

RIP IT UP

July 1978
No.13

BRUCE
SPRINGSTEEN'S
East of
Eden



The Band's Last Waltz



The Night They Closed Old Dixie Down

Robbie Robertson smiles his way through an anecdote about road-life. He tells of a job the Hawks did in Fort Worth, Texas, recalling the venue. He describes a sort of decrepit hall, with the stage set far down one end. The structure was so decayed, he explains, that the roof had had to go, which was why the place was called the Skyline Ballroom. It wasn't a classy joint. They had a one armed go-go dancer. It was only months afterwards, says Robertson, they discovered that this was Jack Ruby's nightclub.

The story, one of the moments of *The Last Waltz*, captures a little of the Band's heritage. The Band is after all, one of the finest products of the sixties, and all that decade holds. Robertson himself talks about years of assassination, South-East Asian involvement, causes of one sort or another. As collaborators with Dylan, and regulars of late sixties music festivals, The Band inevitably finds itself linked with the social phenomena of its formative years.

And yet *The Last Waltz*, a film of a 1976 concert, released in 1978, is so much more than a historical curiosity. As the Ruby nightclub tale reveals, a degree of social history has rubbed off. The Band have been to interesting places at interesting times: Albert Hall with Dylan in 66, Woodstock, the 1968 Woodie Guthrie tribute concert at Carnegie Hall. But The Band are also musical survivors. To this *The Last Waltz* resoundingly testifies. Whatever the sociological fascination of Jack Ruby's Skyline Ballroom, playing two-bit joints like it in those early years has wrought an undisputed excellence.

They set off in 1960 as The Hawks, backing combo to rock-a-billy Ronnie Hawkins, and wound up their touring career (professedly anyway) on Thanksgiving Day, 1976, at the Winterland, San Francisco. That simply, is what Martin Scorsese's movie *The Last Waltz* and the Warner Brothers' soundtrack album are all about.

The Winterland was the first venue to see Robertson, Danko, Manuel, Hudson and Helm play as The Band. It was decided fitting that it should also be the last.

Promoter Bill Graham went overboard to ensure it would be a special event. 5,000 tickets were sold at \$25 a piece and went within hours. Dinner and a promenade orchestra



were laid on. The set from *La Traviata* was hired for \$8,000 from the San Francisco Opera Company. The chandeliers were props from *Gone With the Wind*.

Maybe such unholy extravagance speaks of the middle-class absorption of rock 'n' roll. But the real gold of the event was not in the baroque setting, but in the committed performance of The Band, and the astounding parade of friends they brought along to celebrate.

It is quite fair to call *The Last Waltz* celebratory. Most of the musicians wear a respectful, and in some cases reverential air. Neil Young comes on to state, with awkward self awareness, that it is one of the pleasures of his life to be on the stage with these people. And as if to demonstrate feelings of mutual regard, The Band provides uniformly excellent backing for each artist.

Unlike almost any other parade-of-stars event I've experienced, there is a unity and an excited atmosphere to this presentation. The film gives an abundance of entertaining images. Ronnie Hawkins fans Robertson's guitar during a solo in corny tribute, using an improbably shaped ten-gallon headpiece. Neil Young leaves his microphone to gather, almost star-struck, with Danko and Robertson around another.

Virtually all the musicians given a spotlight respond in kind. Some of the enthusiasm re-

sults in moments of bizarre abandon. Van Morrison demonstrates staggering lunges which pass for dancing. Dr John, regaled in pink bow-tie, sharing a mike with Neil Diamond is similarly amusing. Only Diamond appears wholly misplaced in this company, even if Joni Mitchell and Clapton do not fit as well as say Paul Butterfield and Muddy Waters.

Those of us who have never and will never see this great rock and roll band play live can only express gratitude for Robbie Robertson's decision to have the farewell concert both recorded and filmed. *Rock of Ages* stands as the definitive live Band album, but without a doubt *The Last Waltz* will endure as a visual record. The animation of characters, who for New Zealanders at least, are those indistinct five in frontier costume pictorially frozen on the back of *Music From Big Pink*, is a treat.

Not surprisingly there are revelations. Robertson, a man whose photographs make him look like a close-cropped accountant, comes to life as more the guitar-hero than I would ever have expected. I should not be surprised to find the film garnering a minor Robbie Robertson following amongst N.Z. female adolescents. Meanwhile Garth Hudson, labouring distractedly amidst arrayed keyboards and sellotaped scraps of music manuscript, is as much the nutty professor as anyone is likely to conceive.

In a sense the film is shot and edited to dis-

play such neat and confined images. Scorsese, the man responsible for *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, *Taxi Driver*, *Mean Streets* and *New York New York*, wrote a 300 page shooting script in preparation for the show. Allowing little to chance he spent the entire evening issuing instructions to his cameramen. Although such an elaborate camera choreography tends to channel and manipulate the viewers response, *The Last Waltz* shows the signs of being the only rock movie with an original rationale since Pennebaker's innovations in *Monterey Pop*.

Like each of the performers, Scorsese's set pieces, particularly the anecdotal interviews shot later, are evocative. In each, some small portion of The Band's development and history is featured. Scorsese's clear intention is to create a kind of annotated concert, without losing the energy of the live show. He is more successful with the Winterland shots than with the studio sequences of "The Last Waltz Suite" even though the latter are played live. Only the concert footage really grasps the emotion of such a ritual farewell.

Undoubtedly the impact of auditorium scenes is sustained by excellent sound. *The Last Waltz* was the first rock film to be shot in 35mm; it was also the first to use a twenty four track recording system. What is more important is that Robertson spent months mixing tapes down for the movie and for the record (they are incidentally mixed slightly differently). Unfortunately we shall never hear much of the material played that night merely because there was so much of it. Suffice to say that the *Last Waltz* record buyer gets more of it than the film goer.

Choosing highlights from either a three record set or a two hour film is a task overly prone to peculiarities of personal taste, especially with material of such a high standard.

Of The Band's standard repertoire, "Up On Cripple Creek," and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," carry the biggest wallop. Of the guest performers Van Morrison and Ronnie Hawkins record best.

But my suggestion is to get out and see *The Last Waltz* for yourself. With any luck you'll feel as I did, like clapping half the performances, right there in the picture theatre.

Bruce Belsham

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Does anybody out there still care about the **Sex Pistols**? No? Well, in case there are some of you who do, you'll be pleased to hear that the remaining Pistols (other than Johnny Rotten) are currently auditioning vocalists to take over the front spot in the band. Meanwhile, due for rush release is the single that Paul Cook and Steve Jones recorded with Great Train Robber, **Ronald Biggs**. Biggs sings "God Save The Sex Pistols" while, on the B side, Sid Vicious does his rendition of the well-known standard, "My Way". Both these tracks emanate from the soundtrack of a film of the Pistols which is due for September release in Britain. Their manager Malcolm McLaren described the film as "a feature film with some documentary material tracing the early lives of the Sex Pistols". The soundtrack album will feature mainly new studio recordings with some live tracks — vocals are taken by all three members ... somewhere in London. **Johnny Rotten**, now working under his real name of John Lydon has formed a band with ex-Clash guitarist Keith Levine, bassist Jah Wobble and American drummer Jim Walker. But Lydon estimates it will be at least 6 to 12 months before the band will be able to perform — in order for Lydon to extricate himself from his obligations to former manager, McLaren ... on the **Bob Dylan** front. The likelihood of we far flung colonies getting the opportunity to view Dylan's film, *Renaldo and Clara* are improving. At approximately four hours in length, it was considered by distributors to be "unmarketable", particularly in view of the almost uniformly bad reviews it received. So when Dylan was offered \$2 million dollars to cut the film down to 2 hours, commercial realities won out over artistic integrity and the film was duly cut ... **Dylan** is now to play an outdoor festival in Britain next month. This date is in addition to the 6 shows at London's Earls Court. The one day festival being held at Blackbushe Airfield will also feature **Eric Clapton** and Band, **Graham Parker** and the Rumour and **Joan Armatrading**. And while we're talking of Dylan, it's with red faces that we report that the title of the new album will be *Street Legal* and not *Street League* as we reported last month. Release date in Britain is intended to coincide with his concerts there, which means the album could see NZ release sometime next month ... the next **Stevie Wonder** LP *The Secret Life of Plants*, is in fact a soundtrack to a movie of the same name. Little Stevie has stipulated that the album not be released until the film also gains general release — which means September is likely

Hot News Hot News

for both album and film. Stevie's soundtrack is not primarily instrumental and all bar two tracks feature vocals (although final track selection for the album is not completed) ... the saga behind **Leo Sayer's** new album also sounds intriguing. When Leo was here just a few weeks ago, he spoke of his new album as due for imminent release. Now it seems the album has been cancelled and at the end of the present, Leo will return to LA to record. What happened? ... One time rock star **John Lennon** is also in the studios for the first time in a few years. Lennon is not at present signed to any record company ... **Chicago** have named the replacement guitarist for the late Terry Kath — it's **Donnie Ducas**, who's worked with Stephen Stills among others ... **Doobie Brothers** vocalist, **Michael McDonald**, is to pursue a solo career on the side. He'll be managed by West Coast whiz-kid Irv Azoff who also looks after the careers of Steely Dan, Boz Scaggs and the Eagles ... **Walter Becker** and **Donald Fagen** of Steely Dan are currently putting in time on a jazz album from Wayne Marsh and sax man Pete Christlieb (who took the solo on "Deacon Blues") ... **Rod Stewart** who, as we reported last month was off to Argentina to watch the World Cup Soccer, had a double tragedy during his stay there. Not only did his favourite team Scotland go down badly to Peru but when Stewart was visiting a restaurant a shootout occurred which left one gunman dead. Stewart refused the armed guards his record company urged on him and chose instead to return to London and watch the remaining games on TV ... the delay on **Nell Young's** next LP, *Come a Time*, is due to the fact that Young has rejected three lots of artwork for the cover already ... **Fleetwood**

Mac, member John McVie, married his long-time girlfriend Julie Rubens last month and those who turned up for the reception included the complete crew of Mac, John Mayall, Peter Green and Bob Welch and, of course, Ron Wood ... **Peter Green** has now scrapped all the tracks he recorded in England for his comeback LP and will now work in LA with Mick Fleetwood ... **Stevie Nicks** also turned up onstage at **Todd Rundgren's** performance in LA. Along with Hall and Oats, Spencer Davis and Rick Derringer, she joined the Runt for a grand finale on "Hang On Sloopy" ... **Lynyrd Skynyrd's** next album will in fact be a recording with the late Ronnie Van Zandt. Recorded in 1971, the album will be titled *Lynyrd Skynyrd's First and Last Album* ... due for imminent release is **Foreigner's** second LP. Big things are projected ... **Louise Goffin**, daughter of Carole King and Gerry Goffin is to record with Bob Ezrin (Kiss/Alice Cooper) as soon as she graduates from High School ... the next big music film will likely be *Thank God It's Friday* which stars Donna Summer and includes the Commodores. The film is currently the number one box office draw in the States and in its first two weeks of release has grossed \$5½ million ... **Bette Midler** is to star in a remake of *Gypsy* to be titled *The Rose* ... **Elvis Costello** collectors would do well to note that the B side of the new Costello single "Pump It Up" is "Big Tears", a previously unreleased track that features Mick Jones from the Clash on guitar ... and closer to home one-time Auckland promoter Barry Coburn now resident in Melbourne, manages the Phil Manning Band — includes Midge Marsden and Peter Cuddihy — and Tourists, which contains the front line from Beech ... **Mark Williams** will be recording his first Australian album with CBS. Working with Mark will be Mal Logan, who was over here as **Renee Geyer's** keyboard player. **Mark**

her application for a divorce from Mick ... the **Amazing Rhythm Aces** have lost guitarist Barry Byrd Burton, but correspondent John Malloy reports that his replacement was: "hot stuff and equally slick at clean country leads and pedal steel" ... Mr Malloy also reports that causing a stir on the West Coast of the States is Washington based band, **Root Boy Slim and the Sex Change Band**. But these guys are not your average punks — The bassist, guitarist and drummer are all well over six feet and beefy. It's hard to tell if they're ex-football players or just heavy beer drinkers ... but you tend to forget about the band when Root Boy Slim takes the stage. Right away you know he's not, well, *normal*. A big man with an even bigger beer gut, he's dressed in a track suit at least a size too



