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Big Country Making it Big The Looters and the Yanks A Look at Some Dance Clubs Gang of Four: Determined Love as Nourishment



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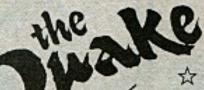
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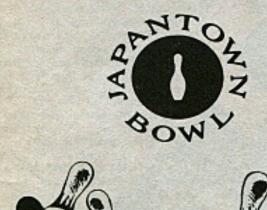
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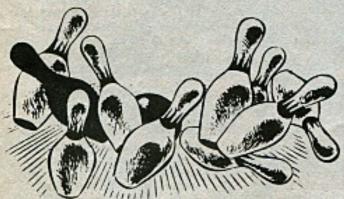
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SPECIAL PRICE

6 THE QUAKE DECEMBER

Big Country

Revitalizing Music For Anesthetic Times

By Tom Lanham

1983 will most likely go down in history as the year that pop charts finally opened up to the myriad of styles, attitudes and sounds that had previously been overlooked or simply ignored. With Michael Jackson's streetwise funk consistently dominating staid, urbane airwaves, one would suspect that listeners are ready for anything these days.

It's no surprise, then, that a four-piece Scottish band called Big Country is striking it rich their first time out. Their altogether unique approach is as refreshing as it is curious. Who could have predicted that the strains of the Scottish Highlands would come wafting merrily through America like so many bagpipes? No member of Big Country, however, plays the bagpipes or even cares to learn. The band's sound, which can be recognized distinct y in apartment airwells, on trebly ghetto blasters down the block, and from fuzzy car speakers out on the street, is the product of guitars, not wind-powered instruments. Guitars that sound like bagpipes? The four members of Big Country (Stuart Adamson -vocals, guitars, e-bow; Bruce Watson - guitars, e-bow, vocals; Tony Butler - bass, vocals; Mark Brzezicki - drums, vocals) know exactly what they're doing. "In a Big Country," their current harmonic, hook-filled single is sweeping the charts on both sides of the Atlantic and helping to push Big Country's Celtic-flavored album, The Crossing, into the Top/Twenty.

You can never deny your past," admitted Mark Brzezicki of Big Country's overtly ethnic influences. "In Scotland it's a different situation compared with what's in America or even England. We draw on tradition, and tradition always stands the test of time. It's a good base to work songs and ideas from, rather than taking a cliched situation like doing a disco song with the words 'I love you, baby.' Our music can get across to people the same way as a song about boy meets girl these are the stories and parables of everyday life that Stuart's seen around him in Scotland. The tone of this album is basically that in times of despair, you can still be optimistic."

Optimism is certainly in no short supply in the Big Country ranks these days. In the short span of a year-and-a-half the group has grown dramatically into an immense phenomenon in Europe, and, in the process, become one of the few bands that critics and the general record-buying public alike vote 'yes' on. They now threaten to attain the same status in America.

The group came together under the aegis of Adamson, whose five-year stint with another popular Scottish group, The Skids, had left him restless for something new. He began writing his peculiarly earthy idylls with a guitarist friend, Bruce Watson, and soon found his as yet unnamed unit ready to record. A drummer, a bassist and a few demo tapes later the band had a record contract and had dubbed themselves Big Country, a name, Brzezicki explains, "that suited the sound of our music."

"I think that when bands get together," he continued, calling from Scotland where the group was preparing to record a new single on the eve of their first American tour, "infortunately for a lot of groups and record companies, one is very keen to look over the other's shoulder and see what somebody else has done before in finding some sort of formula to base your music on. You can be one of those bands that's already successful so that you become successful, too, just by following someone else's footsteps. What's important in music is to stick to what you believe in and how you are naturally and get people to actually see what you're doing and believing in you, which is what we've done. We're happy with our songs because they give us a certain feeling that runs through us

when we play.'

That feeling comes across quite powerfully on The Crossing, Big. Country's Steve Lillywhite-produced debut album. The ten songs lope along on ethereal undercurrents of Scottish vernacular, with passionate displays of guitar craftsmanship dotting the course. True of their name, Big Country conjures up visions of just that - a big country, with rolling, green hills, jagged, apathetic crags and bitterly temperamental weather presiding over a people who are often at the mercy of their environment. The remarkable ambience manifested on The Crossing is as cheery and heartwarming as a glowing fireplace on a cold winter night. Big Country is alone in its field, and tracks like "Harvest Home,"
"Chance" and "Porrohman" prove the
band's first Stateside hit to be no fluke.

"Stuart Adamson's style of playing is totally unique," comments Brzezicki on his group's trademark 'bagpipe' sound.
"The way he uses echoes and harmonized sounds on his guitar creates a whole spectrum of sound other than the normal, cliche rock guitar sounds. And when he plays against Bruce, you get a type of echoed jigsaw, where the knitted guitars intertwine to create the finished sound."

The most interesting facet of Big Country's vigorous, twin-guitar assault, though, is the group's use of a little-known electronic marvel called the e-bow. Perfected in America by, of all groups, Black Oak Arkansas, the e-bow, when held over the pickup of a guitar, allows the guitarist perpetual sustain on whatever chord or note he chooses to strike.

"Stuart and Bruce both use e-bows when they play together," says Brzezicki, "which has got a great sound. It was something Stuart really wanted because when he plays his open, sustained sound the guitar is open to as many sounds as a synthesizer just by exploring it; it's been a very limited instrument for a long time. There were only two e-bows in Britain when he was looking for them, so now, I would presume, there are none left."

"We're the only four left" is a quote the band's art director nicked and committed to print on the sleeve of Big Country's recently-released U.K.

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8 THE QUAKE DECEMBER

twelve-inch single, "Chance." A
pretentious show of airs on the group's
part? "Hey," defends Brzezicki, "we
didn't do that. That's just the way our
art director feels about us. All of the
reactions we've been getting are
absolutely amazing! The whole thing
about this band is that we're being
ourselves, and all you can do is be
yourself and rely on your instincts.
That's the only way we ever will be."

Hearts and Songs of Fire

Frank Andrick

he crowd that came to Wolfgangs Saturday November 12th came with BIG expectations for Big Country. Judging from the crowds reaction which ran from ear to ear grins, whoops and stamps, all the way to some accomplished vocal harmonizing on the bands thematic hit single "In A Big Country" most of those expectations were easily met. Members of the usually jaded and staid "Too Cool To Move" music community were spied grooving to the Big Country beat. In fact the two soldout in advance shows combined the desperate attitudes of the "must see the show because Big Country are important and I must be seen there"/and those emersed in the true call of the muse, the fans who bought the records and came because there was never a thought to do anything less. For once it was difficult to distinguish a difference between the two. All of which confirms the emotional and yes even spiritual bond between Big Country, their music and their people. The people of the Bay Area who paid almost \$15.00 a piece in advance for admission for each show led leading guitarist Stuart Adamson to remark, "so many of you paid for both shows to see us! You must have a lot of money here in Americal We certainly can't do that back home!" I was left with the impression that the crowd would have done it all over again with no hesitation the next evening had that been possible. No wonder over 400,000 copies of Big Country's debut album The Crossing have found their way into American homes already. But an album is recorded at an artists direction, the real test of the flame is the live concert.

In the San Francisco Bay Area where the band received their initial push airplay wise due to the college radio stations KFJC and KUSF, and the massive support of The Quake, Big Country was untested. Reports from English and East Coast Press might have set the stage for the inevitable, claiming that Big Country was one of the few bands to come along since U-2 that lived up to and in fact surpassed theirhype and publicity. Over 1,600 music lovers gathered at Wolfgangs to put Big Country to the test.

All the talk of studio trickery, Steve (U-2, ultravox, etc etc.) Lillywhite production, and any other hesitatant reservation vanished as Stuart Adamson, Bruce Watson, Mark Brezicki and Tony Butler took the stage launching into the opening tune of "1000 Stars". A quick shift of tempo and colouration and the band moved thru "Angle Park" a track originally found on Big Countrys "Fields of Fire"

import E.P.

