

Melody Maker

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Elvis plays for dancers

ELVIS Costello, who completed a run of seven concerts at London's Dominion Theatre on Christmas Eve, will be back in London on January 30 at the end of his current tour with a show at the Hammersmith Palais.

Costello and the Attractions decided to play the show because of the high ticket demand for the Dominion concerts, and also because they were unhappy at the treatment of their audiences by bouncers in the seated theatre and want to play in an unseated

venue. Tickets for the Palais, which holds about 3,000 people, cost £2.50 and are on sale now. Costello will be supported by John Cooper Clarke and Richard Hell and the Voidoids, despite the critical panning that Hell has received. Costello is said to be impressed by Hell's songs.

Meanwhile Costello's new album, "Armed Forces," which was exclusively reviewed in last week's MM, is officially released on Friday this week.

ELVIS by Harry Plummer

Why Rod missed his own party...

TEN-pounds-a-head Rod Stewart fans were disappointed when the singer cancelled a spectacular New Year's Eve party a few hours before show time at London's Lyceum ballroom.

Stewart, suffering from a cold and a sore throat, spent the New Year quietly with friends instead of joining Elton John, Hot Gossip, and other guests at the party. None of the name

guests turned up either, but DJ Dave Cash entertained the two-thirds-full Lyceum. Rod's spokesman, Bill Stonebridge of Riva Records, said on Tuesday: "We first knew about the cancellation at Sunday lunch-time, and unfortunately a lot of kids who turned up were disappointed. But Capital Radio broadcast the news several times during the day, and hopefully a lot of people found out in time."

"Rod had already played six concerts and his voice finally gave out on Saturday night at the Olympia. Some of his band had flu as well, so it was decided it would be best to cancel the party. Obviously Rod regrets the decision very much, but



those who paid £10 for their tickets will get a full refund. Those who went to the Lyceum and stayed for the disco show got a £5 refund.

"There were no angry scenes as we had deliberately kept numbers down anyway to avoid overcrowding. We expected around 2,000 and a lot of kids stayed for Dave Cash and had a great time, and although Hot Gossip did not turn up for technical reasons, the fans were not totally without entertainment."

It is unlikely that Stewart will re-stage his Lyceum show. At the end of the week, he returns to Los Angeles, then starts a tour of Australia.

Fans who did not go to the party should write to the Lyceum box office at Wellington Street, London WC2, and enclose a stamped addressed envelope for their full refund.

The tanning of Dire Straits

by IAN BIRCH (p.19)



DYLAN IN JAPAN

by MICHAEL WATTS (p. 17)



Marvin Gaye's bankruptcy blues

by VIVIAN GOLDMAN (p. 7)

EVERYBODY IS A STAR!

Enter the MM Rock/Folk Contest (p. 16)

MARK KNOPFLER by Adrian Beek

DYLAN by Tony Rot

GAYE by Alan Ingham

CHECK THE WEEK'S TOP 60 AT LONDON'S TOP VALUE OUR PRICE RECORD STORES

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29 CAT STEVENS— BACK TO EARTH	4.70	3.70	59 OLIVIAN BROWN— THE WILD PLACES	4.25	3.25
30 E.L.O.— OUT OF THE BLUE	7.49	5.75	60 SMYTH 'N' TEARS— FICKLE HEART	4.40	3.40

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For information and readers' queries ring 261 8480 or 261 8315.
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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Ray Coleman

EDITOR: Richard Williams

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Michael Watts

FEATURES EDITOR: Chris Welch

NEWS EDITOR: John Orme

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Max Jones
Chris Hayes
Colin Irwin
Allan Jones
Herry Doherty
Maureen Paton
Robin Graydon
Ian Birch
Brian Case

CONTRIBUTORS:

Jeff Atterton
Karl Dallas
Leonard Feather
Simon Frith
Bob Gallagher
Vivien Goldman
Andy Harris
Max Harrison
Martin Hawkins
Stan Hey
Susan Hill
Michael James
Simon Kinnerley
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Valerie Wilmer
Pete Wingfield

PHOTOGRAPHER:

Barry Plummer

ADVERTISEMENT

MANAGER:

David Curtis

Advertisement department phone: 01-643 8040

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EARTH, WIND & FIRE (Pic: Michael Putland/L.F.I.)

E & F: March dates Nelson forms new band

EARTH, WIND & FIRE make their first British appearance for three years in March when they headline two concerts at Wembley's 8,000-seater arena and one at Birmingham's Bingley Hall.

The seven-man group will be bringing over their full American stage show, created by illusionist Doug Hemming, featuring levitation, dematerialisation, and a magical pyramid.

When the band last played in Britain they supported Santana, and this visit, which features EW&F with no sup-

port act, will be the first since for British audiences to see a show regarded as one of the most spectacular ever mounted by a band.

The group's British concerts are Birmingham Bingley Hall on March 2, and Wembley Arena on March 3 and 4. Tickets for Birmingham are priced £4.00 and available from January 30 at usual

ticket agencies, and tickets for Wembley are on sale from January 8 by post from the Wembley Stadium Box Office (Ref Earth Wind and Fire), with cheques payable to Wembley Stadium Ltd with an ssc. The box office opens for personal applications from January 15, and tickets are priced £4.50, £2.75 and £2.00.

Earth, Wind & Fire can be seen in Britain this month on BBC television when they appear on the massive concert for UNICEF to mark the International Year of the Child.

The 90-minute show, A Gift Of Song, is being recorded in New York on January 10 and will be broadcast in Britain on January 13 at 8.00pm.

EW&F will be joined by Rod Stewart, the Bee Gees, Abba, Elton John, Donnie Summer, Olivia Newton-John, Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge, Andy Gibb and John Denver.

The aim of the Music for UNICEF programme is to provide a continuous source of income for the charity, and the idea was evolved last year by the Bee Gees with Robert Stigwood and David Frost. As well as performing on the show, each of the musicians will give the rights of the song they perform to UNICEF.

Clubs to raise support payments

THE MUSICIANS' Union has virtually won the second stage of its fight to ensure that all support bands playing the prestigious London clubs receive a minimum payment. After the Marquee agreed in the summer to pay support acts a minimum of £25 per person, the Rock Garden and the Music Machine have now said they will comply with the union's demands, although an exact rate has not yet been fixed.

Yany Rayna, rock organiser, Mike Evans said the rates for both would be higher than the Marquee, however, as they involved bands playing after midnight. "They have indicated that they will comply with our rates, which will be officially set early this year," he said.

Until now, the Music Machine had been paying about £15 for a support band and the Rock Garden about £10, according to Evans.

The Rock Garden added all the bonus to bands if they distribute so many tickets, but that's just a way of avoiding paying them any more." The Rock Garden's claim, that enforcing the higher rates would mean they were unable to afford any more support bands, was rejected by Evans.

CHEAP TRICK and TREATS

CHEAP TRICK arrive in Britain later in January for a 22-date tour that marks the band's first main stab at the UK market. The tour, which winds up with a show at London's Hammersmith Odeon at the end of February, coincides with the release of the band's new album, "Dream Police."

The tour details are: Oxford Poly (January 25), Leicester University (27), Brighton Sussex University (February 1), Bristol University (2), Manchester University (3), Canterbury Odeon (6), Keele University (7), Nottingham University (9), Bradford University (10), Birkenhead, Hamilton Club (11), Cambridge University (12), Colchester Institute (13), Scarborough Posthouse (14), Sheffield Poly (15), Leeds Poly (21), Newcastle Mayfair (23), St Albans Civic Hall (24) and London Hammersmith Odeon (25).

Cheap Trick, who first appeared in Britain in April when they headlined a show at London's Roundhouse and in Birmingham following the release of their acclaimed "In Colour" album, release its follow-up, "Dream Police," on February 9, a week after the new single is due. The band plan to appear on BBC 2's Rock Goes To College as well as adding more dates to the UK show.

PRICE WITH A HEART

ALAN PRICE returns from Los Angeles in the middle of January to start a British tour, his first for a year.

He breaks off recording to perform on the tour, which starts at Norwich Theatre Royal on January 21 and continues: Cardiff New Theatre (26), Slough Fulcrum Theatre (28), Glasgow Strathclyde University (February 3), Easton for Congress Theatre (9), Hatfield Forum (10), Manchester Royal Exchange (11), Bradford St George's Hall (14), Sunderland Empire (15), Bridlington Spa Theatre (16), Sheffield Crucible Theatre (18), St Helena Theatre Royal (21), Croydon Fairfield Hall (23) and Southend Cliff Pavilion (25).

ELO sued by UA

ELO and their record company, Jet Records, plus their American distributors CBS and its president Walter Yetnikoff, are being sued for breach of contract, attempted world monopoly of ELO sales, violation of America's anti-monopoly laws and libel.

The case stems from the decision of UA's current owners, Artie Mogul and Jerry Rubinstein, to buy the company from Transamerica in May 1978. They approached CBS for financial backing at a time when Jet's owners, the Arden family, were also looking for money from CBS to buy Jet Records out of Transamerica.

Some of the charges brought by Mogul and Rubinstein relate to the agreements they claim they reached with Jet and CBS for CBS to buy back existing copies of the ELO album "Out Of The Blue" on Jet, which was licensed to UA Records at the time.

Mogul and Rubinstein are claiming between \$100m and \$420m damages in a Federal case, and between \$60m and \$280m in a California State action.

Brooker LP

FORMER Procol Harum singer and keyboard player Gary Brooker is about to start recording his first solo album with producer George Martin and a band that includes guitarist Tim Renwick. Songs for the album have been written by Brooker with lyricists Keith Reid and Pete Sinfield, and keyboard player on the record will be drummer Dave Mattacks and bass player Bruce Lynch.

Stones in the studio

THE ROLLING Stones, who are planning to play a series of British dates in the summer of 1979, arrive in Nassau for two weeks' recording this month.

Although the band has about three albums' worth of material in hand — songs recorded in case Keith Richards was imprisoned after his recent drug case in Canada — they have booked into the Nassau studios to lay down some new songs recently written by Richards and Mick Jagger.

The Stones' first plans for this year include a tour of Australia and New Zealand. The tour will include a stop at a tour that is likely to include follow up with a European and American tour in the summer. The band's next album is likely to be released in February.

ROCKPILE HEADLINE BENEFIT BILL

ROCKPILE headline a London benefit for French punk patron Marc Zermatti at the Electric Ballroom in Camden on Saturday, January 13. The band, which also features the Tyla Gang and the Damned, and it is understood that Lee Brilleaux and other members of Dr Feelgood are likely to play.

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BILL NELSON, who finally laid Be-Bop Deluxe to rest last year, is about to emerge with his new band, Red Noise, for a British tour in March plus a single and album in January and February.

The lineup of the band is still being kept secret, but the tour has been set with a start at Bristol on March 4 and the final show at London's Theatre Royal on March 18.

The full dates are: Bristol Hippodrome (March 4), Southampton Gaumont (6), Birmingham Odeon (7), Leicester De Montfort Hall (8), Lancaster University (9), Liverpool Empire (10), Manchester Apollo (11), Newcastle City Hall (12), Sheffield City Hall (13), Bradford St George's Hall (14), Leeds University (17), and London Theatre Royal (18). Tickets for the London show are available from the second week of January priced £3.50, £2.00, £1.50 and £2.00.

The Red Noise single is out in red vinyl on January 25, with Furniture Music's "Acquired By Mirrors" and "Wonder Toys Last Forever." Neither of the B-sides will include the album, "Sound On Sound," which is out on February 9 and was produced and written by Nelson with production assistance by John Leckie.

Forty-year-old Nelson began his career in the mid-Fifties as a rockabilly artist and some of his earliest cuts have been featured on recent rock 'n' roll compilations. But he didn't have a hit until 1960, when "Living" reached the top ten position on both sides of the Atlantic.

Although he had lesser hits, Nelson was unable to sustain his initial chart success and in the mid-Sixties left Warner Bros for the Hickory label and then to Epic, headed for Nashville, recorded country music and appeared on the Grand Ole Opry last year. DFM released "Bob Luman Rocks," featuring his best tracks from the early to mid-Sixties.

Quo ready

STATUS QUO are setting up a series of British shows for the late Spring and early summer to tie in with the release of a new album and single which are expected around June or for next year.

The band's plans include tours of Australia and New Zealand earlier in the year before a tour of Europe that will include the British circuit.

The 3p in your pocket

NO doubt you'll have noticed that your newsworthy charged you 3p more for this copy of the MM than for last week's.

Why also point out that, despite inflation, the MM has remained at 15p since 1975 — which is more than can be said for the price of records and concert tickets.

We also point out that, despite inflation, the MM has remained at 15p since 1975 — which is more than can be said for the price of records and concert tickets.

The charts: Gold diggers of '78



BONEY M

● Here are the most popular singles for 1978. This chart is based on awarding points for a record's entry and duration of stay in the Melody Maker singles chart.

1 RIVERS OF BABYLON/BROWN GIRL IN A RING	Boney M, Atlantic	559
2 YOU'RE THE ONE THAT I WANT	John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John	460
3 NIGHT FEVER	Bee Gees, RSO	300
4 SUMMER NIGHTS	John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John	292
5 SMURF SONG	Father Abraham, Decca	282
6 THREE TIMES A LADY	Commodores, Motown	261
7 BAKER STREET	Gerry Rafferty, United Artists	252
8 RAT TRAP	Boombtown Rats, Ensign	249
9 WUTHERING HEIGHTS	Kate Bush, EMI	244
10 MATCHSTALK MEN AND MATCHSTALK CATS AND DOGS	Brian and Michael, Pye	241
11 DREADLOCK HOLIDAY	10cc, Mercury	237
12 DENIS	Blondie, Chrysalis	228
13 TAKE A CHANCE ON ME	Abba, Epic	224
14 DANCING IN THE CITY	Marshall Hain, Harvest	223
15 WISHING ON A STAR	Rose Royce, Warner Bros	220
16 TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE	Johnny Mathis and Deniece Williams, CBS	219
17 BOOGIE OOGIE	A Taste Of Honey, Capitol	219
18 SUBSTITUTE	Clout, Carrere	215
19 COME BACK MY LOVE	Darts, Magnet	204
20 NEVER LET HER SLIP AWAY	Andrew Gold, Asylum	202
21 FIGARO	Brotherhood Of Man, Pye	198
22 AMNIE'S SONG	James Galway, RCA	198
23 BOY FROM NEW YORK CITY	Darts, Magnet	193
24 SANDY	John Travolta, Polydor	190
25 IF YOU CAN'T GIVE ME LOVE	Suzi Quatro, RAK	183
OH WHAT A CIRCUS	David Essex, Mercury	188
27 I CAN'T STAND THE RAIN	Eruption, Atlantic	186
28 STAYIN' ALIVE	Bee Gees, RSO	186
29 MR. BLUE SKY	Electric Light Orchestra, Jet	183
UPTOWN TOP RANKING	Althea and Donna, Lightning	183
31 JILTED JOHN	Jilted John, EMI	182
32 I WONDER WHY	Showaddywaddy, Arista	179
33 IT'S RAINING	Darts, Magnet	178
34 LOVE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE	Rose Royce, Whitfield	176
35 BLAME IT ON THE BOOGIE	Jacksons, Epic	174
36 MULL OF KINTYRE	Wings, Capitol	173
AIRPORT	Motors, Virgin	173
38 GREASE	Frankie Valli, RSO	172
RASPUTIN	Boney M, Atlantic	172
40 IF I HAD WORDS	Scott Fitzgerald and Yvonne Keely, Pepper	171
41 DARLIN'	Frankie Miller, Chrysalis	170
FOLLOW YOU FOLLOW ME	Gencsis, Charisma	170
LUCKY STARS	Dean Friedman, Lifesong	170
44 BECAUSE THE NIGHT	Patti Smith, Arista	167
45 MISS YOU	Rolling Stones, Rolling Stones	165
46 LIKE CLOCKWORK	Boombtown Rats, Ensign	164
47 IF I CAN'T HAVE YOU	Yvonne Elliman, RSO	161
FOREVER AUTUMN	Justin Hayward, CBS	161
49 LOVE IS IN THE AIR	John Paul Young, Ariola	156
50 NATIVE NEW YORKER	Odyssey, RCA	155

Two titles tied for 16th, 21st, 25th, 28th, 36th, 38th and 47th position.
Three titles tied for 41st position.

1978's best-selling singles artists

1. BONEY M	848	18. COMMODORES	261	36. SUZIE QUATRO	188
2. JOHN TRAVOLTA AND OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN	765	19. ROD STEWART	260	37. DAVID ESSEX	188
3. THE BEES	653	20. BROTHERHOOD OF MAN	236	38. ERUPTION	186
4. DARTS	634	21. GERRY RAFFERTY	252	39. ROLLING STONES	185
5. BLONDIE	550	22. BRIAN AND MICHAEL	241	40. ALTHEA AND DONNA	183
6. BOOMBOWN RATS	514	23. 10CC	237	41. JILTED JOHN	182
7. SHOWADDYWADDY	450	24. JOHN TRAVOLTA	230	42. JACKSONS	174
8. ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA	441	25. MOTORS	224	43. DEAN FRIEDMAN	173
9. ROSE ROYCE	425	26. MARSHALL HAIN	223	44. FRANKIE VALLI	172
10. DONNA SUMMER	418	27. JOHNNY MATHIS AND DENICE WILLIAMS	219	45. SCOTT FITZGERALD AND YVONNE KEELY	171
11. KATE BUSH	375	28. A TASTE OF HONEY	219	46. FRANKIE MILLER	170
12. FATHER ABRAHAM	348	29. ANDREW GOLD	215	47. GENESIS	167
13. ABBA	323	30. CLOUT	215	48. PATTI SMITH	167
14. CHIC	299	31. SHAM 69	204	49. YVONNE ELLIMAN	161
15. WINGS	290	32. HI TENSION	199	50. JUSTIN HAYWARD	161
16. HEATWAVE	289	33. JAMES GALWAY	198		
17. BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS	286	34. SMOXIE	197		
		35. CRYSTAL GAYLE	189		



BEE GEES (Pic: Mike Putland/L.F.I.)

PRISM

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Costello mustn't get away with this insult

I HAVE just returned from the Dominion Theatre, where Elvis Costello gave one of the seven concerts arranged for this week. The evening was a sell-out and we were anticipating quite a concert. What we got can only be termed an absolute rip-off.

They began a lifetime set that was far below the standard of recorded material. The audience, however, were determined to make the most of it, presumably in the hope that their enthusiasm might spread to the stage. It did not, and as the band carelessly raced through each

song, with Costello engaging in conversations with members of the band, he decided to dispense with song titles (largely unnecessary since it was almost all old material) and ran each song into the next. Forty minutes after the set began, Costello and the Attractions walked off and immediately the safety curtain came down. Having paid £4 for tickets the audience stayed for ten minutes, clapping and shouting, but the band did not reappear.

When a sound engineer was asked why Costello had done this, he said: "It was probably because the audience wasn't dancing." I find it hard to believe that I was in the same audience as him, since in the stalls many people were dancing. I very much doubt that this insult to the audience would have occurred if it had been the opening night at the Dominion, but since it is unlikely that any member of the music press would be attending the fourth night, it was presumably deemed to be all right to ruin the evening as a couple of thousand "ordinary" people. He was certainly lost one fan tonight and I suspect he has lost hundreds more — D WELLINGTON, Charlton Road, Charlton, London.

I'm talking about the references to Jesus as a homosexual, and the character's constant use of obscenities and expletives and the way in which Jones has portrayed the concept of Heaven as a pitiful joke. God, too, has been mocked with obscen-

Witty, clever, but that panto's an offence

CONCERNING the now annual pantomime spoof by Allan Jones (MM, December 23)... the idea is good but the contents are of such a nature that I feel constrained to protest.

I find the whole article in the worst possible taste and highly offensive, pre- viously regarding Melody Maker as the last bastion of good journalism, objective criticism and high standards, an example to the NME and Sunday News sold their souls long ago.

Put it this way, would you draw it offending coloured people by writing a parody of Jesus and calling them niggers, rascals, inferior to whites or whatever? Of course not, yes you would outrage millions of coloured people who have come to expect (rightly) better treatment in these "enlightened days".

Do you realise that thousands of Christians will be deeply offended by your "light-hearted" poke at religion or would asking a three-price spread at Christmas be too much to sacrifice for the sake of keeping happy a minority fringe of people who happen to believe in God and have placed their whole trust and belief in Jesus Christ?

this and swear-words constantly coming from his mouth.

I found the whole article in the worst possible taste and highly offensive, previously regarding Melody Maker as the last bastion of good journalism, objective criticism and high standards, an example to the NME and Sunday News sold their souls long ago.