Root Boy Slim

small, baseball cap and glasses that say Root (you look through the O's). Now here is a guy without any semblance of good taste. I mean he is *gross*." The Root's songs consist of such tasty titles as "My Wig Fell Off", "I'm Not Too Old to Love You" (complete with middle section devoted to Roman Polanski) and the classic "Boogie Till You Puke". Still the guy must have something going for him as Becker and Fagen helped out on their first album and it's produced by Steely Dan producer, Gary Katz. Could be interesting ... on a slightly different subject — **Peter, Paul and Mary** have reformed, George Martin is to produce their comeback LP ... The **Who** album originally scheduled for June is now reset to appear in August ... **Neil Young** working on a movie from an idea of his. Title is *Human Highway* ... the first disco TV programme has begun in the States ... pedal steel player **Al Perkins** (Manassas etc) is to produce an album featuring other steel players such as Red Rhodes, Sneaky Pete and Tom Brumley ... **Peter Frampton** is to undertake a world tour late this year and early next. It's understood this could be Frampton's last for some time. He's already committed to two further feature films after he completes his role in *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* ... The **Sex Pistols** single recorded with Ronald Biggs has been retitled "The Biggest Blow (A Punk Prayer by Ronald Biggs)". A preview of the single shows it to be a surprisingly catchy little item on which Ronald Biggs proves he can sing



Steely Dan: Walter Becker and Donald Fagen

and Mal have written at least two of the songs that will be recorded ... and **Dragon** are also hitting the studio trail and work on their third Oz album has begun. Title is *O Zambesi*. Once again it's produced by Peter Dawkins who'll mix and cut the final product in the States ... as you no doubt know the **Rolling Stones** have opened their American tour. The first date in Florida was before a crowd of 10,000 and the band were aided and abetted on keyboards by Ian McLagen, late of the Small and Big Faces. The show kicked off with "Let It Rock" and proceeded through "All Down the Line" "Star Star", "Honky Tonk Women" then into 8 songs from the new album, *Some Girls*, and finished off with "Love in Vain", "Brown Sugar" and finally "Street Fighting Man". The 13 city, 5 week tour includes dates at clubs (where tickets will be on sale only the day before the date), as well as 90,000 seater stadiums. The album has entered the US charts at 18, making it the highest debuting album of the year. *Some Girls* was released in NZ on July 3 ... **Led Zeppelin** are reputedly rehearsing in a country castle in Britain ... new LP from **Van Morrison** due very soon. Recorded in Britain and also in The Band's Shangri-La Studios, the album features Garth Hudson as well as a host of British session men — Herbie Armstrong, Peter Bardens, Bobbie Tench etc ...



Santana, **Joan Baez** and the **Beach Boys** are booked for a concert in Leningrad that is to be recorded both for album and film release. The concert is sponsored by Levi-Strauss and produced by Bill Graham ... forgot to tell you that **Blanca Jagger** has withdrawn

(sort of) and (if he wrote the words) that he's got quite a sense of humour. The song is played in the characteristic Sex Pistols style, while Biggs sings "God save the Sex Pistols / they're a bunch of wholesome blokes / they just like wearing filthy clothes and swapping filthy jokes." While the chorus goes (as far as we can figure out): "Ronald Biggs was doing time / till he done a bunk / now he's glad he's seen the light / and sold his soul for punk. "While on the flip side you'll find the world's only punk version of "My Way". Your mother won't like it ... expect to see in your record shop later this month — **Dylan's** *Street Legal*, **Al Di Meola's** *Casino*, the second **Peter Gabriel** album (title *Peter Gabriel*), **Firefall's** *Elan*, **Cheap Trick's** *In Colour* and a re-issue of the first Springsteen album — *Greetings from Asbury Park* and at some undetermined time in the future — **Leon Russell's** *Americana*, **Leon Redbone's** *Champagne Charlie*, **Lowell George's** *Thanks I'll Eat It Here* and the next **Doobies** album.

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Recognise this guy? Naah, you're wrong. In fact it's the inimitable Graham Parker and, here's the best news of all, Graham Parker and the Rumour will tour NZ in September. Dates are uncertain as yet. Also playing here in September will be the Little River Band and Roberta Flack. Now keep this one under your hat (or wherever you keep such things) but round September or October, Muddy Waters with Johnny Winter could turn up on these shores and War are also a strong possibility. And for those of you who don't come out in the winter, scheduled for outdoor concerts in the summer are Rod Stewart and the Eagles.

LATE NEWS WRAY/GORDON

Late, Late News: Following their mostly-completed movie, *The Kids Are Alright*, which is set for Christmas release, **The Who** will begin work on a film based round their 1973 rock-opera *Quadrophenia*. The group will not appear in this new film though they will contribute the soundtrack which will include the material from the album as well as new songs ... if you've got this far through *Small Stuff*, you might remember we told you

the **Sex Pistols** single had been retitled — well, it's been changed again. It will now be known as "No-One Is Innocent (A Punk Prayer by Ronald Biggs)". The song remains the same, only the title has changed ... **Robert Gordon** and **Link Wray** — the men who've brought rockabilly into the 70s — have decided to end their partnership. Disputes over musicians and style have brought on the break. Both will record solo albums ... and last but not least with cliché in hand, we note that Bob Seger is being touted as the producer of the next **Frankie Miller** album. You all will have noted, of course, that Bob covered Frankie's "Ain't Got No Money" on his new LP *Stranger in Town* ...

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BOWIE LIVE

David Bowie's new live album, the second of his career, is set for early July release overseas. The album is a double, produced by Tony Visconti and recorded in Philadelphia. Though as yet untitled, the track listing is: "Hang On to Yourself", "Ziggy Stardust", "Five Yers", "Soul Love Star", "Station to Station", "Fame", "TVC 15", "Warszawa", "Speed of Life", "Art Decade", "Sense of Doubt", "Breaking Glass", "Heroes", "What in the World", "Blackout" and "Beauty and the Beast". NZ release will probably be in August.

SPRINGSTEEN





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rumours Auckland

The **Suburban Reptiles** have been in at Mandrill studios recording their next single. **Phil Judd** is supervising production and lending a hand on guitar ... a **Neville Purvis** tune, "Disco On My Radio", was released early when it turned up on the flipside of Johnny Mathis and Denise Williams' "Too Much Too Little, Too Late" ... **Alastair Riddell's** new single will be entitled "Through Eyes of Love" ... **Living Force** intend to leave for California to record there ... **Golden Harvest** finished their album recently and have left town. They will be playing another national tour ...

One of the more adept new bands in town, **Get Smart**, featured at Zwines last month. Their live dates still number in single figures yet they impress more than most of the es-



established units ... On the same show was another newbie. **The Plague** with Richard von Sturmer, Miles McKane, Davis Parkin and Sally Griffin amongst others ... **Pocket Rocket** are now called **Gaelforce** and are resident at the Lake Tavern, Rotorua ... **Annette Morrison** (Beaver's sister) has replaced Julie Meneedham in the **Spatz** lineup ...

Radio Waikato are starting to hold Sunday afternoon concerts at the Founders Theatre in Hamilton. First up in July is **CB** on the 9th. Here's Andy loses Andy and Richard Wilde moves in. The new producer for **Radio With Pickies** is Graeme Hobson ... The National film unit is doing a documentary on Red Mole's current tour that will end in Auckland on July 2nd. The director is Sam Neil (ex-Sleeping Dogs). The Moles then head for Nth America ... Guitarist Paul Clayton has left the **Flyers** and will not be replaced ... A new single will soon be released on CBS by ex-kiwi **Malcolm McCallum** entitled "Who Is Your Love For?" ... Also from Melbourne comes the new **Manning Band** album which features Paul Cuddihy (ex Spacewalk), Cruise Lane, Streetalk, Stewart and the Belmonts, VoxPop and Skyhooks). The album will probably not be released here as the Aussie Lowest common denominator is lower than ours ...

L.B. Sands

Dunedin

Christchurch punk rockers **Johnny Velox** and the **Vauxhalls** were special guests of the **Enemy** at a recent Beneficiaries Hall concert. **Johnny Velox** couldn't make it as his mother wouldn't let him because he had exams to sit, but the **Vauxhalls** managed fine without him. Their re-interpretation of "Griffin's Gingersnits" was great. The **Enemy** are playing and writing better than ever. One of their new songs "Don't Catch Fire" is as good as anything I've heard anywhere. The **Clean** are improving thanks to new vocalist Doug, but **London SS** have broken up, the remains are forming a new band, **The Vamp**. Oh and yeah, by the time this goes to press the **Enemy** will have completed a successful gig in Christchurch.

From punk to mainstream: Jim Taylor (ex-Odyssey), Rob Aitken (ex-Rocks Off) and Ray Moore from Thoroughbred have formed **Cheap and Nasty** and have been playing at the Captain Cook. **Cruze** have a new drummer, Barry Blackler, and they are starting a full working schedule again in August. Rumours circulating that **Expende** are going to tour Fiji. **Gardens Tavern** have returned to booking rock bands despite the ban on loud music imposed by residents a few months ago.

From local to the big time: **Leo Sayer** brought the house down in his two concerts here. People dancing in the aisles despite the fire regulations and the disapproval of the Regent staff who had to try and enforce the regulations. The **Byrds** were all we hoped — two encores "Eight Miles High" and "Find the Cost of Freedom". Chris Hillman (33) is wondering whether to give up rock and take to lecture tours again. No Kidding. **George Kay** and **Keith Tannock**

NEW DYLAN MID JULY

Bob Dylan's new album, *Street Legal*, should be released in NZ in mid-July. The album contains ten new Dylan compositions and Dylan is credited with lead vocals and electric and rhythm guitars.

The remainder of the line-up of musicians on the album is identical to the band he's currently touring with — and differs only slightly from the band seen at the Auckland concert earlier this year. The album was produced by Don De Vito.

The track listing is: "Changing of the Guards", "New Pony", "No Time to Think", "Baby Stop Crying", "Is Your Love in Vain", "Senor (Tales of Yankee Power)", "True Love Tends to Forget", "We Better Talk This Over", "Where Are You Tonight? (Journey Through Dark Heat)".

Angus Mackinnon writing for *New Musical Express* said: "A powerful positive album. What the hell, I'll state my case — *Street Legal* is Dylan's second major album of the seventies."

Meanwhile Dylan has apparently given his OK to the release of a live album recorded in Japan earlier this year. This album may only be pressed in Japan, thus elsewhere the LP would be available on import only. This recording could be out by August.

SAILOR KEY LP

Hello Sailor began work on their second album on the 26th of June. The band have now decided to remain with their original record company, Key Records, and work at Stebbings Studios in Auckland with producer Rob Aickin has begun. Hello Sailor now intend to play club dates on America's West Coast after completion of the album.

Meanwhile their first album, *Hello Sailor*, has achieved gold record status, that is the equivalent of one million sales in the US.

SCAVs AT ALICE's

"We like playing here," Johnny Volume, the Scavengers' guitarist, said before the band played the last of three nights at Wellington's Slack Alice nightclub. "It's like the old days," he said, presumably referring to the Scavengers' days at Moody Richards in Auckland. "They hate us."

Punk rock is still new to Wellington and people there have never been eager to accept Auckland rock bands. Even before the Scavengers began playing the reaction was predictably divided. The resident band, Itchycoo Park, had shown a policy of playing anything that made people dance, from Van Morrison to Uriah Heep's "Free Me". Most of the audience stayed to dance to the Scavengers. Some people jeered. Some threw ice.

The band played on while a few people threw tomatoes. Volume spat at the audience on request and threw his drink out over the dance floor.

The nightclub's management decided to call the band off but the Scavs looked set to play on. Someone took the opportunity to throw a glass at Volume, cutting open his forehead.

In the ensuing scuffle someone smashed Volume's guitar, throwing it to the floor and breaking it at the neck. Volume was taken to hospital, refusing to press charges.

GENESIS

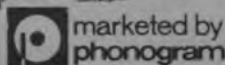
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Judd aids Reps

Another of the not-yet conquering heroes has returned. Philip Judd, co-founder and three times ex-member of Split Enz, slipped back into New Zealand last month. He is the fourth member of the band which left for England two years ago to return to live in Auckland, and his departure leaves singer Tim Finn as the only original member of the band still with them.

His current duties include work with the dreaded Suburban Reptiles on their next Phonogram single. As well as producing the disc, Judd will play a little guitar on it in place of the now-departed Reptiles guitarist, Billy Planet, although it is highly unlikely that this arrangement will extend to live work. At the moment, it is not certain that Billy Planet will be joining Split Enz.

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Interview FRANK GIBSON

Frank Gibson has done well. Thirteen months ago he left Dr Tree, Auckland's jazz rock combo, and New Zealand for Britain, and now he's back on his first tour as Leo Sayer's drummer staying at five star hotels and drinking Heinekens. What went right?

"I know Bruce Lynch who plays bass for Cat Stevens — we used to live together for two years and we were great friends. I know Dave Macrae (Pacific Eardrum), Billy Kristian and Chris Thompson who's with Manfred Mann. It was just a matter of looking them up and waiting to see what happened."

So Frank had the right connections, but there's no way that he would have made it if he didn't know a snare drum from a tom-tom, in other words he's good. How did he meet Sayer?



"Well some studio things started to happen because I had been recommended to a big contractor or fixer in London. You see in studio gigs you work for a fixer and you're on a list of drummers he's got and he knows what you're best at and he'll put you on certain gigs he thinks you're suited for. This guy I worked for, his name is David Katz, thought I'd suit Leo. Leo actually asked for a different drummer but Katz said I've got somebody you'll like better. I did two things in the studio for Leo and I got the tour."

Gibson would be the first to admit that luck played an important part in his successful emergence from the wealth of musical talent that thrives in London, but his versatility and sheer capacity for hard work circulated his name around the right places.

"I worked hard — I never turned down a gig in London since I got there. I didn't care what it was — I've done some funny old pub gigs just to get my head about. I did a lot of jazz and be-bop gigs, in fact, I was working six or seven be-bop gigs a week for months and doing sessions in the daytime — TV shows, commercials, rock'n'roll records, demos and anything that's going. I auditioned and toured Israel with Tina Charles. The thing is to circulate and let a lot of people hear you and some of them are bound to like the way you play."

Gibson is enjoying the security of a regular wage with Sayer and the relatively carefree

existence of being part of a unit rather than being responsible for a band as he was with Dr Tree. But Sayer's music with its cross blendings of sophisticated pop and Anglicised funk is entirely different from the style he was accustomed to playing with Dr Tree. Does this change bother him?

"No, I think Leo Sayer is every bit as valid as anything I've ever tried and what's more he reaches more people. I've changed my ideas a lot since I've got there and I think communicating with people is very important. I love being part of it, and he communicates so well, he's such a good performer. I love the gig. I've always played in a variety of styles, and playing with Leo is just another style."

Can he see himself returning to the style that he was playing with Dr Tree?

"I haven't played anything remotely like what I played with Dr Tree since I left but I will get around to it and I'll play with some very good players — even better than Dr Tree. Eventually I might go on my own but at the moment I'm enjoying working with other people."

Gibson has worked himself into an enviable position in the pop biz, definitely a Kiwi makes good storyline here and the future looks even more promising as he is appearing on his first Sayer album recorded live later this year in Los Angeles. He deserves it. George Kay

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*Feels so good when I'm with you
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With you it feels like it should feel
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Van Leer at Fair

Thijs Van Leer, whose flute playing was the driving force behind the Dutch band Focus, will be the star attraction at Music Expo, a trade fair in Auckland this month, running from July 24 to 29.

The fair, which is organised by the Music Trades Association, is usually an industry affair held in Rotoura. However, this year the venue has been moved to Auckland and every effort is being made to involve the public.

Van Leer is coming from Holland for the fair and will play music in a rock, jazz and classical context. Schtung and Hello Sailor, making their final appearance before their American trip, will feature with Van Leer in a rock concert at the Town Hall.

The instruments and amplification equipment go on display on Thursday July 27, but in the days leading up to the official opening there will be an all-Mozart concert by the Symphonia of Auckland, the rock concert with Schtung, Sailor and Van Leer, and a jazz concert featuring the Bruce Morley Little Big Band and Van Leer.

Van Leer will also perform with the Symphonia on Saturday July 29 in a finale concert. Juan Matteucci will conduct.

JAMES BROWN AT SHORELINE

James Brown probably invented funk and could lay a substantial claim to being the grand daddy of disco.

It's not easy to appreciate the importance of James Brown from New Zealand for Brown is a figure whose influence — musical, political and social — has always been most significant on the American black community.

During the late 50s and early 60s he mounted the James Brown Revue which travelled back and forth across America playing mostly to all-black audiences. It's on this arduous circuit that Brown developed the show that became legendary — with Brown working his audiences into a frenzy that climaxed when he would collapse in an exhausted heap at the centre of the stage at each show. His attendants would rush forward, drape a purple cloak over him and help him slowly off the stage. Suddenly he would fight off his helpers and force his way back to the microphone, only to collapse after forcing out another chorus. Again his



attendants would assist him off the stage, this time draped in a different coloured cloak, to find that he forces them away and ... so on. Brown never left the stage until at least his fifth time through the routine.

In Auckland to perform at two cabaret shows, the routine is now reduced to a mere two capes and a perfunctory run-through, but it was the only aspect of the show that was.

Brown is now at least in his mid 40s but his onstage energy and commitment remains impressive. His movements — the distinctive fast-foot shuffle and press ups — now come in short bursts, rather than the show-long athletics he once managed.

Power is still his trademark. He has one of the loudest, most harsh voices in all of popular music. Onstage his tiny frame seems to contain more power than he dare let loose. After the fast songs, he has to visibly compose himself before he can tackle a moving version of "Georgia on My Mind" — it's as if he didn't contain this strength, he would overwhelm the song.

The fast songs display Brown's taste for simplicity. He's stripped the soul formula to its basics — rhythm and voice.

As one writer has noted: "Attacking Browns for being repetitive is like attacking Africans for being overly fond of drumming. "But it's the slow songs — "Please, Please, Please", "Try Me", "It's a Man's, Man's, Man's World" — that show off Brown's talents as a singer, his ability to wring the most out of a phrase.

For "It's a Man's World" he almost dispensed with the lyrics and for several verses just hammered those words. With Brown's characteristic power and intent, you knew he meant it.

After the show, Bryan Staff of 12M and I talked to James Brown. He's an impossible mixture of the jive-ass and the friendly. He welcomes everybody as brothers, while he sits having his hair permed.

So did Mick Jagger really steal his stage movements from Brown, as legend has it. Brown isn't telling. "I'm not going to talk about Mick. Mick and I are good friends. I don't think as a performer I should say anything."

But he reacts explosively to the suggestion that disco is merely watered-down soul music. "Yeah, you're right man." But admits that disco will "be a broader scope for us." Thus Brown is peddling his 1978 sound under the title of heavy disco. "But this new disco is really heavy soul. But I water some of it down too otherwise people wouldn't understand it."

By now, it's three thirty in the morning and Brown has to leave to catch the five thirty plane to Australia. He's changed his clothes, his hair's finished and he delivers his parting message: "I just want to say to the people out there — 'Hope you live two hundred years and I live two hundred years minus one day, so I never know beautiful people like you have passed away. God bless you.'"

Alastair Dougal

Who's Where

Citizen Band July 9, Founders Theatre, Hamilton. July 21, Auckland University Cafe. July 23, Headquarters Rock Cafe. July 27-29, Island of Real.

Charisma Oscar's Nightclub, Century Arcade, Auckland.

Golden Harvest July 3-8, Bayview Hotel, Napier. July 17-22, Sandown Park, Gisborne. July 24-29 and 31 to August 5, Mayfair Hastings.

Tom Sharplin & the Rockets July 3-8, Aranui Hotel, Christchurch. July 10-16 & 23-30 Shoreline, Dunedin. July 17-22, Waikiwi, Invercargill.

Andy Newbury July 1,7-8, 14-15, 21-22 & 28-29, Durham Arts Centre, Auckland.

Easy Street July 3-8, Cabana Hotel, Napier. July 5-10, Sandown Hotel, Gisborne. July 24-29, Furlong Hotel, Hawera.

Reel to Real July 6-8, Provincial Tavern, Upper Hutt. July 13-15 & 20-22, Olympic Hotel Naenae, Lower Hutt. August 3-5, Provincial Hotel, Upper Hutt.

Bamboo July 5-8, Exchange Tavern, Parnell. 10-15 Hillcrest Tavern, Hamilton. July 27-29, Headquarters Rock Cafe.

Urban Road Wed-Sat, Station Hotel. Sunday & Tuesday, Foundry., Nelson St.

Th'Dudes July 6 & 7, Island of Real. Windsor Tavern 2pm, July 8 & 22. July 13-15, Gluepot. August 1, 12M Radio Workshop.

Mysex July 10-15, Windsor Castle. July 19-22, Gluepot.

Lipservice July 14-15, Headquarters Rock Cafe. July 26-29, Gluepot.

David Hollis & Earthsong, Brent Blann and John Taylor, August 5, Wellington Cultural Centre, World Trade Centre, Sturdee St.

The Plague July 2, Island of Real.

Zig Zag Theatrikilla July 9, Island of Real.

Mahana July 14 & 15, Island of Real.

Chris Thompson July 19, Island of Real.

Rough Justice July 20-22, Island of Real.

Murray Partridge July 16, Island of Real.

Trix Kafe July 8, Island of Real.

The Flyers July 4-8, Gluepot. July 12-15, Exchange Hotel, Parnell.

Gavin Nannestad July 12 & 13, Electronic music for the Hard people, Island of Real.

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Test Flyte Downunder

"The tour itinerary didn't say how far apart the last two towns were or how we were travelling up. When we found it meant a six-hour drive before the concert we got up early — it was dark — and took off for the airport: a bleary-eyed Roger McGuinn arriving in Auckland on a bleak, rain-lashed Saturday morning.

The recent New Zealand Tour by former Byrds, Roger McGuinn, Chris Hillman and Gene Clark, along with Poco drummer George Grantham, constituted not just another reunion, but the first performances of a newly formed group. On return to the States they will begin recording an album in late July under the name Flyer. (The permanence of Grantham's tenure with the band is not yet known although he will definitely be on the album.)

The original and obvious moniker for the band is considered unsuitable because, as Hillman put it, "It just wouldn't be the Byrds without David and Michael." Moreover, any new recording under that name would remind audiences of the unhappy '72 reunion. About that album McGuinn and Hillman are blunt. It seems their enthusiasm for the future allows them an easy candour about the past.

Hillman: "I hated that '72 album. It was rushed. We needed 3 months just to get to know each other again. I think we all went in there with songs but we saved the good ones

for our own projects. I know I did. Gene had some good ones though."

McGuinn: "I listened to it again and it's not as bad as I thought, although my 'Born to Rock and Roll' is a disaster."

A corporate title of surnames for the new group is also to be avoided "rather than risk another Souther-Hillman-Furay escapade."

That ill-fated '73 attempt at a supergroup is now dismissed by Hillman as "the ingredients of a great cake which just didn't cook. We never worked together; just on each other's songs." Yet Hillman speaks fondly of his other post-Byrd outfits, the Flying Burrito Brothers and Manassas. His relationship with Stephen Stills in the latter band was "and is, very close. We have a good friendship." In the New Zealand concerts Hillman featured two numbers he wrote with Stills.

Looking back further, Hillman laughs in recalling when he, McGuinn and the original Byrds first stormed world charts with "Mr Tambourine Man." "We really weren't sure if we liked the song at first." Nonetheless that record virtually made them All-American heroes, the first group to break the Beatles-led, British stranglehold of the charts.

From that beginning, the Byrds' success grew as they progressed from the 'folk-rock' genre they had founded to developing the 'psychedelic sound' on such fine albums as *Fifth Dimension* and *Younger Than Yesterday*. Then came the masterful *Notorious Byrd Brothers* which, following the untimely depar-

ture of David Crosby, was virtually a co-operative venture between McGuinn and Hillman. To this day they regard it as one of their finest moments. "We had a real good creative rapport there. Rog and I wrote two good songs in one evening."

In his enthusiasm, Hillman compares their current working relationship to the *Notorious* period. "We recently sat down and wrote a new song real easy. We have that same feeling as then."

McGuinn and Hillman originally parted company in '68 after disagreements following the classic *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, an album which had again seen the Byrds pioneering a new field. Today, any past friction is long forgotten as they joke about the split.

Hillman: "Rog deserted me and left me in the street."

McGuinn: "No, he left me to go off with Gram Parsons."

Hillman: "We invited you."

McGuinn: "That's true, but I wasn't into country enough to do that."

If further assurance of their rejuvenated harmony were needed, one could note that in concert McGuinn proudly introduced two *Sweetheart* numbers — including a glorious acapella rendition of Dylan's "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere" — as "from one of our best albums."

They see no dilemma in still performing old Byrds' numbers in a band which is trying to establish a new identity.

McGuinn: "We'll always play Byrds' songs. After all they're ours. Like Paul McCartney still plays 'Yesterday' and he's Wings."

Hillman: "People have got to have that reference point. But we're no nostalgia show. We've limited the old songs to 4 or 5 and people's reactions to all the new ones have been real good."

Indeed, the new songs (on one hearing anyway) are all impressive and bode well for the coming album. As well as the band, concerts included short solo spots featuring material from members' individual recordings: Hillman's from *Clear Sails*, McGuinn's from *Cardiff Rose*, Clark's being unreleased here.

Individually or collectively, off-stage and on, their demeanour is relaxed. There is little attempt to present the image of 'A Rock and Roll Star'. Says McGuinn, "It's just a gig." He grins and adds, "It's pretty neat though."

Hillman: "We're older now. I just feel I'm a musician. I'm not sure anymore what the 'Star' end of it means. Limousines and private airplanes?"

The irony is heavy. This interview was conducted in a packed Honda after a turbulent early morning flight in an Air N.Z. Friendship. A wet and slightly dazed Hillman described the trip as "Jim Croce Airlines", while McGuinn thought it rather complemented his "punk rock dream" of the night before.

The June 10th *Ready to Roll* appearance was taped the day they arrived in New Zealand "wrecked from 15 hours on an airplane."

McGuinn: "I was such a trooper, I wanted to do it."

Hillman: "He talked us into it. Somebody said we looked mean on T.V. We were just tired."

McGuinn, a confessed space and technology freak, has always been a sucker for film and T.V. studios. "I don't want to be a director or anything but I like to hang around and watch them do it." On T.V. he wore a *Star Wars*' T-shirt. "I've seen the film 7 times. I've got some of it on video." He's recently co-written a film script, although as yet has no plans for its production, and has had a few acting lessons. "I'm moderately interested but I've realised now that movie actors don't have the same liberty as musicians, especially when you get to our stage. Actors get told what to do all the time and we don't."

Hillman: "As your credibility grows you get more chance to call the shots. We have pretty much artistic control."

McGuinn: "And movie actors never get the audience response until some guy has cut their part up. They don't see the final thing until it's out. We have a large say in the recordings and we get immediate gratification from a concert audience."

Gratification indeed if the Auckland concert showed a typical response. Despite an atrocious sound system (for which the promoters should be shot), broken guitar strings and George Grantham being ill, they received a roaring acclaim. People tried to dance but the security guards, aware of the inevitable depravity ensuing from such activity, stopped it smartly. Of course the classic hits would invariably draw rapturous applause from such an audience; the maturing rockers and 'ageing hippies' McGuinn had predicted. But Hillman was right; there's more to it than nostalgia. This band was not a bunch of tired legends trading worn-out harmonies on a past decade's fame. (Beach Boys please note.) While things may appear casual, the ease is deceptive. Vocally, they are as strong as ever — Grantham's backing work is an asset — and instrumentally they still kick it, not just as experienced professionals, but with a rock 'n' roll spirit which is very much alive.

It may be a gig but, as the man said, it's a pretty neat one.

Peter Thomson

(with thanks to Mary who arranged the interview and drove the car)



Ms Armatrading In Concert

Reaction to Joan Armatrading's Auckland concert, both in the Town Hall itself and in the press, was unreservedly favourable. Admittedly, she had the biggest head-start from her audience that I have seen for any performer, but it still takes a great performance to live up to the kind of expectations that this crowd obviously had.

That she carried it off so well in the circumstances is a tribute to her own capabilities, because the band she used, apparently drawn from the middle ranks of the British session fraternity, did not manage to bring the same sparkle to her songs as the players on her albums. Instead, Armatrading was obliged to provide most of the drive and energy with her singing and guitar work. Guitarist Bill Hamm seemed especially out of place with his jazz fusion stylings in arrangements originally built around Jerry Donahue's tasteful interjections.

Generally, the band was competent enough, but it is a shame that the costs of touring this part of the world are starting to decree that artists bring a rather cheaper band than they would dare to step on stage with in Britain. Leo Sayer appeared here last month with a collection which was by all accounts less than he deserved, and Armatrading had to put a lot of work in to bring the best out of her musicians.

All this effort was masked behind a studied air of unconcern, mind you, a good example of how to hold the audience's attention with anti-stardom. The between-song introductions and anecdotes all came with a convincing amount of diffidence, and it was hard not to believe that they were spontaneous. The show never lagged, even though there were much longer gaps between songs than might normally be considered usual for a well-paced show.

Right from the beginning, she scored well with her audience of fans by opening with 'Down to Zero', and following it one song later with 'Show Some Emotion'. The strength of the songs, and of her singing, immediately reassured the audience. As the show went on, taking in large parts of the *Joan Armatrading* album, and almost all of *Show Some Emotion*, they gave more to the performer than any Auckland crowd I have ever seen. It is probably

more than coincidence that they were also the first Town Hall crowd I have seen with a majority of women in it. Although she denies any particular links with feminist groups, Armatrading is obviously aware of the amount of support she gets from that sector, and is prepared to acknowledge it on stage. In a long introduction she told a story of how she repulsed the unwanted attentions of a male admirer — to the obvious delight of much of the audience.

I don't know if supporting artist John Hanlon is not so aware of the inclinations of Armatrading's audience, or whether he is just bloody-minded, but he took his life in both hands when chatting amiably about having his 'lady' wash his dishes after him. He was greeted with the inevitable hisses. In fact, that was the strongest reaction he garnered from a set which had some interest added to it by the cocktail-lounge piano of fellow ad-man Mike Harvey. Like Lea Maalfrid's recent stint as an opening act, their performance proved that New Zealanders don't lack for musicianship, but rather urgency and confidence.

Armatrading showed what that kind of aggression can do for a show. By the time she finished her set with "Kissing and Huggin", she had worked the band up to full steam, and the audience to fever pitch and the demand for an encore was tremendous. I even had one neighbour sobbing at the thought that it might be all over. When Armatrading came back alone to play "Peace In Mind" at the piano, you could feel the relief run through the crowd, and the feeling peaked in another roar after "Back To The Night". Eventually, she emerged to finish with a rousing work-out on "Never Is Too Late", with the band slotting surprisingly well into its reggae setting.

Reportedly, a huge proportion of overseas acts that play Auckland use stories of the sterile audiences here to frighten their children. Auckland crowds are in danger of being labelled plain indifferent, but the general casting off of the big city *sang froid* for Joan Armatrading gives the lie to those who would maintain that the condition was incurable. All it takes is a touch of genius.

Francis Stark

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S EAST OF EDEN



"It was so beautiful, I felt James Dean was back . . . When I saw James Dean for the first time I fell on the floor. When I saw Bob Dylan for the first time I fell on the floor. When I saw Bruce Springsteen for the first time I fell on the floor." Jackie De Shannon.

In 1973, after the release of his first album, Bruce Springsteen, from Asbury Park, New Jersey, was widely acclaimed as Dylan's logical successor. Dylan had been the last popular hero to encourage the belief that rock 'n' roll could still change the world, and right from the outset there were obvious similarities between Springsteen and Dylan. Similarities, showed even in appearance: both Dylan and Springsteen looked to suffer from lack of sleep, both grew stubby beards.

Springsteen had been a guitarist with numerous Asbury Park-based R'n'B bands before recording his first LP, *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.* It was Springsteen's lyrics, however, which stood out; he wrote about the New Jersey streets from which he came, he was "the king of the alley" who "could walk like Brando right into the sun":

"The devil appeared like Jesus through the steam in the street
Showin' me a hand I knew even the cops couldn't beat
I felt his hot breath on my neck as I dove into the heat
It's so hard to be a saint when you're just a boy out on the street."

Mike Appel, Springsteen's manager, had typecast his prodigy as a folk troubadour, pre-1965 Dylan, and told him to write songs with plenty of lyrics.

It was no real coincidence that Springsteen was signed to CBS by the man who had a decade earlier signed up Bobby Dylan. Springsteen had been reading Tony Scaduto's autobiography of Dylan. He put the idea to Appel, Appel contacted John Hammond, told him he wanted him to listen to Springsteen because Hammond had discovered Dylan. And, Appel added, "we wanna see if that was just a fluke, or if you really have ears."



Greetings from Asbury Park N.J., 1973

Hammond furthered the already-growing myth by telling *Time* he had reacted to Springsteen "with a force I'd felt maybe three times in my life" and, as he told *Rolling Stone*, Springsteen was "much further along, much more developed than Bobby was when he came to me". CBS record executives and rock critics alike began talking of Springsteen as "the new Dylan".

"What do I care, I'll do anything once," Springsteen said in April that year. "If it works, it works. But I don't wanna be concerned with too much of what's going on with promotion. That don't seem so important to me, but it's important to Mike. I trust whatever he does."

"In all my years in this business," Hammond said, "he is the only person I've met who cares absolutely nothing about money."



"The best thing anyone can do for me is not to mention Bob Dylan," Springsteen told *Time* in April 1974, "I've been influenced by everybody from Benny Goodman on: Sam Cooke, Wilson Pickett, Fats Domino. When I was nine and saw Elvis Presley on TV, I knew that was where it was at."

Springsteen's second album was a marked improvement on his first. He had ably shrugged off any debt to Dylan, he was now the songwriter in a band — the E Street Band — rather than a solo songwriter. The head-on rush of cinematic images that had characterised the first album had given way to a more mature concept.

"I never did separate the words and music all that much," Springsteen said after his second album, *The Wild, the Innocent and the E Street Shuffle*, had been released. "The only time I did was when I was playin' by myself. The lyrics aren't as flashy now as on the first album. Then it was all a lot of images. I was writing about all the things that were happening round me. If it felt right, it was okay. Lately I've been trying to deal more with ideas — with concepts, with themes. The stuff I'm writin' now is closer to what I was writin' in the bars. I got pulled away then. I walked in off the street and was about to get a record deal. I wasn't about to argue."

Despite enthusiastic reviews neither album sold more than 200,000 copies within the States. Springsteen was regarded at CBS as one of Clive Davis' proteges; he was nearly dropped after Davis left, his second album was — at best — only half-heartedly promoted.

Springsteen kept on touring, preferring to play small concert halls and clubs rather than large halls. Earlier he had had a disastrous tour as opening act for Chicago, playing in 20,000-seat halls. "Some groups just go out and plow through it," he said. "But I can't do it that way."

He met up with Jon Landau, then a contributing editor at *Rolling Stone*, in April 1974. A month later Landau wrote a review in which he said "I saw rock and roll future and its name is Springsteen." CBS spent \$50,000 in publicising the quote.



Advert., Rolling Stone, July 18, 1974

"When I saw that ad, with the quote ripped out," Springsteen recalled in an interview with *NME*, "I went 'Uh-oh . . . this looks like real bad advertising'. and I called the company up and said, 'Hey . . . get that ad outta the papers, man, are you tryin' to murder me?' "

Springsteen placed complete trust in Appel, still telling *Rolling Stone* in late 1975 that "I think Mike is the greatest, number one". Appel had co-produced both of Springsteen's albums with his partner, Jim Cretecos. But when recording of the third album, *Born to Run*, had dragged on for several months since its start in June 1974 it was clear to Springsteen that "we needed an outside perspective".

Landau had previously produced albums for the MC5 and Livingston Taylor. When Springsteen turned to him he left his job at *Rolling Stone* to become co-producer.

"... With *Born to Run* it reached a point where it was a nightmare," Springsteen said. "We were not getting close. Then Jon came in and he was able to say 'Well you're not doing it because of this, and this, and these are factual things which in reality are blocking what you're doing' . . . Me, you know, I just want to hear it, I don't want to know. I have no desire to work the knobs, run the soundboard, none. I don't care what I know or not, so I'm dependent on someone who's there to get me the sound I want."

Appel began to resent Landau's growing influence over Springsteen but, with Landau now in control, *Born to Run* was eventually completed. It took a further four and a half months, 12½ months in all. Landau attributed the further delays to Springsteen's concern for detail: "He'd spend hours on one line. He'd say 'hang on guys, I wanna check a line' and four hours later he'd be sitting there trying to make the most minute changes in one verse."

Appel offered both *Newsweek* and *Time* interviews with Springsteen. Both magazines appeared with cover stories on October 27, Mike Appel's birthday.

At this time Springsteen's contracts were about to run out. Appel made the offer to renegotiate.



"You know, kids go, Hey! When are you gonna make a record?" I say 'One of these days' ": Springsteen, March 1977.

The legal wrangle that followed Springsteen's intention to begin recording a fourth album with Landau as his producer stopped him from recording for over a year. Appel had said he would "... fight and possibly destroy, through legal means, that which he had created, namely Springsteen's career". A settlement was eventually made out of court. Appel received over \$1 million in cash, contract and property rights and in return relinquished administration of Springsteen's pub-

lishing, recording and management. *Rolling Stone* described the case "a textbook example of a financially naive musician learning the meaning of money only upon success".



"(Appel's) interest in this action is strictly financial. My interest is my career, which up until now holds the promise of my being able to significantly contribute to, and possibly influence a generation of music.": Bruce Springsteen in affidavit, December 8, 1976.

Bruce Springsteen has always been fighting for his career. In the beginning it was because he refused to play Top Forty; they wouldn't let him play in any of the New Jersey bars. Later he was fighting because they called him "the new Dylan" and "the future of rock and roll".

But it wasn't until they stopped him recording that Springsteen realised that, perhaps for the first time, he held little control over his own destiny. "For me, everything is through music," he once said. "I don't do anything else. I just want to be the best I can be, and I don't even think I know what that is."

"You're born with nothing, and better off that way, Soon as you've got something they send someone to try and take it away . . .": "Something in the night," Bruce Springsteen.

The song comes from the new album Springsteen began recording as soon as he had a settlement with Appel; the album once titled *Loose Windscreens*, then *Racing in the Streets* and, finally, *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. As the first album he has released in three years, *Darkness on the Edge of Town* has a lot to live up to and, predictably, some people will be disappointed.

Springsteen is neither the new Dylan nor rock 'n' roll's new messiah. *Darkness on the Edge of Town* is a disarmingly personal album, and its songs lack the fiery optimism that lay at the heart of *Born to Run*. The Sam Peckinpah "death or glory" vista that ran through such songs as "Lost in the Flood", "Incident on 57th Street" and "Jungleland" has gone. Springsteen's new hero is no longer fighting fate but resigned to it, choosing instead to live "only with strangers", and to walk "with angels that have no place". When Springsteen neatly changes a lyric that has been used in the Stones' "Street Fighting Man" and in the Mamas and the Papas' "Dancing in the Street" it is to draw attention to the underlying despair that runs the album's course:

"Cause summer's here and the time is right
For racin' in the street."

It may be wrong to interpret this constant theme as having reference to either Appel or the court case. But while Springsteen's songs are fictional they are often loosely based on fact and here the bond between fact and fiction is made all the more obvious by the inclusion of a song like "Adam Raised A Cain". Cain is traditionally regarded a killer, but he is also the mythical destroyer of illusion. Springsteen's vocals often seem passionate — almost intense — adding sincerity to his words:

"He was standin' in the door, I was standin' in the rain,
With the same hot blood burning in our veins . . ."

Obviously Springsteen's cult hero status will last only while he can continue to write convincingly about New Jersey street life, and to do this he must remain unaffected by success and its trappings. In choosing a hero whose only option is to "come home from work and wash up and go racin' in the street" Springsteen has done nothing to lose his cult following. That is the great triumph to *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, it may not fulfil Springsteen's promise to "make the greatest rock and roll record ever made", but there are all the signs that someday he will make that record.

Jeremy Templar

records



He's so tough

Return to Magenta
Mink De Ville

Capitol

How does one follow a classic? It's a question that's always been the torment of the artist. Sometimes it's insurmountable and subsequent works are merely a reminder of greater achievements. Others rise to the challenge. Willy De Ville is a winner.

The first Mink De Ville album was one of the strongest debut records. Every song was attacked as if there was no second chance. Definitely a hard one to follow. *Return to Magenta* is a little more careful in tone, but excellent nonetheless.

Once again there are strong overtones of Phil Spector. Once again Jack Nitzsche, Spector's protege, is at the controls. "Guardian Angel" and "Just Your Friends", with its manic haronica straining over what seems like dozens of furiously strummed acoustic guitars, are firmly in the tradition of Uncle Phil. "Soul Twist" and "Rolene" are mainstream Mink De Ville R&B in the manner of "She's So Tough" and "Gunslinger" from

the previous album.

But Mink De Ville are not stuck in a cul de sac bounded by echo-laden ballads and New York rhythm and blues. "'A' Train Lady" is reminiscent of Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions, "Desperate Days" is sort of Spanish Harlem reggae, and "Easy Slider" with Dr John on the eighty-eights could be New Orleans parade music. "Steady Driving Man" is, as the title suggests, a boastful Bo-Diddley styled raver, giving Willie plenty of room to stutter and snarl. He has one of the greasiest leers since the halcyon days of Presley.

Doc Pomus wrote the liner and "I Broke that Promise" is full of the string drenched heartbreak that Pomus injected into his own great "Save the Last Dance for Me." Willie De Ville should have recorded "On Broadway", not George Benson. As Pomus says, "Mink De Ville knows the truth of a city street and the courage in a ghetto love song." Hyperbole, yes, but appropriate all the same.

Ken Williams

there is the occasional case of melodic phrasing which sounds a bit too redolent of previous work. Nonetheless, if neither record provides quite the outstanding heights of last year's efforts, there are many fine tracks.

In funky vein the Commodores continue to deliver the goods, including a particularly catchy "Flying High". There's also the, by now expected, highlight of a Lionel Richie ballad.

Seeger, of course, can still punch out rock & roll of classic dimensions.

The shining example here is "Hollywood Nights", a number which amply demonstrates not only his stature as singer but as a songwriter. The lyric captures, in brilliant simplicity, the sort of 'rock truth' which lesser talents strain to express.

Many of the cuts on *Stranger in Town* show Seeger pursuing the lighter, less gutsy style he employed to effect on *Night Moves*. Once the use of strings and girly chorus would have been anathema to him but here they almost become an integral part of the sound. Some Seeger fans think he's going soft, but I remain faithful. Strangely, the only real failures are the two non-originals. (It seems silly to weaken the album and give someone else the royalties when some of his own early songs could stand updating.)

But, in neither the Commodores' or Seeger's case is the album to be considered a failure. If the previous album scaled new heights, this one is at least hanging in there. Not as good? Pretty close.

Peter Thomson

Heavy Horses

Jethro Tull
Heavy Horses
Chrysalis

Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson is the antithesis of every rock star you've ever known.

His contempt for blue jeans, most modern

It takes three

Genesis
And Then There Were Three
Charisma

No record collection should be without at least one Genesis album. Their music is a yardstick to judge others by, in terms of tune, arrangement and production.

Genesis excel in all three departments, especially when it comes to proving that classical-rock music is not just an attempt to camouflage a weak tune with a grandiose arrangement.

The strength of Genesis has always lain in their songs, and anyone who failed to understand their earlier efforts has only to listen to "Ripples" or "Trick of The Tail" to change his mind.

Genesis have the cumulative talent to transcend all barriers, all of them artificial, and reach out to all music lovers with the sincerity and dedication that are their hallmarks.

In these pages I have already extolled the virtues of the live set "Seconds Out", but the following studio effort is always the proof of the pudding, doubly so for Genesis, since in

music apart from his own, and the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll syndrome is boundless.

Anderson has long been Tull's sole creative force, and his fanatical following has never wavered. Once a Tull fan, always a Tull fan. Their unique fusion of free-form jazz, classics and English folk is a heady, spell-binding mixture that is highly addictive and extremely popular. Witness the enormous queues in Queen St for tickets the New Zealand Tull tours of 1972 and 1974.

Heavy Horses, the band's eleventh outing, reflects a mellowing of mood that was already evident in the previous album, *Songs From The Wood*.

Anderson, once the man without a home who lived out of suitcases, is now settled in an elderly farmhouse in the English countryside, with his second wife Shona, and



baby son James. His new-found delight in country and family life is now a strong influence.

Gone is much of the heavy, electric riffing that was once a Tull trademark, to be replaced by a skilful weaving of acoustic guitars, flutes, violins and percussion instruments. Not a "Locomotive Breath" in sight.

The melodies are subtle and take time to appreciate fully. There are strong Elizabethan and Celtic strains, no more so than on "Acres Wild", where Darryl Way's violin combines with some very primitive hand drumming to produce a sound as traditional as The Chieftains in full cry.

The imagery of the lyrics is decidedly pastoral, with Anderson playing the squire of the country manor. Cats prowl the barn ("The Mouse Police"), moths dance around candle flames ("Moths"), and anxious eyes are cast towards the weather vane to see what the day will bring ("Weathercock").

In "No Lullaby", Anderson sings to his baby son, warning him of the "dragons and beasts" that lurk in the outside world, and the battles he must fight. Only here and on the title track is the band allowed to extend itself. Otherwise, the reins are held tight.

Not everyone's glass of mead, but then Jethro Tull never have been. It's another love-it-or-leave-it sound, and this one won't gain any new fans. Even Tull fanatics will find it difficult listening at first, but perseverance will bring rewards.

Jethro Tull are very much alive and well and living in the country. Not as tough or as biting as in days of yore, but still in a class of their own. Ian Anderson is no longer a rampant young stallion, but he can still sire a good 'un when the occasion calls. Long may his lum reek.

Duncan Campbell

the interim they've lost guitarist Steve Hackett, once a major creative source.

Have no fears here, for "Three" is admirable evidence that Genesis as a trio are still as viable as ever, and new horizons abound.

This album marks the emergence into the limelight of Mike Rutherford as a composer and allows Tony Banks to consolidate his already-proven songwriting ability.

Rutherford especially makes his presence felt, with the exquisite "Snowbound", which Genesis fans are bound to be singing for weeks to come, and the brooding "Deep In The Motherlode".

This album also marks a breakthrough for Genesis, in that it's produced their first hit single, "Follow You, Follow Me." Our own noble Murray Cammick says it sounds like Seals and Crofts. Maybe, but if it gets Genesis a wider audience, then well done. Anyway, it's just about the weakest track on the album.

Once again, David Hentschel is behind the control board, and the production here would make even the most inferior stereo sound good. Turn it up loud and let the sound wash over you.

Genesis have had their share of troubles, first losing Peter Gabriel and now Hackett, but on this showing their future seems assured. This album is a lesson in survival.

Duncan Campbell



Brian Eno
Before And After Science
Polydor

C'mon guys and gals, let's measure out our lives in shirts like we did last summer, get back to minus in a tiny canoe and separate the torso from the spine. What is there left to do?

We could turn to the wall or we could turn to Eno, because the dust is settling and the cows are coming home to roost. In Eno we will find true beauty ('scuse me) but you've only got to peer into the back of a radio to get that stuff. The music of a jellyfish chamber ensemble is another kettle entirely and you might just find *that* on Eno's newest hot platter called *Before And After Science*.

I want you to buy this record by one of my favourite rock stars because this is the one that folk who don't think they like Eno might just like. My own tastes run to Lou Reed, Abba, and the Fifty Foot Hose so you can see that I wouldn't put you crook.

B & A Sc. is Eno's smoothest production job yet, it almost sounds like your conventional rock record, almost. Especially on side one wherein lurk such heavy musos ('scuse me) as Phil Collins, Dave Mattacks, Phil Manzanera, and the Dadaist Kurt Schwitters who died in 1948. Nice to see you back on deck Kurt.

Some of these gents make it through that little hole and out onto Side Two, bits of which do sound like elevator music at an oyster colony, but the masses have been prepared for that facet of Eno through exposure to Bowie's music-to-eat-Gothic-cathedrals-by. Nearly every one of those umpteen thousand souls who bought *Low* and *Heroes* are searching for Eno even if they don't know it.

Then there's "Here He Comes", the brilliant piece of pop that kicks off Side Two and could kick Kate Bush and the Bee Gees into next Saturday Night forever. Yes . . . I'm recommending Eno to you and I've never even met him! Then consider warm jets, tiger mountain and another green world. Your tympanum will tell your cochlea that it's Xmas again.

Terence Hogan



Nick Lowe
The Jesus of Cool
Radar

It can't be easy being Nick Lowe. When you are the subject of more scurrilous stories than anybody else around concerning your, um, peculiar attitudes towards plagiarism, record production, pop music, alcohol, and general coolness, people wait for your records like piranhas. Those twelve inches of vinyl are the perfect opportunity for somebody to really show you up for the phoney you are. In the case of *The Jesus of Cool*, they are all going to be disappointed. It's everything you might have expected and more.

Everybody has heard the Bowiesque "I Love the Sound of Breaking Glass" but the album also features thinly-disguised appearances by the Jackson Five, Thin Lizzy, 10cc and Nick Lowe, as well as brief references to others along the way. It also features Lowe's rough and ready approach to the mixing desk, already heard to good effect on records by Ian Drury, Elvis Costello, Graham Parker, Dr Feelgood and the Damned.

This combination of this clear-conscienceed plundering of pop music's archives and the vigorous playing and production of the record put Lowe at least on the

same footing as his proteges, and in some cases above them. While he cheerfully pinches any idea that is not screwed down, none of his songs amount to parodies or copies of the originals. Where they get really close, as on 'The Sound of Breaking Glass', they use the idea, and its connotations, to create a completely new song — often by the inclusion of particularly bizarre set of lyrics.

The Jesus Of Cool ensures in its own modest way that the music of Lowe and his London contemporaries (people like Parker, Drury Costello and Dave Edmunds) will survive. It is packed with radio songs, and while it may not wrinkle the Bee Gees out of the top forty, it will be played enough to make it a little easier to be Nick Lowe.

Francis Stark

Aces Burning

Amazing Rhythm Aces
Burning the Ballroom Down
ABC

In the movie *The Last Waltz* the band's drummer, travel worn Levon Helm, talks about Memphis and the surrounding area as the "sort of middle of the country" where all musical influences come together. From this melting pot of blues, country and gospel emerged B.B. King, Elvis Presley, the Band, and the Amazing Rhythm Aces.

It's by no means fanciful to see the Aces as the successors to the Band. At their best, the Aces can evoke that sense of the vanishing American frontier that was the hallmark of the Band, a meld of the pastoral and the medicine show.

Their new album consolidates the reputation they have built with their three previous releases, a mixture of rhythm and blues, country and gospel, tinged with Western Swing styled guitar, intricate and propulsive.

As usual, Russell Smith pens most of the songs, including the Bob Segerish title track and the haunting "Spirit Walk."

He hasn't Robbie Robertson's sense of drama or his feel for an oblique lyric, rather he concentrates on melody and musical texture, to set the tone.

There's no catchy "Third Rate Romance" or "The End is Not in Sight," but the album is a delight throughout.

"We're schizo," says Smith, "We dig people as far apart as Ella Fitzgerald and Hank Williams. Most of what we like comes out in our music."

Ken Williams

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34. **Breezin'** George Benson
35. **Down Two Then Left** Boz Scaggs
36. **Heavy Horses** Jethro Tull
37. **Feels So Good** Chuck Mangione
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(National Sales Chart June 25, 1978.)

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BUT SERIOUSLY FOLKS...

A NEW SPLASH-HIT L.P. FROM JOE WALSH

records

The Vibrators Pure Mania Epic

The Vibrators are one of the string of second-division punk bands which caught onto the New Wave mania when it hit Britain in early 1976.

They came along at a time when energy, rather than skill, was the key word. Learn four chords, form a band and play at break-neck speed, not forgetting to yell out the traditional counting-in.

The Vibrators, in fact, were largely opportunists, who saw the NewWave as a chance for the fame which had long eluded them. Leader Ian Carnochan, affectionately known as Knox, is 32, and chief sidekick John Ellis is 26, as is drummer John "Eddie" Edwards. Original bassist Pat Collier was in the same age group, and has since been replaced by 19-year-old Gary Tibbs, whose punk credentials are slightly better.

The Vibrators started off playing the same London pubs and clubs as most New Wave bands, until they caught Chris Spedding's eye. He got them to record his "Pogo Dancing", but their own "We Vibrate" single made a far greater impact, and will doubtless be looked at as one of the first great punk singles.

Pure Mania die big business in Britain, since it was one of the first genuine "punk"

albums as such to be released. Sadly, it is now over a year old as it is finally released here and shows its age.

To coin a familiar phrase, *Pure Mania* now sounds like Last Year's Thing. Every song sounding the same, taken at high speed, dubiously dirty lyrics with occasional kinky references . . . it's all there. And it's long since been surpassed. The Vibrators have been living and gigging in Germany in recent months and are now touring Britain again. Reports are that their show and material has changed drastically from this.

This simply serves to echo the recent complaint made in these pages by Jah Jarrett over the reluctance of record companies to release reggae. The same applies to New Wave. *Pure Mania* might have sold had it been released last year. But even to New Zealand punks it's now sadly irrelevant and has only curio significance.

Judge for yourself by all means, but when are people who like something other than the Bee Gees, Linda Ronstadt and Fleetwood Mac going to get a decent deal? Surely a little of the sales profits from *Saturday Night Fever* could be used to hasten the release of a little more minority music? Is that an unreasonable request?
Duncan Campbell

Frankie Miller Double Trouble Chrysalis

Double Trouble, Frankie Miller's fifth album, is a fairly apt title as, by all accounts, Miller is your regular Sauchiehall St scrap-



per, and compared to *Full House*, his last album and best known reference point, *D.T.* is, as the title suggests, more abrasive and beligerent. Miller's new producer, Jack Douglas (Aerosmith) is partly responsible, but his new band (his fifth consecutive new line-up), comprising Ray Russell (guitar), Procol's B.J. Wilson on drums and Paul Carrack from Ace on keyboards who has co-written much of the material with Miller, is an improvement even on the excellent ass-kickers he had on *Full House*.

Carrack, who already has Ace's classic "How Long" under his belt, has the right melodic feel to complement Miller's grimy vocal style — try the R&B approach of "The Train" or "Love Waves". Miller's own "Have You Seen Me Lately Joan" is a gem, a dusky mid-tempo rocker with a sneaking melody that's difficult to forget. Andy Fraser, the same, has two powerful songs on *D.T.* — "Love is All Around" and "Double Heart Trouble", a good Bad Company cockstrut and Miller's Paul Roger's phrasing is perfect. Frankie, like Rod Stewart, is a shrewd interpreter of other peoples' songs as he de-

monstrated on *Full House* with Lennon's "Jealous Guy" and the old "Love Letters". On *D.T.* we get Marvin Gaye's "Stubborn Kind of Fellow" which doesn't do much for me, but the oldie "Goodnight Sweetheart" swings with a sort of sentimental power — and ideal closing track.

A good album, but Miller is a restless sorta guy as he just can't seem to keep a band tied down for more than one album and there's little hope of him becoming a household name with this instability. He will probably never become fashionable and *D.T.* may not be this year's most essential record but he's far too good to be ignored.

George Kay

Various Artists Transatlantic — the Vintage Years Transatlantic

There was a time when you could almost guarantee a musical product by the record on which it appeared. Island, Elektra, Transatlantic — these were three cases in point.

Now, with Transatlantic being revived by RTC we are given a sampler of some of the best work that appeared on that label. Songs by Pentangle, the Humblebums, Richard Digance, Ralph McTell, Gerry Rafferty, Bert Jansch and John Renbourn make one realise that at one point Transatlantic certainly had a stranglehold on the more interesting British 'folkies'.

For me, anyway, Steeleye Span and some of the later electric folk groups took the wind out of Pentangle's sails to some degree. And yet Transatlantic had Mr Fox who made two quite exceptional albums in the late 60s — early 70s. But they unfortunately don't feature on this sampler.

Nicest surprise on the record is an Irish group, The Boys of the Lough doing live performances of "The Kincora Jig" and "Behind the Haystack".

Don't know how much this disc is, but I should imagine it is mid-price. Let's hope it whets people's appetites for Gerry Rafferty and the Humblebums!
William Dart

2-4-6-8 Tom Robinson Band

Tom Robinson Band Power in the Darkness E.M.I.

What is the elusive something which has everybody panting in anticipation of a new album? Whatever one may think of TRB, their debut album seems to have had this effect on the record buying market. Which in itself must be significant.

The album itself? A mixture of hits and misses, unfortunately. If we go back to TRB's debut E.P. which had the notorious "Glad to be Gay" on it, we can see the considerable strengths of the band. A live performance of dazzling power, a rather quizzical sense of humour ("Martin"), a good polemical protester, not without a trace of irony ("Glad to be Gay"), a bitter look at the music industry ("Don't Take No for an Answer") and a good wind-up raver for closers ("Right On Sister").

Now to the album. There is the "Motorway" single, which is very effective as such and another strong number is "Grey Cortina", in which Chuck Berry's auto-imagery is evoked:

*Twin exhaust and rusty bumper
Chewing gum at traffic light
Stop at red but leave on amber
Grey Cortina — outasight*

A good straightforward rock song, working within a genre and no less effective for having done so. And a song like "Too Good to be True" is a rather nice "new-wave-ballad" even if it is rather similar to "Glad to be Gay" at times on the musical side.

Going back to the E.P. it was obvious in

songs like "Don't Take No for an Answer" that Robinson knows how to make a really driving chorus that can take repetition after repetition — and considering the rather tepid attempts in this direction by many current groups, this is quite a feat. On the album songs like "We Aint't Gonna Take it" and "Up Against theWall" have similarly memorable choruses, but the verses are so weighed down with political verbiage that the chorus assumes the role of a musical oasis.

The political thing I find rather hard to accept in the album. The title song, "Power in the Darkness" is a case in point. It could be subtitled "Seven Definitions of Freedom", and the poetic style is rather uncomfortably close to some of Donovan's more recent work. When the Town Hall tyrant speaks his piece in the middle, it reminds one of some of the gimmicks late sixties groups were putting in their songs. Robinson never really gets outside of the song at all, and distance or irony is important in any form of popular art. Reed, Newman and Zappa are proof enough of this.

These grumps apart, there is much to admire in the album. A disciplined band with a real sense of ensemble playing, and effective use of a basic rock band line-up, which avoids any sameness in the sound.

Maybe I should stop using Elvis Costello as a touchstone for all the other New Wave artists. It will seemingly only lead to massive discontent.
William Dart

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Ry Cooder
Jazz
Warner Brothers

Another fine release from WEA is Ry Cooder's latest. Cooder, like David Bowie and Randy Newman, always keeps his audience guessing. A small audience, but a faithful one I should imagine. And a growing one, judging by his reception in the Auckland Town Hall last month.

Leaving the Tex-Mex style of his previous two albums behind him, Ry Cooder has espoused the causes of various genres of American popular music ranging from the late 19th century to the present day.

The most contemporary offerings here are three traditional Caribbean numbers adapted by the great Bahamian guitarist, Joseph Spence. In these numbers Cooder uses an instrumental group incorporating such diverse colours as cymbalum and pump organ, and mandolin and tuba, to create a sound somewhere between his earlier "Denomination Blues" and the music Taj Mahal was making in the early 70s.

The oldest number is "The Dream" which dates from around 1880. However the bulk is what the title of the album suggests: Jazz. There is "Flashes", a stunning Bix Beiderbecke solo played by Cooder on solo guitar, and two songs are quaintly touching as pieces

of nostalgia — these are "Big Bad Bill is Sweet Willian Now" and "Shine". In "Shine" and "Nobody" Cooder uses a vocal quartet with some smooth harmonies underlying Cooder's vocals.

It is really impossible to praise Jazz too highly. And, in closing, it is pleasing to note that Joseph Byrd is still around and arranging. If the name doesn't ring a bell try to find a copy of the United States of America's first and only album, or Phil Ochs' *Pleasures of the Harbour*.

William Dart

Johnny Guitar Watson
Funk Beyond the Call of Duty
DJM

Johnny Guitar Watson, a veteran of more than 20 years of funky music, is still a virtual unknown in New Zealand even though for a time he used to come into our living rooms every week. That was when *A Week of It* used one of his tunes as its outro. Very good it sounded, too, but sadly it was uncredited and to most people Watson remains an odd-ball whose album jackets are so outrageously tasteless as to be almost quaint.

Too bad. He's one of the best R&B artists around. He's been around since the mid fifties, an influence on a whole generation of guitar players, most especially Frank Zappa, who used Watson for hot vocal duties on "One Size Fits All". He was the original "Gangster of Love" and notes wryly that while Steve Miller's version of the song went gold, his stayed plastic.

A couple of years ago Watson moved to DJM and made *Ain't That A Bitch*, a classic workout in space age funk. Watson was one

of the first to explore the electronic aspects of the electric guitar and he hasn't stood still. He played virtually all the instruments on the album and multi-tracked the vocals. The album was a smash in the States. He followed it with *A Real Mother For You*, which was again very good, but a little too close to *Bitch* for comfort.

Now he delivers his third DJM album. It's the same old groove . . . but it's wonderful. It's what is by now formula Watson, dense moog backgrounds, sly vocals, stinging guitar lines and rhythms that won't quit.

Johnny Guitar Watson may be working what has turned out to be a golden groove, but his saving grace, like that of Chuck Berry, is his wit. He writes some of the funniest lyrics and punctuates them with some of the most blowing music around. The gangster is back.

Ken Williams

Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson
Waylon and Willie
R.C.A.

The prospect of a new Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson collaboration is a thing to approach with mixed expectations. As *Rolling Stone* magazine writer, Chet Flippo, puts it on the back of the sleeve, these two men are the godfathers of modern country music. Consequently one expects either a record of real excellence, or the disappointment of hasty product hustled together to raise fast dollars.

To tell the truth, as an occasional admirer of the genre, I have been lately disheartened by the relentless parade of mediocre country performers and downright bad country

songs on the likes of T.V. One's *The Entertainers*. Country music and I were becoming estranged.

I am offering then a small prayer of thanks to *Waylon and Willie* for restoring my faith. It turned out to be as good as I had wanted, to bolster my waning appetite.

Waylon and Willie is an album on which that essential ingredient, care, seems to have been spent. First indications were not good. The cover was tacky, there was no useful information anywhere to be seen. So how relieved I was to hear an excellent, clean production, to hear arrangements, not intruding, but heightening songs. And most welcome of all was the first rate vocal presentation.

Waylon and Willie's harmonies, where used, have the quality of naturally complementary voices, a quality enhanced by years of experience. Jennings' throaty toughness and Nelson's nasality give the intensity that distinguishes the "outlaws" from pulp C&W rivals.

The atmosphere the two create, part macho-strength, part plaintiveness emerges from an obvious attention to the songs. Practice, or at least honest sentiment has been pumped into the material all of which has been lifted by performance. My favourite is Nelson's "It's Not Supposed to Be That Way" and I'll also put in a word for "Looking for a Feeling" and "I Can Get Off On You". Not to forget a nice treatment of a Shel Silverstein, Dennis Locorriere number "A Couple More Years".

This is a fine little record, one that, if I were Mr Westmoreland, producer of *The Entertainers*, would make my stomach sink.

Bruce Belsham

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At the outset I shall say I wasn't quite prepared for Renee Geyer's Trillo's show. Word of mouth reports of her performance during her previous tour had been appetite-whetting, but I was lukewarm about her recordings. In person, she was more than convincing, she was magnificent.

Mal Logan. They shoulder the task admirably. Punch particularly impressed with his sensitive and melodic style, though he could sting when the moment warranted.

Flyers



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ROCK A LA GIOCOSCO /GAY ROCK

Five years ago I read this curious ad in the personal column of the *Los Angeles Advocate*, the gay American tabloid. The legend read: "Liza, Shirley, Barbra, Merman, Peggy fans. Contact me for that hard to get material. H.L. Medici, 51 Clifton Ave C, Newark NJ 07104". This little gem nestled between an ad for Gay Mormon group and one in which Don Love proclaimed his interest in latex rubber baby pants, sheets, diapers and other related gear.

Surely this isn't really where it's at for the gay community? And with gay activists renewing their vigil in Gay Pride week last month, it might be worth looking at some cross currents between the music scene and the gay life style.

In the last dozen years or so Donovan was probably one of the first singers to foster a deliberate gay consciousness. His rather fey and willowy style is not really completely accounted for by the late sixties flower power. When Donovan sings to his drummer on "Song to John" from the *Open Road* album, "You're my single, lemme be your chart", it would take more than the hasty introduction of country ladies in the last few lines, to take the reverberations off that statement.

However, Donovan's pervasive feyness probably works *against* the gay implications of such moments. Similarly the rather pat word-games in "Get Back" and "Ob-La-De, Ob-La-De" show the Beatles were more interested in word-games than treating gay themes per se. The Rolling Stones went on their early seventies decadence kick, whether it be in the legendary "Cocksucker Blues" or the live version of "Honky Tonk Woman" with its 3rd verse about sailors. And now that Bianca has declared that she feels like a man, Jagger has really become gay by default.

Ray Davies and the Kinks were probably the group of this period who were mostly closely in line with a gay consciousness. The rather sad and wry vignettes of "Two Sisters" and "Death of Clown" are poignant

reminders that some people just don't make it in the rat race of Life. No, I'm not going to quote Thoreau and his wretched drum.

And when the Kinks came out with "Lola" in 1970, here was a song that really did treat a gay theme with a directness that was almost startling. It didn't pull its punches either:

Well I'm not the world's most masculine man

But I know what I am and I'm glad I'm a man

And so is Lola.

1970, and the culturally right-wing gay cliques were starting to cluster around a dying Judy Garland. Across the Atlantic, Janis Ian had included a remarkably matter-of-fact treatment of a gay theme in her song "Queen Merka and Me":

And the great stoned hash-eater, the child-less white Peter

Who walks with his boyfriend on into the spray

Saying "I love you babe", walking down towards the pavement

Enflocking, embracing as to say "I don't care"

I love him more than her.

Admittedly Janis Ian has now announced her own gayness. But in the late sixties, this



Tom Robinson Band

was probably not the greatest of the problems she had to deal with. And she didn't soil her track record with any hideous closet productions like Rod McKuen's *The Body Electric - the Erotic Words of Walt Whitman*.

The 70's moved on. Many groups flirted with images that suggested all was not straight ... So one of Steppenwolf liked cross-dressing and it was said that ... (whisper) one of the Kinks was ... gay ... and so on and so forth proving nothing. Then David Bowie, showperson supreme, picked the right time, donned a dress and announced to the world that he was gay. And

there's two record covers for proof!

However Bowie's apocalyptic visions had little place for exclusively gay themes. What can one say? He admits to being a non-aggressive dad in "Kooks", or that "Lady Stardust" is about Marc Bolan? It took Lou Reed, with all his Velvet Underground apprenticeship behind him, to write songs with fairly direct gay themes — "Walk on the Wild Side", "Vicious", "New York Telephone Conversation" and "Make up", which almost has Lou making a clarion call:

Now we're coming out, out of our closets

Out on the streets, yea, we're coming out

If Lou Reed was the undoubted King of New York Bizarre in his time, then his West Coast equivalent, Frank Zappa, hardly makes any use of gay themes. The only ones I can recall are Rodney Bingenheimer claiming that young homosexuals yearn for Wild Man Fischer's red underpants, and the occasion frisson in the Girls Together Outrageously's first, and only, album.

There have always been odd-shot records with gay overtones. When Smith Ballew recorded "Can't We Be Friends" in 1929 using the 'girl's words', he was starting a mildly amusing joke that would be echoed in recent years by George Melly ("Kitchen Man"), Ian Mathews ("Da doo ron ron") and Bryan Ferry ("It's My Party"). Jonathan King is relevant here but beneath discussion, let alone contempt. And Kevin Ayers missed a golden opportunity in his recent "Falling in Love Again". Did Elton John have that little influence on him?

Then there have always been gay songs with uncomfortably chauvinist overtones — like Shel Silverstein with his heart in the wrong place. Ben Gay's "Ballad of Ben Gay" on the compilation album *Dr Demento's Delights* is a grubby and not very funny instance. Then there is Leon Russell's snide attack on Little Richard in "Crystal Closet Queen" and Jimmy Webb's "Once in the Morning" from his *Letters* album — an altogether better humoured attempt. However, when he did the song with the Supremes, Webb made sure that he didn't sing the verse:

I was hanging round London trying to pick up a new line

When a man I did not know he invited me to dine

He said we can make each other happy you know we're both the same kind

And I like some of yours if you'll please take some of mine

Some amazingly realistic songs emerged

in these years. Sparks' view of boarding school passions in "Angus Desire", or "And the Boys Lazed on the Verandah" which Peter Sarstedt wrote for Fresh's first album *Out of Borstal*. And the United States of America spelled it out in upper-case in "The American Way of Love":

Later on an indiscreet

Encounter in the men's room

While you tell yourself that a natural urge prevailed

Disco is currently popular in the gay community — in the States the Ritchie Family come across as a sort of soft-core Labelle to their gay fans, and a few years ago the Miracles wrote their brilliant "Ain't Nobody Straight in L.A." for their *City of Angels* album. But gay rock and punk rock, or gay rock and new wave surely isn't that a little bit like Kipling's East and West.

Well, that was before Tom Robinson. The same man whose records are being banned left right and centre by Auntie NZBC (free publicity! free publicity!). Robinson's "Glad to be Gay" is a sort of anthem or cheer call for the gay community — a highly polemical song, to put it mildly. But musically the song seems a little suspect for a new wave group. Surely it is really soft - pedal - showbiz - cabaret style, just waiting for a Liza Minelli treatment a la the finale of *New York, New York*.

I think "Don't Take No for an Answer" from the Robinson E.P. is far more effective as a gay protest song. Certainly it is more oblique in its attack, but the whole song catches the atmosphere of a sad misencounter from the personal columns of *Gay News*:

No use sticking together

I gotta get out or get off

I offered you a slice

But you tell me no dice

Because you wanted the lot.

Such an indirect treatment is often the most effective. After all some of the most sensitive instances of minority-portrayal in songs can be found in songs which do not set out to protest for that particular minority — viz Janis Ian's "Queen Merka and Me". About three years ago Mercury released Steven Grossman's *Caravan Tonight* — gay singer, gay songs, good reviews in *Rolling Stone*, but not ultimately a very happy affair. I wonder what Tom Robinson will do in his album?

P.S. Maybe Mr Medici is still open to offers, but I refuse to furnish any reader with Don Love's address.

William Dart

FROM THE #1 NEW GROUP OF 1977:

FOREIGNER





Neville's Column

NEVILLE PURVIS AT YOUR SERVICE...

I'm warnin' ya. I'm two hours past the deadline, there's a stack of lagers in front of me and already I'm fractionally more than half-cut. So this month it's RAVE ALL THE WAY.

* * *

Amazing what passes for comedy in this laugh-starved land of milk and money (bit of verse from Purvis there). Last night I went to a club to see this stand-up comic called RAZOR LARF — just checkin' out the opposition yunnerstand... I needn't have worried. His big finish was an impression of ELVIS PRESLEY in which he lay in a coffin and never moved for two minutes... As an encore he said he'd do a VOLCANO. He whipped off his shirt, lay down again and put Talcum Powder in his navel. Then he coughed.

* * *

CORBEN SIMPSON is back in town. A weirdo from way back. Corben was with BLERTA and later FEATURED at Ngaruawahia. Last week he hit the Big A after sitting out in the country for a few years. He's already auditioning a band. He's rumoured to have a lady singer signed up. And it looks like pretty soon it's BACK ON THE ROAD AGAIN.

* * *

I swear I had nothin' to do with it... Some kind of factory cock-up meant thousands of the new JOHNNY MATHIS/DENISE WILLIAMS single went into the shops with the NEVILLE PURVIS DISCO SONG on the A-side... By the time they discovered the mistake and recalled stocks, most of them had sold. Purvis fanatics everywhere must have rushed the shops. And as a result Johnny Mathis is on the charts for the first time since Noah was a COWBOY.

* * *

If you weren't quick enough, don't worry.

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When the Kangaroos can hype OLIVIA, NEWT & JOHN and ANDY GIBB to the top of the overseas charts along with the Re-Re-Processed Bee Gees — then it's time we PULLED FINGER. Of course the RECORD COMPANIES and the RADIO and TELEVISION people are gonna have to wake up. The fact of the matter is that these days it's BIG BIKKIES! Kiwis spend thirty million bucks a year on records. And compared with the overseas market that's a SPOONFUL OF CHICKENSHIT.

A bit of HYPE (or MARKETING as they call it in business circles) is all that's needed... Far be it from me to criticise Rob Muldoon but someone should point out to him that ABBA have creamed VOLVO as Sweden's top money-earner. I'll tell you one thing for free — be a hulluva lot easier than exporting DEAD COWS.



As a contribution to the export drive I had the best graphic artist in the country design a logo. "ONE HUNDRED PERCENT KIWI ROCK" could become the key line in seventy-nine.

Neville on the level,

Neville

SINGLES



Todd Rundgren

This month it seems most appropriate to arrange the new singles in descending order of punkness (or curliness if you subscribe to the New Wave theory). The only difficulty is the steadily increasing numbers of performers who are knocking out either imitations or parodies (sometimes it's hard to tell). Still, here goes.

We're on safe ground with "She's So Modern" by the **Boomtown Rats**. It has the right words — although perhaps a little too right to be ahead of the fashion — the guitars go chunka-chunka and they should love it on the jukebox down at Zwines. Still and all, if "Looking After No. One", complete with neat T.V. clip, couldn't make it, it may not be able to see much action against the Bee Gees.

Also in the easy category are the **Tom Robinson Band**. Their words are well and truly in the style — not to mention extremely appropriate, and rather amusing in a black sort of way. "Up Against The Wall" is not quite the MC5 rant you might expect, but rather a wry look at the problems facing Britain's leaders, and a few tips on how to make them worse. The guitars here don't just confine themselves to going chunka-chunka, there is also a very fine guitar solo which clocks in well inside the allowable maximum. I suspect that this will get the airplay that the

closeted ones didn't dare give the TRB's last effort.

We step onto shakey ground with the normally dependable **Motors**. Where their previous releases have been a little too close to Status Quo to win the hearts of the true punk (I hear there's one left — living in Remuera with his mum and dad) — "Airport" is a different kettle of vinyl. Piano and string synthesiser don't augur well, and when the acoustic guitars and da-da-da-das come in, you just have to face it. It's pop music of the minor key kind — and damn good too.

Mink De Ville have credentials all right, but they got theirs rather differently from their English competitors. Here the Marty Robbins arrangement, and the production by Jack Nitzsche give the record an indefinable air — perhaps it will remind you of Gene Pitney. And just for the hell of it, listen to the harmonica solo and see if you can convince yourself that it isn't Bob Dylan. This has been an instant rumour.

Our very own **Neville Purvis** comes next — neatly straddling the line between Disco and Punk, in a shameless attempt to sell out. The main trouble with "It Takes Money", is that somebody forgot to tell the drummer that it was the New Wave side of the record he was playing on — although I suspect if Boney M get to hear it they could make a mint out of the style. Meanwhile, over on side two, Neville and the girls whoop up a storm of "Get Downs", "Right Ons" and "Whassa Guts". "Disco on My Radio" — the morals of the BCNZ allowing — might be just the sellout Neville is looking for.

The **British Lions** may have seemed like a clever name in 1977 — but the All Blokes soon put a stop to that. Unfortunately the sight of a lot of ageing Welshmen trying to keep up with the flower of New Zealand manhood is closely paralleled by the performance of their namesakes in trying to foot it with the punks. Despite the title, (and almost the right amount of chunka-chunka) "One More Chance To Run" is not going to score in the corner. I'd say it was comprehensively out-scrummed.

Finally, amongst all the sickly outbreak of "Power Pap", I've sneaked in something from somebody who knows better. **Todd Rundgren** made the all-time best pop album, *Something/Anything* (gunna argue?) and after all that Utopia drivell it is good to hear him do it again with "Can We Still Be Friends". This is my record of the month — all the rest soundlike ashtrays on my turntable by comparison.

Francis Stark



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Letters

Rip It Up PO Box 5689, Auckland.

How much longer can the great bands of the South Island be ignored by the rock establishment. Anyone whose heard The Enemy or The Vamp from Dunedin or The Vauxhalls from Christchurch would realise that these bands leave shit like the Surburban Reptiles in the dust.

Dunedin's rock bands are gonna break big and you guys gonna be sorry you ignored them. Flying four bands from Auckland to Wellington Festival and ignoring The Enemy is criminal. Our day will come — North Island sucks — South Island rules OK.

A. Pathetic Dunedin

Happy birthday and congratulations for a fine magazine.

There is one thing wrong with this magazine and it could ruin it. You wanna know what the fault is — basically, Neville, and his shitarse column. Why don't you show him the boot. I'm sure me and a lot of other 'concerned' readers would appreciate it.

One last word, we've had enough of English new wave, could you please give us some high class New York acts, eg Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Patti Smith, Talking Heads, Television etc.

Mike Thornton Papakura

Poured a little Scotch
into my cup
started to write
to rip it up
But who'd want to read about
where I've been
even in a
free magazine
Chorus:
There's one more sip
and one more toke
success is Just
another Joke
etc

Guy Phillips 'Another Joke', 1978.

I am writing concerning two things, firstly: Mr Potter's letter and secondly the best NZ song I've ever heard — "My Pohutakawa" by Citizen Band.

Who does Mr Potter think he is? I felt the review of the Wings album was excellent. The album is trash and I feel the humorous way the review was written softened the blow

it should have received. Reviews are always personal views.

This brings me to "My Pohutakawa". This must be the best NZ song written in years. (It's on the B side of "I Feel Good"). Why the hell hasn't it been thrashed to death on Radio? To let this song die would be a crime. For f**k sake let's support local artists. Citizen Band are brilliant and they are right under our noses.

Dr rock has had "My Pohutakawa" on R with P a couple of times — it's good to see someone's got taste.

Paul Kirber Mt Eden

Having unwillingly contracted a severe case of Saturday Nite Fever, I was left with no choice but to consult my local psychopathologist. He advised me to stop reading papers, except for N.M.E. and Rip It Up, watching TV, venturing out and listening to the radio, except Barry Jenkin, until the epidemic had passed. I decided to take his advice and am pleased to say I'm riding high on the crest of the New Wave back to recovery.

He also told me that the symptoms of the fever, total insanity, was infecting many lovers of decent music and that the cause was the total monopolisation of the world by the Bee Gees.

Finally he said that the only cure was either to follow his instructions or set out to erase all trace of the Bee Gees from the earth. To this end I am now forming a Bee Gees annihilation society. (KILL for short). Anyone wishing to join should see me personally at Zwines any Saturday night.

Chris the punk.


The music that was presented at the 1978 Jazz Festival, to me, was a fine display of music of the late 50's and early 60's. I'm not knocking the be-bop players but it is nice to listen to jazz of today.

If acts like Herbie Hancock, Stanley Clarke, Weather Report, Chick Corea etc were presented in Auckland, N.Z.'ers could see how jazz has progressed over the years.

Why, on such an important occasion as the Auckland Jazz Festival cannot all forms of jazz be presented, by overseas and local artists. I'm sure the NZ jazz fans would be delighted to know of the abundance of (unassisted) professional musicians around NZ who are currently playing (& writing) jazz of today.

Russell Good Mt Eden

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Bruce Springsteen.
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