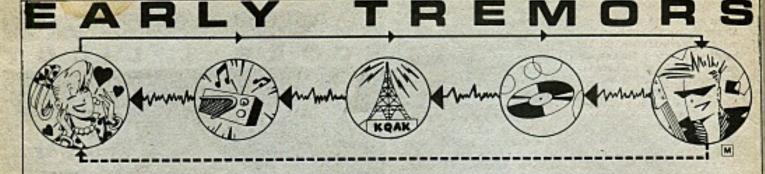
It is hard to shake the epic quality and feeling that permeates a Big Country concert. Almost impossible to escape that history in the making feeling. Feeding that feeling Big Country presented a slice of their history in playing "Balcony" the B-side of their "Harvest Home" single, already a highly prized vinyl rarity even in England. The song has grown well with Big Country and now offers an easy excuse for Stuart Adamson's guitar pyrotechnics as his snake and fire inspired lead guitar gave "Balcony" a new personality. Stuarts out front guitar leads sometimes remind one of Bill Nelson who in his BeBop deluxe days produced an album by the Skids, a Scottish band that featured the teenaged Stuart Adamson.

In the aftermath of "Balcony" the sets paralleled B.C.'s. The crossing lp including "Lost Patrol," "Porrahman," "Fields of Fire," and a stunning rendition of "Inwards," a song held so personal by the band that interview discussion of the song is Verboten!

Closing the set with "Harvest Home" the band encored with the Smokey Robinson and the Miracles heart render "Tracks of My Tears." A song included on Big Countrys latest import single recorded live in England, "Tracks" provided an emotional cap to the evening and Stuart has learned to project himself and his passions expertly into that canvas. In order to drive the point home the band layed out a devestating second version of "In A Big Country" complete with a chorus sung by at least 400 or so in the audience. It was certainly something to be a part of!!! To let Stuart put it in his own words, as he did on the bands way to the Miyako Hotel following the show. "It was great Mon! A night when the heart ruled the head. Finding each other in all of our hearts. Thats all of us!! Thats where we come from and where we want to go." Big Country is already there!!







What's early on Early Tremors?

The Police with a new British single out that includes a live version of Message In a Bottle along with a previously unrecorded tune, Someone to Talk To as the flip to their new single, Wrapped Around Your Finger.

The Police's Stewart Copeland has teamed up with Wall of Voodoo's wicked wonder, Stan Ridgeway for an interesting collaboration on the tune, Don't Box Me In featured on the Rumbielish soundtrack. It's really a wonderful tune.

O superwoman herself, Laurie Anderson is expected to have a new I.p. out soon. Called Mister Heartbreak, it includes Sharkey's Day, a song that started out quite

differently from the final mix. Credit Adrien Belew with the creative alteration. He's guest guitarist strumming on Laurie's new l.p.

The states have Laurie Anderson, Europe and soon the rest of the world will have Nina Hagen. From East Germany, Nina has established quite a bizarre reputation for herself. There is almost nothing this woman will not attempt, on stage or otherwise. Her new import album called, Angsitos (which means fearless thanks to a rash of calls from the Early Tremors audience) has several strange operatic sounding numbers on it including Sunday favorite, New York, New York.

From the lady who brought us 99 Luftballoons, Nena (from West Germany) also brings us Tanz Auf Dem Vulcan. It's as stirring and as musically diverse as Luftballoons and is another great track on her debut l.p. That l.p. will be released in English soon, by the way. Following the Cure's San Francisco show back in August, they returned to Europe and found themselves in Paris for one more show before bopping into the studio to cut their latest single, Lovecats. As Robert Smith told our producer Frank Andrick, the new song will be unlike anything we have come to expect from the techno pop band that brought us, Let's Go To Bed. It's a wonderfully jazzy sounding piece with a rinky tink plano. Following its debut on Early Tremors, Lovecats quickly landed a spot on the Quake playlist.

Now that Hunters and Collectors, Talking to a Stranger is getting regular spins on the Quake (heard in June on the Sunday night show), we have started to dip into an even newer l.p. on import from the band. Judas Sheep is found on the Fireman's Curse, recorded by German producer Connie Plank (Ultravox, Kraftwerk, Eurythmics) at his West German studio. The band ventured to San Francisco mid November for their debut live show and also stopped in to be our special guests to coincide with that show'

SRO. ..was the situation at Wolfgangs when Big Country performed in early November. Early Tremors is proud to have been one of the first nationwide supporters of Big Country. Based on your feedback, we quickly recognized that it would simply be a matter of time before that enthusiasm translated to a big following for the band as well as big sales.

In town for a promotional jaunt, England's new sensation, Paul Young made a surprise appearance on Early Tremors. We still firmly believe in this artists ability to be one of the biggest in the 80's. We've been spotlighting a radically remixed extended version of Comb Back and Stay from his debut Lp. No Parlez. Although you've been hearing Paul's interpretation of the Joy Dhision masterpiece, Love Will Tear Us Apart. Paul told us he will never allow it to be released as a single out of respect for

the now departed Ian Curtis from Joy Division.

England's 999 has been on hold for awhile. Now they're back in action with, Arabesque, an accustically polished piece of pop with tons of hooks and a very different sound from the band that brought us hollywood. 999 incidentally is the English emergency phone number like our 911.

It used to be as easy as, ABC. ABC is another band attempting a new approach. Their latest single, That was Then but This Is Now, has a harder edge to it than past material and it sounds terrific.

Madness reigns on Early Tremors with their new 3 song import 12 inch. We played, The Sun and the Rain. There's also a live version of My Girl on the new release.

New from Ultravox is a live six song import epentitled Monument. It's being co-released in Europe with a cooresponding video piece available at a relatively inexpensive price. Included in this ep is the classic, Wenna and another Ultravox fave, Hymn.

The Jam's compilation Lp. is out. It's called Snap, and includes rare singles. Also as part of the package, there is a limited edition 4 song live 7-inch with, Move On Up., (the Curtis Mayfield tune) recorded on the Jam's farewell tour.

The final performance for Australia's Mental as Anything was right here in San Francisco. Those of us who had the opportunity to see them open for Men At Work at Berkeley's Greek Theater couldn't wait to catch them in a more intimate setting. This rockabilly country punk blues band defies categorization.

That same night, through the wonders of modern technology, the Mentals, Greedy Smith guested on Early Tremors.

Our new faves out of the Athens GA. area (as recommended by R.E.M's Michael Stipe) are Love Tractor. The press is rapidly picking up on this new cerebral dance rock band and so have we. Jeb's Pharoh has been part of our program for a while. Although Love Tractor was in town in October, it looks like it wasn't quite enough for their newfound fans and they may be coming back in January. We'll

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Let's Active's Every Word Means No has been an Early Tremors staple since we got our hands on a copy of the cassette back in July. Not only is Let's Active providing us with some new vinly but their live show is as tastefully crafted as their new ep. Afoot. If you saw the Quake/REM show at the Kabuki in early November, you know what we're talking about.

Opening for both Let's Active and REM, was the Boston band, Neats. The Neats are a four piece rock band patterned after the early garage groups of the 60's. They also dropped in to the Sunday night program for an impromptu conversation.

For the real thing, KFJC's Frank Luft brought in some of the California psychedelia bands as part of a special Early Tremors segment. They included Stained Glass, Chocolate Watchband, Syndicate of Sound, and Bogus Thunder. After hearing these bands it became obvious where a lot of the modern influences are originating from.

The next Sunday, Harry Summerall (San Jose Mercury News) brought in psychedelia bands of a National scope.

Hope you were listening when the Mutants came in on Halloween eve to assult our airwave. Later on, Sisters of Mercy, in town to play the I Beam, also came by as well as openers, True West.

True West's Russ Tollman told us about a show they did in New York recently at the Danceateria. Seems Tom Verlaine showed up, went back stage after the show and told the band he had purchased their record and loved it. Now there's talk about Tom producing True West. Incidentally that Danceateria show was recorded and will be available on cassette only, released through Roir Tapes in January.

From Sacramento to Los Angeles, the Long Ryders have a similar musical approach as True West. Influenced by the Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers, they are part of the current country psychedelia sect. Lead singer for the Long Ryders, Sid Griffin has even written a book about Burrito Brother, Gram Parsons.

Back to the Bay, congratulations are in order to Avalon Boulevard who have just landed a major distribution deal with Important Records.

Other local color in this issue of the Early Tremors wrap up?

Versatile Paris Working have just released their new 7 song ep. Guest drummer is the Mutants Dave Carothers.

Wire Train's new Lp. won't be out till January but if you were tuned to Early Tremors in November, you heard a track from the

album on import thanks to 415's Howie Klein.

The Yanks new ep, Only Lovers Left Alive, is a creative collection of tunes from the former Das Blok and SVT members.

Thanks to the following local bands for stopping by, providing us with material or both: Necropolls of Love, Bad Attitude, Panel of Experts, Lucas, the Contractions, Elements of Style, Wombat Suicide, Big Race, Eric Blakely, Sideways, Muddogs, Permanent Wave — Voices, Big City...

The Early Tremors informal phone poll song of the month is the Cure's Lovecats trailed closely by Nina Hagen's, New York, New York

Finally we offer to you a listing of albums that we feel deserve your immediate attention. Iggy Pop, David Bowle, Howard Devoto, King Curt (produced by Dave Edmunds, and interestingly enough it tracks from the inside out). The The, Assembly, and the Live U-2.

0

Belle Nolan, Peter Standish & Frank Andrick COMIC ART



eto by Stefano Mi





YANKS

by Susie Leon

"We're a young band but the people in the band have a wealth of experience to bring to this band."

A very apt description of Yanks by its newest member, Steve Aliment. Yanks is one of North Beach's latest contributions to The City's ever-changing, ever-alive music scene. The lineup includes Jack Johnson formerly of Das Blok, Owen Masterson of Das Blok and SVT fame and Paul Zahl, also from SVT. Aliment, who headed his own band in Seattle, is replacing Jack Casady on bass.

It's difficult to go to a Yanks show and sit still. Masterson's vocals are convincing, the guitars strong and clear, the beat powerful and the rhythm compelling. As Aliment says, "I've never been in a band where every guy is a 3-dimensional performer... musically competent, vocally competent and visually competent."

Watching the band live drives this point home. Even lousy PA systems can't distort Johnson's masterful guitar playing or Zahl's well-timed fills. But the vocals sometimes require effort to hear. Yet Yanks is not overly bothered by this because "...there are people who

just come and they sit to hear the words ... there are some people who never dance, they just sit and listen and for them it's like going to a class."

"We try to play as quiet as is comfortable for us and try to get the vocals over...we want people to understand what we're saying but we also want to play...we definitely want to see people dance."

Despite major label interest, Yanks have a recently released single on an independent label. (See review.)

"We're a young band," explains Masterson, "We want to handle it for a while, we want control for awhile...you jump in so fast that you end up lost."

A problem with deciding on a single is the band's wide variety of music. As Zahl puts it, "we don't know which side of the band we want to expose first." Johnson adds, "..we're not trying to focus on any one place. We figure with the stuff we're playing, we could cross over to four different areas."

At least four. The band's repertoire includes alarm-clock numbers like "Scandal Rocks High Society" and "She Comes In Blues", upbeat love songs like "Stay," and the thematic roller, "Saddle Up."

Described by the band as a "Mashed Potatoes" of the 80's" and "textbook lust," it definitely carries a message, both about love and its sexual needing nature, says Masterson. And upon second listen, it would also seem to speak for Yanks.

Carrying a message in my heart, One in a million I've never felt like this before. Lost in a secret Nobody knows what's goin' on. Nobody knows the love between us we have found. I can't deny it. I get excited. I cannot stop my eyes from finding you in a crowd.

The lights dim and the crowd comes to life. Yanks overtakes the stage with Owen greeting the audience in his friendly, swaggering way. The opening chords of "Scandal" are electric jolts charging the crowd with the band's enthusiasm and energy.

Scratch in the words on medicine cabinet

glass. Nobody knows the songs I've etched there or the facts. Locked in a world of private glances. When opportunity knocks, will answer. Caught in a dream I'm not used to dreaming, wrapped up in arms I'm not used to feeling.

The rough edges are disappearing from Yanks. A cohesive tight unit is beginning to glitter from under the unsure beginnings. They've got the conviction, the energy and the talent. All they need is you the believer.

Baring a hunger, I can taste it on my lips. The waiting is over. We're goma ride until it hurts into the night. Nobody knows where we have gone. Nobody has seen the things we've seen, done what we've done. I turn for the better brought us together. Not gonna risk us losing what we've got now.

YANKS Only Lovers Left Alive DTI Records

At long last this quartet from North Beach finally releases its debut EP, an actual 6-song piece of vinyl that you can actually play on your turntable. Year. O guys, where's the 8-song album, the national tour, the Day on the Green...

Seriously, this record is a fine bit of Yanks' sound. All originals, the songs are no surprise to fans who have attended Yanks concerts. Side One has three songs which highlight most of these shows; "I Don't See Her Anymore" the Das Blok classic; "Saddle Up," and "White Lies." Side Two show three different sides of the band; title track "Only Lovers Left Alive," crooningly sad song "Ain't Like Me," and rocker "Scandal Rocks High Society."

The first three have similar arrangements but different themes; songs about love and liars surrounded by steady percussion and Jack Johnson distinctive guitar leads. "Saddle Up" has an almost theme-ish quality it sings not just about love but about relationsips as well.

The title track somehow reminds me of Gary Myrick's style: something about the imagery and the melody. "Ain't Like Me" is sung almost accapella style and Owen's voice is a bit raw on this one. "Scandal" shows the rockier side of the band and is a biting observation on the jet set.

All in all a record easy to listen to, maybe a little harder to get all the words. Too bad Jack's prowess on guitar is not pointed out at all here; to see him live is quite amazing. Same for the other Yanks. But if you can't do that, Lovers is a decent sampling of an earnest, hardworking band.

The Looters

We Sing What We See

Barbara Withers & Paul McNabb

The Looters are an infectious R & B Rock Band that attain a rare magic in performance, they combine a soul stirring Latin R & B sound with honest street wise perspectives. "It's all right there on the block where we live; hispanics, asians, blacks & whites...It's a melting pot, the whole world right in front of you." This is the heart of the Looters, and it shows in their lyrics. which chide us to "do our own thinking, question authority and strive for the best possible situations in this one world we all live in."

Having been together for a year now,

the band consists of:

Matt Callahan - Lead vocals and

lim Johnson - Bass & Vocals. Joe Johnson — Guitar & Vocals Akal Fillinger - Synthisizer & Vocals

Bobby Imsolucki - Drums

At this point in the bands life they are attempting to market themselves. As Matt explains "We've been pretty much stand-offish in the business side of things. Because we wanted to be appreciated for our music and not our connections. Now it's starting to pay off so I don't think we made the wrong decision." This stand-offish attitude was based on the band's disillusionary experiences at some bay area clubs. After realizing that as a new band; good, bad or indifferent, they couldn't even get the most basic element of respect from local promoters, they went underground, performing 54 dates in the year all at venues out of the public spotlight. In August of '82, with a group of friends, they started the popular but now defunct offensive club (and known as the 998 from its Valencia St. address) the club proved to be very satisfying for the band and as Matt says "it kept us going spiritually."

Another spiritual event for the band was a positive fluke. The Sandinista Govt. of Nicaragua invited the band to perform for the Nicaraguan people. The Sandinista's put a tremendous emphasis on culture, even in the midst of war. The Nicaraguan people are also hungry for rock. Such "American Pie" traditions as billboard's top 100 and



MTV have made music in roads in Nicaragua and the people rolled out the red carpet for the Looters. During performances in Managua, Leon and Estli the band found the people contrary to the image of the American Press. All doors were open, no topics were taboo and the people just wanted some good live "musica," the Looters provided that expertly. A French production company followed the band around the country and shot about 6 hours of video combining live concert, footage with street scenes of the band. Hopefully we'll get to see the finished product here in the U.S. "The Nicaraguan people have no gripe with

the U.S. people. It's the govt. & business that they are fighting," stated Matt. "Also, they're not Communists, land and liberty are they"re revolutionary goals." Matt went on to say that since their return from Nicaragua, "were're not trying to wave a banner, it's just a crusade against accepting what you're told. People should ask questions."

The Looters don't describe themselves as a political band. They see themselves as actionary musicians not reactionary. You should see them too, the only thing they'll steal is your time and you're guaranteed they'll give a lot more in return.



eating in the 80's

By Mr. Koste

ts the time of year when friends and family get together by invitation or otherwise to drink a toast and join in a bit of holiday cheer. Around Kasa Koste, we spread the cheer in the same fashion as my Ukranian ancestors: Christmas just isn't Christmas without Zakooskeh.

Loosely translated, Zakooskeh means "something to bite on." Now in many households that means coffee and cake. Traditional, yes, but not very practical in absorbing the alcohol to the brain from the consumption of holiday cheer. A typical assemblage of Zakooskeh includes a loaf of unsliced rye bread, unsalted butter, kielbasa with horseradish, home canned pickles and peppers, perhaps some cold ham and a dish of creamed herring. Please note that Zakooskeh is considerably

heartier than the average finger food you find at cocktail parties. A good spread should serve as a mini-meal unless you plan a fullfledged meal to follow the drinks. When in doubt as to what qualifies as Zakooskeh and what doesn't, simply empty the icebox of all foodstuffs that haven't begun the transformation to science project, and serve. Should you be entertaining uninvited party people that you don't particularly care to see, bring out the wicker basket of Rye Krisps and Wisconsin cheese wedges they sent you three or four Christmases ago. Anyone who dares to sent it deserves to eat it. (So there)

Fruitcake is another one of those mail-order edibles that some people believe to be the perfect thoughtful gift. However, I've yet to taste one that hadn't absorbed the flavor of its festive wrapping. If you're going to do fruitcakes this year, do it right and make it yourself. Its a time consuming project and the high cost of the ingredients (particularly the candled fruits) may tend to make the cheese wedge gift box look attractive, but the final product is definately worth the time and effort. Stay away from the diced fruits...the bigger chunks cost more but make for a moister cake.

You might consider mailing one of our native Bay Area treats to family and friends this year. Theres a number of seafood dealers at Fishermans Wharf that can ship dry-ice packed shellfish anywhere in the country. (Imagine the look on the recipients face when they realize they got a case of crabs for Christmast) Timing is critical when mailing those dungeonous delicasies so I advise you let the person on the receiving end know that its coming in advance to give your gift a better chance of arriving fresh. To eliminate the fear of disappointment, skip the crabs and send a gift bax of dried fruits. FROM FRUITS TO NUTS on Union Street and on Pier 39 offer a multitude of fig. prune, appricot and nut collections

that can be easily shipped anywhere. For delivery closer to home, BISHOP AND HARPER on Geary Blvd. has prime-pick gift boxes of apples and oranges that are always well received at holiday time. For the person who has everything, consider a box of exotic jam and fruit from THE KIWI RANCH on Highway 99 in Gridley.

My final holiday offering comes from the family cookbook that Pop Koste authored five years ago. This sumptous writing was given to my brother and four sisters to save on long distance phone calls. (Hey Pop! I need the recipe for those great dumplings you used to serve with roast pork...) Theres Always Scrambled Eggs was never intended for mass publication, but since its one of the inspirations for "Eating in the Eighties," I feel no guilt in revealing one of my Dad's intriguing creations:

CHRISTMAS HAZELNUT TORTE

 Shell and grate % lb. HAZEL-NUTS (about 2 lbs unshelled)

2. In a mixing bowl, cream together: 2% cups POWDERED SUGAR, 10 EGG YOLKS, 14 tsp.



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By Susie Leon

Rathskeller (or Rat Cellar) 600 Turk at Polk

A German Cabaret meets modem music is what happens in the depths of the Rathskeller. The entrance is on Turk, down some stairs and you can go left to hear German melodies or right to hear the latest in modern music. Both sides offer stuff to dance to; you can start off with waltzing and end up the evening going crazy in the next room.

Admission is \$2 w/invitation, \$3 w/o and it's open every Friday night from about 9 till 2 pm. Unfortunately you must be 21 to enter as there is a bar on hand with \$2 drinks which tend to get stiffer as the night wears on. Yum. There's tons of room to dance as tables line only the sides; everything else is dance floor. The dee jays even take requests, but they dare to play new songs; the night yours truly went, I heard three new tunes that were well-received and danced to.

I think you'll like this place coz the music isn't boring, there's lots of room and the folks there are real nice., No bully bouncers here. Even parking is relatively decent since it's away from downtown Polk and crazy North Beach. Open Every Friday night till the walls fall down.

The Berkeley Square University Ave Berkeley

This cool little place recently reopened after losing its lease and features live bands most of the week but also has dancing on Tuesday and Friday nights. David Bassin, of Rough Trade Records, does the disc-spinning Tuesdays and Brian Raffi, of I-Beam fame, works on Friday; if this doesn't give you a clue as to the type of tunes heard, well, you'll have to cruise over and hear for yourself 'coz it's usually new, un-Top 40 and interesting.

All ages are admitted into the Square; you only have to be 21 if you want booze. Drinks are usually about \$2.25. Berkeley being the motley town it is, expect crowds of the same type, that is to say, of unknown origin. Room is usually not at a premium, and there are tables and chairs to lounge about in. There's a kitchen serving various kinds of munchies, and several video games to entertain wallflowers. Parking is not impossible though sometimes annoying; University Avenue is well-lit, but the side streets aren't. All in all, not a bad place to groove

Studio West Vallejo at Front

This place is big; according to a staff member, a thousand dancers can fit in here no problem. With their hours, a thousand people might just come in. They're open from 10 pm-4 am Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday, till 7 am Friday and Saturday and closed Monday and Tuesday (some of us do sleep once in a while). It's \$3 on week-days and \$5 on weekends and you don't have to be 21, just 18, although no alcohol is served.

The average crowd ranges between 18-25 and is farily highenergy. Rock of the 80's is the name of the tune here, though most Wednesdays features live bands to check out. The deejay keeps most folks happy and so does the snackshop. What keeps moi happy is ample free parking across the street; what a deal.

The Endup 6th & Harrison

One of the more reasonable spots to dance in, the Endup is open Tuesday through Sunday from 8 pm - 2 am and closed on Mondays.

But the fun doesn't stop then. Grab an early breakfas' somewhere and come back at 6 am on Saturday and Sunday and the party starts all over again, with the bar and everything. Wheee.

Entrance fees vary. Tuesdays it's \$3 but drinks are 25c. No cover Wednesday and Thursday and \$1 drinks. Friday and Saturday the \$3 cover isn't charged until 9 pm, so get there early if you can. However, you must be 21 and over to get in. Sigh.

There is an outside deck for dancing, pool tables and a light show. The deejay keeps people on the dance floor with a blend of new wave and other dance-a-billy tunes, with Thursdays featuring the "Rock of the 80's" mix. Sunday mornings seem to be the busiest and the diverse crowd of afterhours party-goers are a fun lot. A wild place to end up, yuck yuck.

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SALT, and 1 T, DARK RUM.

Add the ground nuts and stir until foamy.

4. Beat until stiff (?) and fold in 10 EGG WHITES and 1 T. FINE BREAD CRUMBS.

5. Spring-form cake pans are not a must but they help in final preparation. However, ordinary round 9 inch cake pans work just as well since the cakes have a tendancy to pull away from the sides.

6. BUTTER two cake pans well

and cover with more FINE BREAD CRUMBS.

Pour in the batter, then sprinkle the tops with more FINE BREAD CRUMBS.

 Bake at 350° for 40 to 50 minutes. Check for doneness with a toothpick.

Remove from pans and cool on bakery racks. Then, very carefully split each layer in half so you end up with four thin layers.

10. Whip up 2 or 3 cups of

FRESH WHIPPED CREAM.

11. Carefully transfer one of your halved cake layers to a cake plate, alternating with a generous dollop of WHIPPED CREAM. Save as much cream as you can stand for coating the top and sides of the torte.

 Decorate the top with TOASTED HAZELNUT HALVES, or colored sugar, drierres, or what have you.

Christmas Hazelnut Torte can

be made in advance, but remember that whipped cream will deteriorate and turn the cake to mush if kept in the refrigerator too long.

By the way...don't worry about leftover. I've found that even folks who shy away from rich deserts always come back for seconds. My seconds up.

A little traveling music maestro....

0

VIDEOACTIVE

Steve Seid

It should have been most effective use of a cymbal, but the Billboard Video Music Awards settled on the unlikely category of "Most Effective Use of Symbolism." Just imagine a greeting card award for "Best Use of Punctuation." Or a sculptor honored for "Most Innovative Use Of A Fig Leaf." There are some elements of a medium please substitute rock video for medium - that are better left unturned. They're ingrained, inseparable and integral and integral parts of expression. I mean: you wouldn't praise Salvador Dali for "Weirdest Landscape With Dripping Pocket Watches." So what's all, the hoopla about "symbolism?" The envelope please.

Nominated for the "Symbolism Award" are the overdose kings themselves, Russell Mulcahey and David Mallet. Mulcahey (Billy Joel, Ultravox) as you all know is famous for his use of water. Liquids flow from champagne glasses, down alleys, through halls; like one big urinary fixation. You get the feeling that it's mind over bladder. Water is one of the big symbols. Over two thousand years ago it was placed in the public domain so that anyone could use it without paying royalities or wor-

rying about copyright infringements on the collective unconscious. One of your most hackneyed symbols, but people's imaginations just whirl when they see Eddy Grant subsumed by his living room rug or Billy Joel spilling wine glasses in slow motion (an often used symbol of our dulled perceptions). Gasps of "Oh god, return to the Mother" and "Wow, Life springs eternal" flood our parched little minds.

What's wonderful is how symbols strike a familiar chord. It could be an E minor, A sharp or just a major chord. But they do strike a chord. You see: even a guitar is symbolic. Ask Freud or Motley Crue. Held near the lower abdomen, the guitarist's hand running crazily up and down the rigid neck. You've got the picture. Sometimes the guitar symbol is followed by gushing water.

Now David Mallet (almostevery Bowie tape) doesn't limit himself to water, though he has done a wonderful job of placing David Bowie in a number of liquifying circumstances. You must remember Bowie slowly sinking beneath the waves in his harlequin outfit from "Ashes to Ashes." And then there's the parody of From Here To Eternity with his damp China Girl, Oddly, members of "minority"

Love as nourishment as seen in this "rotting" bride from Greg Kihn's jeopardy.





Stripped of his socialized armor, a man retreats to the womb, eluding the feminine aspect. Suggestive of homosexual impulses. Note the "phallic" camera to the left. From Backstabber by Hyts.

cultures seem to be a new symbolic mode in Bowie's videos, "Let's Dance" was an award nominee, but probably for the soleful "red shoes." Rumor has it that they were the same red shoes that Judy Garland wore in The Wizard of Oz. And those were originally going to be blue, but Toto (not the band, the dog) passed water on them, symbolic of a greater love for vengeance (red), aggressiveness (red), commies (red), bull fights (red), financial debts (red) and seeing (red). But more interesting is this pre-occupation with chinese and aborigines, aka minorities. For Bowie minorities are a loaded image. They could be anyone making less than \$250,000 per annum. They could be representative of the unrepressed, sexual mulch that Bowle doesn't symbolize, ie. no genitalia in Aladdin Sane or The Man Who Fell To Earth. Or they could embody the few fans who still remember Ziggy Stardust.

To fashion a catalog of rock video sysbols, at least two 3" x 5" file cards would be required. And Mulcahev and Mallet might even get a column of their own for watered-down emblems. There are quite a few of them. Here goes: cars (mobility), fog (alienation). drugs (more alienation), hallways (room service), girls (sexual domination), other girls (sexual submission), large mansions (heroic affluence), swirling lights (virility), cigarettes (puds), audiences (faceless hordes) and faceless hordes (audiences).

Naturally, there are hundreds of other images, but they aren't symbols. Sometimes, they're just acne tableaus like "Sexy and Seventeen," culled from deodorant commercials and contempo puberty fashions. At the other end of the spectrum videos like "Total Eclipse of the Heart" filled by shrimpy guys with LEDs for oculars, chuckle about their own vacant, heavy-handedness and

are propped up by props, not symbols.

My very favorite symbols: Ever notice how the harlot in Red Rockers' Good As Gold video pours gold dust between her legs? What I see is the perfect union of masturbation and mastercharge. Or think about the zombles-as-tans in the Billy Idol and Greg Kihn videos.

On the homefront, Alcon, under the guidance of Jayne Morris-Paul, just finished three, count 'em, three, videos for AC/CA. The triplets, "Flick of the Switch," "Neryous Shakedown," and "Guns for Hire," were shot in LA at Coppola's Studio and edited in good old San Fran. Using a timely Big Brother story. Third Rail Media completed "The Big Picture" for Wonders of Science, a snyth experiment from San Jose, Tawn Mastrey, producer and reproducer, is about to limber up for Physical Ed, a San Mateo-based band on Sleeping Bag Records. How camp! Teaming up once again were Joe Dea (Krokus, Greg Kihn and Shooting Star) and Juanita Diana (the Units, the Call) to immortalize "Backstabber" for Hyts, a prophetic band on A & M. The scenario features a number of dancers and a shower sequence straight out of Psycho. Wire Train, 415's newest, will never say never to their video of "Never," sculpted into admissible evidence by Patrick Kriwanek. And finally two turncoats: Eddie Money went to New York to have "The Big Crash" rendered. Eddie can be seen playing a cop who shadows a young girl bent on trouble. The Rubinoos went who-knows-where to get "If I had You Back" shaped into a comic distraction. A good part of this new video transpires in a supermarket where the beefy members of the band eye some choice women modeling meat. Not a video for vegetarians, but certainly one for people who envision women as muscle on the hoof.

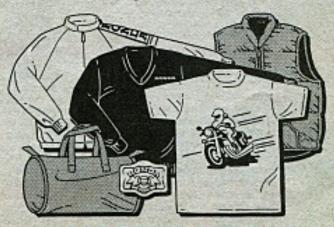
Well, so much for symbols.

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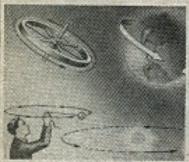
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Was (Not Was) Burn To Laugh At Tornadoes (Geffen)

Was. Not Was. Sums up pretty neatly the spirit and intent of this record - listening to "guest star" Mel Torme singing "Zaz Turned Blue," you want to retch with laughter; next minute you're taken aback by the vitriolic, sneering vocal on "The Party Broke Up" or the starkly sinister "Man Vs. The Empire Brain Building." You'll be bouncing along guite innocently to the rubbery rhythm line in "Smile" and then realize how snidely cynical the song is. No, Was (Not Was) are not your average group of everyday AOR songsters. The "Was" brothers, Don and David Weiss, don't make records to just lay back and listen to; they spread the content pretty thick. But you can't get through Born To Laugh At Tornadoes with a straight face, either -- just listen to "Knocked Down, Made Small (Treated Like A. Rubber Ball).

Was (Not Was) is the wonderfully precocious brainchild of David and Don Weiss, bonafide Detroit eccentrics, and their zarry bunch of musical friends. Don and David do practically all the songwriting, and Don is the production wizard and "zengineer"; he plays bass, synth-

esizers and keyboards, some guitar, drums and cello. David does backing, some lead vocals and plays flute, trumpet, organ, vibes and harmonica. This album, their second, is worth the price of admission just to hear Torme's sublimely ridiculous "Zaz Turned Blue," not to mention the juicy cameo roles by the likes of Doug Fieger (ex-Knack), Ozzy Osbourne (on a funky-chant dance tune), Mitch Ryder, Sweet Pea Atkinson and Marshall Crenshaw (bit vocals and guitar) - plus a supporting cast of dozens more. At a certain point, one passes the threshold of surprise. And that's just for beginners - it doesn't say anything of the mini-melodramas, the vast variety of musical source material and the creative (if synthheavy) arrangements. The Was brothers change musical clothes with more than ease - abandon's a better word. In addition to acidflashbacks "Man Vs. The Empire Brain Building" and "The Party Broke Up," both surreal technoraps with minimal accompaniment, there are the almost-conventional airplay ditties like "Smile" (featuring Fieger on lead vocals) and the hilarious/sobering "Knocked Down, Made Small." "Zaz Turned Blue," while far from Torme's best performance, is a picture-perfect ballad that could have been penned for Sinatra; the Was brothers turn in an equally well-crafted set of rockers, material not unsuited for the most firmly entrenched, midstream bands. "Knocked Down," if not for its hilarious lyrics, could almost be a Foreigner tune there's the same mid-tempo pacing, the same "big" AOR sound that Journey and Boston get and the same middle-of-the-rock-road feeling to Harry Bowen's vocal. Mitch Ryder's singing on the techno-boogle "Bow Wow Wow Wow" isn't his most passionate, but it's still a kick-ass song.

The lyrics, in most cases, are sarcastic without being bitter, philosophical without being self-righteous and boring. When Ozzy Osbourne sings (yes, Ozzy Osbourne) "You can't ban the bomb'and there's no way to stay calm," it hardly leaves you without hope; how could it, with that bouncing beat behind it? And although I'm sorry Zaz turned blue, I can hardly believe what my ears are telling me when I listen to Mei crooning about his mishap.

All things considered, Born To Laugh At Tornadoes is a better, more mature, musical effort than the debut, Was (Not Was) — despite the missing mega-cut. There's no "Tell Me That I'm Dreaming" here, and I doubt this lp will land Was (Not Was) in pop's

top 10. (Your father probably won't like it, either). But it's one musical elevator you can definitely go up on.

- Jean E. Catino

RX Offerings (D2 Records & Tapes, S.F.)

This is a strong, creative record with a lot of frantic energy in the grooves. RX is Dan Lauter's creation - he wrote, arranged and produced the material, a somewhat unfocused melange of rock, jazz, funk, punk and Eastern musics. with song structures resembling jazz tunes more than anything else. What's most interesting - as well as most disconcerting - is the way these various elements are combined. It's sort of the way some fashion-conscious punks dress with an ear and a mind to the meaning of the piece, a faith in how the total effect will come off, and the youth and energy to make it work.

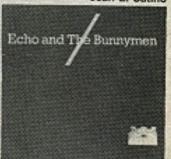
RX is Lauter on sax, keyboards, Indonesian and Chinese flutes and vocals. He and bassist Raven Williams worked together in New York in 1977; Chris Cunningham is also a long-time musical cohort (Chris has played guitar with James White and The Blacks). Offerings was born when Dan and Chris met (again) at an RX/James White soundcheck in Berkeley; they agreed to put a band together, and Chris and Raven came to San Francisco to record RX's debut. The band has since done some touring in the Bay Area and is planning a second lp; Raven is in the process of relocating to San Fran-

Offerings is the complex and often interesting result of the first studio meeting. On the title cut, drummer Mark Brandt and percussionist Kwaku Dadey set up a Burundi-like beat and Lauter adds Men-At-Work like horns; then the band goes into a kinda blue jazzy interlude with a dreamy, Easternsounding sax solo. Lauter's vocals are half-spoken, half shouted; the effect is that of a poetry rap.

Most of the other songs and arrangements are adventurous and unpredictable, and that makes the record more of a listening "experience" than just another slab of vinyl. It's not easy to peg with the ever-present epithet, Somewhat more conventional are "Do The Rockalot" and "Cocktail Child" the latter of which will be included on the KQAK lp. "Cocktail Child" reflects the same kinds of rock-funkjazz influences, but the punk raveup choruses could earn it a place in the hardcore's heart. Lauter's lead sax dominates practically every

track; on "Getting Ready For War." a blindly angry burst of two-chord punk, he doesn't blow the hom so much as side it in and out of a deranged, strangled squeal. The rage is palpable. Lauter admits he's spent little time in the last couple of years listening to recent music and has never attempted until very presently to write "commercial" tunes. That's a big part of what makes his music interesting. For the serious listener willing to spend time, this record will yield some rewards. And it certainly demonstrates that Lauter and Co. have significant potential that shouldn't be overlooked.

- Jean E. Catino



Echo and the Bunnymen

Echo and the Bunnymen have issued a five-song EP that basically supports Porcupine, their magnificent album of earlier this year (Sire Records). Two of the cuts that appeared on that LP, "The Cutter" and "Back of Love," are here in remixed versions, although the differences are slight. They're great in any form - headlong, fullforce displays of power, marked by completely unique arrangements and meticulous production. The songs are performed, as usual, with absolute conviction - none of the fashionably mechanical ennui that drags down some of the group's contemporaries. There's also a live version of "Do It Clean," performed last July at the Albert Hall, in which the band sounds remarkably like The Doors in some spots. And "Never Stop," which leads off the EP, is up to the Bunnymen's usual standards, All in all, a nice job, although another full-length album would be preferred. Only one question: how can a band with such a stupid name be so good?

- Robert J. Bowman

Introducing the Style Council The Style Council (Polydon Records)

"Dig their grooveline and to it" suggests the liner notes from "Introducing The Style Council," the debut effort by Britishers Paul Weller and Mick Talbot. This seven

song mini-LP is a fair sampling of former Jam leader Paul Weller's approach with homs, social commentary, and a sound soulful and sixtles-ish but more in tune with the 80's than Weller's late, lamented Jam.

The lack of driving guitars and an adolescent beat are the distinction between The Jam and The Style Council. Weller seems to have expanded on the later-period Jam sound to a point of across the board accessibility and a maturity which leans more towards musical proficiency than lyrical content. The addition of Mick Talbot on keyboards reinforces the commitment and together, Weller and Talbot display a lot of promise with "Introducing The Style Council."

"Long Hot Summer" appears in single and club versions on the album while the club mix of "Merry-Go-Round" clocks in at a hefty seven minutes and forty-two seconds. Repetition of songs and including club mixes on a first album in a general "no-no" but The Style Council carries it with such

savvy and British charm that this mini-LP contains little filler and can be considered as a complete album effort.

Weller's late-Jam experimentation with horns is continued on "Speak Like A Child," described as "A track that swang." The grittiest cut on the album is Mick Talbot's lone composition, "Mick's Up." Talbot steps out on his Hammond organ and delivers a "rave-up" number reminiscent of Steve Winwood and the Spencer Davis Group or Alan Price with the Animals. "Mick's Up" is a track that bridges the 60's with the 80's.

The Style Council is a sophisticated statement which answers the question, "What ever happened to the mods?" Weller and Talbot are a pairing that complements each other's sensibilities. A full-fledged album is in the works which may show more definition to their sound rather than a testament to their soul and English invasion roots. Meantime, the Style Council are off to a smashing start.

- Peter Fields

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DOORS OPEN AT 10 PM

If you're 18 years and older

100 Vallejo at Front

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AMPLE FREE PARKING

Mental as Anything

Belle Nolan

Like many of rock's luminaries, Mental as Anything are artists in the true sense of the

They met at the National Art School in Sydney Australia in the mid 70's.

All aspiring painters, quick on their assignments, they found themselves at the local pubs day in and day out talking about philosophy and "other sorts of rubbish" as lead singer/keyboardist Greedy Smith called

They had a penchant for bar room sing alongs and country cover tunes and found it a wonderful way to get free drinks and meet people.

"We didn't even know we were a band until this guy asked us to play at this dance and they had to have a name for their poster. Well, we didn't have a name and we said, we'll leave it up to you, you think of one. So we're walking down the street the next weekend and we see this poster 'Dance at such and such place' with "Mental as Anything." We said to each other, "Hey, I thought we were playing there." Then it suddenly dawned on us, that it was us. So we've been after this guy ever since. All these people started thinking of us as a punk rock band cause of the name. That was back in 1976," inputs Greedy.

Seven years and four albums (two in the U.S.) later, Mental as Anything is still trying to break out of that "punk

If anything, Mental is more country and blues influenced. Listening to their new lp, Creatures of Leisure is proof.

Greedy Smith offered this insight,

"Country music is very good to play to alcoholics; to people who drink. It works great in the pubs in Australia. When we first started playing, we used to play songs like, "My Old Kentucky Home" and "Put Your Sweet Lips a Little Closer to the Phone", a lot of blues, Hound Dog Taylor, Jimmy Rogers and Hank Williams."

If you were at the Men at Work show at Berkeley's Greek Theater in October or at Wolfgangs November 6th for the final Mental as Anything performance, you witnessed first hand their unique brand of rockin' rhythm with obvious country overtones.

What a fun band the Mental's are to watch, too! They throw themselves into their performances with a kind of zest and fanaticism reminiscent of their country/blues mentors. There is a lot of interplay between the band members as they jokingly chide each other. There is also a good deal of exchange with the audience. Lead singer Greedy Smith is known to leap out into the crowd, wireless mike in tow, and playfully dance and carry on with anyone who is willing.

As talented as the Mentals are in a live setting, their real artistic prowess is in the construction of their material. They have the uncanny ability to transcend the trappings of rock's thematic constraints by creating incredible visual images. Yes, they deal with the standard rock and roll themes, but they try to treat them a bit differently.

"Brain, Brain" for example is just a song about a broken romance. You know, a girl and a boy have an argument and the girl walks out. The boy is so crushed that he falls to a heap on the floor. The song is basically a plea to the motor reflex centers in his brain to make his arms and legs work. Or, 'Fiona', is another one about a broken

romance. The main line is: I'm not a heretic as far as true love goes, but I've changed denominations and I guess it shows.' It's just a way of mixing a bit of theology with romance." said Greedy.

All the band members contribute material to their albums. This is in keeping with their Creatures of Leisure attitude. If the responsibilities are divided up, then no one member is overly burdened with too much work, is their philosophy. Although they consider themselves to be lazy suburbanites, it has not inhibited their ability to create some ambitious video

In fact they have produced some 15. clips over the years. The first one they did was in 1979 for their offbeat first single, "The Nips are Getting Bigger." It cost \$350.00.

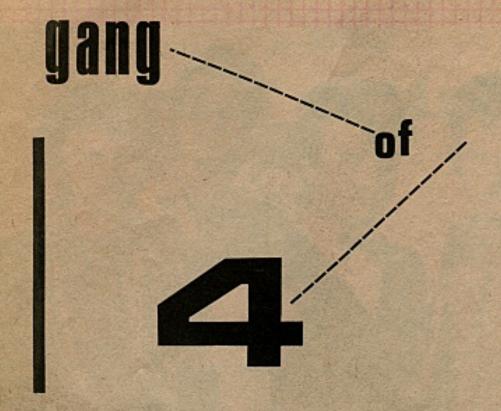
Greedy: "We used out of date film and the record company's lighting dock. Since then we've been making clip after clip; cheapies. I think the total cost of our clips together is about \$35,000. It's quite amazing because we came over here and wondered how on earth people could spend \$100,000 on three minutes. It's unbelievable! What we did in the new clip was to do it around the motel, in the bedroom or on the roof."

Look for their latest video, "Working

For The Man" on MTV. In the meantime, the "Mentals" are bent on being" creatures of leisure." Having just wrapped up their nationwide tour, the members are scattered about enjoying their time off.

A new album is on for the near future.

Don't be surprised if you hear about the "Mentals" trying out some new material while enjoying their favorite environment. Perhaps there is something good that comes out of drinking.



Dan Montgomery

The American release of "Entertainment!" in 1979 signaled the arrival of a band that, one way or the other, would have to be reckoned with. The Gang of Four, like their namesakes, were few in number, but they were determined to be heard.

Andrew Gill's guitar dominated
"Entertainment!" He played as if his
guitar strings were red hot, rarely holding
a chord longer than a split second, and
delivered chords in staccato bursts. That
sound of pent-up energy boiling over
created a trension that gripped the whole
album and defined the band's sound. No
one else sounded like it.

Rolling Stone called "Entertainment!"
the best debut album since the Clash's first
LP. (Of course, it sold like a crites' favorite,
too). The songs dug out Western political
hypocrisy and held it up for anyone to see.
"Look at the world through polorised

glasses/Things'll look a whole lot better for the working classes," John King sang in "I Found That Essence Rare," the album's most stunning cut. Other targets were the media and male/female relations. "The same again/Another disagreement/You dreamed of scenes/Like you read in magazines... Is this the way it is/Or a contract in our mutual interest?" King sang in "Contract," which ends with a chorus of "Our bodies make us worry."

Behind it all was a cranking beat from drummer Hugo Burnham and bassist Dave Allen. On top and inside it all was Gill's gnashing guitar.

By the release of "Solid Gold," in 1981, the Gang sounded a bit different. The bass was mixed more up front, and the music had funkier, more donceable rhythms. "What We All Want," stood out from the rest, and "Outside The Trains Don't Run On Time" harkened back to the first LP, but it was "Cheeseburger" that got the most attention.

The EP that followed contained a real head turner, "Another Day Another Dollar," "To Hell With Poverty." Gill's choppy guitar blasts were abandoned in favor of a howl of sustained distortion that soared over an agressive beat. When he shifted into siren-like undulations and back, the effect was riveting. "To Hell With Poverty," King sang, "We'll get drunk on cheap wine!" The song was a big dance club hit, but the Gang still wasn't a popular success.

Of course, their chosen topics and ways of addressing them, it's unlikely anyone in the Gang expected to be embraced by radio programmers. But, at least in America, the group seemed to be in a sort of no man's land. Though they were something of a thinking person's leftist punk band, the music was too sharp-edged to get radio airplay and therefore reach mainstream listeners. At the same time, they were popular among punks, but no one was printing Gang of 4 on the back of a leather jacket.

But last year Allen left and the Gang added Sara Lee, formerly of Robert Fripps League of Gentlemen, on bass and Edie Reader on percussion. The change made a world of difference. Lee's bass was more soulful, Reader added rhythmic complexity. Their voices made 'T Love A Man In A

Uniform" possible.

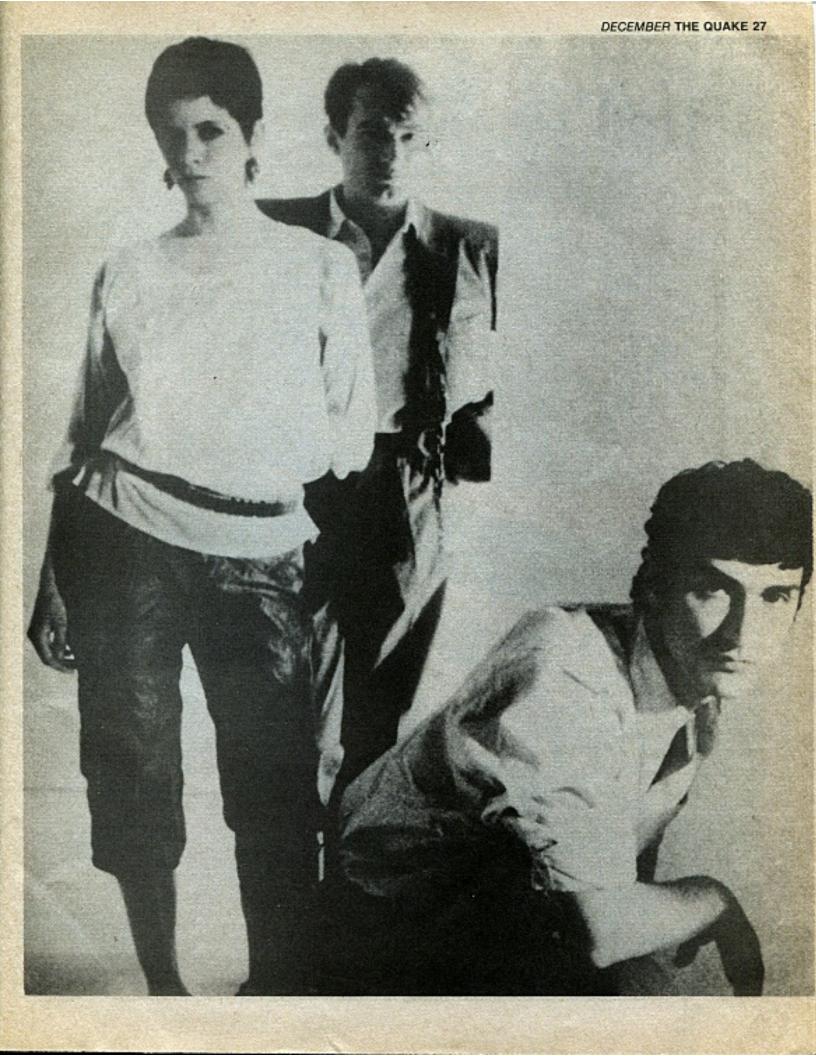
That song on "Songs of the Free," was perhaps the band's greatest moment. "The good life was so elusive/Handouts, they got me down," King sang straight faced, "I had to regain my self respect/So I got into camoflage/The girls, they love to see you shoot." Unfortunately for him, the girls disagreed, "You must be joking. Oh man, you must be joking!" they answer. The song was the Gang's most commercial yet, and radio was just warming up to new bands. The Gang of 4 had themselves a hit.

Looking back, "Songs of the Free" had hints of the step the Gang took in their new release, "Hard," but the new LP is nevertheless a departure for the band. Now a trio, (Burnham and Reader are gone) they enlisted ex-Rumour drummer Steve Goulding and vocalists Alpha Anderson and Brenda White for the album and tour, plus occasional strings and borns.

On most of "Hard," the Gang sounds like a pure soul band, even King's voice sounds completely different on some songs, especially the single, "Is It Love." Only "A Man With A Good Car" sounds

like the old Gang.

The Gang of 4 has always had a reputation for excellent live shows, something they more than lived up to at the kabuki last year. King moves across the stage like he's on skates, dancing all the time. They may be an artsy, intellectual outfit with economics and politics on their minds, but they're also a dynamic rock band. That's what makes the Gang of 4 special.









Michael Snyder

UNDER FIRE: This is certainly the most exciting and thought-provoking American film of the year...so far. My only reservations involve the Hollywood sheen of "Under Fire's" love triangle. Otherwise, it's a top-notch political thriller about a photojournalist, played by Nick Nolte, on assignment in Nicaragua. Joanna Cassidy costars as Nolte's paramour, a foreign correspondant, and Gene Hackman is a writer turned TV newscaster who is Cas-

sidy's former lover. Holy Hemingway! We follow this trio from Chad to Nicaragua in 1979 as they report on brushfire wars and full-scale revolutions. After some time in Nicaragua, Nolte and Cassidy begin to side with the rebels, a dangerous decision for supposedly unbiased observers. The complications that result from their newfound alleglance generate guestions about responsibility and public trust in the media. "Under Fire" also examines the nature of heroism. Are heroes made, born or fabricated by history? Is history just a series of photos, both real and staged? Early in the film, Noite says "I don't take sides, I take pictures," but constant exposure to the inequities of the Nicaraguan revolution and to such characters as an American mercenary played by Ed Harris, who changes sides depending on

the source of his salary, conspire to make Nolte change his tune. When Somoza's right wing regime falls, every bleeding heart liberal in the audience can't help but cheer. Yet the movie is so taut and canny in its craft that Ronald Reagan himself might side with the rebels at a White House screening.

THE RIGHT STUFF: A

highly-touted flick that is also about heroism and also features Ed Harris, this time playing the other side of the military, All-American astronaut John Glenn. A storm of press has accompanied the film's release because of the real John Glenn's current campaign for the presidency. But Glenn's heroics as depicted in "The Right Stuff" don't compare to those of test pilot Chuck Yeager, whose story is told concurrently with that of the origin-

al seven Mercury astronauts. The film begins in 1947 as the laconic Yeager, tersely portrayed by Bay Area play wright and actor Sam Shepard, becoming the first man to break the sound barrier. He's too much the lone wolf to be considered for a position as an astronaut over a decade later. Instead, we observe the exploits of those who were chosen, through their training to the last of the four Mercury space flights in the '60s. "The Right Stuff' is well-acted by a large cast, including many local thespians and comedians, and was stunningly photographed at Edwards Air Force Base and Northem California locations that stand in for New York, Cape Canaveral and Houston. Director Philip Kaufman did a yeoman's job of adapting Tom Wolfe's book, but the movie wavers between satire and



Nick Nolte in Under Fire



THE RIGHT STUFF: "The Permanent Press Corps" is none other than the Bay Area's hilarious I Fratelli Bologna.

a sincere attempt to exalt the making of American heroes. The dual storyline following both Yeager and the Mercury 7 is episodic to a fault, and at 3¼ hours, "The Right Stuff" is also a bit too long. On the whole, though, it's a cheerful look at a more innocent time, when men were men, etc., etc.

REAR WINDOW: The first installment in a five-part retrospective of Alfred Hitchcock classics, 1954's "Rear Window" is currently outgrossing every other picture in town, and with good reason. This marvel of wit and suspense stars jaunty Jimmy Stewart as a photographer with a broken leg, who begins to notice some bizarre goings-on in the apartment across the way. Weirdos abound in Stewart's Greenwich Village neighborhood, but one of them, burly Raymond Burr, appears to have murdered his wife. Stewart embroils his debutante girlfriend. the delectable Grace Kelly, his wisecracking nursemaid Theima Ritter, and his detective buddy Wendell Corey in his search for clues to the grisly crime and, in the process, endangers his own life. It's kinda tough for a guy with a broken leg to evade a madman. The four other Hitchcock favorites to be re-released are from the same era, and moviegoers are the

better for it. "Rear Window" holds up like a bank robber with a machine gun and gets away with the prize for the best movie of the month. And it was made almost 30 years ago...

RUMBLE FISH: Francis Ford Coppola's latest is upon us. Like the director's previous movie, a mawkish paen to childhood lovalty called "The Outsiders," "Rumble Fish" is based on a novel by S.E. Hinton. If both movies are taken into account, delinquent teenagers coming of age in Tulsa, Oklahoma seem to be Hinton's obsession. Filmed in richlytextured black & white, "Rumble Fish" embraces a surreal quality, not the cinema verite one expects from a contemporary movie shot in monochrome. The camera trails Matt Dillon - he was in "The Outsiders," too - as he trails his older. brother, the Motorcycle Boy, Mickey Rourke in his most significant role since "Diner." The Motorcycle Boy is on the verge of manhood and wants to dispense with his mythological status as prince of the Tulsa streets. The younger. Rusty-James is confused and hurt by the Motorcycle Boy's abdication. Sweet Diane Lane is a middieclass teen temptress hoping to socialize Dillon's Rusty-James, be-bop singer Tom Waits is typically funky as Benny, owner of the biliard parlor/hangout, and Dennis Hopper is perfect in the part of Rusty-James and the Motorcycle Boy's drunken tather, a lawyer on welfare. Slow and rife with atmospheric smoke, time-lapse cloud ballets and obvious symbology, it will probably fail to put Coppola back in the black or the limelight, although its modern-day setting works much better than the burnished technicolor nostalgia of "The Outsiders" greaser tragedy.

TESTAMENT: If a successful work of art is supposed to provoke or enlarge one's vision, if it's supposed to mirror the human experience or educate the observer in some way, then "Testament' is museum quality. This film about the aftermath of a nuclear attack is devastating, in any sense of the word. Bombs have suddenly destroyed most major cities in the United States, including San Francisco, leaving a number of suburban and rural areas seemingly unmolested, "Testament" is about the aftermath of such a catastrophe. The locale, a small Northern California town, is close to home, and so is the horror of the story. Over the course of this modest, meticulously crafted movie, we watch a family cope with the inevitable slow death that dooms

those who escape atomic vaporization at ground zero and must instead endure radiation poisoning. There are no science-fiction mutations or high-tech special effects in "Testament," just the obscenity of men, women and children dying painful deaths for no reason and the tragedy of no future for the young. Jane Alexander and William Devane are convincingly mundane as Mom & Dad, until Alexander's display of courage and emotional strength in the face of unmitigated adversity. First-time director Lynne Littman has also coaxed amazing performances out of the girl and two boys who play Alexander and Devane's kids, especially the littlest. Scottie. enacted by Lukas Haas, who will break your heart. Based on a short story by Bay Area writer Carol Amen, "Testament" is overly sentimental and moves at an almost funeral pace as it shows a world dying with a bang, followed by a long, mountul whimper. Nonetheless, it should be compulsory viewing for anyone foolish enough to entertain thoughts of a "limited" nuclear war, for all world leaders and delegates to the U.N. and for anyone who simply values life. Rather than showing "Our Friend, The Atom" in our school system, they should be running prints of "Testament." O



ROCK LOBSTER A few lines from the

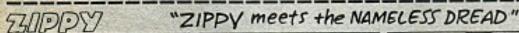


Live from the Quake studios, it's your friendly neighborhood Crustacean, inviting you to dance away December at a nightclub near you.

On Thursday night, December 22nd. The Quake will present a Lobster night at the Stone on Broadway in San Francisco, with the Flying Tigers headlining. As with Wolfgangs on December 3rd, we'll feature the bands that will appear on The Quake's Miller-Rock-To-Riches album, so look for the opening bands to be some more of our local favorites. Of course, I'll be there to spin Rock of the '80's dance music, and give away as many T-shirts and L.P.s as I can grab. Also a"Lobster Claws" Christmas party at the Keystone, Palo Alto for the following Friday night (Dec. 23rd). Keep listening to The Quake for details!

It's been a lot of fun to go out and do live dance appearances, sort of "road testing" the dance-ability of the songs we play on The Quake, at clubs like the Trocadero in S.F. and Stargaze in Fremont, but I especially enjoy playing the records in between live bands. It's both an opportunity for you to dance to your favorite "Rock of the '80s" music, and at the same time you get to see some of the best of our emerging bands here in the Bay Area. Support your local musicians!

Remember: IF YOU DON'T DANCE, YOU DON'T STAND A













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The Rack of '84'

Robert Seidler, Population R, Perfect Strangers, The Defectors, The Uptones, Rx, Flying Tigers, Fade to Black, Voice Farm & Stir-Ups.

The Quake Album coming soon to the Bay Area Record Factory outlets.





When you pulled in two hours ago, you didn't have this problem. And with a party just starting, the last thing you wanted to do was wait around another two hours.

Neither did the rest of the guys. So when they offered to give you a lift, that's exactly what they did, proving not only that they were in good shape, but that they were good friends.

So show them what appreciation is all about. Tonight, let it be Löwenbräu.

Löwenbräu. Here's to good friends.

o 1983 Beer Brewed in U.S.A. by Miller Browing Co., Milwaukee, Wi