Put it this way, would you draw it offending coloured people by writing a parody of Jesus and calling them niggers, rascals, inferior to whites or whatever? Of course not, yes you would outrage millions of coloured people who have come to expect (rightly) better treatment in these "enlightened days".

Do you realise that thousands of Christians will be deeply offended by your "light-hearted" poke at religion or would asking a three-price spread at Christmas be too much to sacrifice for the sake of keeping happy a minority fringe of people who happen to believe in God and have placed their whole trust and belief in Jesus Christ?

GOD blither and disown it that's it, isn't it. A right or two catering from. How much house in. A right or two catering from. How much house in. A right or two catering from. How much house in.

There's no satisfaction in this (this attention is all by a cooing from off stage, JANIS JOPLIN (in a high, fine) Coomoooooooooooo — Ho, I'm waiting.

GOD (slightly embarrassed): well. Must dash. Punish me. I'll be back. (GOD ankles off stage in an excited limbo).

MELODY MAKER, DECEMBER 23

Please think about this letter. Whatever you do, don't write me off as "Religious Fanatic. North

Shields. I'm not! I just want to see the end of Allan Jones, cynical put downs and attempted destruction of my faith in God and trust in the word (Read it)

It's not up to God's people to defend his Name (as if he needed it) but it is the responsibility of Christians to support each other and safe guard our right to worship and believe what and whom we choose without bitter, vicious, offensive, wasteful and irresponsible articles, like "All This And Heaven Too", outrageous, disturbing and, in some cases, deeply upsetting our fellow Christian brothers and sisters.

I don't condemn you or judge you for your atheism, agnosticism that is between you and God and mine day you will have in agnosticism before Him, but I ask you as a person with some degree of faith in your integrity to stop these needless cynical articles, witty though they may be, and return to responsible and articulate journalism.

Looking forward to a favourable reply — NORMAN JOHNSON, Wooler Avenue, North Shields, Tyne & Wear.

BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST



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POLK STREET RAG
Taken from their Album—LIVE TAPES



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get the point, Alex

AFTER having seen Alex Harvey in concert with his new band at the Glasgow Apollo on Saturday night, I feel really sorry for the guy. Alex has a problem on his hands; he has the reputation of his last band to over-

come. He spent most of the night trying to put forward his new material and band, above cries of "VAMBO", to an audience making the inevitable comparison between the old and the new bands. (As Harry Doherty did in his Caugh in the Act review of December 18).

OK, so the original SABB were one of the most exciting shows around, but Alex also has an excellent sound with his new set-up. The pity is people won't accept it for that it is, they're too busy shouting for the SABB of the past.

Maybe the sax should realise it's second to the lead guitar, but I'd just like Alex to know some people are getting the message, and I'll certainly be buying his next LP — MAZ, Hillend, Ednam, Kelso, Rosburghshire.

More Caroline

I AM indignant over the lack of coverage by you and the other two papers of Radio Caroline's latest financial difficulties. Many of your readers are influenced by the form of music played on Radio Caroline as it is Europe's first and only album station. If it were not for Caroline rock music would not be where it is today.

It was the first of many offshore stations which provoked the pop music explosion of the mid-Sixties. Even the Beatles owe a lot of their success to the pirate radio stations, as the BBC (then holding the monopoly) would not play "that dreadful pop" in those days. Thus, due to the pirate radio stations, rock music started in a great way.

Yet to my deepest grief, the media totally forgot the pirates, and even the main one which has existed for 14 years, until about six weeks ago.

Come on MM — publish something — what are we fated album music lovers

going to do without Caroline.

If the Government realised how many people listen to Radio Caroline, and that the music is far more sophisticated than that played on Capital or BBC, I'm sure they would allow the British an album station.

I hate Radio One. It is an insult to the average intelligence of the British person. — WOODNEY HAMMOND, Woodberry Down, Epping, Essex.

So remedial

EVERY WEEK that I read the MM I become increasingly anguished by the members of the public who think groups such as Public Image Ltd have something to offer.

Miss P. Harrod (December 23) tried to credit herself with understanding Public Image. It appears to me that nobody can possibly understand something that is virtually devoid of talent.

Anybody could play the sort of music that Public Image perform. It is so remedial in its nature that it cannot really be described as music anyway. It is true to say that they are "bad" (and I am not being opinionated).

In the same way it is therefore clearly true to say that the likes of Beethoven and Chopin are "good" (i.e. they are technically good) again without being opinionated. Just because I have used Beethoven and Chopin as examples, I do not claim to like them.

Mia Harrod also has the nerve to say that Olivia Newton-John etc are making money in a vacuum. At least, Olivia can sing and, therefore, has a right to make money for it. Neither is Olivia's success rubbish for the same reason. Again, I am from like ONJ.

Johnny Rotten claimed not to be trying to make money. He was the Sex Pistols. He didn't seem to do very well and now even this idea has gone. He was a window clearly identified by two full page advertisements in consecutive issues of the MM.

Least of all do Public Image offer a fortune. Quite the opposite. They promise a return to the past. After all, their music is a return to the

absolute basics. Neither, as Miss Harrod claims, do "you either hate to take it or implode".

There is another option which is the safest: ignore it and, as the old saying goes, it and its supporters might leave you alone. — LARRY BLAKEMAN, Cowbridge, S. Glamorgan.

Thanks, Charlie

CHARLIE Gillett hosted the final edition of the best radio show of the decade, devoted to 20 years of rock and roll, namely Honky Tonk, on Radio London, something he has been doing every week for the past seven years.

He would not like his "retirement" to go unappreciated, as he has provided me with a lot of pleasure over the years (as he has many others, I'm sure). In his down words, he got people to realise there was a lot more good music that you could hear than by just tuning into Radio One.

As far as I am concerned, Charlie's main accomplishment has been:

1. The tremendous number of "depth" interviews. Among others he has spoken to in 1978 are Professor Longhead, Carl Perkins, B. B. King, Muddy Waters, Joe Ely and Roy Brown. What else will talk to these guys when they come over in future?
 2. "Discovering" Dire Straits, surely one of Britain's most promising bands for years.
 3. Supporting Chas & Dave (now just about to make the big time).
 4. Playing all that lovely Forties' & fifties'.
 5. Supporting all the minor label's and giving them plenty of airplay.
- Basically, I am very grateful to Charlie for turning me on to the Amazing Rhythm, Kate & Anna McGarrigle, Jesse Winchester, Doctor Hook, Alesep At The Wheel, Joe Ely and the tremendous Guy Clark.
- Seven terrific years, Charlie. Thanks very much.
- M. F. TROTMAN, Biggs Lane, Dinton, near Aylesbury, Bucks.
- LP winner



The meek shall inherit...the bankruptcy court

by VIVIEN
GOLDMAN

RING out the trumpets! Roll out the carpets! Marvin Gaye's released his first studio album for two years! I'm tempted to add, Bring On The Music, 'cos you sure ain't getting any here. But that's another story — for which, turn to page 16. The bizarre circumstances behind "Here, My Dear," a double album, are what now concern us.

It's an everyday story of music-biz folk, their loves, their hates, their winnings and losings, recounted in a manner worthy of The Archers, with the exception of the simulated orgasms on Side Three.

If my tone seems perhaps overly sardonic, it's because there's something about Marvin Gaye I don't trust, even over the telephone. As he himself says, referring to strained relations with his record company, Motown, "There's two sides to every story. They could tell you a few nasties about me."

too." I'd love to hear Anna's side. Anna is Gayle's ex-wife Anna Gordy, the sister of Berry Gordy, the big cheese up at Motown. Rather like hooking up with the boss's daughter -- a traditional love triangle that Elaine Jesmer exploits in her mysteriously unavailable novel, *Number One With A Bullet*, which she herself claimed was based on her days as a P.R. at Motown. Its hero, Daniel Stone, bears an uncanny resemblance to Marvin Gaye.

In the book, Stone is heaped with abuse by his in-laws, the Vales. They not only force him to buy the Brooklyn Bridge, they also

make him drive them over it, then push him over the side in mid-Hudson. Metaphorically speaking. Anyway, this Daniel Stone/Marvin Gaye figure is a sensitive cat/sympathetic figure.

Removed, alas, from the long-winded reflex "charm" of the Marvin Gaye — greasing his sanctimonious platitudes with generous lubrications of red wine — I once interviewed. From the size of the hotel suite, it was a good year.

Don't think the man was *ade*, or actively unpleasant. He was honest, plainity itself, but plausible he wasn't. And I felt like I was back watching the level drop in the bottle when Marvin waffled over the phone from L.A. last week, gently shushing the kids in the background.

He still sounds implausible, even when he's detailing his grievances in a determinedly chipper, if somewhat slurred, tone: "Things are terrible, but I'm happy to be alive. I mean, things aren't going particularly well, but that's a part of life I'm familiar with, it's not that I'm sad, I'm depressed; a little at odds with life. Basically, I'm all right."

EVEN if the reflex animal instincts that kept my folks out of the camps tell me Gaye is not the greatest human being I've ever met, I do feel human sympathy for a mortal in a distress period. I wouldn't like to be in the bankruptcy courts and handing up to a million bucks over to my ex-husband, not that I have one. A Troubled Man.

Gaye himself puts it all down to factors both personal and professional, with breezily cheerful candour: 'I'm unmanageable. I'm my own worst enemy. I refuse to be manageable, and it sometimes gets me in trouble. I have an incredible belief in human nature, although I'm constantly shocked; when I trust humans to do things, I find out more why paper and contracts exist. People don't believe in

handshakes. I still believe in it, and it gets me in a lot of trouble. I don't like contractual business. I like people who believe in righteousness and goodness. It's difficult to find."

Pretty disarming stuff. When we spoke, Gaye had two more days in the bankruptcy courts to go; he's busy working out a settlement period for his creditors. "I'm not what they call a poor bankruptcy, so there's lots of buzzards waiting."

As Marvin casually remarked, "We all do have money problems" — but I get the impression that Gaye's gone into voluntary liquidation over more than the price of a new pair of speakers.

What's your biggest sum of money outstanding, Marvin?

"Two million dollars, to my former manager, a Jamaican named Steven Hill."

Any particular reason that you ran up such a large bill?

"I'm in that state because I prefer to manage my own life and affairs, and I'm not the smartest in business."

Exactly how many lawsuits are you involved in right now?

"There's a lot of people saying I owe them a lot of money. I don't

radio sented a cross between the

Python, ITMA and Ignorance
Bliss. His humour was str

know why I'm involved in any of the lawsuits, really. I always thought it was such a decent firm. . . . I'm involved in lawsuits because of my unswerving faith in human nature. I never learn. I wish I could stop believing in people. I'm an easy mark. I'm not even sure I've got the best legal counsel in the world. . . ."

ONE advantage of screaming to the world that you're a nudnik is that you can beat everyone else to it.

I ask Gaye why there's this prissy little legend on the album sleeve: "Special thanks to all the musicians who are too numerous to mention but who are all superstars!"

This statement is particularly unconvincing since the gateload sleeve features not only some good artwork (depicting hands dicing with records for dice, over a Monopoly-type board, prizes being various consumer durables, against an extra-terrestrial/Gothic backdrop), but also quite enough column inches to cover an orchestral, rushing PR speak praise of the album. The only way you have done it again. He being a creative genius and having the guts to express to that 'special someone' things we all sometimes find difficult, may have inspired this

masterpiece. It is most assuredly a collector's item." Et cetera.

Sorry, sleeve, did you say something?

Yes. "That's a bunch of bull," if you'll pardon the expression. I couldn't put out the names because I didn't cut the album under normal Union procedures, and I'll have union problems enough without putting out the names. The album mostly the musicians who played with me in London and on the road, musicians like Bugsy Wilcox and Fernando Harkness. That's enough names, isn't it? I don't think all real people know me that they're not on the credits. Yes, they're probably not very happy with me. In fact, one of them's suing me. He says I stole his ideas for 'Anger' and 'Funky Space Reincarnation.' But he volunteered his chords, didn't steal them.

By this stage, one lawsuit more or less doesn't make much difference. In fact, Gaye's court cases are tripping over each other like lovers falling in and out of cupboards in a bedroom farce.

A cute little sub-plot was the point where the courts were trying to decide who should get the bulk of Gaye's profits from "Here, My Dear" — his ex-wife or his creditors, or "extortionists", as Gave refers to them.

"HERE, My Dear" took three months to record, but "it's been lying in the can for the better part of a year. I would never really finish it because I'm involved in some political infighting with Motown, and then the Federal Court felt it was part of my estate for bankruptcy. . . ."

The "buzzards" never had a chance to sink their "claws" into Gaye wrote and recorded the album specifically as part of a very unusual divorce deal. Marvin was woolly about the details, but apparently his ex-wife gets "most of the profits 75-80 per cent. It breaks off at a million . . . yes, that was the decision handed down

So how did you feel going into the studio to record an album you weren't going to see any money from?

continued overleaf



Around the Moon

KEITH Moon's 1973 radio shows, broadcast over the Christmas holiday, proved if nothing else that BBC Radio transmission hasn't improved much beyond the days of 2LO. If Keith Moon's jokes sounded old and familiar, so did the sound of Radio One's Wonderful Static.

As Your Raver (oh, sorry, I'm dead, assassinated by the High Ones), as Your After Dark Person tuned in to hear repeats of the comedy and rock shows Moon concocted with producer John Walters, most of the gags and banter were submerged in a steady hiss of radio noise that seemed to be emanating from some galactic supernova, or the vacuum module next door.

But through the crackles and pops, no rust could be detected at full strength, as Moun pre-

sented a cross between Monty Python, ITMA and Ignorance Is Bliss. His humour was strongly influenced by Python and Viv Stanshall; and there was even the "Knickerst" "You called, sir?" joke from Scafold.

But Moon was at his best with heartfelt ad libs, rather than his — at times — strained delivery of lines, like Reginald Bosanquet reading the News At Ten during a time of national crisis.

The dialogue did remind us, however, of that curious trick Moon had of mixing the broadest street dialect with the high-falutin' tones of a senior civil servant, while his uncouth intonation reflected his love of rock and roll. His choice of records included Elton John, Rigor Mortis, and Thin Lizzy cuts, and of course some gems from the surfline music

he played endlessly at home or in cars.

Some of the contemporary references doubtless made older listeners realise how times had changed. Keith played Traffic's "Smiling Phases" and explained how the band had spent the previous five years "getting together in the country," and then introduced Thin Lizzy, saying "they have been getting together on a building site in Kilburn."

It may not have been up to the standards of *Around the Horn* or even I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again, but the Moon show exemplified the drive of a successful rock star who goes to his grave expelling pain with his life. If Kinn had more choices to channel his energy into such projects, he might have been worth a try. — CHRIS WELCH

Radio One: the awful truth

THE most significant proportion of the population might have spent virtually the entire Christmas holiday locked in the secure grip of the television, watching old movies mostly featuring Charlton Heston, a cast of thousands and a variety of hair-pieces, but some of us found time to pursue other pleasures.

Reading, for instance (that surprised you, didn't it?).

And, chortling our way through *Changing Places*, a novel by David Lodge (published recently in paperback by Penguin at 95 pence),

about an American academic, Morris Zapp, visiting England on an exchange teaching course, we came upon one of the most pertinent profiles of Radio One — and by extension, British broadcasting of rock music — we've seen since John Peel and John Walters offered their opinions on the whole sorry mess in these pages last August.

Zapp has just arrived in England when we join him, and is in search of some kind of entertainment.

"He had," writes Lodge, "a brief honeymoon with Radio One that turned into a kind of sadomasochistic marriage. Waking early in the hotel he had flicked on his transistor and listened to

what he took, at the time, to be a very funny parody of the worst kind of American AM radio, based on the simple but effective formula of having non-commercial commercials.

"Instead of advertising products, the disc-jockey advertised himself — pouring out a torrent of drivel generally designed to convey what a jolly, amusing and lovable guy he was — and also advertised his listeners, every one of whose names and addresses he seemed determined to read out over the air, plus, on occasion, their birthdays and car registration numbers."

Gluttons

"Now and again he played musical jingles in praise of himself or reported, in tone of unremitting jollity, a multiple accident on the freeway. There was almost no time left for playing records. It was a riot, Morris thought. It was a little early in the morning for satire, but listened enraptured. When the programme finished and was followed by one of exactly the same kind, he began to get restive."

"The British, he thought, must be gluttons for satire: even the weather forecast seemed to be some kind of spoof, predicting every possible combination of weather for the next 24 hours without committing itself to anything specific, not even the existing temperature."

"It was only after four successive programmes of almost exactly the same formula — DJ's narcissistic gabbles, lists of names and addresses, meaningless and jingles — that the awful truth dawned on him: Radio One was like this all the time." Many a true word and all that — ALLAN JONES.

DANCING FLAT OUT

PERHAPS the most absurd story thrown up by the traditional lunacy that seems inevitably to attend the Christmas celebrations comes from Manchester where the local council were forced to cancel a marathon dance party which was to have lasted from Christmas Eve until Boxing Night.

The event was apparently advertised by poster all over Manchester and at least 200 people are said to have paid £1.50 each for tickets. "Astonished" council officials were moved to mix the jolly-up when they discovered that the party was to be held in a three-bedroom council flat on the Hulme Estate.

Immediately alarmed by the prospect of more than 200 gyrating souls frugging in such cramped conditions for three days, the council served a notice banning the event under the Pollution Act, which apparently covers the nuisance to the public caused by excessive noise.

The council chaps paid a visit to the flat in which the party was to have been held, but found no one at home. So they taped to the front door an order banning any amplified music. Mrs Edna Lynch, who occupies the neighbouring flat, was immensely relieved. "It would've been hell," she is reported as saying. "I certainly wouldn't have gone."

Another neighbour, Mrs Alice Hartley (85), who lives directly beneath the flat, declared: "I would have put the shutters up. I can't imagine 200 people in one of these flats — there's not room to swing a cat." — ALLAN JONES.

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ARTERIAL TWO



Kevin Keegan, just voted European Footballer Of The Year, met up with Smokie after one of their concerts in Hamburg, and even the waitresses had trouble telling who was who. Maybe it had something to do with the similar hairstyles — in this case perm from your four. (Pic: Wolfgang Helmann/Camera Press)

NEW wave music will never become hugely popular across America because of the conservatism of radio and the cut-throat nature of the music industry. "Music's a massive industry now, and so is radio, and when conglomerates are involved, they're unlikely to risk such big money. That's why adult-oriented rock will remain at the top of the pile of records. They know people listen to that, and buy the albums. It's that old no-risk situation . . . and

This year's Billy Joel

it's frightening."

Dean Friedman said that. On a visit to London for concerts, on the crest of two hit singles and a big-selling album, he was reflecting on why he likes the state of the music scene here as compared with his native USA; and he showed an awareness of the machinations of the industry that belied his 23 years.

He seems to have adopted Britain as a second home, not merely because his records and concerts have sold well, but because he thinks we are still somewhat more pure, more embryonic in a business sense, towards the music.

"There's more focus here," he said simply. "More friendly, more personal. You can GET AT a city by visiting a radio station, talking to a local paper, dealing with the music press in the States, they're so self-conscious . . . and the industry's so large, so cumbersome and unwieldy, and so much money's wrapped up in the record biz that they're conservative to a fault. Newish people — like me and most of the new wave — have a tough time making an impact. It's left to the independent labels like RSO

to take chances — and now even they've got the Bee Gees' industry to worry about!"

He wrote his first song at nine and comes from a music-based New Jersey family; his mother was a classically-trained singer "and there was always a Broadway score around the house." He learned piano and guitar and was nine when the "British invasion" of the States occurred, spearheaded by the Beatles, Stones and the Dave Clark Five. Last year he assumed the mantle of singer-songwriter, scoring a hit with "Ariel," and he's recently clinched a fair following among young pop fans with songs bearing good hooks: the mawkish "Lucky Stars" and "Lydin," an interesting song about guilt in love. Briefly, he's this year's Billy Joel.

He's unhappy about being called a singer-songwriter. "When I think of that description, they're epitomised by James Taylor and people with a lousy sense of timing. It became a rather dirty phrase, singer-songwriter, they were early Seventies and they were lazy about their music, more into attitude and the timing too much about the instruments being used on their songs."

I'm very serious about what's going on my records — I CARE! To that degree, don't call me a singer-songwriter."

At 13, he forged his birth certificate to enable him to get work selling Mickey Mouse balloons at Palisades Amusement Park; he earned a dollar an hour which helped him buy Paul Simon records. "I'd get home at 2.30 in the morning, put Paul Simon on, and find myself transformed by his lyrical imagery."

Jon Mitchell remains his other idol — "she was the only reason I wanted to get involved in the music business. I wanted to meet her." He never has done, but his obsession about her is as strong as ever. "She's always taken more chances than anyone else, although she's become alternately better and less accessible at the same time."

Nitchell is the one, he asserts, who has never forgotten her responsibility to ensure that rock music progresses as an art form. "Who else has pushed the confines and borders so consistently as Jon? Who else writes lines like: ' . . . when the sun flows in like butterscotch? I love her.' — RAY COLEMAN

from previous page

"I felt poor," chortles Gaye. "But it's all new stuff. At first I thought I'd put out a bunch of garbage, because all I had to give was one album. There was no stipulation that it was to be a good album — she was taking chances! So I was going to put out a bunch of crap."

The I got very — then I thought of the fans. Then I thought I'd come out with stuff that wasn't very bad but wasn't very good. I started recording, and the more I cut, the more I got involved. After a certain point, I forgot I was mad and angry and did some decent work. The result is pretty fair, I've listened to it for over a year."

That's an understandable chain of reactions; the only flaw is that "Here, My Dear" betrays Gaye's better instincts — by being the archetypal double-album-thar - would - have-been-a-simple

Having just pointed a generous proportion of my Christmas holiday trying to find the studios as a soft-focus album, in this LP

in my bedroom, I now see "Here, My Dear" as a four-sided endurance test, one of the more obvious cases of artistic cop-out. I can recall recently I can't believe that Marvin Gaye put his best efforts into "Here, My Dear," and that transmutates

all his earnest, humorous candour into hypocrisy. I can believe Gaye when he says: "I'm a difficult person to work with. I believe something should be a certain way, I really believe it."

I just don't like his way.

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Why yell about racial integration when you're the embodiment of multi-ethnicity?

COLIN IRWIN soothes Bethnal's frustrations

GEORGE Csapo is, irrefutably, the clay from which rock heroes are moulded. He exudes a belief in himself and his band which brooks no argument; his colourful character flourishes on flamboyance and extroversion and devours the spotlight; and he hails from — and is still insistently a part of — the streets, in all their clichéd inverted glory.

Csapo, for he probably still requires a few words of introduction, is a Londoner of Greek and Hungarian extraction who sings, plays keyboards and does extraordinary things with a violin in Bethnal, a band who've been making urgent, if not cataclysmic waves in the last year.

They are undeniably a derivative band, but at least their roots are varied and interesting, and in the league of music where a band's quality is judged by the impact of the kick in the gut and the volume of sweat dripping from the armpits then Bethnal hold a prominent position.

Far and away above all this they have Csapo, a lethal figure in black, whose mannerisms and full-blooded commitment gives Bethnal a fierce, yet feminine, brutality. Initially from the point of view of people who are aesthetes and tried to smother sound with their heads under a pile of vinyl, it was not about the rest of the band to hear it, but it's difficult to resist the temptation to become a victim of Csapo. The others sweat a bit, and would not have made it without the central figure, the star of the party, even if he's on stage. And he does seem to be in a class of his own, as they fervently believe, it's Csapo who's the one who's there.

He would appear to accept this responsibility with considerable relish, showing an involvement in the music of the role of the band as being a vanguard for British rock 'n' roll, a cosmopolitan end-city band drawing on the diverse influences available from the contrasting cultures of its members, yet tightly united from being brought up together in the same city. The urban music of the fight?

"Bethnal," they tell you earnestly, "are becoming pioneers for rock music. We cut across everybody. Pakistans, blacks, white kids, everybody."

Csapo greets me with an intense bonhomie that borders on intimidation. He grins warmly and speaks with impatience. "Hi, how are you? How y'doin' wanna coffee? ... sit down ... nice to meet you ... you wrote that review?"

"I admit it, nervously."
"On well ... at least you wrote it after seeing us." Later, their bitterness over media treatment becomes apparent. Not just the press but radio too, they feel, hasn't made it any easier for them.

The other member of the band present, Everton Williams — a bass player who springs around the stage with maniacal agility — is more reserved. A woolly hat hovers over his eyes, and he nods in greeting, but he opens up as soon as the conversation gets beyond the platitudes, and is probably even more defiantly dogmatic than Csapo in his statements. They are delivered in an easily fascinating mixture of Jamaican and cockney, interspersed with lapses into Liverpool.

HE's particularly keen to clarify their position on race. They are what they are, he says profoundly, and what they are is a mix of Greek, Hungarian, Jamaican and London, which is how it is in the modern world, and that's the natural result of the integration. There's no political big deal in their union, and they don't regard themselves as political commentators, though the social implications are obviously inherent.

"There was a review in Sounds," says Everton, "and it was something like 'Bethnal can't do anything to the music world when they put aside all this racial bullshit.' You know, as if it suddenly doesn't matter what the band's about. It's like me trying to create something out of nothing. I'm black, George is Greek, and what we're saying is we are what we are and we're proud of it. We're not making a big thing out of it. All we're saying is what England is to us is all about."

Csapo is quick to catch the mood of Everton's speech. "The thing is just being what we are, and that's our demonstration. We weren't supposed to get blacks and whites together, not that, but we've done it and this is what it's like."

With a few exceptions their songs,

Bethnal: shop music, blurred image



BETHNAL (Pic: Barry Plummer)

certainly, don't tend to deal with these issues, relying more on traditional rock 'n' roll values, and apparently, innocuous enough. They profess admiration for those who are using their music to make overt statements and political comment, and praise Tom Robinson and the Clash when I mention their names. Later though, I detected (though it might have been a misinterpretation) a faintly patronising attitude towards white rock musicians making loud noises on the subject.

"I think it's great, what they're doing," says George. "It's freedom, innit? That's what it's all about. People should say what they feel. But the way I describe it is ... we're ... 'I. We live in the park. We're in Central Park, and the others are looking into it. We know what it's like. We don't have to shout about it. We're not like ...' He pulls up suddenly. No, I don't wanna say it."

Chorus of "go on" from the interviewer and Williams.

"No, I don't like slugging people."

WILLIAMS takes up the point on about preconditioning before I can push Csapo further.

"If you're black," he says, "you're expected to play reggae or funk or soul or jazz. And if you're white, it's just rock. Now you're meant to cut your hair short and play punk. That's real ignorance. Because it comes from the same thing. Hard rock, heavy rock comes from there in the first place, western and blues. But people don't wanna see that, they're just blinded by it and that's it, that's as far as they wanna see. They say that's black people's music. But it came from all different directions and that's what we're bringing out."

"That," continues George, "is why Everton doesn't play reggae. Because he's grown up in England, he's been

brought up with us. Yet he's been brought up with his own music as well. And me too. Reggie didn't start until '69 or whatever. That's where we all came from, we all grew up together.

"The thing is, nobody really understands what we're trying to do, they all misunderstand what this band's about. This band is just writing about what's going on around us, y'know, and because we don't fit into your reggae or your heavy metal or your punk ... we're doing our own thing ... the gigs are great, we're going down great, the best band people have seen in fucking ages. This is a fact. But the press can't say Bethnal's ... there."

Well, observes Everton, the press never comes to see them to find out for themselves.

George jerks a thumb in my direction. "He came to see us, didn't he?"

"Yeah, but ... it's like if I say to him, 'Come down the disco man,' he says, 'No, I'm not interested.' Next minute, the press is suddenly writing about discos and he's suddenly into it. To me there could be something really brewing up musically, but if you want to find out what's going on out there, you've got to go out and look for it. So the press only come to see when you've got a record contract."

If there is confusion about the band's niche, then the source of it must surely be the violin, hardly the most fashionable of instruments. Csapo plays it wildly, often in absolute frenzy, but clearly he knows his way around it with some familiarity. In concerts lately he's taken to playing a classical piece, "Allergo," putting it over with skill and excitement, and it comes as a little surprise to discover he's been playing it since he was a kid.

"It has confused people," concedes

Csapo. "People think we're either a folk band or a ... weird band or a ... can't describe it. But I'm trying to use the violin in a new way. I'm trying to make it fashionable. Make it more acceptable. Make it a more aggressive instrument than people imagine it is. I'm trying to make that play by a little skinny kid with glasses and spotty face and greasy hair. I wanna make it more up-front rather than in the background."

"I'm singing, and the violin's, like, on my left hand, and it's right up-front, and it's really singing the old rhythms than in the back like the old Sixties bands used it. I'm trying to make it different. It's always been in the background, but I'm trying to bring it round to my way of doing it."

"I think the violin works much better live, though. Visually it's quite exciting. I'd imagine people get off on it visually, and it's hard to capture that on record."

Despite the presence of the violin, they've still been widely associated with the punk scene, and have been together for eight years with the same line-up (and the same determination). Neither do they approve of all the classic anti-establishment attitudes of punk — the influence of the Who, for example, is very evident in their work. Yet they couldn't get a record deal until the punks came along.

"We had the hard time getting a contract," says Csapo. "We weren't desperate, but we wanted to make it. Until punk, there was no chance. Then everyone was signing bands left, right, and centre. So we were thankful to the punks. People said we were punk, but in their eyes anyone who was who had short hair."

"I've got pictures from three years

ago, when we used to wear army gear and short hair, and played 'My Generation' and all that sort of stuff. So when we got a contract, obviously they thought 'Here's another load of punks! We feel we belong to this era, but we're not, as we were punks, though we felt an identity with them.'

Everton. "But we didn't wanna destroy. We just play music for people to enjoy. You've seen us live — don't tell me the way we act on stage we wanna destroy."

Course not.

They readily acknowledge the influence of the Who. "Baba O'Reilly" has long been a stage favourite, and Csapo in full flight sounds not entirely unlike Roger Daltrey. Peter Townshend is even given a credit on the sleeve of the new album "Crash Landing," though they say his contribution to it was merely as a consultant. Apparently he made it known he liked the way they tackled "Baba O'Reilly" on the first album, and wanted to help with the second.

"So we went to his boat-house and played him the demos we'd done. We were there about three hours, he'd got 'develop that' or 'the vocals should be louder there,' y'know, things like that. I don't understand why it is in rock 'n' roll that people don't accept young bands working with the old masters. But you take any other art form, or classical musicians for that matter — all the young musicians study with the old masters, the great people. That's the way you learn. They don't tell you what to do, but you study under them and you learn. That should be used in rock 'n' roll, why not?"

Returning to the subject of the media, they curse Radio One at some length for not playing their single, "Nothing New." They don't seem particularly perplexed as to why this should be. Everton: "You can always go out for the next 25 years, and be a minority following, but to get a mass audience you need the record. And you can't sell an album straight off unless you've got the single."

Csapo is talking at the same time. "What I do is ... it's very frustrating. We rely on it so much ... I wish we didn't have to. A few years down the road, when I made some single bands, and I hope if it came to that I'd either use some old masters, or I'd use some of the great people. You don't have to worry about hitting the punks with a heavy hand, because we've got a very strong straight away. We need that, we need some more punks, and we need some more commercially viable, but we don't do it."

"We've always tried to be modest with music," he will go on. "Right now, suddenly the bands we thought we could compete with are getting the results and a band like us is still in the shits. Why is that? There was a time, right, when the BBC would play Clash and the Buzzcocks and all that ..."

Everton completes it for him — "And now they're Tony Blackburn records of the week."

"We put our heart into it. Go into the studio and people like it. Yet the BBC turn round and say, 'No man, it's too heavy.' If Tommy Gun isn't heavy, what is?"

The vitriol begins to fly. And gets closer to home. They feel the press — including this paper — hasn't been all that fair on them. The subject of their appearance at the Reading Festival is unwisely mentioned.

"I'm gonna have a go at you about that," says Williams sharply. "It's a Sunday, right? We had Chelsea on before us, and several other bands, and those bands didn't get the crowds going, they didn't get the crowds up off their asses. We went on stage, and we were frightened. I don't know if it was a crowd like that up? But we went on and we did it. We surprised ourselves with it. We were in a good way for a goal, right, and when you get to that goal, you think at least Melody Maker, or whoever's down there will at least take the story the way it is. In fact there was ... nothing. It was like that. Second Division band going ... y'know, 'they don't tell us anything, we're not ...'"

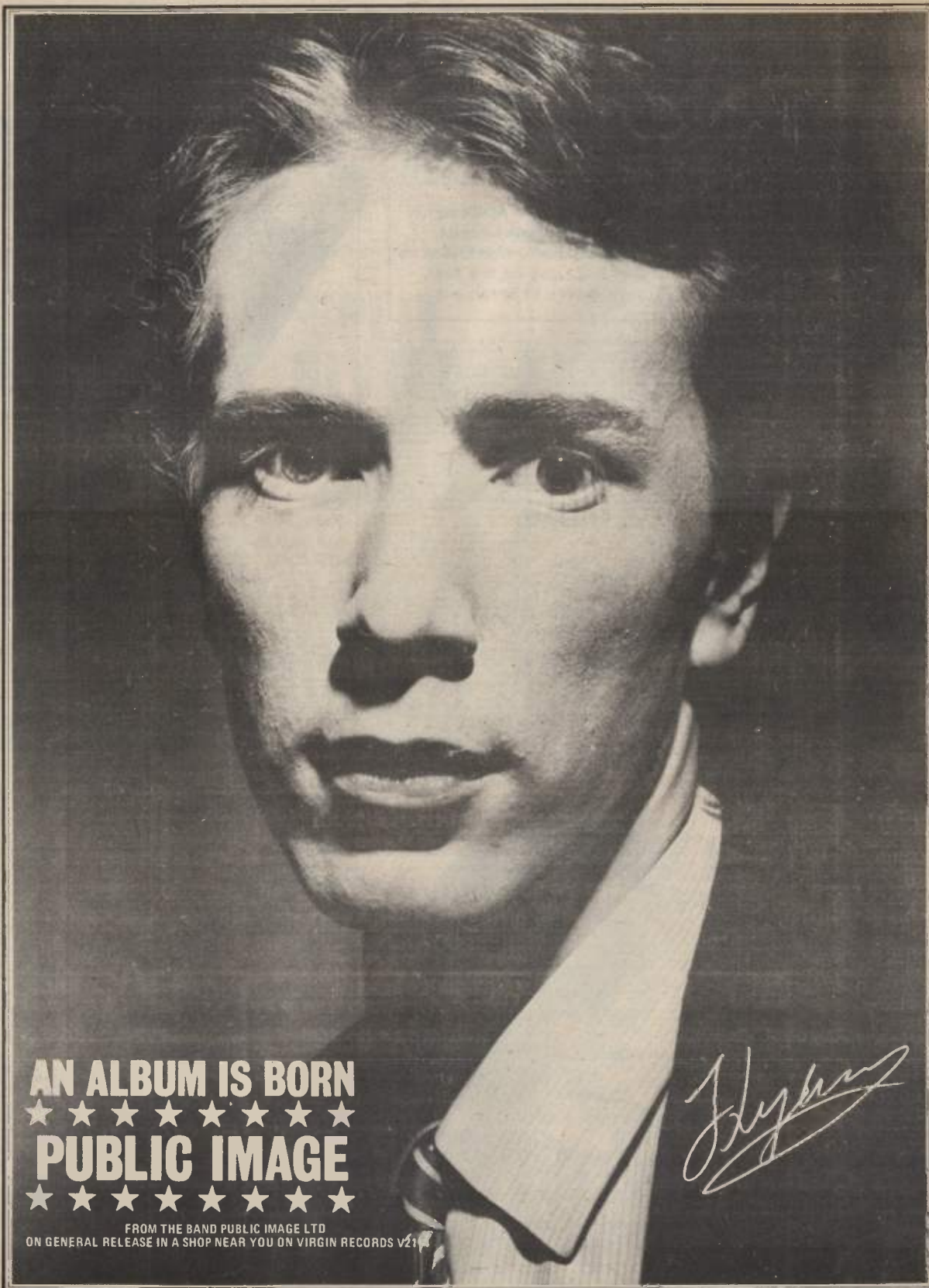
Suddenly there's the unexpected silence. "I don't think," moans Csapo, "we're very popular with the press."

Surely not, I sussed.

"Let's face it, you lot, you can't pin us down for a record. We're a punk band, we're not a heavy metal band, we're not a pop band, we're not a funk band, we're not a soul band, we've got our own thing going. I don't see us in any category at all. We've been through reggae, and the Beatles, Who, Zeppelin, everything. Take a track like 'Dreams' from Liverpool. It could do that. Because they can't pin a label on us, it's supposed to be a crime."

There's no holding them back now. "They say we haven't got an image. What do they mean by that? We're what we are, and we're doing it. How many other bands are like us? We're a cosmopolitan band, we're a mix of different cultures. It's like the new generation of kids mixing together. We're not making a big thing out of it. We're just being what we are, and that's our demonstration. We weren't supposed to get blacks and whites together, not that, but we've done it and this is what it's like."

Everton. "But we didn't wanna destroy. We just play music for people to enjoy. You've seen us live — don't tell me the way we act on stage we wanna destroy."



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The new wave lops

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IT'S a truism to say that you have to decide which is real — you or Los Angeles — but like most truisms, it has its roots in truth. So once you've decided but quick — as most everyone does — that YOU are real, then obviously Los Angeles isn't.

Just sit back in your car and cackle at the human menagerie littering the streets and lining the sidewalks, or cackling back at YOU from their cars.

Naturally this near-total dissociation from your environment, aided and abetted by the fact that fantasy and reality have been for so long intertwined (in Hollywood especially) that nobody knows what's what and who gives a damn anyway, most often means a total and appalling negation on your part of any responsibility for your actions to other people and the environment. I say, Kill City, where the debris meets the sea: the psychic and physical garbage is everywhere.

All this Sodom and Gomorrah stuff is all very refreshing after dull old Europe, where you can rarely escape the sense of responsibility there, that word again) to yourself and others at large, through living in a closely-knit society where every action somehow matters, but it's... disturbing.

Oh yes, the sun and the fruit is huge and everyone looks beautiful and sun-kissed after the pallor of Northern Europe, but... well, the Hollywood sign from where I'm staying reads "OD" — its smiling stage of collapse and who am I to demur? Beneath the overripe surface there's this underworld. The City of the Angels is very strange and very beautiful — very "American" in its endless suburbs of fantastic white.

In LA you can get anything you want (and that means anything): in this humid hothouse the sicko sensibilities so accurately detected by Kenneth Anger's Hollywood Babylon flower and bear strange, twisted fruit. Bringing in the old Manson/Beach Boys duality would be merely facile if not for the fact that no-one will talk about it, ever, indeed mentioning the subject at all is a cross breach of normally laissez-faire Angelino etiquette.

The conclusion is that somewhere out there, in Beverly Hills, Silverlake, Santa Monica, Venice, it still goes on.

BUT we're not here to worry about that, so let's up the hill to scenic Griffith Park observatory, to look at the lunar landscape. In early evening, under a blood-red moon, the city pulsates endlessly, massive and terrifying, Altrimp One.

Swivelling a little to the right, you can see the Capitol Tower, its Flitfies Skylon architecture making it one of the most stylish and recognisable buildings in the huge mass-media complex hex that makes the Wonder of Hollywood. This is what most people think of as LA, when in fact downtown LA is several miles away, dull woods of steel and glass where nobody ever goes except to service the needs of one of the other two main Angelino industries, finance. Bucks. The rest of the plentiful bucks supply comes from the other industry — oil. But Hollywood is strictly Media City. Film, records, television, video, and the innumerable service industries that grease the wheels of the entertainment monolith — restaurants, costumers, technicians and engineers of every description, dealers, hustlers and on and on.

The result of this extraordinary and enviable media access and concentration is mostly to spiral the town's solipsism and basic tuncy when everything is a "simulating reality" but in fact reinterpreting it and creating a dream in "guilty" guise, it's hard to work out even what "real" is. And who cares, guys? Often the participants fall prey to endemic occupational diseases: a silt facility, a tripping out on their own cleverness at being INSIDE the machine that churns the fantasies that eat millions up, an enduring contempt for the "audience" (hicks), and a flat refusal to see their actions in any kind of wider context or to even acknowledge that there might exist a wider context. I mean, man, "not my problem."

In the extreme, most Angelinos are so TV-damaged anyway that they're actively relieving the thought of the

Big Earthquake (astrologically scheduled for 1982) in the absolutely deft expectation that it'll beat the movies hollow. Then they'll serialise it.

OK: after the short guided tour around various pertinent aspects of their assumed environment, we can at last get to the Screemers.

Back on the top of Griffith Park, if you follow Hollywood Boulevard eastwards, crossing over the Hollywood Freeway, before Hollywood proper falls into Silverlake and the East LA barrio, you might be able to detect North Wilton Place.

Screemers Tomata Du Plenty and Tommy Gear (pen names, it's safe to assume) live in the upper half of a detached bungalow, totting Porsches in the driveway. The area features mainly lowish-rent accommodation and small movie production companies, the local papers insist on calling it the unfashionable side of Hollywood, but it's HOLLYWOOD all the same. The Screemers seem to take it like ducks to water.

It's difficult to know what exactly to make of West Coast "punk," or whether, in the circumstances, it should even be given that name. (No.) It's very easy and tempting for English writers to dismiss it as a copy, a joke, revealing more about their chauvinism and ignorance than anything else.

Once you've been out there, you're forced to recognise, at least, that although some of the trappings are similar (and indeed on occasions that trappings are all that are there), the groups are working within an entirely different context, and are to be taken seriously, facing and trying to come to terms so they are with an entirely different set of problems. As ever, the similarity of language blinds you to the fact that you are on the other side of the Atlantic.

Let's just say that with the exception of the DIs, transplanted to the more rigorous atmosphere of San Francisco, that the two premier (in



In Hollywood, where AOR reigns, no-one loves the spiky-heads. But the Screemers, who talked to JON SAVAGE, may be the first L.A. new-wavers to break out.

longevity and competence) Angelino "new" bands are the Screemers and the Weirids.

Not that this means very much in biz terms: although both groups live within walking distance (in Los Angeles, that means very close) of the heart of the "industry," as far as any attention they might have got, they might as well be on the other side of the moon. (The current state of the "art" is revealed when you switch on fab KMET: a constant diet of Beatles, Led Zepplin and Crosby Stills and Nash — 1969 for ever.)

Here the full nightmare of the hippie generation in control is laid out for all to see. When the majors can push losers like Van Halen and Foreigner and make millions, they're hardly going to take notice of some spiky-haired bunch with weird names worrying about stuff like "artistic control", making statements and generally out to threaten their raison-d'être (if only on the basest fashion level), now are they?

ABC say they HATE punk rock and who's to argue? Warners consider themselves badly put by the whole Sex Pistols episode, and all the local groups bitch about them "spoiling it for us." Stories fly around the circuit about high-level directives from the Prez of the United States to the Prezles of record companies saying "No Punk Rock" and good ol' Linda Ronstadt hangs out with the ambiguous Jerry Brown.

ALL this madness is hard to conceive of over here, where the whole thing's been well wrapped up and packaged and sold successfully. The stubborn refusal of the Biz to recognise the new groups under their nose has had some interesting effects: some groups have obviously split up, disillusioned (no gold at the end of this rainbow), others pursue their development with greater determination.

More in San Francisco than LA, the fact that groups have been kept

Pix: Ruby Ray

out in the cold has strengthened the rebel (rather than the commercial) premise for their formation: benefits (for Striking Miners, against the anti-gay Proposition Six) are common. In LA, all these difficulties are compounded by the fact that what there is to react against is so diffuse.

It's difficult, actually, to get too upset on the groups' behalf, or at least too self-righteous. After all, sooner or later the companies will not only recognise that there's money to be made here, but that they'll need new fodder for the existing machinery. Most of the bands will instantly accept the proffered contracts, and events will take their usual course: one set of consumer expectations and standards exchanged for another.

It may take two or three years, though, and the Screemers just aren't prepared to wait that long. They're ambitious, talented and they want it all NOW. And they'd sell their granules (if they have any left) to get it.

Early September saw them up north in San Francisco, Oakland to be precise, spending a week at Target Video doing promotional videos. A simple access out there: Target's rapidly expanding catalogue consists mostly bands nowhere near signing record contracts.

This is stage one of the Screemers' big gambit to get record-company action: stage two is to hit New York, where they sold out CBGB's just before Christmas. (Stage three is no doubt to visit England: much of the interview was conducted with them as being interviewed about the UK.)

The morning is spent watching a live video of them at the Stardust in Los Angeles — even on the small screen a clever, powerful, electric performance — and hearing them run through a comparatively new song, "122 Hours Of Fear."

SO Tomata Du Plenty stands stock still, his hair vapour-rubbed UP, as the camera pans in. The music begins, slow and harsh: Gear plays an ARP Odyssey synth (only recently having discarded the book of words he used to have propped up so he could play the thing), Paul plays a Fender Rhodes electric organ (and was

brought as an accomplished musician into the group to give it that extra musical gloss), and KK plays drums (occasionally they use synthetic percussion).

And then Tomata whips round and yells SCREAMS! "Be quiet or be killed!" The music breaks out in full force — lush, dramatic, discordant like old horror-movie scores — very strong.

Tomata's strident vocals make more sense when combined with the visual input of his stage persona: extraordinarily mobile, he'll prowls the stage, a Victorian villain, within a split second falling to the ground and gibbering apastically, or just stare psychotically — adding up to a brilliant mime and pastiche of various stereotypical poses.

The other main visual focus is Gear, as both KK and Paul are busy playing their instruments and getting on with the business of making noise: he'll stand erect and rigid behind his ARP, oozing arrogance, jackknifing into violent movement. It's hardly pretty, but compelling all the same. And, in example of the extraordinary media access out there: Target's rapidly expanding catalogue consists mostly bands nowhere near signing record contracts.

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enough: in the interview most of the talking is done by Gear and KK, who'll sing in with lightning interjections and wisecracks; Tomata is light and frothy, charming — his voice hoarse from continuous rehearsals for the cameras. Paul is silent: he speaks twice and both times Gear jumps on him instantly.

Gear is the boss, the Director. His are the authoritative statements. Moody, ferociously bright and highly intelligent, he is most obviously at the heart of the Screemers.

A FEW quick details: Tomata and Gear moved from Seattle with the transcendently named Tupperware, chopped and changed and formed the Screemers with KK and David Braun (now involved with local label Dangerhouse) in February 1977. They recorded a demo tape of five songs — including the classic "Peer Pressure" — in a bedroom April 1977, and played live for the first time in May of that year.

Presumably the idea of doing those videos is to present some sort of attractive, readily-comprehensible package to the record companies: it seems a good idea because what seems to be happening here is like a two-year gap between you and the record companies — and I don't think most groups can afford to wait that long...

continued p. 26

CLOCKWISE
from front:
Tomata,
K.K., Paul,
Tommy
Gear



Jazzscene

PIANIST Harold Mabern is one of those unsung heroes, always selfless, original and utterly reliable, always passed over when it comes to accolades.

Born in Memphis in 1936, Harold settled long ago for being a musician's musician. He came up with George Coleman, Louis Smith, Booker Little, Frank Strozier and Phineas Newborn, and his track record has been impressive, including gigs with Miles Davis, J. J. Johnson, the Benny Golson Jazztet, Lee Morgan, Lionel Hampton and the current Louis Hayes Quartet.

"My main influence is definitely Phineas Newborn, and through him, Nat King Cole. He influenced most of us pianists. But more than that, I've always been influenced by tenor saxophone players like George Coleman and John Coltrane."

Burly, balding, Harold is an expansive man prepared to haul off and analyse his strengths and weaknesses. "I'm self-taught. I really didn't get involved in the piano until I was in my teens. One day I heard a young lady play who I found out later happened to be my cousin. It sounds weird, but I sat down beside her and I just started to play. After that, it was nursery rhymes, 'The Hucklebuck' and the honey dripping things like that. Being around guys like Frank Strozier, he really encouraged me all the way."

At Manassas High School, his band directors, Professor Andrew Goodrich and Matthew Garrett — father of Cecil and Dee Dee Bridgewater — gave him a solid foundation. Jimmy Lunceford had been band director before them: some school, some classmates.

"When I first heard Phineas Newborn, it really frightened me, and I said, 'Wo-ho, how can I get with

Mabern: ringing the changes

by BRIAN CASE

this? His father had a music store and they had a piano in the back. We used to go and watch him play, and after about a year I got used to it. After I got to Chicago, where there were a lot of good pianists around, I realised that nobody else could play faster or better than he could, so most of the initial fear was gone out of me." In Chicago, Ahmad Jamal, Billy Wallace, Chris Anderson and bassist Bill Lee taught him the chord changes — "harmonically speaking." I found my style in Chicago. At after-hours joints like The Cotton Club, he listened to players like Clifford Brown and Max Roach; listened and learned.

NEWBORN went on to New York, where his career nosedived for a spell. "He got a lot of bad raps to beat, to be perfectly honest, from some of the critics, and even some of the musicians put him down, which is a drag. No one can play the piano like he can — it's not just technical. If you listen carefully, there's a lot of Bud Powell in his playing."

"I think of Phineas as giving me birth, but I believe

I have something that's mine. What happens, it I can simplify it, I don't think too much about the actual chords per se. For the most part, I think in terms of a total sound."

"I like to play patterns — that's where John Coltrane inspired me — because he had a way of playing patterns, sequential patterns. Might be a rhythm pattern, might be a chord pattern, but it's repetitions. I hope that's not boring, but Bird even recorded a song by Neil Hefti called 'Repetition', so it can be effective if it's used in the right way. This is a corner I've tried to find for myself, because I don't hear too many people doing it that way."

And modes? "A lotta young guys don't realize that modes will not fit everything. That could be a trap too. I hate to use the word hipness, but knowing when to take some, leave some. Nothing pleases me more than to play modal, then turn right round and play 'Strike Up The Band' as a ballad, then turn right round and play 'Cherokee', because it's all challenges."



HAROLD MABERN (pic: Valerie Wülmer)

With Tatum, Peterson, Newborn and Hank Jones topping his personal pantheon, Harold was unlikely to have eyes for either cross-over or electric piano. "I figure that not everybody can be a star — it's enough for me to lay with

Rocky Mountain hoedown

BUFFS and near-buffs should soon be able to see two rather special jazz films (from the USA) which had their British premieres — and one of them its world premier — when jazz came briefly to the South Bank cinema in the middle of the 22nd London Film Festival.

The National Film Theatre screened two documentaries, the half-hour Jazz in Exile, and the feature-length The Great Rocky Mountain Jazz Party. Between them they told us quite a bit about jazz musicians at work and play, it they're not the same thing, and how they feel about their trade.

The musicians talked, especially in the opening short (made in the USA earlier this year and directed by Chuck France), and of course played Jazz in Exile was probably preferred by those with modernist tastes in the music, but the filmed report on Dick Gibson's 1976 Colorado jazz bash was no mere Dixieland jubilee. Both are worth turning out for.

In the former, some of the jazzmen who have worked in Europe were shown in a series of cross-cut interviews, and also heard in musical footage.

The cast included Richard Davis, Chuck Mangione, Dexter Gordon, Gato Barbieri, Steve Lacy, Wilton Felder, Six Hooper, Freddie Hubbard, Ben Sidran and Phil Woods. The talk is what really made the film significantly different from most other shorts, although there were several interesting performances — by Gordon, Gato and Woods for example.

Phil Woods' group playing 'Last Night When We Were Young' sticks in my memory as one of the more passionate musical utterances in a film which, if hardly cinematically exciting, takes a serious look at a number of jazz musicians who speak seriously about their profession and their audience at

home and abroad. Dick and Maddie Gibbin's annual four-day jazz thrash in Denver, Colorado, is well known to be a pretty chaotic affair for musos and customers alike. Some 50 musicians are invited to wine, dine, play and sweat the net in considerable sights around Colorado Springs.

The 1976 orgy in the theme of The Great Rocky Mountain Jazz Party. Fairly, it can be said that a jazz-loving cinematographer will not tell value from its 100 minutes of loving repetition. Director-photographer Villa Lapenik's camera follows various musicians as they arrive, take part in innumerable jam sessions, and now and again, as they eat or drink, chat or kip, or even play solo trumpet in church or blow reveille from a boat on the lake. Without question, some of this will be considered rare and valuable footage in the years to come.

It's also all good clean fun — though a shade too long perhaps and I recall with pleasure numerous superb moments such as when Ruby Braff is greeted triumphantly in the street by Clark Terry and the two of them indulge in a witty horn dialogue and when the late Joe Venutis blows looks about ready to catch fire with the exuberance of his playing when Bob Wilber and the two of them indulge in a soprano summit on 'Sing Of Songs', when young Jim Faddis duets with the very elderly pianist, Eubie Blake on the veteran's own song, 'Memories Of You' — and, if allowance is made for sentimentality, when Lullie Armstrong is accompanied with (what else?) 'Hello Dolly'.

Some of the moments have been edited drastically, or in a manner which omits bars or misses beats, but who's complaining?

Both these films are being distributed here by TCB. Releasing and should be available to jazz organisations as well as art cinemas and so on. Look out for them — MAX JONES

bram tchailowsky

- 9 January - Bristol, Colston Hall
- 10 January - Bournemouth, Winter Gardens
- 12 January - London, Hammersmith Odeon
- 13 January - London, Hammersmith Odeon
- 14 January - London, Hammersmith Odeon
- 16 January - Ipswich, Gaumont
- 17 January - Brighton, Dome

ON TOUR WITH
RORY GALLAGHER

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RUNNERS**



singles

REVIEWED BY IAN BIRCH

THE BEACH BOYS:

"Kona Coast" (Reprise K14494). This is terribly sad. The Beach Boys seem to have split into two (warring) factions. On one side Dennis and Carl Wilson want to pursue and develop the avenues opened up by the likes of "Surf's Up," whereas in the other corner Mike Love and Al Jardine, besotted by transcendental meditation, want to regress into those teenage sidewalk-surfing days of the early Sixties. The latter also exercise control over Brian Wilson. Hence "Kona Coast," written by Love and Jardine, is a desperate and juvenile re-enactment of opus-sand innocence. The Maharishi has a lot to answer for...

DON LETTS, STRATETIME KEITH, STEEL LEG, JAH WOBBLE: "Steel Leg v. the Electric Dread" (Virgin VS 239). One of last year's finest singles was released at the end of last year. "Public Image" took everyone by surprise. It snuck into the bloodstream unexpectedly, light, tight, ringing, ingenious and unavoidable (just like the Bee Gees' "Too Much Heaven," in fact). PIL's Jah Wobble, (Stratime) Keith Levine and Jim "Steel Leg" Walker have teamed up with old mate Don Letts for this four-tracker. I suppose it's a little like the Glitter Band making their own single while still officially connected with G.G. himself. The sound relates directly to its motherode but takes it into other areas at the same time. "Steel Leg" is the harsh, grating rock & roll approach of PIL, and not very successful. The other three numbers (the titles are really funny) are London-weaned, white-boy dub where Zion gets inextricably muddled up with islington. It's much more entertaining than I ever thought it would be.

JEAN MICHEL JARRE: "Equinoxe Part 5" (Polydor POSP 20). Self-consciously modern Euro-disco made by the prosperous. On the back of the picture sleeve you see Jean and his comrade Charlotte Rampling autographing the master plate with a coffee-stained casualness. Brisk and pretentious music for the discerning (but happily alienated) city dweller.

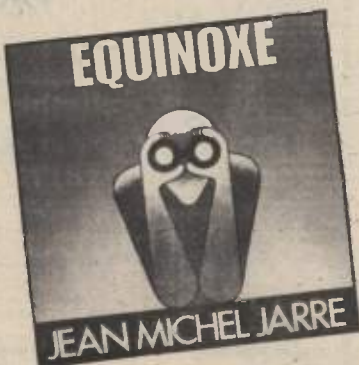
CERRONE: "Je Suis Music" (CBS 12-6918-special extended version). Despite the grim title, this is very straightforward and unashamedly danceable. Populist disco that cheerfully nicks and re-moulds the most successful elements of other populist disco. There is some winking guitar that I could do without at one stage but, otherwise, start weaving your way through the bar towards the dance floor.

DAVID KUBINEC: "Some Things Never Change" (A&M ABMS 7394). This is awful. A clutter of stupid words, brassy back-up harmonies and tepid Bowie-esque trademarks.

Lean pickings this week—it's that time of year



THE USERS



What's astonishing is that John Cale produced it.

DAN HARTMAN: "This Is It" (Blue Sky 6989). Hartman used to be the bass-player with Edgar Winter's band and recently scored a deserved bullseye with his very own, "Instant Replay." The follow-up will be another smash — no doubt about it. Once again, his voice, which sounds like a squeaky Boz Scaggs, does battle with sax, strings, piano and so on in the stomping Tom Moulton mix.

THUNDERCHILD / Dead London (CBS 126477 — full length version). Taken from Jeff Wayne's "The War Of The Worlds" (featuring Chris Thompson on vocals and Ricard Burton on narration. Ten minutes of pure embarrassment. Why do people (and musical directors in particular) insist on sellotaping rock & roll to speculative fiction? At best the relationship is specious; at worst, a completely alien coupling. Jeff Wayne does everything you'd expect, turning out a kind of hammy TV production of "Diamond Dogs." Virtually ignoring the whole feel of the Wells novel, he flounders around in top-heavy flourishes and squealing guitars. May the Force destroy it.

PURE HELL: "These Boots Are Made For Walking" (Golden Sphinx Records GSX 002). I don't care if they once shared a loft home with the New York Dolls (more fool them); I don't care if they are one of the first all-black punk bands (haven't they got better things to do?); I don't care if they are managed by Curtis Knight (he should certainly know better); this is a dull, pointless Heavy Metal-slanted re-hash of the old Lee Hazlewood song. Pathetic.

THE THREE DEGREES: "Woman In Love" (Ariola ARO 141). Prepare for a big disappointment. After the irresistible "Giving Up, Giving In" the threesome unaccountably turn to glossy, super-club fare. Jackie Trent meets Helen Reddy at a ritzy reception. Shame on you, girls.

THE USERS: "Kicks In Style" (Warped Records WARP 1). Not bad. Produced by Dave Goodman, the sound is the rough side of pop — the Undertones with more pouting and minor toughness. Still, to get noticed boys, you really have to be a bit more distinctive.

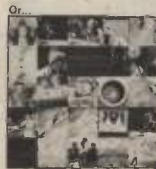
THE JACKSONS: "Destiny" (Epic EPC 6983). Another disappointment, following the delicious "Blame It On The Boogie". This is music for courteous appreciation rather than skin-twitching excitement. The production is classy but the song, written by the boys themselves, isn't up to much.

ROTOVATORS: "Meat or Sleep May Safely Braise" (Company Records SRTS/78/CUS 143 — available from Fort Barnes, Rookery Lane, Lincoln LN6 7HQ). They sound like a newer, less jaded and more (fringe) experiential version of the Albertos. Frolics with theatrical teeth.

When your elderly dowager aunt asks in her strident, horsey voice what you did with the record token she gave you, show her a bag of sick.



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MARVIN
GAYE
(pic: Alan
Johnson)

Albums

MARVIN GAYE: "Here My Dear" (Tamla T364 LP2)

I SUPPOSE I should be grateful to the new Marvin Gaye album for something—I did a very surreal drawing in pencil while wading through Side Four. By half-way through Side Two I'd already mentally awarded myself a medal—surely I was going to be the Only Person To Sit Non-Stop All The Way Through "Here, My Dear"?

Listen, apart from the academic interest, I was listening to this album to make a living. It's not me that has to rush out to the import shops and which half a week's earnings onto the counter for four sides of Gaye's banal meanderings. It's you.

Theoretically, it had the potential for being Gaye's greatest work since "What's Going On," recorded in 1971. Glancing through the discography supplied with the biography is a surprising reminder that Gaye's present credibility rests on his musical acknowledgement of how fucked up everything is on "What's Going On," and his '73 sex manual, "Let's Get It On." Other than that—well, you got your Motown Greatest Hits, who needs, besides that decade-old swag, most of what's left is muzak for ino-floored bordellos tucked into alleys behind bus stations, of varying levels of dance appeal.

The story behind "Here,

The sound of alimony

My Dear" is remarkable (read it on page 7), but basically Marvin's got to hand over the greater part of the potatoes he earns from this record to his ex-wife Anna, Berry Gordy's sister.

I can picture the argument now—Anna and Marvin are in the middle of a slanging match. Marvin's just opened the bill from Anna's hairdresser.

"Hey, baby, what the hell do you think you're doing? This check's enough for four Vietnamese children to live on for about five years."

"Really, Marvin, I don't know why you're acting so pissed. Every time you open your mouth in a studio, you earn enough to feed 60 Vietnamese families for 20 years. Maybe 30. You're always so unreasonable."

"Hey, baby, that may be what you think, but just cool it—I mean, all those throat sprays don't come free, you dig?"

With that, Marvin sets fire to the invoice and hurries it against Anna's new drapes, and... no, flippancy aside, "Here, My Dear" offers Gaye an ideal opportunity to examine some harsh emotional realities. The break-up of a marriage—in this case, his own—is always different, but there are emotional wrenches that strike chords between each one. It's unlikely that superstars could have cushioned Gaye from the agonising adjustments/blissful feelings or relief of a less well-endowed couple, financially speaking.

Instead, it sounds like Marvin goes into a studio with a group of his usual session musicians, and just jams for two days straight, with the aid of some choice blow. He then picks out 14 of the best jams, and divides them into four. What do you get? A double-album!

Literally speaking, Marvin darts between best and worst as if he couldn't tell the difference. Between the first cut on Side One and the last on Side Four, Marvin makes a superficial examination of every inch of how he met, won, and wed Anna, how they fell in love, how they fell out of love, harsh words exchanged, how he met Another Woman, et cetera.

The odd moments where he goes so far as to scratch the surface are pointed, sometimes funny, sometimes vindictive: "Is that enough for you? I know you love that expensive stuff..." What can I do? The judge decreed you should go on living the way you're accustomed to...

Sometimes tell me, please, why must I pay these attorney's fees? ("Is That Enough?"). Occasionally, he allows a glimpse of hurt and anger: if you really loved me, how could you turn me in to the police? ("When Did You Stop Loving Me?").

But too often, Marvin chooses to express bliss by monotone croonings, clichés of the "Ooh baby, let's get it on all night long Uhh-uh" variety. Looking on the bright side, only one of the four sides is

totally inexcusable. Side Three. From the mindless cootycycoo of "Sparrow" to the flaccid instrumental "When Did I Stop Loving You," the content is an insult to international record-buyers.

The other three sides vary from good to drab. I'm actually astonished that I can't hear a single hit 45 on it, with the possible exception of "Time To Get It Together," whose intro is the only section of the album I've wanted to play back immediately. On playing it back, I felt it was only comparatively good.

I've well and truly OD'd on "Here, My Dear." As I write listening to an independent label disco mix, "Don't Call Us Immigrants" on the Arakaw label; the singer, a Birmingham man called Tabby Cat Kelly, is an elegant soul crooner who obviously spent his formative years listening to Marvin Gaye; he's all righteous anger tinged with pathos, as Gaye was when he pleaded "Save the children" on "What's Going On." Spend your money on that, instead.

Sorry, Anna. — VIVIAN GOLDMAN.

AL CAMPBELL: "Showcase" (DEB LP07).

IGNORE the drab sleeve, the uninspired title—Al Campbell's first album is one of the year's most solid releases. Structurally, it's impeccable: the ten tracks consist of five singles, vocal and dub version, gracefully slipping into one another just what most reggae fans do with their singles—flip it over quick.

Thus the first side opens with "Working Man," Al gasping in syncopated cries of pain before swanning into his elegant, mournful singing, detailing typical working-

man's blues. One of Al's most noticeable virtues is how simply he rides the rhythm: unfussy, spare, almost understated sympathy with five of the best rhythms assembled on one album for a long time.

Every rhythm on "Showcase" can easily lend itself to a variety of vocal treatments, as the elegant, understated Campbell dubs display: a whole series of killer bass lines, the kind that sound so natural that your body moves as if you'd danced to them in another life for days on end, and had forgotten them till now.

Due to a classic case of "soon-come," there's no information on the sleeve, but in fact 24-year-old Campbell recorded the vocals at King Tubby's and the rhythms at Channel One with the Revolutionaries—Sly and Robbie, Ansel Collins, Douglass, Rancine—the same crew you hear on many, many JA releases. Special praise for Vin Gordon, a.k.a. Trommy, a.k.a. Don Drummond Jr., whose trombone solos on "Tough Man Skank" are a cry of anguish.

Some of the rhythms are very familiar—"John Tom" is a reworking of rapper Zukki's classic "Phenetic," for example—but they all blossom anew.

Literally, Al focuses on street life. "John Tom" is a fable about someone who "was trying to trick me into stealing another man's car, but my mother always said, look before you leap—you'd better step on, John Tom..." "Big Man" is a rallying cry for dreadlocks vs. "babistems." "Children Of The Ghetto" is a rallying cry, and so on. Predictable content for a music that's traditionally dealt in social awareness, but it's still true, and Campbell's beautifully-tailored delivery plus the riches of the rhythms make for addictive listening. — VIVIAN GOLDMAN.

BATTLE OF THE BANDS!

STAND by for the main chance—the 1979 MM Rock/Folk contest starts here! The MM's annual nationwide search for new talent is under way once more, providing the golden opportunity for new bands and solo artists to launch themselves to glory.

The MM contest is still one of the few platforms on which young talent can make a mark—and win some attractive prizes in the process. This year the prizes will total £2,000 in cash and musical instruments, and £1,000 will go to the winning band, who will also appear at one of the major events of the rock calendar, the Reading Festival.

The Rock/Folk Contest is a genuine "live" music competition for bands, amateur and semi-pro, and last year attracted an entry of 650 bands and 210 soloists, a total of 3,500 musicians.

The contest is sponsored by the Association of Musical Instrument Industries and EMI Records, and is organised in co-operation with students' unions around the country.

Area heats will take place at Southampton University (March 3), Strathclyde University, Glasgow (March 10/11), Manchester University (March 24), Brunel Technical College, Bristol (April 7/8), Warwick University, Coventry (May 5), Leicester Polytechnic (May 6), and Surrey University, Guildford (May 12). Other heats are being set up in Leeds, Durham, Oxford, Canterbury, Clacton-on-Sea and London.

Three area finals will take place in May and early June in Leeds, Birmingham and London, and the National Final will be held in July. At each area heat, the judging panel will include representatives from Melody Maker, EMI Records and the Students' Union.

Soloists must submit their entry in the form of

a tape recording of a live performance, and from these recordings selections will be made for appearances at regional finals.

DO NOT SEND A TAPE NOW, but fill in the entry form and send it with the fee and stamped addressed envelope; the organisers will then send you full details of how and when to submit your taped entry.

Entry fee is £1 per person (i.e. fee for a four-piece group is £4), cheques to be made payable to Westland Associates. Entrants should also include a stamped addressed envelope.

The contest is open to all amateur and semi-pro bands and soloists. Closing date for entries is February 7, 1979.

I/We wish to enter the 1979 Melody Maker Rock/Folk Contest and enclose £1.00 entry fee per person entering and a stamped addressed envelope no smaller than 8" x 4".

Please tick appropriate category:

Groups (Amplified) ☐ Number _____ Entry fee enclosed ☐

Groups (Acoustic) ☐ in group _____ £ _____

Soloists (Tape only) ☐ Cheque/Postal Order to be made out to Westland Associates.

USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Group/Soloist name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number _____

Name of person to contact _____

Post to: Melody Maker Rock/Folk Contest, 23a King's Road, London SW3 4RP (01 730 2628).

HI TENSION: "Hi-Tension" (Island ILPS 9564).

CHRIS Blackwell's black English funk progenies finally appear on album after two successful singles ("Hi-Tension" and "Brianna Hustle").

They borrow falsetto harmonies, plucked guitars from Earth, Wind & Fire; the ballads could be Maurice White outtakes. The out cuts (except for "Power and Lightning," a solo-trading instrumental derived from EWE's "Africano" groove) use the hard, unmodish rhythms of brass construction and the Fabrics (chaps that's why H-T hasn't made in America).

Production, by Kofi Ayivor and former TI staffer Alex Sadein, is fine, their mix features a surprisingly boomy snare in a spacey track decorated by dripping wet percussion and guitars (beautifully arranged and played).

Groove: pleasant but (excepting the magical "Hi-Tension") unremarkable. Writing: excessively indebted to Kalimba.

Mix: strange, not uncommon in English R&B, but successfully so (the only comparable example being Bloodstone's "Natural High"). The best elements of this sound are stretches (without the detractions) on Third World's Sadein-produced LP. **DAVID**

ALLAN CLARKE: "I Wasn't Born Yesterday" (A&M AUL 704).

I THOUGHT baths was one of the Three Musketeers till I discovered Allan Clarke's new LP. Funny thing about ex-Hollies—divided they fall, poor dears. Clarke's voice still stretches (without the detractions) on Third World's Sadein-produced LP. **DAVID**

There's a list of back-up musicians, singers and special mentions as long as a queue at Oxford Circus. Clarke's voice, still stretches (without the detractions) on Third World's Sadein-produced LP. **DAVID**

Again, on "No Prisoners Taken," starting side two, the arrangement is strong enough but, again, the lyrics are solemn schlock. Dito "I'll Be Your Man." "The Street" "Light Of My Smiles" has a cheerful Eurobeat and the prize of the album, "Who's Goin' Out Back Door" with an early Stewart arrangement of the lyrics sung with real venom, comes next. The sepulchral "Off The Record" does what it does. There are no winners at all on this desperately earnest album.

Admittedly Clarke is far more at ease with the slow ballads, and he is a fine singer—but, although his command of the English language is commendable, he should record the works of others. **SUSAN MILL**.

LEO KOTTKE: "Burnt Lips" (Chrysalis CHR 1191).

LEO KOTTKE once played a support to Son House's Sixties comeback, and now those experiences have rubbed off on him. Laterally those old vocals (long since described by Kottke himself as "Geeze facts of the Roudie") day have threatened to en-

BOB DYLAN: "Bob Dylan At Budokan" (CBS / Sony import 404P 1100-1).

NOW that all the initial acclaim of his recent world tour is over, it's pretty obvious from the various recorded evidence that Bob Dylan's concerts were not what they were first cracked up to be.

Those sappy introductions to the awkward attempts at tastefulness, the clumsiness of many arrangements—all that was overlooked in the enthusiasm at seeing him perform once again.

This has been a big year for Dylan, a year in which he has tried to reassert his artistic supremacy, and perhaps he's become a lot more aware of what is going on in music. For the first time since the days with the Hawks, he's assembled a permanent band; he's finally admitted the production inadequacies of his records; and he's open to more contemporary musical styles, like the reggae mode he employed on "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right" and "Knockin' on Heaven's Door."

But somehow he hasn't got it right. He seems more tuned in the MOR values of someone like Neil Diamond than to the more urgent musical demands of today's audiences. His concept

gulf his loopy, blues-based guitar which is saying much to amalgam, say, Johnny Cash and Lightnin' Slim attracts, look no further. Mr. Kottke is 35 and manages to sound about 500, so sublimely world-weary is his delivery.

Like-minded tracks are placed back to back so that the arrangement is a series of "Frank Forgets" and "Sonora" — a nightmarish sequence of "It's a Wonderful Life" and "It's a Wonderful Life" — and Nick Lowe's "Endless Sleep" (off the "bow"). EP, not to be confused with the Judy Reynolds (oldie) with the aforementioned "It's a Wonderful Life" and an epic quality as a result of all the cross-references.

Things aren't picked up while never less than assured, is hard put to equal the luxurious surrealism of the lyrics, and seems best employed in a persuasive role, for which his lengthy full-out technique is perfectly suited. Always there, at effect rather than cause, he is not so much the master guitarist of his press releases as the picky, underexposed emergent singer / songwriter of peculiar charm. — MAUREN PATON

CLARENCE "Frogman" HENRY: "Is Alive And Well Living In New Orleans And Still Don't His Thing" (Pye KPL 5574).

OR AT LEAST, he was in 1970, when these tracks were recorded for the Roulette label, for whose catalogue Pye

certs at Earl's Court were very adult, but rarely was there any sense of danger, of an artist taking real risks. Maybe, in retrospect, he should not have played up to his audience's expectations in recapitulating for them his career, perhaps he should have based his concerts upon "Street-Legal" which contains some of his best songs (as well as a few of his worst).

Of course, in a way, he can't win. His own reputation is the hardest act he has to follow, and by showing more of himself he has invited inevitable criticism. I now think that those who complained that his performances were a bit of a nostalgic wallow were right. I wouldn't recommend this live double album from 1974, to any but the most diehard fan, and even he would be better advised to get hold of the bootleg tapes from Earl's Court, which are superior in several respects: the performances are generally grittier, the atmosphere more thrilling, and the choice of songs is a little better. Indeed, they include "Tales Of Yankee Power," that delicate version of "Tangled Up In Blue," and the really vibrant "Masters Of War."

Perhaps it's something to do with the Japanese audience, but "Budokan" is muted and predictable. For a start, the sound is too clean, and one notices with mounting irritation the prevaricance of Steve Douglas's trilling flute and his snare work, which always seems confined within decorous limits.

The fundamental problem, however, is Dylan's approach

to recognizable songs, and this, of course, is the essence of the new Bob Dylan. Whatever his talents, arranging is not one of them, and, although bassist Rob Stoner is said to have helped in this area, Dylan and the band just bash on through.

That so many of the performances work, particularly "Maggie's Farm" and "Like A Rolling Stone," is because of the inherent quality of the songs and the feeling for them rather than what Dylan does to them. Would anyone prefer the versions at Earl's Court to the originals? I doubt it. Dylan's idea of arranging is pretty superficial, and is epitomized by his handling of "I Shall Be Released," which builds up rather archly to his delivery of the title line and then has him and the girl back-up singers finally come in after a dramatic pause of Las Vegas proportions.

Would the occasion on this album where a reinterpretation really brings out an unexpected quality in the original is on "I Want You," where the beat is stripped away, emphasizing his voice, broken as "the cracked bells and washed-out notes."

"Tangled Up In Blue" got a similarly poignant treatment at Earl's Court.

You often, though, Dylan comes on as though he's reading a kind of revue book, "Going, Going, Gone" to close the first half of his performance, so that the girls can both sing his offstage and line audience into the interval, still makes me wince.

Who would once have suspected such sentimentality of Dylan? Is that really erasing the old Dylan we want? — MICHAEL WATTS.

CHARLIE GRACIE: "The Cameo-Parkway Sessions" (London HAU 9513).

SOME weeks ago on our Echips page it was stated that Decca's London label had a new manager with enough enthusiasm to consider reissuing material that was languishing in their vaults for over 10 years. I hope the possibility of succeeding reissues is judged by the reaction to, and sales of, this album. I hope someone down at Decca doesn't cancel the reissue of the Henry Street Club set for what I'm about to say—but, then again, perhaps it's a good idea to put out an album which only really merits a max-single.

Okay, so away from the studio and up on the stage Gracie was a different proposition. He was a right puting out an album which only really merits a max-single. Gracie was a different proposition. He was a right puting out an album which only really merits a max-single. Gracie was a different proposition. He was a right puting out an album which only really merits a max-single.

Side one contains his hits "Butterfly," "Fabulous," "Love You So Much It Hurts," plus misses like "Lookin' For A Good Time," "Cool Baby" and "Dressin' Up." Side two is so weak as to be immediately dispensable. Six of the side's ten cuts were taken from "Listen and you'll know."



At I said, an album worth only a max-single. The problem with such a 45 is not what to put on it, but what to leave off it. Now, here's about something more worth putting on it. I'm talking about the album "Cameo-Parkway Sessions" by Charlie Gracie. It's a London HAU 9513.

GROVER WASHINGTON JR.: "Reed Seed" (Motown STML 12099).

ITD perhaps be stretching a point to say that this album was made on the cheap—but, devoid of the lush instrumentation and star-studded cast that characterized his Kudu, this latest outing by Kudu, this latest outing by Kudu, this latest outing by Kudu.

Produced by himself at the tiny Ridge Sound Studio in Philadelphia, without added strings or horns, it's very much a group effort. The group, being Washington's road band, collectively named Locksmith. The result is a musical breath of fresh air, an album that sounds like a group of friends playing together.

Locksmith consists of John Blake on keyboards and electric violin, Tyrone Brown on bass, Doc Gibbs (percussion), Sid Simmons (keyboards), Richard "Big Boy" Stecker (guitar), and Pete Vinson (drums) — and they do it to death.

Blake and Gibbs — whose tuxedo guitar is way up in the mix — penned the suitably discofied opener, "Do Da Boga." "Stecker's 'Thru' by Stecker, boasts a neat soprano solo and some effective multitracked horn parts from Washington (the plays soprano, tenor, alto, and baritone sax, as well as flute on the album), as well as Gibbs' shakers, bells and what-have-you, dancing across the stereo from ear to ear; the intro to the title track is a haunting Washington composition, grabs you with its unusual combination of sax, electric violin, and synth; and there's more overblown harmonizing between flute and sax in Simmons' slower "Marrage Search."

Side two opens with my favourite, "Santa Cruzin'," written by the whole group, and gets on there again on timbale; the closer, "Loran's Again," again by CWJ, sees him on tenor, with an Eric Gale-ish break from Stecker. It's a lovely non-part hook in thirds harmony on the middle eight, and Gibbs' picking cover after cover on timbale; the closer, "Loran's Again," again by CWJ, sees him on tenor, with an Eric Gale-ish break from Stecker.

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Whatever the nature of those legal wheelings and dealings that led to Kudu's label's new distributor, Motown, he's come out on top. "Reed Seed," made with his own musicians and under his own conditions, is obviously close to Grover T's heart; like all his previous albums, it's riding high on the U.S. soul-jazz charts. **DAVID**

RAY CHARLES: "Ray Charles Blues" (Ember CJX 854).

HENRY'S collection of (twenty) early tracks (1949-50), recorded by Ray on his arrival on the West Coast in clean, unrepentant stereo. It's some of the best music of the 20th century, occupying a rare place and chronologically position between the sophisticated of Billie Holiday etc. and the Cole and the in-between of Sam Cooke and Clyde McPhatter.

Ray sings brilliantly throughout, before the days of "Had My Heart Sunk In You" (a pile reverts; even if it is mature, every note of it is finely turned. Ray, hadn't yet developed his rough, Fifties' voice, there's a vocal that's almost perfect, a vocal that's almost perfect, a vocal that's almost perfect.

The weaker side of it, like "I'm Had My Heart Sunk In You" (a pile reverts; even if it is mature, every note of it is finely turned. Ray, hadn't yet developed his rough, Fifties' voice, there's a vocal that's almost perfect, a vocal that's almost perfect, a vocal that's almost perfect.

THE GROOVE



MARK KNOPFLER investigates tax-exile lifestyle

and how to get it

The groove and how it works (Part One)

OUTSIDE it must have been in the 80s, but inside Compass Point Studios, Nassau, the air-conditioning was working so energetically that an extra layer of clothing would have been welcome. Daft, really.

The lights had been dimmed. In the control booth, Jerry Wexler, Barry Beckett, Mark Knopfler and Jack Nuber sat grouped behind the MCI mixing board. The atmosphere seemed unusually quiet. The studio staff had just gone home, and the normal congestion at the pool table down the corridor had died away.

The mood in the control room took on an extraordinary blend of controlled concern and suppressed excitement. Pick Withers stood in the studio, waiting for the go-ahead. The red of his spotlight merged into the surrounding blackness. He was about to add some percussion to a song called "Single-Handed Sailor", and had devised a do-it-yourself shaker from one of Adrian Boot's empty film canisters partially filled with sand. It called for some finely-boned wrist action.

Barry Beckett's Southern drawl went out through the Intercom: "You've got to keep it steady, Pick, steady as a rock." He need hardly have said it. As soon as the backing track leaped into life, Pick began swaying in perfect synchronization, completely immersed in his craft. Nothing was forced; everything grew out of that propulsive interlocking of the parts.

Dire Straits, 1979's band-most-likely-to, didn't get where they are by following fashion. So they're soaking up the sun in the Bahamas on the excuse of cutting their second album with R & B veteran Jerry Wexler. It's a hard life.

Brochure: IAN BIRCH. Snaps: ADRIAN BOOT.

A relaxed ebb and flow where energy and precision dovetailed consummately.

Jerry Wexler, decked out in his "Don't judge me... I haven't been final mixed" T-shirt, kept time so fervently that, as he later admitted, his arm almost fell off. Barry's shoulder blades began their characteristic rhythmic twitch which signified that all was well (when he began chewing his pencil you knew that something somewhere was awry). Mark Knopfler danced in his chair.

Pick finished and Mark yelled out: "Wunderbar, my little cosy pal!" One take and it surely was — to plunder another Beckett byword — "in the pocket".

The groove and how it shows (Part Two)

THE mood was strained, now. Mark had made several attempts to put down a lead solo on a cut called "Lady Writer", and a slight irritation was beginning to show. Dire Straits invariably disliked doing more than four or five consecutive takes on the same song. If the pocket wasn't filled within that allotted time-span, they would drop everything, play pool

and return at a later date.

Barry's experience and intuitive understanding were brought to bear, as he broke the gathering tension with some humour: "Now just think of those 20,000 kids waiting outside with their hot dogs and colas..." laughed Mark. We all chuckled. He began to pick out a kind of filigree version of "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" on that seasoned old red Strat.

"Right," decided Barry, "just go ahead. Go where it naturally takes you." The word was given and the action followed. With a glorious effervescence, Mark coaxed out phrases that complemented and advanced the thrust of the song. Dynamite wrapped in velvet. That's rock & roll.

● "There's a humanity and humility involved, which isn't meant in a precious sense" Pick Withers.

DIRE STRAITS were in Nassau recording their second album under the dual production auspices of Jerry Wexler and Barry Beckett (in fact January will see them in the Muscle Shoals Sound studios for the final mix-down). I was invited to see what was happening.

This is probably where The Journalist should come in with a long-winded justification about the whole set-up, but in the case of Dire Straits such an approach is unnecessary. If you see some sort

of "street credibility" problem here, that is strictly your problem, sunshine.

Since their inception in late '77, the Straits have always stood outside any of the prevailing fashions. Their reputation has grown simply out of the excellence of their music and the unassuming character of the band. It's been the result of individual action, be it a punter hearing or seeing them for the first time or the commitment of certain people connected with the dreaded "biz".

For instance, their signing to Warners in the States was effectively sparked off by the personal enthusiasm of two record company employees: Roberta Peterson in Burbank and Karen Burch in New York. They brought the band to the attention of Wexler, currently the head of A&R in Warners' East Coast Division. The formula has been repeated in a barrow-load of other countries — oddly, Britain has so far been the slowest to catch on. Once again, individual company personnel plus local deejays have championed the first album in the face of Phonogram's hesitant official policy.

Australia (where they have been number one for weeks), New Zealand (ditto), Germany (where the promoters are so eager to have the band tour that they will themselves underwrite all expenses), Holland (they were actually mini-mobbed there on a recent

flying visit) and Canada have been particular areas of devotion, helping push sales over the half-million mark. Three copies have even been shifted in the Lebanon. It seems to have been an unusually natural process.

The core of their collective personality lies in Pick's words, above. Obviously they stand at the opposite end of the spectrum from, say, the massive commercial pipeline that is Kiss, or the obsessively self-centred flatulence that is Styx, or the extreme alienation tactic that is Public Image.

Equally obvious is that "humanity and humility" does not paint a picture of deliberate self-denial or monastic self-righteousness. Their aim is enjoyment and communication on a level that combines both sensuousness and intelligence (you can dance to Dire Straits) and, consequently, they channel everything into the music or the song at hand.

They abhor the cult of the personality. As Mark said, "The real reason we're doing what we're doing is because it's real. The words that apply are love, commitment and respect..." As it happens, I don't think that sounds at all ridiculous.

THE prevailing spirit in Nassau was one of creative 80-operation and good-natured banter. The customary demarcation lines between band and producer just didn't exist. Everyone lived together in Capricorn, a house rented from on Barbara Harkness, a millionaire patroness of the arts.

Because Nassau is a tax haven, an awful lot of rich people live there. Island Records is registered as a company there, and its chief, Chris

continued overleaf

Dire Straits from previous page

Blackwell, built Compass Point Studios on the island for similar reasons. The Straits opted for the studio not only because Barry and Jerry's other commitments wouldn't allow them to spend time in Britain but also for those financial considerations. As David Knopfer explained: "What would have happened is that the British company would have had to have paid the American musicians' union a certain amount of money to be re-recorded in the States. If they'd done that, their profit margin would have been so small as to make it ridiculous."

Capricorn may have been a pretty eye-dazzling amalgam of swimming pool, Greek porticos, hideous neoclassical busts of black manikins and pieces of Wedgwood china come alive but it was still a hell of a lot cheaper than staying in one of the nearby hotels.

A firm schedule was adhered to every day. Each afternoon and a hefty chunk of the evening was spent in the studio, which despite the neon-lit clientele that it's attracting (from Talking Heads to ELP and, this month, the new, multi-million-dollar, multi-equipped. There was no isolation booth, for example, so that when Mark wanted to do an acoustic track he cheerfully used the adjoining broom closet.

The schedule found Wexler, who looks and acts like a patriarchal cross between Ernest Hemingway and Edward G. Robinson, habitually arranging the evening meals. When he went off to New York on a business trip, he would always bring back huge quantities of meat and vegetables (along with mountains of cigarettes by the likes of Eric Clapton, Dave Stapleton, and the Waller and the Russell Sisters for late-night unwinding).

Synthetic though the surroundings were, they never interfered with the job in hand. Before arriving in Nassau, the band had used the Wharf Studios in Greenwich Village, one of all the material bar one song, "Communique," which was written during an afternoon when engineer Jack Nuber was on sick. They re-recorded it the following morning.

In fact the original demos were so impressive that Jerry would often joke, "You made it straight out of the first place. Now we just have to remake it!"

The parts that make up the whole

IT is not easy to get Dire Straits to talk 'officially' about themselves, and even harder to persuade them to interpret their music. Personal biographies only give a partial view of appreciating the music, they argue, while one of the most vital aspects of their approach is to keep a song open-ended, with a life of its own, independent of its creators as possible.

In Mark's case, especially (for he has written all the material on both albums), the literal/documentary use of fire kills a song stone dead. When he is asked who, say, is "Harry" (the protagonist of "On the Beach") and "In the Gallery" he baulks.

Mark talks in long pauses, choosing words cautiously. He was not only a journalist for several years but also, armed with an English degree from Leeds University, taught at Loughborough Tech in Essex.

He explains that he uses the device of persona more now in his writing. "I feel more of a detachment now from 'me' in a song, which doesn't stop me from writing. It's just a rock song. I don't feel that I should have to answer for it—I'm not trying to negate my own responsibility for what I've done, but there's a whole load of natural good licks that take on a life of their own, in terms of their cohesiveness, yet still have a kind of open ends for chance or whatever might crop up."

"I think that applies to a lot of people who write and play. There's a sense in which you're like other people. You can't own them, or say that this is what was intended, because you'd be lying. I know that, I know, because the whole thing is coming from you anyway. But when somebody does a portrait, for instance, I'd be very interested in the level at which it comes out resembling what they photographically intended. If you don't."

It's a nice discovery to make actually. I don't know if you've ever found that a thing might begin to take shape of its own accord, either by the dictate of the camera or that you've decided to use or just through the sheer multiplicity of the content, or I don't know what. What

I'm saying is that you've never got anything mapped out completely. Given that, I think what you do need is a feeling for form, but what I really want to avoid is all the personal attention on Mark the bloke, who is just a bloke. I really don't want any of that stuff.

"Sometimes when I listen to these songs, I think, 'That's got nothing to do with me as a bloke.' For instance, 'Follow Me Home'—a new song. 'I'm important in a lot of ways. Yes, I was on an island, and yes, there was a girl—but it's not very different from any other tourist sleep on a beach, being up to a ruin, looking out over the sea, eating meat and drinking wine. But the idea goes beyond that, leading to a song which doesn't actually belong to the bloke. I like to be divorced, in that sense, from the song.'"

HEARING the new material (which I promised not to judge, since it hadn't been final-mixed), what I really found most accessible about Mark's writing was its comprehensiveness. Diverse and very human emotions are given shape by intellect which reacts to everyday events, responding to touch and visuals as well as to sound. His songs take account of atmosphere, mood, sound, sensuality, moment, change, space and tension.

Later Jerry Wexler agreed, enthusing over Mark's "concrete imagery." "Like on 'Single-Handed Sailor'—we're just sailing down at the docks and hear those hawsers creaking on the swell of the tide of the Thames, and you can see maybe a ship or two, and then the captain of the ship or the incredible picture in 'Follow Me Home'—I see cave dwellers, in fourth century, some-where south of Yucatan. And the music is so consonant with that."

WHEN I unleashed all my interpretations on Mark, his first reaction, after a chortle, was "Don't forget women!" I had dissected, so he began to rebel.

"Surprising as it may sound, there is an attempt at achieving some unity. I hope it's not too much of a contradiction, in the light of what you've just said. I do try and write a song as a whole thing, rather than midnight mumbles with a guitar. What's really pleasant is just the multiplicity of responses that goes on. We're not necessarily attempting to do one specific thing—God forbid—except just to make something whole and failing every time. I think that's the way against over-intellectualizing."

Mark spoke warmly about Beckett and Wexler, though there had been some minor disputes. One centered around the famed Wexler "sweetening" technique, which Jerry employed extensively on Atlantic. "I've listened to the early stuff. In essence, the basic tracks were decorated with often ornate and studied arrangements, a process that effectively took away the music. 'Money Honey' by Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters, and was developed/modified by Berry Gordy on early Motown singles."

"I thought there might be a possibility—this was before we'd sent Jerry the demos—that we might be pressured into excessive use of other instruments, though I felt all right about it at root. I thought, never mind, because I know it can't be a bad record—not really. In fact, what happened was that he was the first to say that there should be nothing added. All the talk about using the Memphis Horns was unnecessary."

"I was envisaging fairly extensive technical changes, but I find that just isn't the case, which, in all honesty, is a surprise to me. Instead we get tremendous receptiveness and sensitivity towards what we're doing. It's simply a question of bringing it out as something on the best."

"What's really nice is seeing them work together. Each one of them listens to the other. When Jerry enters into a musical territory which is Barry's turf and he knows it but he goes in straight—Barry listens and alters what he's doing, if it's at all possible."

"Oh, it's a whole feeling thing, understanding, pick-ups, times, choice of take, and after recording the cadence of something, sometimes a knowledge that something's not a go. Jerry is very clear for a song, and a surety feeling that when he's not there, he has left a space. And the other important thing is that Jerry handles the vocal line very clearly. He does it gratefully, so professionally, there's been so much attention to detail."

Mark consistently maintained that

their main objective was fun, but it was of a variety that lay in complete contrast to what he termed "desperation."

"There's a lot of that on the rock scene—overcompensation for what's missing, which comes out as a kind of frustration, if you like. When you talk about that kind of fun, what you're getting is like a bicycle pump which is trying to pump up a kind of frustration. Every thing's at bursting point, including the artist, and the result just isn't substantial. It's almost every sense. And a lot of that comes from attitude, a musician's attitude to his music."

DAVE is Mark's younger brother, and plays rhythm guitar. Occasional friction, heightened by their blood relationship, arises but is quickly dispelled. Dave talks a lot about his adolescence and his student years: how he was the classic ball of twine, a combination of a rebellious rebel who worshipped Hendrix and Peter Green; how he then turned to "progressive country" bands like the Eagles, Gene and the Dillards; how he had a brief flirtation with International Socialism at the time of the miners' strike and the worst wave of IRA bombings on the mainland; how he did a short spell of social work in Deptford but couldn't get through to the black teenage guys and how that worried him; how he distrusts abrasive emotion in rock and roll, because that kind of expression can lead to neurosis and danger (except: Sid Vicious).

Dave obviously has great respect for Mark, and badgers his elder brother when he thinks that Mark isn't realising his potential. In the course of one conversation, a parallel emerged to the relationships within Talking Heads. "I'm in '78. Dire Straits toured with the Heads and it struck Dave how Tina Weymouth's stage relationship with David Byrne resembled that of his to Mark. It was almost as if Tina stepped into Dave's chair mark."

I can understand why she does it. It's like Mark and me: there's a kind of supportive relationship, a reinforcement."

He is also very (and maybe nervously) excited about the fact that Dire Straits could be a top-league band in the none too distant future. Is he feeling the pressure?

"In my case this is my first real rock and roll band, apart from the odd weekend when a couple of days there when I was much younger."

Here I am, less than a year after signing the deal with Atlantic. Nassau talking to you; ginger ale, half-a-million albums under my belt, second album being produced by two of the best producers in the business. Where's the pressure? Do you see any pressure?

"I just get excited about how well things are going. There's always plenty of good news to counter-balance anything that might be a bit difficult. It's like a big balloon that keeps floating on up."

JOHN ILLISLEY used to be involved in a record shop and shared a flat with Dave. He exudes an unmistakable aura of having his head screwed on straight. There's no truck with any artsy-fartsy stuff, but he still has a sharp sense of humour.

"Pick Withers, on the other hand, combines the complete lack of thoughtfulness. He can switch immediately from mimicking a George Carlin skit about housewives and slimming pills to discussing the minutiae of business and what he feels about Phonogram."

"There's nobody we don't get on with, but like all record companies there are a few people who just on the conveyor belt, going through the mincer."

He likes things that don't aim for perfection, but he has a kind of living roughness, citing Bob Wills (in Nassau, Pick was engrossed in a Wills biography) and Van Gogh in a Wills biography and Van Gogh in a Wills biography.

He also happens to be an expert drummer/percussionist, a craft he began professionally at the age of 17, starting with the Primitives, spending three years in Italy churning out original band material and touring R&B oldies.

He returned to England, and noticed up a veritable trophy house of associations. There was a called Sid Vicious, who released an album on RCA ("the critics thought it was pretentious and, in retrospect, it was").

He became the Rockfield house drummer, which paid less than zero ("you had to ask for 40p for faps") but was enjoyable nonetheless

The string of names he played with at Rockfield is impressive. Bert Jansch, Howard Chandler, Michael Chapman, and, just prior to joining Dire Straits, Charlie Dore's Buck Pocket (who have recently done a certain amount of work on the Atlantic label). Which brings us up to the here and now and the producers...

BARRY BECKETT, a shy, bulky man, has contributed to countless albums as a keyboards player and producer.

Raised in Birmingham, Alabama on a diet of Jerry Lee Lewis and Floyd Cramer, he spent a lot of time playing local honky-tonks and lounge bars until Papa Don Schroeder, a disc-jockey-cum-producer in Nashville, asked him to go to Rick Hall's Fame Studios at Muscle Shoals to help out "I'm Your Puppet" by James and Bobby Purify.

The experience whetted his appetite. When he landed a position as keyboardist Spooner Oldham left Hall for Memphis, Beckett accepted the offer of a resident gig in the studio. It was the era of the house rhythm section, and he joined forces with bassist David Hood, drummer Roger Hawkins and guitarist Jimmy "The Three Fingers" Miller. They couldn't guarantee Rick Hall's work, and it was his studio that they were working in, but to keep the studio open, they had to do a certain amount of outside work. In Jerry Wexler was coming in, and as a result of that, a lot more gigs were coming in. "I was a business. We started having some R&B hits, very few pop hits."

AFTER severing his connections with Stax Records in Memphis, Wexler brought Wynn Pickett to Fame in 1968, whereupon they proceeded to produce a string of hits including "Land of a Thousand Dances" and "Mustang Sally". The Wexler/Beckett collaboration had begun.

Nevertheless, though the Fame rhythm section was deeply versed in Southern R&B, they listened to and wanted to play pop. The "polish" and "colour" of pop at that time attracted them.

"We knew that if we could incorporate those elements into R&B, we'd have the best of both worlds. But we wanted to go further than that. We just wanted to play pop records."

Gradually this came about. One of the major motivating factors was when the crew of Beckett, Hood, Hawkins and Johnson decided to leave Fame and set up their own studio, Muscle Shoals Sound, in 1969—with help from Wexler and company, Atlantic. Hits came and went.

"We had a policy not to play in other people's studios, because we had our own and we figured that if people wanted to come and work with us, they would come to our studio. That was probably why it was a certain extent, the only exception was that we were still going to New York for Jerry to do Aretha Franklin, because we'd been doing that before we moved."

"It was unfair because we were a little under-equipped, studio-wise. So the only thing we had was the playing ability and a way of getting involved with putting a record together, but I think that's what the people like about it. It was in the first place. We had several producers that didn't know what they were doing. I'd never call names, but we'd get them to help them as much as we could."

A TOTAL change of environment arose when, at Chris Blackwell's instigation, Traffic asked the rhythm team to go out on the road with them, in America and Europe. It marked a crucial turning point. When they returned, the hits started flying out of Muscle Shoals.

"We'd figured out a way to cross R&B into pop, and that was the biggest thing. And then Paul Simon came in and we had our first R&B hit, 'Mrs. Robinson'. It was a one song, 'Mardi Gras', on which he wanted to get a similar sound to what we had on 'Take You Out of the Streets'. It was a kind of a reggae-pop sound."

The session took an hour and a half, and Simon was so surprised by what they had done and experts that he asked them to work on several other songs. It obviously helped that, by this stage, Barry was a reggae convert.

"There's a lot of soul in reggae. Even though someone like Marley has managed to cross it over to a

certain extent, I don't think he's had a big commercial hit in the States yet. That's what I think I can see why, in a way, it's like R&B. It's too raw, it's directed at a certain amount of people only. Direct at that overall populace you've got to put a certain amount of polish on it."

He is, however, not adopting that approach with Dire Straits. For which we thank him.

JERRY WEXLER should need a little introduction. He's a genuine legend in his own time. After working as a journalist on Billboard in the early fifties, he joined Atlantic Records in 1953, when he was a small, maverick independent label. From here on in you could pen several books about his exploits. (If you're interested, pick up a copy of Charlie Gillett's *Making Tracks—The History of Atlantic Records*, which Gillett virtually turns into a Who's Who.)

"I've been involved with a lot of black singers, and sometimes black groups, but in general, black artists are the only ones who make a valuable contribution to that, but there are different processes from the group or rock process, where the producer is usually a fine-tuner, or a lapidary if you will, to the music."

If you confessed musical Jerry's self-analogue. Almost always you can find anyone can do it—that's why more black drops has been able to slip through" with his love of the sound, and his treatment of artists as "valuable property", you should be able to guess his response to the Straits.

THE following words of Wexler's are as thoroughly illuminating as anything a critic has yet had to say about Mark Knopfer and his band:

"They have that Southern characteristic. It's a peculiar, breeding when you don't fill it all up. Making music is always a trade off between how much you state and want to say, and how much you leave to the imagination, and the answer to that is your own taste."

"It's impossible for me to categorize the band. There just isn't any analogue. Almost always you can put somebody into a box and say they're 'like so-and-so'. This band is not like anybody I can categorize. It's the step down the syllabus is I don't mess with it, I don't split it—and I don't think that would even be an option, because the rights of the sound, but he improvises melodically, which to me is the hallmark of a great musician, as opposed to just improvising. He's got a sense of the sound being harmonically oriented. He can do that and still have a familiar relationship to the song. The ghost of the sound is there, but it's good improvisation, in my opinion."

"They represent a very contemporary aspect of British society. They're a part of the most part quite well-educated people, with a very strong sense of self and where their best interests lie. There are elements of a certain consciousness of maybe a lower-middle class and working-class outlook with the benefit of college education. It's a very good because it's a new that's anti-establishment without a lot of blatant sloganeering."

"How can you put it? They respond very immediately to anything that smacks of hypocrisy or sham. There's definitely a sense of the greatest good for the greatest number."

"We all feel the same way, so we're not afraid to sound as if we're gushing. We really do, as if we're involved with something special. I didn't have a notion that it was going to turn out like this when we set out on this little journey."

Funky Nassau: a preview

THE album is tentatively titled left, "Communique", though when I asked Wexler more still arguing, that it might sound a bit like a reggae. He said something more direct, more Anglo-Saxon, and suggested another track title, "News", as a possible contender. They were going to sleep on it.

Listening to the rough mixes, every cut sounded a stone winner. It

has to be said. Overall, the songs are more distinctive than on the first album and the production is streets ahead of Muff Winwood's work on the first album — which, however much the band might argue otherwise, did not do the material full justice.

"Single-Manded Sailor," already mentioned, evokes a "crazy wind wailing round the Cutty Sark" and is firm, chunky and light all at the same time. "News" is a joyous collection of oddball phrases ("He sticks to his guns/ he take the road as it comes it take the shine off his shoes") fronted by a beautifully-picked acoustic and concluded by solitary drums, over which sneaks Mark's willowy guitar.

After a loose-limbed almost-funk intro, "Once Upon A Time In The West" settles into a loping gait with nifty lyrics: "Sitting on a fence/that's a dangerous course/you can even get a bullet/from the peace-keeping force". Mark decided he wanted a kind of "subliminal" syncopation effect on the track, so Pick and he devised a sound out of something they unearthed in the bowels of Compass Point. This "something" resembled miniature tubular bells suspended from a piece of wood. To quieten the effect, they wrapped it up in a dirty towel. What's more, it worked.

"Portobello Belle" continues the A-to-Z-of-London theme of the first LP's "Wild West End", this time the spotlight falling on the celebrated open-air market. Barrow boys are a-squawking while on the truck there is a wino. The central figure is Bella Donna: "She thinks she's tough/she ain't no English Rose/but the blind singer/he's seen enough and he knows" rings out over Mark's National guitar.

PICK jokingly called "Where Do You Think You're Going?" a "butch song". After an acoustic run, Mark's gruff voice spins a tale of confusion, aggression and, most of all, pain. The tempo picks up on "Lady Writer", a compact and sinewy number that comes complete with a Spanish-styled guitar break. The lady writer is on the TV, talking about the Virgin Mary. "This is a modern beat group song," Mark smirked.

Jerry likened "Communiqué" to Booker T and the MGs, and it includes some finely economic keyboard work from Barry. The lyrics are deliberately funny, painting a picture of someone who seems to only come alive through the memos in which he can "say what he means." There is a lengthy but hypnotic fade, with the rhythm and lead guitars delicately jabbing at each other.

"Angel Of Mercy" has to be the single, and will probably have the new-look Rolling Stones panting a little. Its taut, exhilarating, ringing chords are matched by some splendidly tongue-in-cheek lyrics.

Finally, "Follow Me Home" slips in gently. Razor-snap percussion is met by a snaking guitar and heavily anchored bassline. The primitive mood spoken of earlier emerges instantly in the words: "Oh well, the sun go down/celebration in the town tonight/all day long they've been slaughtering on the stone..." The effect is translucent and Mark's guitar achingly understated.

ALL the signs point to Dire Straits being immensely successful in 1979 — which means, of course, cracking America. Warners look set to pull out all the stops, for there are several reasons why the Straits must seem like a godsend to an American record company.

Firstly, all the band members are personable (no office-wrecking: the gentlemanly approach makes life so much easier in the boardroom).

Secondly, they're British — and Britain is still seen in America as an important talent-source.

Thirdly, and mostly importantly, they are in the new wave without being of it. American record men and women hate the British new wave, mainly because they can't understand it; so imagine how those Burbank execs feel about a new British band which can be enjoyed by ears attuned to Little Feat and Ry Cooder. But their association (however tenuous) with the energy of the current British scene can only be useful.

Their music appeals to such a broad cross-section of the community that ~~Warrens~~ ~~can~~ ~~dive in feet first,~~ rather than having to worry about ~~audience~~ ~~demographically-orientated~~ programme directors of adult-orientated FM rock radio stations. It's tailor-made for freeway car radio, no less than Fleetwood Mac or Billy Joel.

Just a word of warning, boys.



LEFT TO RIGHT: DAVE KNOPFLER, JOHN ILLSLEY, PICK WITHERS, MARK KNOPFLER



JERRY WEXLER (foreground) and BARRY BECKETT

A MAN AND HIS GUITAR

LOOK HEAR!

HOTLINE: Agents and Managers who wish their artists to appear in Look Hear should forward dates to John Orme, Melody Maker, 24-34, Meynott Street, London SE1 9LU. These should be posted to arrive ten days before publication date of the MM. (Last-minute bookings may be phoned to 01-261 8818).



BILLY HIGGINS, drummer with the Cedar Walton Quartet: London: Ronnie Scott's



DAMNED: London Hope & Anchor, Wednesday January 10

Wednesday

London Dingwalls: IMMI-GRANT
London Hope and Anchor: 90 DEGREES INCLUSIVE
London 100 Club: ALTON PURNELL, SAMMY RIMMINGTON QUARTET
London Lyceum: CLASH
London Marquee: EATER
London Music Machine: DAVID KUBINEC'S EXCESS, LOCAL OPERATOR
London Rock Garden: THE DOGS, CAPT. COME-DOWN
London Ronnie Scotts: CEDAR WALTON QUARTET, PAM KNOWLES
London Tooting: Castle: VAGUELY ATTRACTIVE
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: EXTRAS, VOYEURS

London Nashville: SORE THROAT
London New Barnet Duke of Lancaster: SUCKER
London Rock Garden: STICKERS, PRIVATE
London Ronnie Scotts: CEDAR WALTON QUARTET, PAM KNOWLES
Norwich Boogie House: IMMIGRANT
Reading Target: ZILCH

EATER: London Marquee, Wednesday January 3

Friday

Belfast Ulster Hall: RORY GALLAGHER
Birmingham: Odeon: ELVIS COSTELLO
Kirkcubright Country Club: CHINA STREET
London Dingwalls: BOWLES
London Hope and Anchor: BLAST FURNACE
London 100 Club: CAM-BRIDGE CITY JAZZ BAND

BROTHERS
London Marquee: GLORIA MUNDO
London Music Machine: RAMROD, JERKS
London Nashville: SORE THROAT
London Rock Garden: ERIC BELL BAND, LOCAL OPERATOR
London Ronnie Scotts: CEDAR WALTON QUARTET, PAM KNOWLES
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: LIVE WIRE
Norwich Boogie House: SCREENS

Nottingham City Malibu: GOTHAM CLUB SWING BAND

Saturday

Aylesbury Friars: ENID
Belfast Ulster Hall: RORY GALLAGHER
Derby Assembly Rooms: ELVIS COSTELLO
London Dingwalls: ERIC BELL BAND

London Hope and Anchor: TRIBESMAN
London 100 Club: HEFTY JAZZ
London Marquee: SHOWBIZ KIDZ
London Music Machine: GONZALEZ, SUCKER
London Nashville: SOFT BOYS
London Rock Garden: RICO
London Ronnie Scotts: CEDAR WALTON QUARTET, PAM KNOWLES
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: SPLIT RIVITS

Sunday

Birmingham Barrel Organ: PARADOX
Birmingham Greyhound: DAMNED
Liverpool Empire: ELVIS COSTELLO
London Brecknock: TENNIS SHOES
London Dingwalls: LEW LEWIS REFORMER
London Hope and Anchor: LEXTON SUZZARDS
London 100 Club: GENE ALLAN
London Marquee: YOUNG BUCKS
London Nashville: TRIBESMAN
London Rock Garden: SHOWBIZ KIDZ
Norwich Boogie House: RUNNING DOGS
Stockton Fiesta: GERRY & THE PACEMAKERS

Tuesday

Bradford St. George's Hall: ELVIS COSTELLO
Bristol Colston Hall: RORY GALLAGHER
London Dingwalls: JOE JACKSON
London Hope and Anchor: London Marquee: C GAS 5
London Music Machine: UNDERDOG
London Nashville: INMATES
London Rock Garden: SPLIT RIVITS
London Ronnie Scotts: CEDAR WALTON QUARTET, PAM KNOWLES
London Talk of the Town: PATTI BOULAYE
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: LIGHTNING RAIDERS
Stockton Fiesta: GERRY & THE PACEMAKERS

Thursday

Belfast Ulster Hall: RORY GALLAGHER
High Wycombe Nags Head: STRAIGHT 8
Ipswich Gaumont: ELVIS COSTELLO
Leeds Florde Green: 999
London Aycliffe Hall: SHOCKING STOCKINGS
London Dingwalls: ALBERT COLLINS
London Fulham Golden Lion: WALKING COCKS
London Hammersmith Swan: PURITANS
London Hope and Anchor: JOE JACKSON
London 100 Club: BRIMSTONE
London Marquee: EDGE, JERKS
London Music Machine: GLORIA MUNDO

Jazz extra

WEDNESDAY: Tony Lee Quartet (Piza Express, Dean Street)
Birmingham Quintet (100 Club, Oxford Street) . . . Chamberpot, with violinist Phil Wachmann, bassist Tony Wren and oboe and guitarist Richard Bewick (Purcell Room, South Bank) . . . Monty Sunshine Band (Portland Hotel, London) . . . The Marilyn Franklin Quartet (Purdy Hotel, Bourne End, Bucks).

THURSDAY: Louis Nelson with Barry Martin and the Dave Penrose Band (Band On The Wall, Manchester) . . . The Inevitable with saxophonist Dave Fets and guitarist John Doble (London Musicians Collective, Chalk Farm) . . . The Ron Rubin Quartet with Bruce Turner (Piza Express, Dean Street).
FRIDAY: Eddie Thompson Trio with bassist Len Skeet, drummer Martin's Cave, Clerkenwell) . . . saxophonists Herman Hauge and Mike Sullivan with bassist Marc Meggide and drummer Dave Solomon (London Musicians Collective, Chalk Farm) . . . Roy Williams Quartet (Piza Express, Dean Street) . . . Ken Ingram's New Synopsists (Dog & Pheasant, Bromsgrove) . . . Roy Kirby's Paragon Jazz Band with Sammy Birmingham (Waterworks Club, Edgborough).

SATURDAY: Keith Smith, Ian Wheeler and Bobby Fox with the New Era Jazz Band in an evening of Hot Jazz (100 Club, Oxford Street) . . . Mike Johns, Roger Smith and Roger Turner (London Musicians Collective, Chalk Farm) . . . The Tony Cox Quartet (Piza Express, Dean Street) . . . The Pete Allan Band (Bridge Street Arts Centre, Newcastle-under-Lyme) . . . The Amazing Band (Wheatshaf, Tooting Bec).

SUNDAY: Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia (Half Moon, Putney) . . . Joe Douglas Trio (Piza Express, Dean Street) . . . Package, with Stuart Goodman on alto and bass-clarinets, and Dick Beard percussion (London Musicians Collective, Chalk Farm).

MONDAY: Dick Morrissey . . . Terry Smith Quintet and the Stan Sulzmann Quartet (100 Club, Oxford Street) . . . Open Season (London Musicians Collective, Chalk Farm) . . . pianist Fred Hunt (Piza-on-the-Park, Hyde Park Corner).

TUESDAY: The JBs, with guitarist Mark Stephens, bassist Andy Moray and drummer Ollie Maycroft (London Musicians Collective, Chalk Farm) . . . Fred Hunt and the Johnny Barnes Quartet (Piza Express, Dean Street).

WEDNESDAY: The Dick Morrissey . . . Jim Muller Band (Basilton Dick's, Knights at Stevenage, Bedfordshire) . . . Beryl Bryden with the Red Nelson Band (Pharman Hotel, London) . . . Neville Dickie Trio (Riverboat Jazz (Piza Express, Dean Street) . . . BRIAN CASE.

Folk extra

THURSDAY: Ratliff Stout Band (Kings Head Folk Club, Market Square, Aylesbury) . . . Jill Darby & Peter Walker (Red Lion, High St, Sutton) . . . Clive Bennett (Ox Folk Club, Sussex Oz, Millis Street, Ayrton) . . . Derek Drimstone (Central Club, South Coast Rd, Peascheven).

FRIDAY: Allan Taylor (Borough Ballif, High St, Knaresborough) . . . Colliers' Folk Festival (Castlecomer, County Kilkenny, Ireland) until Sunday . . . ambitious new event bringing to Castlecomer various Irish folk superstars including Christy Moore, who's been involved with the organisation, Andy Irvine, Donal Lunny, Oisín, Billy Roche Band, Matt Molloy, Siobhán, Freddie White Band, Mary Black, Sackville String Band, Barry Moore and Jim Mahner . . . Tundra (The Crown, Hovedon Rd, St Margaret's, Ware, Herts) . . . Jim Magner (Leather Exchange, Leathermarket St, Southport) . . . Pete & Chris Cox (New Inn, Whyke Rd, Chichester).

SATURDAY: Fred Wedlock (Wychwood Folk Club, Tiddy Hall, Abbot-under-Wychwood) . . . Hope in The Valley (Shackelford Church, nr Godalming) Twelfth Night special for Stagfolk involving Sussex carols performed by singers formed by Vic Gammon specifically for Christmas. After the carols they will adjourn to the village hall for a barn dance . . . Nova (Pack Horse, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds) . . . Mic Jones (Cellar, Cecil Sharp House, Regent Park Rd, London) . . . Jiggery Polkery, John Leonard, (Town Hall, Assembly Rooms, Rotherham) first in a series of experimental cellidans.

SUNDAY: Richard Dignace, Bully Wee, Joe Stead (Tramshed, Lane, St Albans) . . . Alex Atterton (Glast Inn, Soppell, Convent Garden, London) . . . Mick Terna (Freemasons Arms, 101, Chatham) . . . Fantasia (Peascheven Folk Club, Dewdrop Inn, Sneydley Avenue, Peascheven) trio specialising in medieval songs . . . Umps & Dumps, Hugh Rippon (Stad & Castle, Court House Square, London) . . . Echo Mountain Band (Black Horse, Amberg, Leys).

MONDAY: Andrew Cronshaw (Stagfolk, Shackelford Social Centre, nr Godalming) the amazing electric wizard . . . Jan Matemed (Berkshire Folk Club, Joseph Benkin, Market St, Watford) . . . Robin Hall & Jimmie MacGregor (Ole John Tree, Chatham) . . . Fantasia (Peascheven Folk Club, Dewdrop Inn, Sneydley Avenue, Peascheven) trio specialising in medieval songs . . . Umps & Dumps, Hugh Rippon (Stad & Castle, Court House Square, London) . . . Echo Mountain Band (Black Horse, Amberg, Leys).

TUESDAY: Don Shepherd (Railway Hotel, Darford) . . . Bob Stewart (Crooked Billet, Watford, Old Town, Leigh-on-Sea) . . . Foot & Mouth (Phoenix Awake, Black Horse & Harrow, hushes Green, Grafton) musical evening.

WEDNESDAY: Bob Chiswick (Willows Folk Club, Arundel Cricket Club) . . . Alex Atterton (Sausal Club, Norfolk House, South Terrace, Dorchester) . . . Hot Valleys Centre (52, Cheselade St, St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London) . . . COLIN IRWIN.



DICK MORRISSEY: London 100 Club, Monday

SOFT BOYS: London Nashville, Saturday

Questions?

● SEND your questions on the music scene to ANY QUESTIONS, Melody Maker, 24-34 Meymoat Street, London SE1 9LU.

PINK FAIRIES

There's hope for new Fairies

WHAT equipment did the Pink Fairies use before they split up? Is there any chance of them reforming? Are there any music books available? — P. A. Garcia, Manchester.

■ Paul Rudolph: Gibson 1947 Les Paul Junior fitted with two original humbucking pick-ups. Two 150-watt Silms-Watts stacks with four 4 x 12 Silms-Watts cabinets. Duncan Sander-son/Rickenbacker Bass and two 200-watt Marshall amplifiers. Two 4 x 15 and two 4 x 12 cabinets (containing Goodman speakers) specially designed and built by Peace Sounds. Both guitarists used Rotosound strings.

Twink and Russ, the two drummers, each had a Ludwig silver glitter kit with Paiste cymbals and used Ringo Starr sticks. Drum sizes were 22-inch bass, 14 x 13 x 8 and 10 x 14-inch tom-toms. Cymbals were 20, 18 and 16-inch, with 14-inch hi-hats. PA consisted of six 4 x 15 columns and four 4 x 14 cabinets with Midas horns, all designed and built by Peace Sounds. These were powered by three 200-watt Elvertt slave amps. They had 10 D190E and AKG mikes, a WTM echo unit, a WEM fuzz control and a Cry Baby wah-wah. Twink says there is no chance whatever of the band reforming and there were no song books.

I recently bought a second-hand Hofner semi-acoustic guitar and I would like to find out if it is original or if anything has been altered. I would also like to know when it was made and what it cost. The serial No. is 7717 and it is a President model. — K. Tregenza, Funching, Cornwall.

It is impossible to tell from your description whether or not this instrument is in its original condition, but if you will send us a photograph of it, we can perhaps tell you and give some idea of the date of origin and manufacture and original price. — DOUG ELLIS, Sales Manager, Musical Instrument Division, Norlin (UK) Ltd, Woodstock Lane, Blandford, Dorset.

Blues tip
I WANT to learn to play the harmonica in the blues style. Which harp and which key is there a tutor? — Brian Lynn, Wellingborough.

The harmonica used by most of the blues stars is the Hohner Echo Super Vampier, but if you want something more simple, get the Hohner Blues Harp. The most comprehensive tutor is Blues Harp, by Tony Glover, published by Oak Publications and distributed in the UK by Music Sales. It is available at any music shop.

David's way
HAVE David released any albums since "Fluid"? (I am Robert Aschurst, Mr. Tewkesbury). What is the band doing now or has it split up? What equipment do they use? (Simon McMahon, Stevenage).

■ David had released two albums, "Towards The Sun" and "Fluid", both on EMI. They play at clubs all over the country and have done

making sure that any dirt that has accumulated in the grooves is removed completely — an old toothbrush will come in handy for this. Remember that clogged-up dirt in the grooves of the cymbal tends to deaden the sound. We are pleased to advise drummers on the care of cymbals and gongs and send them our catalogue plus our Drum Profile book showing what equipment famous drummers use. The purpose of our Drummer Service is to have a direct link between the manufacturer and the customer. PAISTE DRUMMER SERVICE, CH-6207 Nottwil, Switzerland.

An original?
I RECENTLY bought a second-hand Hofner semi-acoustic guitar and I would like to find out if it is original or if anything has been altered. I would also like to know when it was made and what it cost. The serial No. is 7717 and it is a President model. — K. Tregenza, Funching, Cornwall.

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lan's dates
APPARENTLY Ian Matthews will be doing a UK tour in the New Year. Have you the dates he will play? What is his newest record? — George Hurley, Bolton.

■ The tour begins in France on January 10 and continues through Belgium, Holland, Germany and England, opening at Manchester University on January 27, with other gigs to include Barbourslee, Birmingham, on January 28 and The Venue in London on January 31. His latest single is "King Of The Night" which comes from his new LP, "Stealin' Home."

Help for Bing
I BOUGHT the soundtrack of the album of songs that Bing Crosby made for Mick Sennett in the early 1950s. On three of the tracks, a guitarist is featured prominently. It is possible after all these years that you know who this was? — E. Evans, Morriston, Swansea.

■ According to Jazz Records 1897-1942, by Brian Rust, published by Ariston House Publishers, New Rochelle, New York, USA, guitarist George Leno was used on his death in 1933 on all Bing's recordings, which presumably would have included the soundtracks for the Mack Sennett.

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Echoes

"HAWAII? The music's enough to make you stay away from the place." These unkind words were uttered by "Soap's" leading character who must have been listening to Honky Tonk when Charlie Gillett was playing Gabby Pahinui's Hawaiian Band (Warner Bros. Panini LP BS 3023). Hawaii might, at first blush, prompt a mental image of short, fat men in coloured shirts strumming away on tiples but there's more to it — the influence of the Hawaiian guitar in blues, Screamin' Jay Hawkins' tributes to Waikiki, the hillbilly haunts of Tex Jenks Carman and — this week — Hawaii's Man of Music, Bob Bertram and the rockabilly records he produced for Bill Lawrence. Robin Luke and others.

The avuncular Bertram, born in Sharon, Massachusetts (he now lives in Concord, California) has packed most experiences into his 62 years. Musician and vocalist (his latest single, "Welcome Home Elvis," can be found at Superdisc and other importers), artist (his oil painting of Franklin D. Roosevelt hangs in the White House) and author (several volumes including *The Business Of Music* and *How Loud Can I Scream*), Bertram dabbled in country music on the West Coast during the early Fifties, recording Jack Pits, Eddie Dean and himself for Ode and acquiring the Lariat label famed for discs by Joe Mapis whose guitar playing would later serve as a model to aspiring rockabilles.

Bertram's songs — over 400 ASCAP compositions divided into categories like C & W Blues, Folk, Potatoes and Service (e.g. "Gotta Find My Foxhole Dream") — have

been recorded by Dave Edwards, Eddie Dean and Roy Hogshead who's a must for any Capitol hillbilly boogie set. Lately, Bertram's been collaborating with an old colleague, Edm. Abbe, who wrote "Nature Boy" for Nat King Cole: two of their songs reached the finals of last year's American Song Festival. Back in 1958, another Abbe-Bertram song, "Yes Master" was recorded by Don Carson and the Casals. Although Bertram acquired the master, he never released it. Just the other day he came across a long-forgotten document which indicated that J. P. Richardson (a.k.a. The Big Bopper) had cut the number under the pseudonym of Carson while under contract to Mercury and enjoying hits like "Chantilly Lace".

Bertram's parents had retired to Hawaii and, in 1956, he went there to comfort his father on the occasion of his mother's death, intending to stay a year. He began to put down records, started a record jobbing business and began to record the local talent on his own labels, Bertram International and Polyneesian. The latter is devoted to discs by native islanders; if the enthusiast who recently wrote Hawaiian music forwards his address to me, I'll gladly send him the file on these doubtless uplifting works.

Bertram was also interested in the island's country and rockabilly musicians and I first came across him when I was trying to locate the publisher on Bill Lawrence's "Hey Baby", a track to be included on the long-awaited "I'm partial. Rockabilles, Volume Two". It was recorded at Associated Recorders in Honolulu and features the Lawrence Brothers Combo — Bill (lead guitar and vocal), a yodler (rhythm) and Sonny (bass) — accompanied by Bertram on drums. The group put a variety of follow-ups for the Hawaiian market towards the end of the Fifties, local Top 30 in 1959 — and "Billy Boy", pressed up in 1963 but not released — although Bertram has plenty of copies in stock. Originally issued on Bertram International, "Hey Baby" was sold to Freedom, a subsidiary of Liberty, in 1968; despite its curious origin, Lawrence has a deep Southern voice and heavily bootlegged disc has a genuine downhome flavour comparable to any number of fine rockabilles. Sisters. It's available at \$5.50.



LAWRENCE BROS. COMBO: l to r, Bill Lawrence, Bob Bertram, Sonny Lawrence, Fred Lawrence.

Hawaiian hillbilly

BILL MILLAR pays tribute to
Hawaii's Man of Music, Bob Bertram

KEN CRAIG
records from Tennessee or Mississippi.

Twenty years after the event, Bertram is not too surprised to be told that he's helped to write and produce a rockabilly classic: "Well, I haven't thought much about it to tell you the truth, I just take things as they come. But a lot of people have commented on how the devil we came up with such a sound over in the islands. The Lawrence boys were country music and at that time I'd done quite a few shows with this military band; they always loved C & W performers and the shows we'd put on would always

feature country musicians".

THE Lawrence Brothers also accompanied several of Bertram's acts, including his major star, Robin Luke whose "Susie Darlin'" eventually bounded up the Hot 100 after weeks at the top of the Hawaiian best-sellers — "I was told that Robin was appearing in his High School show and that he had a song I should check out which, of course, I did. "Susie Darlin'" was out on a \$300 tape recorder in Bill Lawrence's bedroom. It was strange because we kept rehearsing with amateur musicians including a ukulele player who couldn't get it

right — I don't know whether you can hear a ukulele on the record but it's there. We'd come in every few days and try again and this went on for weeks. I must have... oh... '75 takes of "Susie Darlin'". The beat was the sound of two sticks pounding away at a ball-point pen in my pants pocket. My lens was black and blue and if we'd gone for take 76 I'd have been crippled for life".

When the performance was taped to everyone's satisfaction, Bertram had copies pressed in New York. Art and Doty Freeman, record distributors from Cleveland, heard the disc while honey-

moonin' in Hawaii and phoned Randy Wood who bought the master for Dot Records. "Susie Darlin'" remained on the Hot Hundred for four months, becoming a million-seller for Luke, who is generally bracketed in a list of one-hit wonders at the back of various tomes on the Past. A 16-year-old blonde with a kind of face that once graced untold numbers of teeny mags, Luke still has his fans, and you'd be wrong to dismiss him as typical of so much Rydel/Availon mish-mash. Dot issued another nine singles, including "My Girl" (No 3 in Hawaii and 97 in "Cashbox"), "Strollin' Blues", "Five Minutes More" (Both Top 20 locally) and "You Can't Stop Me From Dreamin'", a spiky cut that rockabilly collectors speak of in reverential tones. The guide — Bill Lawrence again — is superb and Luke handles this Hawaiian vehicle with a total absence of cutesy-poo. His later recording — "School Bus Love Affair" — "Evelyn" and "Poor Little Rich Boy" — were produced by Dot Records, who signed him under his contract with Bertram expired. They're in sufferably puppy but I can say my fust to the west. As long as Bertram's thoroughly economical production recalls the soft-rock of Sanford Clark, Wally Lewis or Ricky Nelson, the predominant elements of High School graduation wimpiness are pardonable.

All these songs and Luke's version of George Weston's "Well On Well Oh Don't You Know" (but not his cover of Marty Wilde's "Bad Boy") can be found on an attractively packaged album from Bear Family, the German label owned by Richard Wenz whose catalogue also contains old-timey — the Carolina Tarheels and Walter Smith — and a set of previously unissued Johnny Cash

masters from CBS. The Luke album — 16 tracks licensed from ABC-Dot — is available from Bear Family, Records, Geothstrasse 9, 2200 Bremen, West Germany or 39 Defoe Avenue, New Surrey, TW9 4DS.

Luke thought he'd do better with Dot but although he appeared on the show, prestigious places — British viewers may recall an appearance on the *Perry Como Show* — only "Susie Darlin'" and Bertram's composition, "My Girl", made the national charts.

He's now a doctor with a practice in Virginia. Kandy Wenz arrived. Bertram became close friends — they're both health and fitness enthusiasts — and Bertram acted as Dave local A & R man until 1964 when he returned to California to work for himself on a whole variety of projects. Lines, however, in 1970 arrived. Bertram International Records — "We have a new album called 'Susie Darlin''. I bought thousands of records as a rack-jobber and they'd been in storage for years. Then came the olive revival and I found myself sitting on hundreds of copies of collectable records. As I started shuffling them on my sale and auction table, I began to realise that there was a tremendous market in England and on the Continent. So I went back and dug up masters and compiled a rockabilly album."

When the legislation — put together with the help of English and German rockabilly fans — was passed, Bertram on their 45 travels — is another hit-tracker with the Cousins and the Wilson Sisters. It's available at \$5.50 (including airmail postage) from Bertram at 1903 Shary Circle, Concord, California 94518.

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BLUE SUEDE NEWS..BLUE SUEDE NEWS.. BLUE SUEDE NEWS..BLUE SUEDE NEWS

HOT on the heels of the surprisingly successful "Save The Last Dance For Me" comes an entire album of duets by Jerry Lee Lewis & Friends. As with the single, the album purports to include Elvis although the sleeve doesn't actually say so. Whatever conclusion the listener might come to regarding the validity of the tracks, included is a never-before heard version of "What'd I Say" which comes from a 1960 Memphis session that took place several months before the actual hit version was out in Nashville. Despite some ragged edges which obviously prevented its release at the time, it's a pretty wild rendering and well worth digging out of the vaults...

DISCIPLE In Blue Suede Shoes is a (quote) "Sincerely honest biography in which Carl Perkins tells of his humble origins, his skyrocketing success, his agonising battle with alcohol and his transforming encounter with God's Faithfulness, and is on sale now in the States published by Zondervan Corp., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Price is \$6.95..."

THROUGH a deal with the Arzee label in Pennsylvania, British company Rollercoaster Records has put out an inter-

esting compilation of material that gathers together some of the many varied styles and artists who were recording around the Eastern Seaboard area of the U.S. Titled rather subtly Rockabilly, much of the material is playing-on is courtesy of various members of Bill Haley's Comets. Volume two is promised for later in the year...

GREMLINS In this column lessened the impact of the recently reported and ultra-rare Janis and Elvis album. The figure should have read \$1,000, not \$100. Brother Ray, David Ritz's new book *Of The City Leaves Off*, this is an almost impossible task to do properly, even with space permitting. Moreover, we'd need to go back quite a few years since the life of a book is clearly longer than a loaf of bread. Still, we'd do what we can in certain cold areas (e.g. downtown or country) and continue to bring fresh publications to your attention in this column... — STUART COLMAN.

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Ray: still the man

RAY CHARLES

Carnegie Hall,
New York

RAY Charles can pretty much coast from hereon in, his "legendary" status is not just a function of some hype machine, but it is recognized and seconded by the musical community as well as a legion of fans. But judging from his most recent New York appearance at Carnegie Hall, this legend isn't allowing his reputation to sell tickets. He continues to enhance his contributions to the world of popular music by growing more comfortable and sincere in his performances, even while the impact of his recent recorded work lessens.

Accompanied by the Ray Charles Orchestra, and the ultra-charming Raela, Ray Charles delivered a buoyant and soulful (albeit brief) set that scored heavily with the "Charles" chestnuts — "Georgia," "I Can't Stop Loving You," and "What'd I Say" — but didn't rely on them to pick up the rest of his set or pull the audience in.

He had the crowd in his hip pocket the minute he bopped out onstage, apparently happy and loose, and respectful in his white suit. Charles immediately swung into a hot jazz double-time arrangement of "Marie," and then "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning," and before you think his repertoire was in the square yard, you have to know that when he sang the line, "everything's going my way," no one else could have made it so convincing.

The highlights of the evening were two all-too-rare solo spots: a quiet piano and bluesy drama on "One Of These Days," a song of sweet revenge that stung extra hard without sounding petulant or nasty because of Charles' gleeful turn of phrase; and a soulful ballad that began with "Touch Me," (which by itself raised enough gooseflesh and made us happy to satisfy the crowd), and flowed into his

RAY CHARLES

version of "Signed, Sealed Delivered," before it climaxed on "I Can't Stop Loving You." The contributions of the Raela's cannot be overlooked. These five women, who once prompted someone to remark to Charles, "I've taken a good look at them, and I know you're not blind," supplied Charles with sterling support, and the few solo spots were most with a subtle and subtle but appreciative audience.

The Ray Charles Orchestra, under the direction of Clifford Solomon, was loose and swinging, though his solo spots were marked by pin-point accuracy until one of the trumpeters unleashed the right out front to blow a hot chord or two. Only a longer would have been in order, but this small package was indeed a fine time.

STANLEY MIESES.

CHARLIE DORE

Dingwall's, London

ITS seven, maybe eight months since I last catalogued in these pages about Charlie Dore. Since then she's got herself a record deal (with Island), been to Nashville recording, has a new band (though still called Back Pocket), and a brasher style that should soon bury the country tag and the Emmylou comparison.

Last Tuesday's gig, though not without a certain tension,

and distinctly ragged at the edges, suggested even more vehemently than before her past performance that the self-centered dilettantism too often attendant upon jazz players' explorations of the Caribbean and points south was kept at arm's length.

On tenor he ploughed his furrow through a series of similarly worked by Eddie Davis and Johnny Griffin. A virtuoso of the upper register, at fast tempo he brought his phrases cascading down out of it to bulldozing effect in ballads he made robustly expressive use of this musical tool.

John Herler, the group's pianist, showed in his solo the same sensitivity he brought to his accompaniment. This was the more remarkable in that the instrument in question was dreadful enough to have deterred the most committed of musicians.

Both main soloists got fair sense from Chris Laurence on bass and Alan Jackson at the drums, who were themselves generally featured. Jackson's drumming collapsed beneath him in the final number, but he shrugged off this mishap with great good humour to build a powerful solo in the Blakey manner.

An unexpected pleasure was the presence of the tenorist Bill Mitchell, who played the band for a blaring, muted, and bluesy, confirming, as did the evening as a whole, that the London's traditional currency is as sound as ever.

MICHAEL JAMES.

hit single. — COLIN IRWIN.

TONY COE

New Merlin's Cave,
London

TENOR saxophone, rather than soprano or clarinet, appears to be Coe's preferred medium nowadays. Yet when he forsakes the larger horn, as in "Rio Vermelho" or "St. Thomas," his work took on a spiky unpredictability which ensured that the self-centered dilettantism too often attendant upon jazz players' explorations of the Caribbean and points south was kept at arm's length.

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MICHAEL JAMES.

HANK CRAWFORD

Parisian Room,
Los Angeles

FOR some 20 years, the name of Hank Crawford has been a respected name in jazz — during his five years with Ray Charles, and since then leading various small groups of his own.

Crawford has always been admired for his soulful, gutsy solo saxophone. He has doubled on piano from time to time, however, during an appearance at the Parisian Room in Los Angeles, this secondary aspect of his music was predominant that anyone unfamiliar with his work might have thought that he was primarily a keyboard artist.

To make things worse,

Crawford turned up the electric keyboard level so high that it often distorted. The rest of the rhythm section also seemed to be working much too hard, with Charles Green on electric bass, Billy Ray on drums, and Gary Cardelli on percussion, plus a potentially admirable guitarist, Calvin Newborn, brother of Phineas.

For the most part Crawford and company played as loud that Newborn's excellent solos were drowned out. It was as if the musicians had been advised that if they didn't want to play rock, at least they'd better play loud. The material was generally jazz-derived: Harry Sweet's "Edison Blues," "Entrepreneur," Phineas Newborn's "Theme For Bass," and such pop hits as Lou Rawls' "You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine."

Toward the end of the second set, Hank and the group (incorporated up somewhat and the volume controls were turned down. Bizarrely, the superior musicianship of Crawford was heard in a suitable context — LEONARD BATHER.

DARTS

Hammersmith Odeon

THE small girl in specs with a bad cold stuffing tissues and ice cream into her mouth suddenly emitted a piercing yell.

"Kenney," she shrieked from the walls, her shrill cries joined by four or five other boys in drab jackets. The only youth club outing annual of Darts' party on Monday last week, was in sharp contrast to the usual rock and roll.

As Darts expertly reviewed memories of the golden era of rock n' roll, the audience how many of them was actually born in the days of the Beatles, the Beatles, Platters and Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers. April turned the spring music and dance, most of Darts' fans must imagine the group invented Darts.

Certainly the group have the experience and credentials to make a good job of reviving the old song, and with New York City in the ranks, this band probably play and sing better than the originals.

It seemed unnecessary to have bouncers on hand, as the young audience were in having a good time. Indeed, Rita Ray was delighted with the sprightly atmosphere, as having in the aisles through out the show, and exhorted the kids to get up, dance and sing. Eventually the bouncers gave up and the ancient rite of the young on stage blocking the gangways was observed. As Darts built towards a frenzied climax of high-speed rockabogie, CHRIS WELCH.

Folk Forum

Thursday

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REPORT: Park Road, 10.15-11.15

CLUBHOUSE 7, 10.15-11.15

NIC JONES

SINGERS CLUB, 100 Tottenham Court Road, 10.15-11.15

JERRY & TONY DUNBAR AND JACK WARSHAW

STARLOCKER, 100 Tottenham Court Road, 10.15-11.15

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Book News

A PRESSURE group has been formed to campaign for a folk programme on at least one of London's local radio stations. The three stations — Capital, Radio London, and LBC — give extensive time to jazz and country music.

Leading the campaign is Ray Lee, chairman of Capital Folk Club, Covent Garden, who has folk followers to inundate the stations with letters and is organising a petition. He adds: "If the signatories' wishes remain unanswered, more militant action is not ruled out." So far he has had a response only from Radio London, which said: "We have taken note of your interest in a folk music programme, and if we are in a position to mount such a project, we will certainly contact you."

Capital claim — wrongly — that they embody specialist music in their broad musical policy, and LBC is primarily a news station. There's no time for Radio London, who devote most of Saturday afternoon to country music

Radio campaign

and once had a folk programme, hosted by Fred Woods. A similar attempt last year to persuade Radio Oxford to start a folk programme was successful.

Anybody interested in helping the campaign should contact Lee at 181 Pembury Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey (330 4122).

The great traditional singer Fred Jordan will be making a rare tour South from his home in Shropshire in April to take part in the St. George's Festival, planned for Cecil Sharp House, London, on April 20-23. Jordan is seldom seen singing away from home, at the Loughborough and Birmingham festivals, and this will be among his first appearances at a southern festival.

The festival has its best bill yet, including Alex. Aitken, Isabel Sutherland, The Diddies, Fiddlers Jam, Curate's Egg, John Foreman, Pete Twitcheit, John Lagdon, Roy Crompton, Ian Petrie, Gertrude, Taffy Thomas, plus numerous dance troupes and morris teams.

SCA FAYRE, one of the South-west's most popular groups, are splitting up. A harmony group with a sharp sense of humour, they've been together for eight years, made one album, and toured most of Britain. Barry Lister is forming a new band with Martin and Alison Bloomer and Sean O'Shea, and Dave Lowrie and Dave Grigg are expected to work solo. One of their prime achievements was to drink the last drop during a Westward Television appearance.

THE future of One-Eyed Jack is in jeopardy because of a faulty record. They invested £1,000 in making an album and set up a 99 per cent sale to sell it. But when the 1,114 records were delivered, they'd been pressed off-center and were unsaleable. The pressing firm, Longways, at Slough, were instructed not to have to come up with new pressings, leaving the group in a panic that they went in ready to lose the last £1,000. Andy Speechley said: "This could cost our band their exist-

marquee

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plus Local Operator
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Thursday 4th
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West Hampstead

Mon. 8th THE NASHVILLE ROOMS
On Stage 8.30

Tues. 9th ROCK GARDEN
(Residency)

Wed. 10th MUSIC MACHINE

Thurs. 11th THE BRIDGE HOUSE
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Sat. 13th 400 BALLROOM, Torquay

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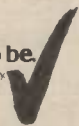
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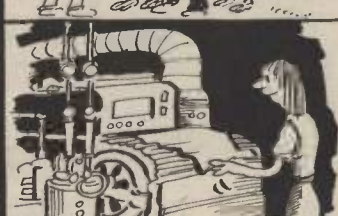
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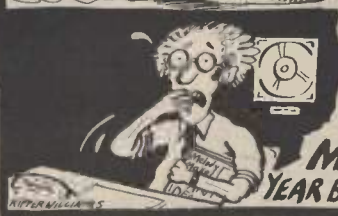
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Fluents, Violins, Guitars and ALL musical instruments can achieve a better powerful lightning action with the new "Finger Magic" and a free video with a few minutes practice will show you the way.

FREE book "FINGER MAGIC" from THE COWLING INSTITUTE 61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50/51/52/53/54/55/56/57/58/59/60/61/62/63/64/65/66/67/68/69/70/71/72/73/74/75/76/77/78/79/80/81/82/83/84/85/86/87/88/89/90/91/92/93/94/95/96/97/98/99/00/01/02/03/04/05/06/07/08/09/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27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UNISOUND

THE MUSICIANS' PARADISE

PENDERS	127-128	ACOUSTIC AMPS	129-130
Fender 127-128	129-130	129-130	129-130
Gibson 129-130	131-132	131-132	131-132
Marshall 133-134	135-136	135-136	135-136
Peavey 137-138	139-140	139-140	139-140
Rock Island 141-142	143-144	143-144	143-144
Shred 145-146	147-148	147-148	147-148
Telecaster 149-150	151-152	151-152	151-152
Telecaster 153-154	155-156	155-156	155-156
Telecaster 157-158	159-160	159-160	159-160
Telecaster 161-162	163-164	163-164	163-164
Telecaster 165-166	167-168	167-168	167-168
Telecaster 169-170	171-172	171-172	171-172
Telecaster 173-174	175-176	175-176	175-176
Telecaster 177-178	179-180	179-180	179-180
Telecaster 181-182	183-184	183-184	183-184
Telecaster 185-186	187-188	187-188	187-188
Telecaster 189-190	191-192	191-192	191-192
Telecaster 193-194	195-196	195-196	195-196
Telecaster 197-198	199-200	199-200	199-200
Telecaster 201-202	203-204	203-204	203-204
Telecaster 205-206	207-208	207-208	207-208
Telecaster 209-210	211-212	211-212	211-212
Telecaster 213-214	215-216	215-216	215-216
Telecaster 217-218	219-220	219-220	219-220
Telecaster 221-222	223-224	223-224	223-224
Telecaster 225-226	227-228	227-228	227-228
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PAY ATTENTION!



Dire Straits from previous page

Blackwell, built Compass Point Studios on the island for similar reasons. The Straits opted for the studios not only because Barry and Jerry's other commitments wouldn't allow them to spend time in Britain but also for those financial considerations. As Dave Knopfler explained: "What would have happened is that the British company would have had to have paid the American musicians' union a certain percentage had we recorded in the States. If they'd done that, their profit margin would have been so small as to make it ridiculous."

Capricorn may have been a pretty eye-dazzling amalgam of swimming pool, Greek porticos, hideous neocolonial busts of black manikins and pieces of Wedgwood china come alive but it was still a hell of a lot cheaper than staying in one of the nearby hotels.

A firm schedule was adhered to every day. Each afternoon and a hefty chunk of the evening was spent in the studio, which the neon-lit clientele that it's attracting (from Talking Heads to ELP and, this month, the Stones), is modestly equipped. There was no isolation booth, for example, so that when Mark wanted to do an acoustic track cheerfully used the adjoining broom closet.

The schedule found Wexler, who looks and acts like a patriarchal cross between Ernest Hemingway and Edward G. Robinson, habitually arranging the evening meals. When he went off to New York on a business trip, he would always bring back huge quantities of meat and vegetables (along with mountains of cassettes by the likes of Ray Charles, Maye Staples, Fair Weather and the Rossell Sisters for late-night unwinding).

Sybaritic though the surroundings were, they never interfered with the job in hand. Before arriving in Nassau, the band had used the Wharf Studios in Greenwich to make demos of all the material bar one song, "Communique", which was written during an afternoon when engineer Jack Nuber was off sick. They recorded it the following morning.

In fact the original demos were so impressive that Jerry would often joke: "You made the album in the first place. Now we just have to remake it!"

The parts that make up the whole

IT is not officially to get Dire Straits to talk 'officially' about themselves, and even harder to persuade them to interpret their music. