're doing!"

"It's not a question of we have to worry about the record companies. We're doing the work, it's up to them really. We're out on a limb. It's going to be difficult to pigeonhole us in any way, but I don't really mind if they do — the Great Pigeonhole Controversy doesn't really bother me. It'd be quite silly to call us a punk band — we're quite big lads and we've been around for a while, we're not pretending we haven't."

You may be wondering why we've given an unknown band so much space. They're not even salivated over by the

weeklies. The point is, Doll by Doll are important and they *deserve* the attention so much more than this hour's slumming hero with multi-gear'd PR machinery working overtime behind. No one asked me to see, interview or write about Doll by Doll. I just believe they will be a Major Force, just as soon as they let themselves.

I'll leave the last word to Jackie Leven, after all, the future is his job:

"The main thing about doing this is that it's given me enough incites into what is *necessary* to happen in rock, rather than what *will* happen. To feel that this band has a very good chance of doing something important for an awful lot of people."

The doors are open.

Kris Needs



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# THE QUICK

## LEFT ROTTING ON THE VINE?

JULES BATES



(L-R: BILLY BIZEAU; STEVEN HUFSTETER; DANNY WILDE; IAN AINSWORTH; DAN BENAIR

I'D almost finished this story when word arrived that the Quick had broken up. Had it been virtually any other band in California I would have (after selfishly cursing "How could they do this to me?") drop-kicked what I'd written out the window, figuring that finishing a story for a British magazine on a now-defunct group with little reputation outside of Los Angeles was a waste of time.

But that's not what happened, and lest you suspect my motivation as being that of a writer trying to salvage her copy, let me state right now that I'D GIVE HALF THE BANDS IN CALIFORNIA TO HAVE THE QUICK BACK AGAIN. And the way I see it, anybody who thinks a band is that great owes it to themselves to do something about it, even if it comes down to mere documentation.

Meet the Quick:

— Stevan Hufsteter (guitar, song-writing). Usually one to stand in a frozen slouch, eyes downcast, centre stage, never moving away from his amp; at the Quick's last performance (a party for their fanclub which took place in a rehearsal studio off Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood) the casualness of the setting provided the security necessary to send Hufsteter careening all over the stage in perfect sympathy with the tough chords and impressively full-bodied guitar lines that power the band's new sound. Compared to the Hufsteter of Real Life, who is articulate and intelligent almost to the point of snobbishness, this guy with a guitar is nothing short of an animal.

— Ian Ainsworth (bass). When I interviewed the Quick we spent a good deal of time discussing the recently revised band sound, one which is more straightforward rocking and less eccentric and Sparks-sounding that the band's 1976 album, *Mondo Deco*, which was released in the US on Mercury-Phono-

gram. The LA fans were slow to accept the change but, as Ian quipped mischievously, "We're tired of supporting their habit". This attitude earned him a swift kick from one of those fans after a recent "New Quick" show at the Whiskey.

— Danny Benair (drums). If any one thing powered and led the Quick, it was surely the imaginative, on-the-nose drumming of Danny Benair. When his twacks and Hufsteter's power chords combine to place emphasis, like they do on the machine gun hook which sets up the chorus of their classic "Pretty Please", I'm at a loss to think of a more exhilarating drum - guitar team.

— Danny Wilde (vocals). At one time caught up in the oh-so-deliberate camp time-warp, Wilde was just beginning to act like himself and not the 14-year-old David Bowie his looks suggest. His flawlessly high pitched voice had thankfully dropped a bit, making it a perfect pop-rock vehicle without raising the hairs on the back of your neck. An



indication of the more satisfying, less "flash" Quick, Danny Wilde, by all accounts a very accomplished musician, recently began playing rhythm guitar in concert.

— Billy Bizeau (keyboards). The only member of the group still associated with Kim Fowley (who the band blames / credits with getting them the Mercury contract and then losing interest), Bizeau wrote "Queens of Noise" for the Runaways. His synthesizer and piano work necessarily assumes a less prominent role in the group sound than it did during their initial "pseudo-sparks phase" (Hufsteter's words).

It seems I've kind of hacked into a discussion of the Quick's importance in the Los Angeles scene, but in essence I held the not totally unpopular opinion that they could have been the best band in town. Though they're each circa 21 years of age, the Quick had built a solid following well over a year before the new wave took over. In their "funny, clever and musical" incarnation they used props and "pseudo-clever" ideas much to the delight of the Hollywood audience, producing in 1976 an album chock full of "ten dollar words" and songs that sounded like — to paraphrase their record collecting drummer — English B-sides from the 1960s.

Never a band to follow trends (in terms of marketability Mondo Deco must have been the most unrealistic recording of 1976), the Quick watched LA go punk crazy without ever taking a step in that direction.

"We could have easily punked out, it wouldn't have presented any problem," said Hufsteter. "We probably could have gotten a record contract, a lousy one. . . . We want to be a packaged item. We want to be a product on the market. It's not what we want to be so much as what we have to be."

For various reasons, the Quick became the underdogs of local scene, a situation which had only recently begun to fade. When they changed they moved toward more simply dynamic and charging rock powered by streamlined melodies and enhanced by a commercially grabbing sense of song structure. Elektra and some other American labels were duly taking their time signing them, but no one doubted that a deal was just around the corner.

The problem was that it had been just around the corner since they left Mercury in April of 1977, and frustration, lack of communication and your standard ego-conflict split Wilde and Ainsworth from the group last April. As of this writing, Hufsteter and Benair are looking for replacements (Benair in the UK, Hufsteter in LA) and should they find the right ones — well, I'm trying not to get my hopes up.

Teri Morris

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|---------------------------|
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| 81 BLONDIE/FALL/RAMONES   |
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| 82 DEVO/ADVERTS/WIRE      |
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4. EASTER - PATTI SMITH
5. THE CLASH
6. PLASTIC LETTERS - BLONDIE
7. HEROES - DAVID BOWIE
8. NOW - FLAMIN' GROOVIES
9. NEW BOOTS AND PANTIES - IAN DURY
10. PINK FLAG - WIRE
11. ROCKET TO RUSSIA - RAMONES
12. BLACK AND WHITE - STRANGLERS
13. TELL THE TRUTH - SHAM 69
14. GENERATION X
15. TWO SEVENS CLASH - CULTURE

## 45 OF LAST 12 MONTHS

1. COMPLETE CONTROL - THE CLASH
2. PRETTY VACANT - SEX PISTOLS
3. WHAT DO I GET? - BUZZCOCKS
4. SHOT BY BOTH SIDES - MAGAZINE
5. GOD SAVE THE QUEEN - SEX PISTOLS
6. BECAUSE THE NIGHT - PATTI SMITH
7. CLASH CITY ROCKERS - THE CLASH
8. SEX 'N' DRUGS 'N' ROCK 'N' ROLL - I. DURY
9. SAFETY PIN STUCK - PATRIK FITZGERALD
10. WATCHIN' THE DETECTIVES - E. COSTELLO
11. SUSPECT DEVICE - STIFF LITTLE FINGERS
12. KU KLUX KLAN - STEEL PULSE
13. THE DAY THE WORLD TURNED DAYGLO - X-RAY SPEX
14. CAN'T STAND MY BABY - REZILLOS
14. ANOTHER GIRL, ANOTHER PLANET - ONLY ONES

## BEST GROUP

1. THE CLASH
2. BUZZCOCKS
3. RAMONES
4. BLONDIE
5. SEX PISTOLS
6. SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
7. FLAMIN' GROOVIES
8. ROLLING STONES
9. PATTI SMITH GROUP
10. STRANGLERS
10. BLUE OYSTER CULT

## UNKNOWN/ UNSIGNED BAND

1. SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
2. THE SLITS
3. THE FALL
4. DOLL BY DOLL
5. POP GROUP
6. SUBWAY SECT
7. STIFF LITTLE FINGERS
8. THE ANTS
9. REZILLOS
10. PENETRATION

## LIVE GROUP

1. THE CLASH
2. BUZZCOCKS
3. RAMONES
4. IAN DURY
5. SHAM 69
6. GRAHAM PARKER
7. BLONDIE
8. BANSHEES
9. TUBES
10. FLAMIN' GROOVIES

## HATED PERSON

1. TONY BLACKBURN
2. MARTIN WEBSTER
3. MALCOLM MCLAREN
4. MAGGIE THATCHER
5. ROD STEWART
6. JOHN TYNDALL
7. PETER POWELL
8. NICKY HORNE
9. JOHN TRAVOLTA
10. FRED MERCURY
10. BERNARD BROOK-PARTRIDGE

## FAVE PERSON

1. JOHN PEEL
2. JOHN LYDON
3. ME
4. JIMMY PURSEY
5. DEBBIE HARRY
6. DAVID BOWIE
7. IAN DURY
8. JOE STRUMMER
9. SIOUXSIE
10. TOM ROBINSON

## SEXIEST PERSON IN ROCK 'N' ROLL

1. DEBBIE HARRY
2. SIOUXSIE
3. GAYE ADVERT
4. PATTI SMITH
5. PAULINE MURRAY
6. CHERRY VANILLA
7. TINA WEYMOUTH
8. ARI UPP
9. JOAN JETT
10. PAUL SIMONON
10. DAVID BOWIE



About 75% of the forms put John Lydon (not Rotten).

## MALE SINGER

1. JOHN LYDON
2. DAVID BOWIE
3. ELVIS COSTELLO
4. PETE SHELLEY
5. JOE STRUMMER
6. IAN DURY
7. JIMMY PURSEY
8. IGGY POP
9. GRAHAM PARKER
10. BILLY IDOL

## FEMALE SINGER

1. DEBBIE HARRY
2. PATTI SMITH
3. SIOUXSIE
4. PAULINE MURRAY
5. POLY STYRENE
6. NICO
7. ARI UPP
8. JONI MITCHELL
9. FAY FIFE
10. KATE BUSH

## HOT TIP FOR THE TOP

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES | 10. REZILLOS              |
| 2. PENETRATION               | 11. BUZZCOCKS             |
| 3. ONLY ONES                 | 12. STIFF LITTLE FINGERS  |
| 4. GRUPPO SPORTIVO           | 13. MAGAZINE              |
| 5. LURKERS                   | 13. DIRE STRAITS          |
| 6. FLAMIN' GROOVIES          | 15. BLONDIE               |
| 7. ALTERNATIVE TV            | 15. STEEL PULSE           |
| 8. THE SLITS                 | 17. DEVO                  |
| 9. THE BOYS                  | 18. DOLL BY DOLL          |
|                              | 19. GEORGE THOROGOOD      |
|                              | 20. JOHN LYDON'S NEW BAND |



## BEST DRESSED

1. DEBBIE HARRY
2. JOHN LYDON
3. DAVID BOWIE
4. RAMONES
5. IAN DURY/SIOUXSIE





"I SUPPOSE if we have to be labelled then we're a New Wave band, in so far as we're a new band. I just want to be myself. We're really a band of individuals."

That's Peter Perret talking. Peter is the figurehead of a rock group known as The Only Ones. In the past he has been compared with such idiosyncratic people as Kevin Ayers, Syd Barrett and especially Lou Reed. When this band began gigging the comparisons between Perret and Reed seemed inevitable. However, they now have an album out on CBS and a UK tour. Perret is now a charismatic figure out on his own. As he says:

"Comparisons are expected at the early stages of any band's career, but in, say, two years' time people will be comparing other new groups with Only Ones' music."

On stage the rest of the Only Ones obviously revolve around Perret and his songs.

John Perry (lead guitar) looks a trifle lazy when onstage, but has a strong personality when you talk to him. He was around in the hippie days of Glastonbury and peace signs. He played in a band known as The Rats (no relation to the Boomtown boys), who used to support bands like Hawkwind and the Pink Fairies. He also had a brief encounter with Robert Hunter (lyricist for some group called The Grateful Dead) and recorded tapes with him, which Hunter then took back to sunny California. Perry wrote about his band, The Rats, in the early issues

of "Zigzag".

On bass is a former Scottish teen idol known as Alan Muir. He was in a band called The Beat Stalkers, who were number one pop stars in Scotland during the early 'sixties. They released about six singles, played on Ready Steady Go along with The Small Faces, but were never very popular outside the land of tartan. The Beat Stalkers split up after about six years — the last straw being when all their equipment was stolen. Alan gave up music altogether for seven years, before stumbling on the Only Ones. He was the last member to join.

On drums is Mike Kellie — though for how long, I'm not sure. You see, while I was interviewing the band Kellie stormed out, saying he didn't want to play anymore. This all happened in a rehearsal studio in North London and the talk turned to possible replacement drummers, so whether Kellie has made up with the band or not, I don't know. In fact, Kellie has been involved in a lot of bands, including Spooky Tooth and Frampton's Camel (which he formed with Peter Frampton) and one wonders whether he'll ever settle in one band. When he first joined the Only Ones, he had nowhere to sleep, so Peter Perret let him move in to his garden shed for a while.

So there you have it. This band is made up of four very different personalities with equally different musical backgrounds. As for mainman Peter Perret. Well, he was in one of those

legendary "First" punk bands (alongside The London SS and The Brats), called England's Glory. They recorded a tape, which their manager Zena Kakouli took around to all the record companies. There was slight interest, but no contracts were offered. The band eventually split up and Peter got to do a gig at the Marquee, so he used a backing band for the occasion, which had Zena's brother on bass — the backing band that night is now known as Squeeze. Zena has stayed loyal to Perret and now manages the Only Ones.

The Only Ones have just finished a UK tour supporting Television. I asked John Perry how it went.

"It was okay, except that Television didn't draw much of a crowd really. Sometimes we played to half empty halls. I think it was mostly a fifty/fifty audience to see us just as much as Television."

Still, even half empty audiences are better than in the early days when the band would play regularly at the Speakeasy. Perret: "The Speakeasy was really a good training ground for going on the road. Down there you play to statues."

The Only Ones signed a contract with CBS last Christmas. Why so late in the day?

John Perry: "We could have signed a deal last February, but we held out for a better deal. Now we've got more money and also complete control over what we release. This was the best company to sign for."

Although this is the first major com-



pany that they've been involved with (incidentally, all the old Beat Stalkers' singles are also on CBS), they did release what is still one of their best songs, "Lovers of Today", on their own Vengeance label. They recorded it solely for the purpose of getting more gigs and trying to tempt record companies to sign them. Not only did it work exceptionally well, but the single is still selling very well indeed. The name of the label — Vengeance — was thought up by Perret after all the hassles he had trying to get a record company to sign up England's Glory.

Their first album on CBS is a success musically and they have attracted a large amount of press recently. If the album has any faults, then it definitely isn't the musicianship. John Perry may seem lazy onstage, but he sure can attack that axe of his. In fact, my own criticism is not against the musicianship being bad, but rather that sometimes the album strikes me as being a bit too polished and professional. I'm not over keen on the use of extra musicians playing sax and keyboards. You see, I like to hear Perret raw and down to earth. His songs should never be compared to the coldness of, say, Television. All of Perret's songs are really artistically written love songs by someone from the streets. In some ways he reminds me of very early Jonathan Richman — another person who was often accused of copying Lou Reed. However, I don't want to get too heavily into talking about comparisons as I know the band all hate to keep reading about who they're supposed to be like. In any case, Perret's songs have a special charismatic quality all of their own.

Take the wry humour in "No Peace for the Wicked". This song was taken far too seriously by some of the music press. I'd like to see more of this kind of sincerity and humour in the Only Ones. It's a quality that only Perret and Jonathan Richman are capable of using to its full.

*Why must I go through these deep emotional traumas*

*Why can't I be what I wanted to be — carefree*

*Why can't I be happy like everybody else*

*No peace for the wicked. They say no peace for the wicked.*

*The angels tell me "No peace for the wicked."*

Although a lot of the album is very low key, "Language Problem" is a very distinctive song, with Perret sounding similar on this up tempo number to another of our great UK lyricists Pete Shelly of the Buzzcocks. Why people should queue up for tickets to see Dylan in '78 when you can see Perret or Shelley treading the boards is beyond me.

Side two of the album opens dramatically with a much better version of "Creatures of Doom" than the live one which appeared on the Hope and Anchor double album. "The Beasts" gives John Perry the chance to fire out some of his more aggressive guitar, whilst the long fade out at the end of "Immortal Story" is as effective as the Buzzcocks' "Pulsebeat". This particular

song was named after the Orson Welles film. I wondered if Perret was very interested in films.

"I don't see that many films, though I will go and see any film by Fellini. I loved "8½". "The Immortal Story" was a really good film, so I wrote about it."

I asked Perret how the name of the band came about?

"I was asleep one night and in the middle of the night I woke up and wrote 'The Only Ones' on a piece of paper. Then when I woke up again in the morning, I realised that it must have come to me in a dream. I never told anybody about it for ages."

I asked John Perry to go over how all the four of them managed to get together in the first place.

"It was very vague about how the band started. Peter came to see my band, The Rats, and the bass player fell off the stage and onto Zena. I apologised later and Peter said he was interested in the band. We used the drummer from the Rats for a while and booked some rehearsal time in a studio off the Kings Road. One day Kellie joined and another day, Alan walked in and said he played bass. Then without even hearing him, Kellie said 'He's our man.' It was just a random meeting. No auditions were lined up or anything. The fact that we all come from different musical backgrounds helps make the band what it is!"

The Only Ones have gone through the whole punk thing practically unscathed, which is unusual considering what they had to go through at their early gigs. To the hippies they were classed as punk and to the punks they

were classed as hippies. Perret never cut his hair to conform to any style. He likes being an individual.

At the moment they are getting a very mixed bag of people at their gigs. A lot of people still don't know how to take the Only Ones, but at least they usually get some kind of reaction. They aren't the kind of band who plays note for note what's on their record either. John Perry is quick to point out that the band is just as happy in the studio as onstage. It's just two different sides to rock music and two different sides to the Only Ones.

Alan Anger



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ADRIAN BOOT

CYRIL JORDAN DISPLAYS DAMAGED DIGITS AFTER BRUM GIG.

# GROOVY TIMES ON THE ROAD!

UP and down the country over the last few weeks wide-eyed audiences have been driven past boundaries of passion they never knew could exist in rock'n'-roll. The Flamin' Groovies have been

sparking ecstatic mania which is gaining momentum the length of our land, climaxing with a glorious stunner of a show at the London Roundhouse on June 11.

Who can deny the Groovies now? Only the most ignorant, gutless, funless, sheep-brained poltroon (as in "Don't Put Me On": a narrow-visioned shit-head — "vacant and cold"). Anyone who was part of the ecstatic throng at the Roundhouse will testify that the Flamin' Groovies are currently hitting a peak which must frighten even themselves such is the incredible POWER they're putting out. A sound like there's NEVER BEEN before in rock'n'-roll (which is why classics are often given its benefit first).

Last month I toldja 'bout the pre-

parations for the tour and we talked to Cyril Jordan. This time we saw how it turned out.

As you probably read there nearly wasn't a tour at all 'cos Cyril badly hurt his hand three days into the opening European leg. He went down on some slippery steps in Brussels and crushed the bottle he was holding with his hand, severing two little finger tendons and nastily gashing his palm. Christ, he could have cut his hand off, or at least been unable to play guitar again (perish the thought). But it was bad enough and Cyril was rushed to a specialist for intricate micro-surgery which undoubtedly saved a lot of trouble.

Now what a time for this to happen, eh, but not to be daunted Cyril has himself equipped with a special cast which kept his fingers free but wrist and injured finger permanently bent, with the aid of a unique safety-pin and elastic band contraption. He devised a new way of playing guitar with his free fingers so, despite often considerable pain, a slightly-shortened set could be managed ('Shake Some Action' being one of the casualties 'cos Cyril's cast prevented him from being able to mute the strings with the side of his hand).

So the Groovies embarked on the tour, pleased with the berserk receptions but pissed off that often they'd hit a town and not spot one poster or any pre-gig promotion. Treating a show like a well-kept secret ain't gonna fill the empty seats now, is it? (Perhaps it's a masochistic new craze by promoters to lose money?) Still, halls full or not, reaction stayed constant whether it was a hundred or a thousand: total innocent adulation, often won on the night (a heart-warming process to witness).

I saw five dates on the tour which, looked at in perspective, are a pretty interesting reflection on differing audiences and how they affect the Groovies. Like how a small-but-rabid crowd could often pull a white-hot performance from the fire where a large number didn't quite make it (for certain reasons we'll see later).

**BIRMINGHAM BARBARELLAS** was the first gig I saw and when we arrived the punters were indeed thin on the ground for opening act Radio Birdman (you've gotta hand it to them, they sure worked hard under often appalling conditions and their one chance of glory was snatched from under them when the awful Boyfriends landed the plum support spot at the Roundhouse. But various Birdmen were still spotted up the front for the Groovies at that gig...).

It was unfortunate that night that the Darts and John Otway were both up the road (in different venues) splitting a potential crowd of three or four thousand between them, leaving the Groovies with a couple of hundred. I didn't see one poster.

It's the first time I've seen the Groovies for 18 months. I can't wait! I know what's in store and I want it. Now!

It's just as I'd hoped and more, that magic Eight-Miles-High stereo sound wall I'd gaped at during an all-instrumental rehearsal effortlessly car-

ried to the concert hall and given added adrenalin dimension by a crazed crowd. Most of the album plus revamped golden oldies given a new lease of life like the Byrds' "Lady Friend", ringing and majestic, "19th Nervous Breakdown" (a thrusting rendition which usually proved the first show-stopper), spontaneous rehearsal work-ups "Baby Please Don't Go" (ringing and dramatic) and Moby Grape's "Fall On You", the twin Beatles celebration "Please Please Me" and "From Me To You", the Kinks' "Lover Not a Fighter", an almost-overpowering "Paint It Black" (that intro!) and a finishing salvo of Chuck's "Let It Rock". The ultimate rock'n'roll band. Like other groups the Groovies could change the words and stick new titles on existing songs to placate the cover-critics but why should they? Screw your rock rulebook, with a sound like that the Groovies are outside any law.

Cyril's beautiful lady Caroline had flown in from San Francisco when she heard of his accident and had been with the tour from the start. We stood grinning in disbelief as the Groovies played what Caroline thought was the hottest set of the tour so far. So good to have ya back, Groovies.

**BRUNEL UNIVERSITY, UX-BRIDGE:** Yeuch! Sweaty plimsolls steam in the Hall of the Student Winking. Beards and glasses do funny. R. Crumb walks up to their mates who either sip halves or go pint-mad and swing on the cables suspended from the low ceiling. The hall's full largely of people with no business to be at a rock'n'roll gig. An ecology debate or a Civil War re-enactment maybe.

So who called Cyril a cripple (now see what I'm getting at?). They hemmed in the faithfuls with their apathy. The Groovies reckoned it was one of the worst gigs they'd done. No passion, no encore.

**VILLAGE BOWL, BOURNE-MOUTH:** Just a couple of days later but the ever-growing contingent of Aylesbury Groovie-maniacs decide it's the only place to be despite the four-hour drive.

A Sunday afternoon in Bournemouth. Phew! What a scorcher! About fifteen of us kill the hours till Groovies-time paddling, sitting in the sea, building sand-castles and jumping on them, going in pubs and getting thrown out and finally going to the gig a bit early, which unfortunately means a stint in the disco, packed with the young Travolutionaires hot to get some Sunday Night Fever. The novelty of taking piss out of the gargantuan-trousered muscle-men cavorting clumsily to impress the tight-lipped-but-gaping gals soon wears as thin as the beer and it's with some relief that the Groovies appear, delighting the hundred or so lost in the cavernous dust bowl of a hall and coaxing a few of the disco-goers from their below-the-waist tent modelling.

Cyril and Chris Wilson have been fighting bad throats all day and with the Anti-in-the-Albert-Hall proportions of the crowd it could be a bummer. But no... it's a Groovies special, conjuring the warmth so lacking at Ux-

bridge, and there's two encores — "Hey Hey Hey Hey" and "Around and Around". And yes, the joint was rocking. To the rest next door... I hope you sit forcefully on an upturned copy of "Night Fever".

**FRIARS, AYLESBURY:** This should have been the BIG ONE. Turned out medium rare (but not without good reason).

Last time the Groovies played here in November 1976 the place went bananas and it was by far the best gig of that tour.

This time the Groovies had been booked to play Friars' ninth-birthday party, traditionally a berserk occasion anyway with balloons, hats and streamers-a-go-go. The Groovies as well? Cyril was warning promoter Dave Stopps to build an asbestos stage two weeks before the gig! And so the Groovies' Scotland supporter-fans wouldn't miss out on their fave group, or the World Cup squad's first match, giant colour TVs were strategically-placed round the venue to relay the cavortings of Ally's Tartan Dope Fiends.

That afternoon the Groovies were working up a version of "Move It", Cyril's hand being fresh out of the cast (although it was so strange not wearing it he had to replace it that evening). In the bright acoustics of Aylesbury Civic Centre the Groovies' multi-tiered sonic orgasm could be given full rein. With the band at full throttle, tonight was gonna be a scorcher: one of the all-time greats, no trouble.

And that's the way it looked as the group bounced on in the wake of Scotland's thrashing and hit an instant high with "Feel a Whole Lot Better" quickly followed by "Between the Lines".

Suddenly the barely-noticed omen of a small stagewards beer-spray from the front-throng in the first number became disruptive reality you can't ignore when a party balloon filled with water smashes against Dave's kit, spraying Chris. Next a half-pint glass (full), which hits him on the hand (thank God it wasn't Cyril...). That was enough. No one's gonna stand like a target and be electrocuted for dummies who wanna do things like that. Mike Wilhelm, also in danger range, followed. Meanwhile Cyril, totally and blissfully wrapped-up in the song, kept on playing with George and Dave. These three also left when they saw what happened.

"It was no big deal," said Cyril afterwards. "We just don't play if they do that. Simple. We're only human and we don't wanna be electrocuted."

The group were all set to go home, but frantic, knee-level persuasion from Dave Stopps prompted them back on to finish the set in between invitations to the culprits to come 'round the back and do the same to the roadies. (Naturally they were too scared but are being hunted down at the moment. Menu job.) It was a great set, the whole hall was dancing (an ecstatic thousand), but I could see the Groovies' rock'n'roll hearts weren't in it, specially Chris, whose red gaberdine jacket (modelled from Ringo's in an old Beatles monthly) was still soaked at the end of the set.



Even a proposed post-gig party was hastily cancelled by its weak-kneed host and they forgot to release the balloons. I went home pissed-off.

So it was all down to the Roundhouse, scene of the Groovies' triumphant comeback two years before.

It was looking good from the start.

That afternoon Cyril had initiated plans for the next Flamin' Groovies album, so you might even get two Groovies albums in the same year! It'll include "Lady Friend", "19th Nervous Breakdown" (WHOOAAAY!!), and Cyril also wants to do a super-revamp of Love's classic "Seven Plus Seven Is" ("with mellotrons!"). There's also the half dozen or so tunes Cyril's come up with on this tour, plus assorted other stuff like maybe "Baby Please Don't Go" and an old track which Cyril describes as "weird" and a bit like "Come Together".

Also that day Cyril had fixed up a meeting with Michael Palin, one of his heroes. His cast was off and he was feeling just great. And when he walked on stage to a hero's welcome from a full Roundhouse... "it was like snorting a five-foot line of cocaine, man!"

I've seen the Flamin' Groovies eighteen times, and without a doubt this was the best one ever.

You can tell when the Groovies communal action switch is crowd-tilted in the OFF than ON direction. For the former they'll just attack with cool authority, slow dazzle and split. ON (and at the Roundhouse bells were ringing and they were flashing red), it's a no-holds-barred blitz, euphoric energy charging the performance and soaking the crowd.

As I watched the Groovies slice through the set I'd come to know off by heart over the weeks, the perfect sound balance fully capturing the crystal impact of the stereo guitars, all the lobbing, gobbing, injury, illness, half-empty halls and arseholes of previous weeks faded into oblivion and the band played the best gig of their lives to a crowd which became more crazed by the song.

The opening 12-string volley climaxed with a MONSTROUS "Paint It Black". "Now we're gonna put on our rock'n'roll guitars," said Chris; Cyril his faithful plexiglass Don Armstrong, which I always think could blast a hole through a wall when I see it, and Wilhelm his huge old semi-acoustic.

The classic rock'n'roll intro and they're head-first into a blistering version of "House of Blue Lights". Wilhelm takes a solo, duck-walking double to the front lights, huge grin across his face as he bends an impossible solo from the axe. "Lover Not a Fighter", "Yeah My Baby"... Cyril, obviously having the time of his life and bathed in rock'n'roll from head to toe tonight, walks to the back and spends five minutes tuning up. Had to. He was completely changing the setting to a rarely-used and complex F unison ("That's something I've always wanted to see if I could do on stage") so the group could play "Don't Put Me On", the classic poltroon put-down from the album.

The first time they've ever done it



MIKE WILHELM

on stage. It builds to a crashing climax, Cyril holding on to a single rippling note for a full minute right to the end.

Next, only the second time this year they've played "Shake Some Action". It's the crowning moment and the reaction is awe-struck and fevered. I was very nearly in tears during that one (and me a grown man!).

"Reminiscing" to rock everyone to their senses and it's the final burn-up on "Around and Around" for a change. "Never was a song more suited to an audience," says Chris. I've got this mind-freeze of the song's final power-drive, with the Groovies' four-man front-line hunched together, bent forward and thrashing some of the greatest rock'n'roll I've ever heard from their instruments. (And there's still the encores to come — "Let It Rock" and "Move It", by the end of which breathing comes hard.)

Groovies, now we need you more than ever, but that gig told me rock'n'roll is here to stay!

Kris



ABOUT six months ago, if you'd asked me what I thought about Sheffield-Rock, I'd have told ya it was non-existent, and that Sheffield was the proverbial desert of the music scene. I would've been wrong. . . .

Now either there's been one helluva metamorphic-type reshuffle, or else the old city's been keeping very, very schtum about activity there. Methinks it's a mix of the two possibilities: Cabaret Voltaire (recently heralded as the new "hip" thing) have somehow survived in Sheff for FOUR years unless I'm much mistaken, and bands like The Human League and Vice Versa have more recently crawled outta the woodwork. These bands have (roughly) one thing in common — their respective approaches to music and organised sound is often radical, never less than inspired. More of which in a future "Zigzag", when we bring you a lowdown on . . . uh . . . "Sheff-Rock".

Meanwhile, over in the Sheffield ghetto, Paul Bower, Terry "Mallender", Vaughn, and (wait for it) Haydn Byes Weston, collectively 2.3, are soldiering on against all odds, and sockin' it to

harder to come by. But a band as individual and sincere as 2.3 have just GOTTA come home to roost sooner or later, or SHOULD if there's any justice.

2.3-music is as individual as it is hard to define. The debut single, "All Time Low"/"Where to Now" may provide a couple of leads, though changes HAVE taken place since then. Backing/harmony vocals, for instance, have improved manifold, now (along with the choppy, clinical guitar sound) the band's trademark.

The recent months have also seen line-up reshuffles. Firstly, exit bassist Paul Shaft (who vocalised, I think, on "All Time Low"), and enter the mysterious Terry, whose real surname and lifestyle are not for the public eye or ear. Paul offered a surname-pseudonym for me to chew on, "Mallender", which is sure no help — but good for a larf (like a cheapo mystery movie, innit?).

Also: enter and exit one Dave Willis, who played sax but never really fitted in. Paul: "He started off playing the whole set but it gradually filtered down to about three numbers. It never really

earing's too easy. I mean, we take a lot of trouble over our lyrics but it's still danceable. The main object is really to get out there, entertain, and have a good time."

His political or non-political philosophy is summed up thus:

"It's alright singing about beating up coppers or 'let's have a riot' or 'let's change the world' if YOU'VE got the sincerity to stand outside that system YOURSELF."

In a nutshell, as they say. Anyway, politics are like choccies — too much of 'em makes yer vomit. I changed the subject. How's about some song titles to suck on? Okay, here goes. . . .

"Bright Lights Over Europe" — a token anti-nuclear power jive, and don't feed me crap like "anti-nuclear songs was last year's fmg, maaan", 'cos the problem/threat is as real as ever.

"Summer of '69" — an ode to the mindless soccer thug.

"The Beats are Back" — in Paul's own words, this is a "homage" to the beatniks, who, it seems, are slowly but surely re-emerging (it's also about the US "beat" writer, Jack Kerouac, about

# THE BIRTH OF SHEFF-ROCK?



them in the local venues.

The band is now roughly one year old, though it's so far been unable to break away from what is, in reality, a "cult" local following. I recently spoke to guitarist/vocalist Paul, who explained the band's main problem: the total absence of a manager.

"Initially we saw it as a crusade, to be independent — but now we're really desperate to go pro. We need to 'go out' . . . but we can phone up for gigs and they'll say 'Oh we're sorry, sonny.' We really need a manager."

Anybody wanna job as a manager? Get in touch with the band via Fast Records. Which reminds me, Paul was bubbling over, trying to make one real thing clear:

"Bob Last at Fast Records. Bob's a remarkable character. The way Fast have treated us has been so good as to be . . . unbelievable. I was amazed. Like, he just said 'Oh, d'ya wanna make a record? Yeah? Okay! . . . he really is an amazing bloke — real honest."

So without a manager, it looks like gigs will continue to be infrequent, "major" recording contracts even

worked out."

The remainder of 2.3 are, on drums: Haydn Byes Weston (and Haydn, if you're reading this, I hope I got the name right) and on guitar: Vaughn (brand noo member whose surname I also dunno, ignorant bod that I am).

I got to asking Paul about his views and opinions vis the rest of the scene. Most obvious is his denouncement of clichés and poses:

"I thought power pop was a tremendous joke — I had a real laugh about that — I mean it was such a really obvious pose, a really obvious trend thing. . . ."

His attitude also carries over into his music: no pseudo-Cockney jive, no daubing propaganda he don't really believe in all over the walls, no pretentious posturing. If a northern accent comes over in the songs, then all well 'n' good. It's the age-old story — be yourself. . . .

What abaht politics then, Paul?

"I hate slonganeering in rock. It's too easy to join in with the crowd and make with the clenched fist if you're going back to a nice flat. No, slogan-

whom I know nuffin' whatsoever).

Then there's "Where to Now", the aforementioned single B-side, which Paul cites as a punk look-back/retrospective. D'ya see Punk is a fading, dying thing, then?

"No, not really. It's just that much of it has become too clinched. It did provide an incentive. I think it's been good in directing attention away from the rock dinosaurs."

2.3 might not be dinosaurs, but they've a whole lot more credibility than practically any bloated BOF you care to name. Things are tough just now, sure, but Mister Paul Bower, no way is he despondent. . . .

"Just one thing . . ." he said, before we signed off. "just let me say, we're gonna come through . . . I think we're gonna do it".

Now let's get one thing straight: Paul Bower is one of the most sincere, committed, no - bull. out - and - out "straight" guys you're ever likely to cross paths with, and when he says something like THAT you just know he's gonna — he's GOT TO — be right.

I would've liked to have talked



longer, but — ahem — you know how it is with show-biz. I'd sure like to see things come good for 2.3, though. They, of all people, deserve at least some break. . . .

Oh yeah, and special fanx to Paul for supplying the photos — some folks'll do anything for publicity (snigger). . . .

Chris Westwood  
OH NO! WE'VE JUST HEARD THAT VAUGHN HAS ALREADY LEFT 2.3 AND THEY ARE BACK TO A THREE SOME (LIKE IN THE PHOTO)

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# So. Farewell then Elvis...

ACTUALLY, never mind about Elvis, what about Guy, Guy the Gorilla... I mean he was only thirty-two for Christ's sake. Marc Bolan was a shock of course but to me Dickie Pride had been a shock, I mean I still have the Melody Maker at home which has the headline "Death of Charlie Parker".

(Never heard of him, moans inate reader M. Black of Norwich, more memory lane guff, could the kids hop to him I ask).

One expects the sudden unexpected and I somehow felt that once Elvis had gone, could Ring be far behind? But Guy — I mean he was my generation. It makes one think, is one fit enough? I mean look all you older readers, Guy was one of us. Probably went to the same gigs as a kid in the 'fifties. I can almost remember him. Me and Ray Coleman and Guy the Gorilla. Who would have thought then that we were destined to become producer of the John Peel programme, editor of Melody Maker and Guy the Gorilla respectively when we used to skip jive the night away down Cy Laurie's to the pulsating rhythms of Mike Daniels' Delta Jazzmen. Then round to the Blue Posts for Merrydowns all round. And what talk! Far into the night it was all han-the-bomb. Colin Wilson and whether Humph could be a sincere jazzier and employ a saxophonist. Derek Jewell was always promising to show but was usually at home listening to the new

extended play record by this new Dave Brubeck fellow who was going to make jazz respectable. Ahead of his time even then. Now, according to the caption on the photograph in the Guardian, he is to be "stuffed for display". Guy that is, not Derek. That doesn't seem decent somehow. I'm not excusing our opinions on the Clyde Valley Stompers but will Ray Coleman and myself also have to suffer the indignity of being "stuffed for display"? Will they want us mounted or just shaking hands? I will remember Guy the Gorilla being a bit critical of Ray Bush and the Avon Cities Skiffle Group but to end up stuffed! For those who missed the chimps' tea party there will be gorilla stuffing in the lounge paddock — well, you draw the short straw Blenkinsop, you hold him and I'll stuff him. Good grief has it come to this? Who would have thought looking at those faded photographs that one of us had the kind of mind capable of appreciating the true worth of Jon Anderson and Yes. Guy that is not Derek.

I wonder why Col. Tom Parker never thought of having Elvis stuffed. Could've made a few bob. After all I believe they used to take his car on a coast-to-coast fund raising tour. Might've fitted the man with castors and trundled him about — finally brought him to England in fact then we could all have seen him. Tobler would interview the corpse for Rock On and it would go on Old Grey Whistle with Bob Harris. Good basis for a spot-the-difference contest. Win yourself an LP.

I never met him of course but I have

shaken hands with Jimmy Savile and I have a photo of Jim shaking hands with Elvis so that's about as close as most of us come. Except of course for a visit to the Elvis musical.

I went to the opening night last year but it seemed to be such a tatty shambles that I left at the interval, assuming that it wouldn't survive beyond Christmas, seeing no reason to trouble you with it. It got hammered by the music press of course but the straight papers all raved. They'd probably gone home at half time as well but their reviews were full of words which could be stuck up outside like "vital", "exciting", "energy" or "sets London's feet a hop-pin". Consequently it's now won some sort of annual award and I know several people who've paid to see it. So I went back, paid myself and offer a warning.

Just buying a ticket seemed a bit of a drama. There were queues of Danes and Germans and so on buying up tickets as if it were the real Elvis on stage. I got behind two middle aged Germans who were buying a block of fourteen tickets but, surprisingly, spoke little English. This meant we all waited until they had finished pushing piles of currency and tickets back-and-forth while they pointed at signs and held up fingers. They seemed surprised to get change and amazed when they actually got the tickets. Perhaps they'd come to the wrong place. When I got to the little window something seemed to be constantly distracting the man — there seemed to be a party going on just out of sight and every time I tried to buy a ticket he would exchange gestures and banter with what I assumed to be a wine

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# When an old cricketer leaves the crease...

GUY THE GORILLA: A TRIBUTE

and cheese consuming crowd with paper hats, squeakers and false noses. Anyway the jollity just out of sight was in converse ratio to the mood of the Euro-rockers waiting impatiently behind me. When he condescended to sell me a ticket he gave me the wrong day. I pointed this out which was the inspiration for more hilarity from the false nose brigade, and he grudgingly gave me the right ticket but the wrong change. By now the crowd behind me was getting positively menacing so I hurried to my seat. There was a German girl sitting in it. After a short debate, during which I was careful not to mention the war, I beckoned a chap who was mincing up and down waving a torch and bugger me if the chap behind the little window hadn't sold the same seat twice! So I wasn't in the best of moods for the show but then it wasn't the best of shows.

There aren't any lines to speak of but films and photos are projected, messages are flashed over the stage while musicians, dancers and three Elvi (if that is the plural of Elvis — like cacti or magi) wander on and off doing Elvis numbers. It's fairly clear that somebody is born, somebody joins the army and somebody dies but it's not what you'd call exactly in-depth. When Mrs. Presley dies, one of the Elvi sings "Mama loved roses" and the screen has pictures of mama and pictures of roses.

A fairly literal interpretation you might think. When they do "Blue Suede Shoes", however, the left hand screen had a picture of Queen Victoria, the right showed President Eisenhower and in the middle was a photograph of someone's cat! A strange evening which ends on an Elvis medley with balloons, smoke and the youngest Elvis singing "One night with you" while bubbles rain down from the flies. All a bit amateurish and silly and all very British rock revival which, like British wine, calls for considerable suspension of disbelief. The audience were very like people attending a run down church. One could only assume that, oblivious of what was going on around them, they had gathered together to celebrate something beyond their surroundings. The Germans took photographs of the people pretending to be Elvis.

There's recently been a bit of publicity about members of the Stranglers attacking or threatening critical critics. The article I saw was by Chris Brazier who referred to the group's refreshingly realistic attitude to womankind as "obnoxious". As I have in my time, made flippant references to both the Stranglers and to Chris Brazier I expect they'll now get together (like Hitler and Stalin) and seek me out. Not that Hitler and Stalin ever sought me out directly but you know what I mean. Jean-Jacques

Burnel is not apparently content with having a university named after him but has learned karate. Typical. People come over here with foreign names, get kitted out with free wigs and false teeth and then they want to punch you in the face. I think I should warn anyone who feels moved to violence by my criticism that I am a yellow belt (or desperate dan) in the martial art of Wanki Ho. This involves me hurling myself to the floor, waving my arms and legs about and squealing loudly in an effort to attract a policeman. My cowardice and my legal adviser are registered at the police station as deadly weapons. It would be nice to be set upon (note for Needs — don't print that as "sat-upon") by someone small, weak and famous so that their record company might be persuaded to settle out of court. I'll try it — Linsey de Paul is silly! I'd like to be set upon by Lynsey de Paul — or sat upon.

To close (at last, sighs M. Black, back to the World Cup) apparently the chap who has just given up J. C. Superstar to play an Elvis was also appearing at a night club called the War Room as Hitler. Jesus, Elvis, Hitler — what a diverse talent — but will he ever get the opportunity to play Guy the Gorilla?

John Walters

# AN EXPENSIVE BEGINNER'S GUIDE To ROCKABILLY

EVEN those of our readers (and writers) who are only capable of looking at the pictures (Bitch! — Ed.) cannot have failed to notice that what is popularly termed "rockabilly" seems to be enjoying some kind of critical renaissance — or is that the right word, because as far as I'm aware, it never was popular before, except with diehard individuals who continued wearing drape jackets and elephant's trunk barnets right through the '60s up to now, and are at least as old as me. . . .

About eighteen months ago I submitted to the equally elderly Frame an enormous review of around a dozen rock'n'roll reissues, but the trendy bugger decided not to use it on the grounds of its irrelevancy to what was happening at that time. So now I'm being asked to write this piece, because bleedin' rockabilly has been decreed as this year's happening thing. Ah well . . . I make no apologies for the fact that what I'm going to write will be far less than the definitive piece on the subject — if the original review thing had gone in at the time, it would be far closer to comprehensive, but since then, the proliferation of generally rotten rockabilly has made it both impossible and unpleasant to keep up with. So what you're going to get, like it or not, is a shameless plug for the Charly rock'n'roll catalogue culled from the vaults of the Sun record company, plus a few thoughts on the current British rockabilly hands I've seen.

Sun Records was based in Memphis, Tennessee, although if you listened to the Lovin' Spoonful's "Nashville Cats", you'd hear John Sebastian singing about "the yellow Sun records from Nashville". It was originally a blues label, and early on recorded people like Junior Parker, James Cotton, Rufus Thomas and Dr. Ross (the harmonica boss). That was around 1953/4. During the next couple of years, the label signed



up the half dozen artists who would make the label famous — alphabetically, that's Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison, Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley and Charlie Rich. All but one of the six are represented in the current Charly catalogue, Presley being the obvious exception because all his Sun stuff moved with him to RCA, who paid what was an enormous transfer fee for the mid-'50s, a staggering 35,000 dollars, which nowadays is not far from the hudget received by many artists for their first album. If you want to hear the stuff Presley did for Sun (and you should because it's better than 90 per cent of the records in your collection, whoever you are), run immediately to your record shop and buy *The Elvis Presley Sun Collection*, which is actually a budget album on RCA Starcell HY1001. If you like that (and you should, etc.) it may be worth the effort trying to get a copy of an album which Charly put out for about five minutes last year (until stopped by the predictable injunction) called *The Sun Years* on Sun 1001. This little gem is basically an interview record, but does contain tantalisingly short snatches of material Elvis recorded while he was with Sun,

many of them very different takes to the stuff which has been generally heard. One must assume, having heard the snatches on the album that there is more Presley material available — if so, why doesn't someone put it out? It'd make the poxy Presley film soundtracks sound as lame as anyone with half a brain knows they are. And just to complete the Presley talk, RCA have recently released *The '56 Sessions Volume One* (Vol. 2 scheduled to come out soon), which documents the first recordings Presley made for RCA after signing with them in November 1955.

Three of the six names we mentioned up there moved into different areas not long after their Sun time, and what you think of their post Sun work is up to you. For my money Johnny Cash was excellent on Sun, and at least a couple of his albums appear to be still available on Charly in *The Original Johnny Cash and Old Golden Throat*, and between them contain not only his first three American hits ("I Walk the Line", "Ballad Of A Teenage Queen" and "Guess Things Happen That Way") but a series of extremely ace tracks which the likes of Frame and I grooved on nearly twenty years ago. Since that time, of course, Cash has become a grotesque parody of a rocker, although I'm not about to cast aspersions on the fact that he's now far more successful than he was in the Sun days, and doubtless his lifestyle has been an inspiration to many people who've felt a bit lost in their earthly turmoil. Similarly, Charlie Rich has moved into country music and discovered success with the excellent "Behind Closed Doors" and the dismal "The Most Beautiful Girl", while his early Sun stuff was like a minor league Jerry Lee, although with occasional high spots like "Break Up, Lonely Weekends" and a few others. If you really want,



you can find Rich stuff on either **Lonely Weekends** or **The Original Charlie Rich**, but do me a favour — don't play them to me if I come to visit, because they seem to me to have as much life as Johnny Mathis. I actually met Charlie's son, Allan Rich, once, and he was a pleasant cat, and his album that I heard wasn't bad, but of course it wasn't released here. . . . Then Roy Orbison — I can recall some sexual adventures to the strains of "Only The Lonely", but that's post Suntime, and so were the rest of his hits, including the astounding "Crying" where Roy held the longest, flattest note ever to induce jaws to drop in disbelief. Orbison wasn't the melancholy tear jerker during his Sun years, but a high second division rocker with songs like "Ooby Dooby" and "Rock House", the first of which was updated rather well by the great (and all too silent) John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival. There is an Orbison record on Charly called "The Big O", but I'd recommend getting some of the Creedence Clearwater records actually.

Then comes my favourite rock'n'roller of all, the absurdly over the top Jerry Lee Lewis. On his day, and with songs like "Whole Lotta Shakin'", "Great Balls of Fire", "Breathless", "High School Confidential" and a heap more, this dude could make Thin Lizzy seem like the Dubliners, John Peel like Nicky Horne, John Cleese like Ena Sharples, and so on. He is ace, and one of the highlights of my entire life was standing as near to him as you are to these words while he, drunk as a skunk, played a devastating version of "Whole Lotta Shakin'" at some naff old reception a few years ago. There are six Lewis albums available on Charly, and while some of them are designed to cater for avid collectors who require some of his rarer (and often duffer) tracks, **The Original Jerry Lee Lewis** and his two volumes of **Nuggets** should blow out the most unbelieving brains. Unfortunately, since he left Sun the man has veered towards country music a good deal, although his view of country is a lot closer to rock'n'roll than any of the others we've mentioned.

and still contains a certain amount of insane pianistics (often played with a cultured Chelsea boot). Rock'n'roll's the thing, Jerry Lee's the king — right on.

Carl Perkins has recently made an enormous comeback, which you'd have to be Tommy to have missed. There's a theory which isn't too far from the truth, I think, that he could have come close to Presley's fame had he not



been involved in a major car smash just as his version of "Blue Swede Shoes" (which he wrote) was charging up the chart at the same time as the Presley cover (Perkins recorded his more than a month prior to Presley, by the way). Since then, Carl's suffered more than most people — several comebacks nearly made it, but perhaps the current big spending by Jet Records will do the trick. I saw his first British gig in 1964, and he was pretty neat then, but since that time he seems to have been lumbered more often than not with dopey backup groups, although everyone I know who went to see him at the Nashville recently backed by Dave Edmunds and so on said it was magic. And we mustn't forget that the Beatles recorded "Honey Don't" and "Everybody's Trying To Be My Baby" on **Beatles For Sale**, not to mention "Matchbox" on the "Long Tall Sally" EP. Almost inevitably, there's a Charly album available called **The Original Carl Perkins**, as well

as another called **Rocking Guitarman**, although to acquire the Perkins original of "Everybody's Trying To Be My Baby", you'll need to get **Sun — The Roots of Rock Volume 5 "Rebel Rockabilly"** (and don't forget its companion compilation, **Volume 9 "More Rebel Rockabilly"**). For me not quite as good as Presley or Lewis, but Carl Perkins, unlike most of his original contemporaries, is more or less still doing the kind of stuff he started with over twenty years ago, and still making it sound worthwhile. Will anyone who's emerged in the last two years be able to say the same?

While we're talking about the **Sun — Roots of Rock** series, of which there seem to be 13 volumes available currently, don't assume that every volume will contain some priceless rockabilly gem. Volume 1 is a mixture of blues and rock, Vol. 2 is blues, Vol. 3 is mostly R&B, Vol. 4 predominantly country, Vol. 6 apparently soul, Vol. 7 blues, Vol. 8 is mostly additional stuff by Sonny Burgess, Billy Lee Riley and Warren Smith (of which more later), Volume 10 is much the same as Vol. 4, Vol. 11 is more blues, with an interesting inclusion of "Just Walking In The Rain" by the Prisonaires, a group composed of convicts, which Frame and I remember as a British chart topper by Johnny Ray back in 1956 (how embarrassing that one), Vol. 12 is blues and Vol. 13 is generally obscure rockabilly.

It may have occurred to someone reading this that most of these records, dating back as they do to the '50s, must have been released here many times before. As it happens, not so. During the '50s, a certain small amount of stuff, mainly by Lewis, Perkins and Cash plus a few others, was released on the legendary London label who held the UK rights to Sun for some time. After the deal presumably lapsed in the mid-'60s no-one did much with the label, and in America, it seems to have been sold to a dude called Shelby Singleton (also famous as the man who discovered Jeannie C. Riley and **Harper Valley PTA**). Sam Phillips, the man who originally started the label, had to

## Rockabilly Roots, OK?



**Matchbox**

THEIR FIRST CHISWICK ALBUM

**Settin' The Woods On Fire**

12 GREAT ROCKABILLY TRAX

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some extent lost interest in his 15-year-old baby, and Singleton was much more of a businessman who in quick time circulated a number of British record companies. Several of them wanted the Sun catalogue, but it seems that Singleton's financial requirements were such that enormous record sales would have to result before anything other than a loss could be anticipated. Eventually, Phonogram courageously picked up the gauntlet, and in maybe a couple of years put out (according to my collection) 28 single albums and four doubles. However, not even their friends and relations could accuse Phonogram of being intrepid — of the 28 single LPs, only six were not by Cash, Lewis, Orbison, Perkins or Rich, while only one of the doubles was by other than Cash or Lewis. Of the six single LPs that didn't conform to the formula, only one had nothing by the big five, and that was a Bill Justis album. In fairness to Phonogram, almost at the end of their time with the rights to Sun, three single and one double LPs were released with the kind of stuff that Charly have plugged in with nowadays, but quite frankly it has to be said that Phonogram did little more for the most part than restore a lot of well known material to a current catalogue. But wait — worse was yet to come! Somehow, one of the companies who sell records in off licences and fish shops acquired the rights to the catalogue for a happily short time, and it was possible to buy some of the magic material of Sun for 75p per album — inevitably, there wasn't a lot of adventure in the track selections there either, and I suppose one can't really blame whichever company it was for picking up the rights to Sun. It seemed as though the brief renaissance of interest in this ultimate rock'n'roll had dissipated, and if you hadn't bought the records while they were around, it was likely to be an expensive business. But then came Charly. Charly's head man is a Dutchman called Joop Visser, who used to work for EMI in Holland before coming over to this country as an A&R man for EMI UK. After leaving there, Joop apparently scouted around to find a financier who would back him in a proper vault dredging operation of the Sun catalogue, along with the acquisition of several other esoteric but interesting records. Various other rock'n'roll fanatics became involved, including the quite unique Max Needham, Waxie Maxie to his mates, who takes care of press and promotion for Charly, and will one day be a legend if he isn't already. That just about brings us up to date. . . .

When Charly started on their reissue programme, it was inevitably headed by the big five, although a proportion of the material released, including the two volumes of **Rare Jerry Lee Lewis**, hadn't previously been available in Britain. This was followed by a dozen LPs of material which was generally more historically important than listenable, featuring names like Little Richard, Page, Clapton, Beck, Eric Burdon, Chris Farlowe and so on, much of which one presumes came from the vaults of Giorgio Gomelski, an entrepreneur of the British R&B boom, who managed some of the hands involved during the

60s. Then the **Sun — Roots of Rock** series kicked off, and has been growing ever since. More recently, there have been oddments released like two volumes of **The Red Bird Era**, which are pretty significant efforts as far as I'm concerned — the original version of "Boy From New York City" by the Ad Libs, for example, plus such kitsch treasures as "New York's A Lonely Town (when you're the only surfer boy around)" and tracks by the Dixie Cups and the Shangri Las, of course. There's a rather odd Willie Nelson (and friends) album, and stuff by the Downliners Sect, David Allan Coe and so on, but the meat of the catalogue has emerged more recently, with some highly productive vault searching which has resulted in the series called **The Original** whoever it is.

Apart from Cash, Lewis, Perkins and Rich (no Orbison, because he didn't make too many tracks for Sun), an adaptation of the series (many with David Oxtoby sleeve paintings) is titled



**JERRY LEE**

**The Legendary Sun Performers** with so far seven albums released. Of the seven, a couple are definitely blues records, one by Howlin' Wolf and the other by Junior Parker and Billy Love, while the Roscoe Gordon record is one I haven't heard. But the other four, by Sonny Burgess, Carl Mann, Billy Lee Riley and Warren Smith, are quite excellent, and the perfect follow up for anyone who previously hasn't been able to see beyond Lewis and Perkins. Burgess apparently dyed his hair scarlet, to match his Fender, his suit, shirt, socks and shoes, and despite the dodgy technical quality of some of his tracks and the fact that from time to time the essential rawness of both his performance and the recording quality tends to become a little irksome, he was obviously one of the most exciting performers produced by Sun. Among his more famous tracks to be found on his volume of **The Legendary Sun Performers** are "Red Headed Woman", dumbly titled "We Wanna Boogie", the excellent "Sadie's Back In Town" and a good version of "My Bucket's Got A Hole In It". And if you develop a taste for Burgess, there's another whole side of him on the **Sun — Roots Of**

**Rock Volume 8**, including neat versions of other people's classics like "My Babe", "So Glad You're Mine" and "One Night (of Sin)".

Carl Mann's much more a latecomer to Sun, and as a result of that and the fact that maybe he isn't strictly rockabilly, he doesn't seem to receive the acclaim which really ought to be due to him as a frantic rocker whose speciality, as the sleeve note of his album says, was "rocking oldies". Effectively, this means that many of his best known tracks were covers of other people's songs, and his volume of **The Legendary Sun Performers** contains versions of "Mona Lisa", "Kansas City", "Ain't Got No Home", "Mexicali Rose", "Ubangi Stomp" (great), and even a version of a trash song called "Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes", which I seem to recall was done here by maybe Alma Cogan (I would imagine that's the greatest possible turnoff for any genuine rock'n'roll fan). Mann also contrived to record tracks who had the same titles as well known songs, but were in fact entirely different, as in "Walkin' The Dog" and "Baby I Don't Care", but all in all, he was much like a slightly more subdued Jerry Lee vocally, and a considerably more subdued Jerry Lee in the piano department. Apparently, he's still relatively young, and has been over here not long ago, so this is one Sun artist who may have a future as well as a past.

Billy Lee Riley should be a familiar name if you know anything about Robert Gordon, who, by the way, is undoubtedly the artist with the best chance of anyone anywhere making it playing rock'n'roll nowadays. Mind you, listening to Billy Lee Riley's tracks on **Sun — The Roots Of Rock Volume 8** and on **The Legendary Sun Performers**, it's extraordinary that he isn't enormous — apart from the well known things like "Red Hot", "Flying Saucers Rock'n'Roll", and so on, just about everything Riley made for Sun is magnificent. Check out his "Bony Moronie" flavoured "No Name Girl", his original rendering of "Baby Please Don't Go" or his covers of "Let's Talk About Us" and "Searchin'". Definitely a best buy, with the added interest of four tracks recorded as late as 1969, when Riley briefly resigned with Sun. During the ten years away from Sun during the earlier '60s, Riley made some other records, chiefly I believe in a more mainstream manner, such as an album I bought for ten shillings a few years ago called **Harmonica Beatlemania**, which features, as you'll have guessed, Beatle hits played by Billy on his mouth organ, which was just one of several instruments he could play pretty well. It's sad that he didn't make it, and probably a little late for him now, but his Sun stuff is highly recommended.

The last of this particular quartet is Warren Smith, who can also be found on the Harvest album apparently titled **Four Rock'n'Roll Legends**, which I haven't yet heard, but which certainly indicates he's still around. Seemingly much like Jack Scott, many of whose singles coupled a hard rocker with a slow ballad, Smith apparently specialised in rockers backed with country efforts which reflected his original up-

bringing as a country boy rather than that of many of his contemporaries who turned their backs on traditional country values when they discovered that rock'n'roll held more promise of fame. Among the songs Smith interprets are "Ubangi Stomp" (again), "Rock'n'Roll Ruby", a great one called "Red Cadillac And A Black Moustache", "I Like Your Kinda Love" and "The Golden Rocket", which is better known as "I'm Movin' On", and although I personally don't rate him as high as Billy Lee Riley, he's still well worth the effort. And before we leave this particular area, a name check for Martin Hawkins, who writes most of the sleeve notes for the Sun reissues, and has also written an invaluable book on the subject, "Catalyst — the Sun Records Story", along with Colin Escott, published by Aquarius Books at a rather exorbitant, but still worthwhile £2.90.

A few other loose ends to tie up in the way of various artists' compilations, like a pair of albums called **The Best Of Sun Rockabilly**, with sleeves that you can put together to make a two feet wide picture. The first volume is a straight reissue of the Phonogram Sun compilation called **Put Your Cat Clothes On**, while the second includes several artists not mentioned in this piece like Malcolm Yelvington, Jack Earls, Ray McVoy and Charlie Feathers. Another compilation is called **Don't You Step On My Blue Suede Shoes**, and has all the best known tracks by most of the artists already discussed, and would probably make a good point for anyone without a single Rockabilly record, while there's also the just released **Rockabilly Rules OK?**, Waxie Maxie compilation designed to show the spectrum of 1978's rockabilly tastes, going from all the old Sun artists through such as Hank Mizell, who I'm not at all interested in, and Crazy Cavan.

Which brings us with reasonable ease to current British rockabilly/rock'n'roll. Recently, I've seen a couple of the new candidates in Whirlwind and Matchbox. The fact that they both happened to be on Chiswick is pure coincidence — Whirlwind seem to be everyone's support act, and I wouldn't have chosen to see them more than once, and Matchbox were playing so close to where I live it would've been stupid not to check them. Whirlwind, in fact, are not to my taste at all — the singer sounds as though he wouldn't exist at all without an echo chamber the size of the Roundhouse. Maybe that's acceptable on record, but live? Whirlwind make the same sound all the time on stage, to the point where sleep comes close to weaving its magic spell, and although their extreme youth in rockabilly circles may eventually be to their advantage (if they can outlive the current trend and still get work after this furor's all over, and I give it no longer than the end of the year until the weaker groups begin to die), they don't yet stand up as anything special.

Matchbox are a very different proposition. They're without doubt the best British rock'n'roll band I've ever seen, and that goes back to Mick Ibbott and the Rockets onstage at the Bedford Granada in the late '50s. Much of this inevitably revolves around the fact that Singer Graham Fenton is one of the

finest frontmen I've ever come across. He's a veteran of the House-shakers and a Gene Vincent freak, but from Vincent's most potent period before he moved to England, unlike Whirlwind's Nigel Dixon, who seems to prefer the latter day model of Vincent, who was, after all, dying and often sounded like it. Last year, Graham joined three of the other Matchboxes in Fred Poke (really?) on bass, who does a double bass act reminiscent of Al Rex (the first person to correctly identify the significance of Al Rex gets a free night out with Adrian Thrills — second prize, two night with Adrian), Steven Bloomfield on guitar, steel guitar and mandolin, who also writes the generally excellent original material, and Bob Burgos on drums, who had been together since 1971. Their experience really shows, and the addition of another guitarist who also plays banjo just adds to the variety of sounds that the band put across. Whether you like it or not, there's going to be a feature on Matchbox in here soon, but until then, play the white man by supporting Chiswick Records and buying this album, which is very good indeed.

Which brings us around finally to Charly's great hopes in the present rockabilly race, Crazy Cavan and the Rhythm Rockers. I have to confess that I haven't even seen Cavan, despite the fact that he's been around for probably as long as Graham Fenton, and has three albums currently available on Charly. In much the same way that Matchbox produce originals which are worth hearing, Cavan Grogan and guitarist Lyndon Needs are more than capable of writing songs that don't seem at all out of place when heard alongside famous '50s epics like "Drinkin' Wine Spo-De-O-De", not to mention "Rock Around With Ollie Vee". Compared to the unacceptable face of British rock'n'



roll as typified by the Wild Angels and so on, whose traditions are unfortunately being carried on by Matchbox and maybe several others, Cavan rocks like he really means it, and he deserves the right to be part of the Charly catalogue, which is without doubt the most potent collection of rock'n'roll to exist since the halcyon days of London-American brought Sun, Specialty, Imperial, Liberty and a lot of other lesser labels under a single umbrella in the late '50s.

Right, I've written it — now you lot go and do something about it.

PS — Do I get a free holiday now, Maxie?

John Tobler

## TWO 45s...

**The Clash — White Man In Hammersmith Palais/The Prisoner (CBS)**

A MONSTER. Undoubtedly the single of six-months-old '78. For a year this has been a powerful stage highlight, guaranteed to bewilder pogoers as it segues from crashed-intro into heavy-echo slow-ska/reggae, Joe singing about that time he was at a reggae gig and felt like the only white man in Hammersmith Palais. There is a majestic, ringing melody. . . I wonder if . . . no, The Clash may want success but they don't wanna be the Boomtown Rats. This is as solid, creative and magnificent a piece of music as you'll get all year, and the "B" side 'ain't half bad either. Maybe if the Smurfs were singing it'd stand a chance of radio-sparked chart propulsion.

**Gary Valentine — The First One/ Tomorrow Belongs to you (Beat Records)**

BLONDIE'S ex-bassist (the bloke who wrote "Presence") looks like he's taking a piss on the cut-off-just-at-the-right-moment sleeve, but he's not wearing glasses. . . and me, Dean Porsche and Danny Baker know what happens when Gary don't wear his spex (he can't see, as we saw at Bristol when he stepped happily into four feet of thin air thinking there were steps. . .). Anyway, ol' splashed-boots' debut (not with his new band the Know, the Mumps are backing here) is a not-bad slice of double yankee pop power. This boy can obviously write good songs but his delivery teeters on the Bland-American hair-line between competent and characterless.

Kris

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some

# ALBUMS



## Some Girls — The Rolling Stones (Rolling Stones Records — CUN 39108)

AH, the new Stones album. For me the most feverishly-anticipated event between the first album in 1963 and "Black and Blue" two years ago was first earful of the latest sizzling hot wax from the Stones which I knew'd be my every day soundtrack 'til the next one. The last album was released just as everybody-knows-what was gaining momentum and since then there's been a hell of a lot else to fill the vinyl waiting-room. But I can't forget the picture hangin' on the wall. . . .

Now here it is! "Some Girls." Tacky undies, gaudy make-up, clever cutouts for the sleeve: the new Stones album. There's been a lot of new wave-propelled water passed under the bridge since "Black and Blue", so where do the Stones jump in? Certainly not with the cement overshoes some anticipated and would still have you think. Energy and care are here and there are new real-life realisations (and resignations) in the words, amidst the usual throw-away female put-down prancings. It's like the group are resigned to their untouchable veteran mega-star position and the parasites and pressures it brings but fuck, they'll do it anyway (and with some of the pesky liggers they've magnetised over the years, it's small wonder that people, 'specially female — them being geezers — are treated with sneering contempt sometimes. But they are capable of being hurt and concerned (like on "Miss You").

Every album the Stones have made in the last ten years has been a mixture of rock'n'blues styles and ballads with the odd indulgence for their pleasure and often-but-not-always ours ("Melody" on the last album must have been fun to create but palled for those not part of the fun). This album is devoid of such whims, with the possible exception of "Faraway Eyes", a laid-back piss-take of redneck country twangings which does work as that.

It's a very consistent album. The needle jumps involuntarily far less than

on its three predecessors, but, at the moment, the killer quotient is lower than on those (no soul-wrenching epics like "Time Waits For No One" or "Memory Motel" which could bring tears to the eyes on the hundredth play). However, I think "Just My Imagination", a cover of the Temps' tune, ranks with their recent best with its marvellous controlled-but-deadly guitar-work and straight "Aftermath"-style pleading vocal from MJ, and I thoroughly enjoy the rollicking up-tempo swagger of "Lies", "Respectable" and "When The Whip Comes Down", heavy on guitars (less layers, more punch would have made things even better) and the miraculous ever-better drumming of Charlie Watts. I skip "Miss You" and play the speaker-stomping 12in. single (eight minutes of it) instead. It's insidious and great to lurch around to. The title track is slow, dense and churning, topped, like "Miss You", with the melodic blues-power of Sugar Blue (who?) and his mystery-harp.

"Beasts of Burden" is the album's straight slowie, the son of "Fool to Cry" with its unison ooh-oohs but faster. Like the rest, it grows. . . .

I'm still not keen on "Shattered", the closer, which hits a nice mean groove alright but doesn't really strike deep enough to make you leap or weep.

One left: "Before They Make Me Run." Keef's track, always the one I look to for more care and raw-emotion pumped through that thin, wasted voice. In this, Keef's mates (like a legendary GP) are dropping off, there's pressure and we'd better get out of here. The song's rough but magic with subtle courtings from the most driving guitar in rock.

So I've got me new Stones album. I like playing it a lot (more than most things) and I know I've probably done the superficial non-put down review you punkies out there don't wanna read. Well, I love the Clash with all my heart but I'll still be keeping an eye on the next Stones eclipse in 1980.

Kris Needs

## Bruce Springsteen — "Darkness On The Edge Of Town" (CBS)

## Mink De Ville — "Return To Magenta" (Capitol)

THE return of the street people, which should be a good thing. First, Springsteen, whose scenario of misfortune has been so well publicised that there's no need for pointless repetition here. I don't see any point in using any artist's business mistakes as some kind of excuse for what may be lacking in his comeback album, so I refuse to allow any sentiment (of which I had little anyway) to colour my judgement away from feeling that this album is pretty ordinary. It's a little difficult to pinpoint exactly what it is that makes this so much of a depressing earful — perhaps the fact that since "Born To Run" came out three years ago, a large resurgence has occurred of loud, dumb, fast and totally unintellectual rock'n'roll, which has stopped a lot of people taking themselves too seriously, and has conclusively proved that popular music goes totally in cycles — at this point, we're back in the late '50s, with an added ingredient of protest, which was to occur a few years later, although its original sentiments were expressed far more eloquently than the punks have managed. Undigressing, the new Springsteen album would have been far more acceptable in 1976 than it is in '78. 1976 was a year when I was prepared to get into the untwisting of lyrics, prepared to tolerate and enjoy the odd dirge, but in June 1978, I'm not about to waste my time with sophisticated, even if well meant, claptrap. It pisses me off when a song like "Racing In The Street" has a lyric that could conceivably have emerged from the pens of Chuck Berry or Brian Wilson, but is sung so slowly (but definitely not bluesily) that it makes your lids droop. It has been said in another review that the album was re-recorded to the power of infinity because there was so much hanging on it, which seems a likely reason for the utter sterility of so much of it, and certainly the early take syndrome (as opposed to the clinical computerised

perfection of recording over and over until it's absolutely right and immensely boring) has come back into its own with a vengeance recently, and produced a lot of much needed life. But more intriguing for me is the fact that each of the weekly music papers has assigned the record for review to one of their up and coming young lads, rather than letting anyone who was an original Springsteen rock writer assess it and compare it with the older stuff. Do Mick Watts, CSM and the rest not feel terribly interested in Springsteen anymore? It would hardly be a big surprise to discover that when such as these early disciples heard the album, they too found it boring, or at least were unable to summon up quite the enthusiasm they felt should be accorded to their early '70s hero. And finally, never forget that it was Springsteen himself who chose his business associates, and if they ripped him off, it was nobody's fault but his own. Feel sorry for him if you like (and I certainly feel sorry for him), but don't make his poor judgement an excuse for the fact that this record sounds like it belongs in another time and another place. Let's hope the next one's lacking the self pity and offers us a little hope — that's what you're entitled to expect from a Messiah. And I still prefer Greg Kihn's version of "For You". . . .

Willy De Ville has somewhat of an advantage in that the music he makes should, if my cyclic theory is correct, become popular again very soon — after all, the Drifters had their first couple of hits in 1959, and Ben E. King, whose voice Willy brings to mind on songs like "Guardian Angel" and "A Train Lady", was their lead singer at the time. Interspersed with soul ballads are harder rockers of equally fine quality, like "Rolene", another John Martin (of Southwind) composition and "Soul Twist", and the Latinesque "Desperate Days", which interestingly brings to mind a Springsteen associate in Southside Johnny, with whom Willy objects to being compared, or so he said last year. Just halfway through the album, there's been more life and energy than on the entire Springsteen LP. The second side, it must be admitted, is a little short of similar magic, and reinforces an earlier impression that this is altogether very similar to Mink's first album — a bit of chat in a foreign tongue and so on. But there are people around who can make albums that are pretty similar and use the same ingredients, people like Van Morrison for one, and it's never stopped me liking both the original and the remake. So it's a very good album in my estimation, and one which certainly should be investigated. The street vibe which the Springsteen lacks is also around in abundance, but it's the energy that really separates Willy and Bruce. In fairness, of course, Willy probably doesn't have too much bothering him at the moment (except that a couple of members of his very fine band have split since this record was made), while Bruce is obviously feeling almost suicidally depressed, if his album's any guide. But isn't that half the charm of rock'n'roll? They don't give medals to yesterday's heroes. . . .

John Tobler

# THE IMAGE IS NOT A CRACK!

Alternative TV — The Image Has Cracked (Deptford Fun City)

YOU know them "artists" and "reviewers", they ain't never gonna stop.

Nick Kent bit. I know almost everyone on or concerned with this album and how, where, why most of the tracks were written.

Danny Baker bit. I paid for it and I can say what I bleedin' well like.

The main reason for this album being so next-to-nothing is because it seems as though Mark (Perry) is surrounded by people who say "okay" too often. There's nobody to say that's awful or the track "Red" is the most pretentious bit of indulgence since the Moody Blues' solo albums. If Mark had such a person around, the many cracks in this particular image could have been polyfilled with better ideas, more guts and less reliance on repetition of tired heavy metal. As it is ATV have settled to make an LP of easy exits and extended bluffs.

The album opens with an intentional pompous fan fare of guitar and R2D2 synthesiser that drags it's overblown weight "cleverly" into "Alternatives" recorded live at the 100 Club. The idea of the cut is to hand the mike over to the audience to "use this soapbox" to "say something". A mistake because if they had something to say they wouldn't be in the audience in the first place. What you get is an embarrassing slanging match between the reluctant crowd and two or three would-be seers. Alright ATV aim to show how "we all don't know nothing" but if that's the case I thought they'd already said it on "How Much Longer", besides this misguided bit of eaves-dropping barely stands up to one play and goes on for far too long.

"Action Time Vision" follows and is the album's bright spot. Particularly noticeable are some excellent backing vocals. It is unique on the album because it lasts only as long as it should and certainly undermines its stable mates on the rest of it. I can't make head or tail of the lyrics but that's never bothered me before.

Back in the real world comes a version of Zappa's "Why don't you do me right?" which though triffy when slipped in live, has only Mark's voice to make this distinguishable from any AC/DC-type plod.

Another live cut that doesn't cut comes next, "Good Times," is thrown away because of the corridor-like atmosphere of the 100 Club, which it doesn't deserve if only because of fair lyrics that dynamite the old "romantic" Deptford Fun City crap.

The words of the unfortunate and distressingly-dull "Still Life" are shabbily hurried beneath what is without a doubt Alex Fergusson's least-inspired "song". "Still Life" was even inspired by one-time "Sniffin' Glue" attendant Steve Mick.

*You are sitting in your small room  
But your mind is like a ballroom*

However I can understand how it could be trivial and baffling if you don't know the full gossip, but then again there's an odd chance that you don't

care. "Viva la Rock 'n' Roll" runs the title on side two's opener and so it should.

The curious "Nasty little lonely" starts off subdued and echoey rather like those old sinister Alice Cooper tracks, where he descends into Hell, which this does in the form of binding, grinding heavy metal, that Ozzie Osbourne would be proud to flex the old gait across. All dead weight and solemn.

Nothing at this point had prepared me for the irredeemably bad "Red" As far as I can see the rest of the album can be put down to mistakes, but if "Red" is the direction ATV are taking then they may as well turn it in here and now. Being subjected to unaccompanied, directionless farfy guitar whackings at the expense of everyone in earshot is not my idea of £3.75. This track alone makes the new Ringo album look positively packed with intriguing ideas.

Now where did I put that filler?

"Cracked" finishes with "Splitting in Two", another good idea that winds up lasting about a month and a half.

So of course you think "Ayay he's had a row with them and slated their LP." What I'd like ATV to think is that maybe this was written from disappointment rather than vitriol, and whether they all cut out the rigged five-star business deals to paste in their scrap-hook and really believe that there's any worth in this disastrous LP, while ignoring those who obviously "don't understand", remains to be seen.

But remember what Lenny Bruce said about Hitler and the information, lads.

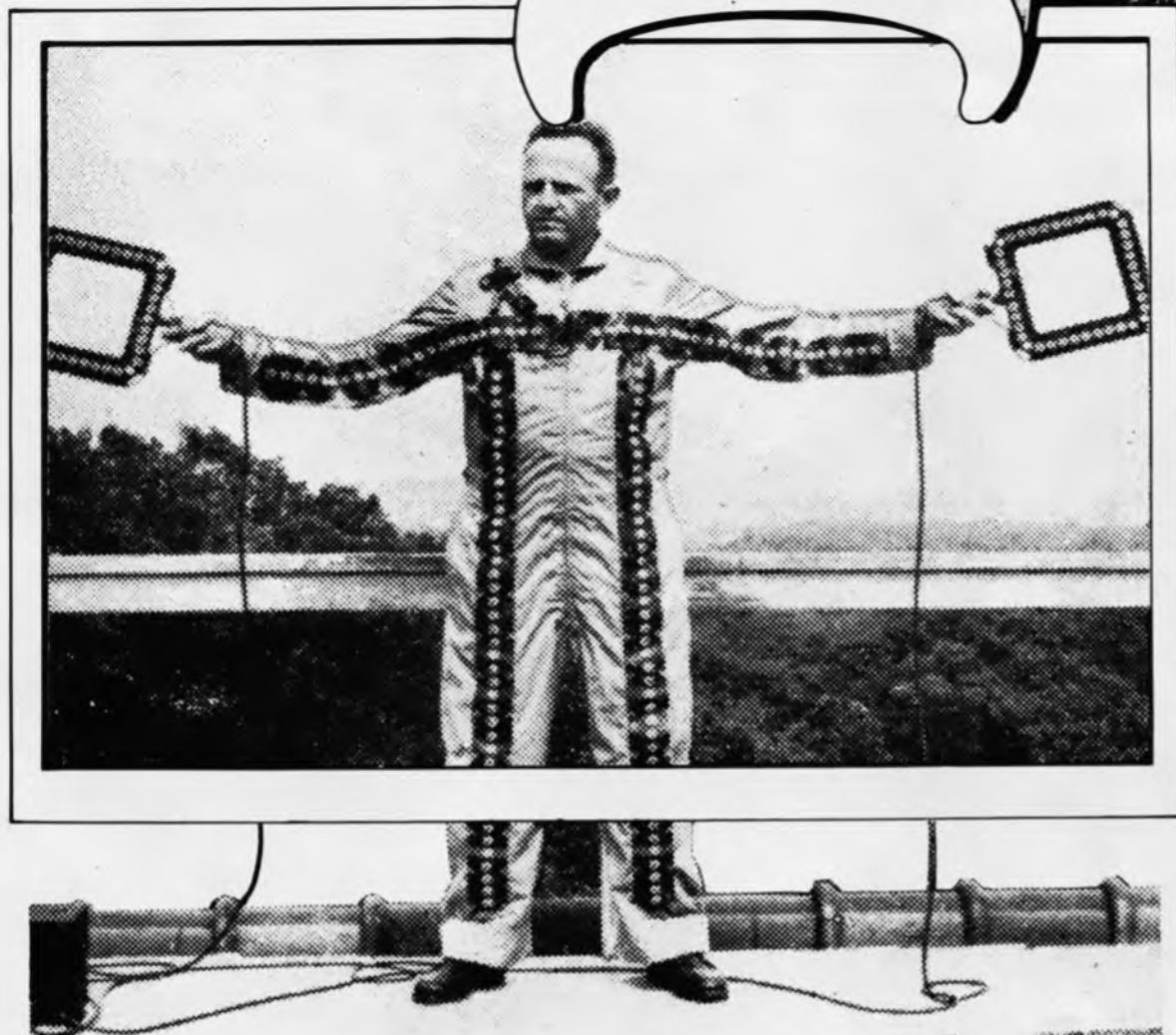
You need the Deviants. But how much longer will the Deviants need you?

Danny Baker

## RAINCOATS

KRIS has given me this little bit of space to give a mention to a great new band who I will be doing a feature on in a future issue. They are called The Raincoats and feature three girls: Ana — guitar/vocals; Gina — bass; Jeremie — lead guitar/vocals and one of the male species — Nick, on drums. They are all old friends of the Slits and their first London gig at Chelsea Art College recently reminded me very much of that particular band. In fact ex-Slit Kate Korus was once in the Raincoats as a temporary replacement for Gina, who was hospitalised at the time. The band recently went to play four gigs in Poland as representatives of UK punk. They went down enormously well. Their main influences at the moment seem to stem from the Slits and Patti Smith — a fantastic combination. Ana writes most of the material, which includes future classics such as "Fairy Tale in the Supermarket", "Black and White Song", "Instrumental in E" and "You're a Million". They aren't playing too many gigs at the moment, but are worth seeing. You'll be hearing more about the Raincoats — and soon.

Alan Anger



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# **The Sumptuous Chinese hostess brought another round of hors d'oeuvres as the dialogue continued:**

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Su Mei returned to our table, bearing a Remy, a bloody mary and a cryptic smile.

Marty Thau

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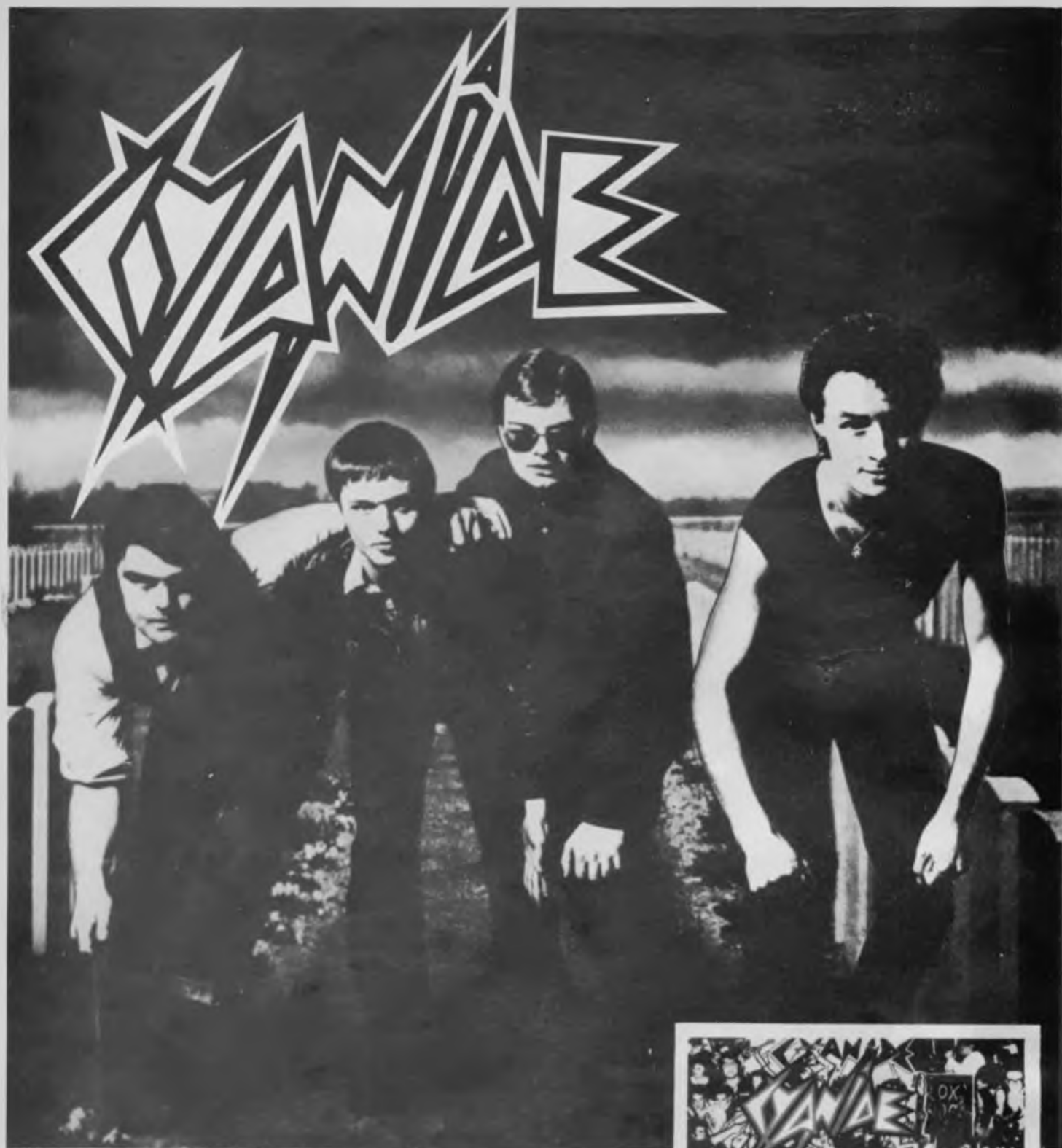
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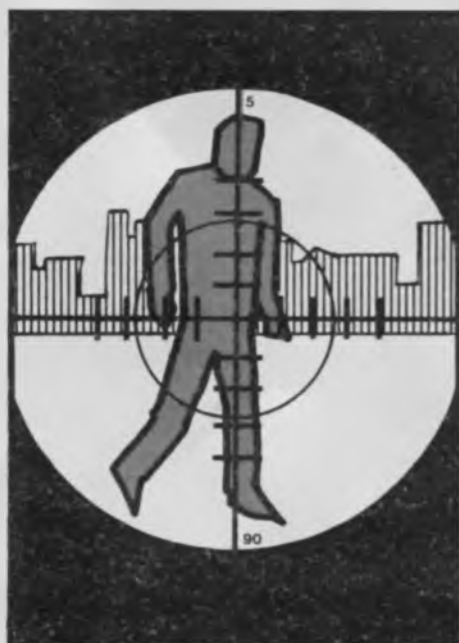
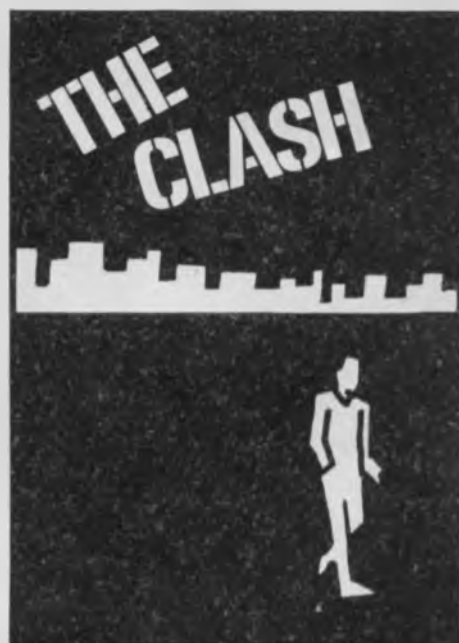
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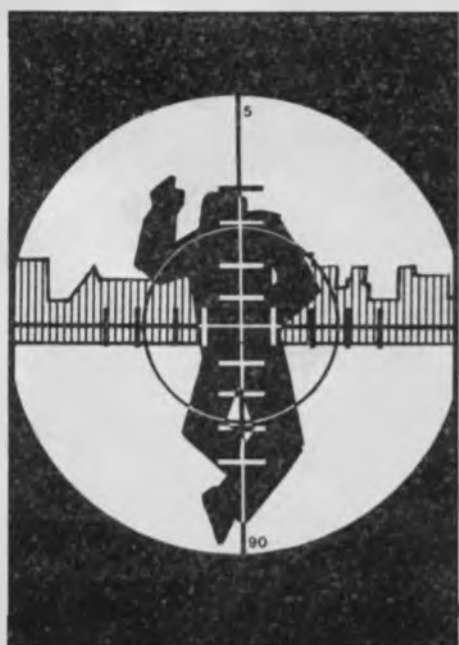
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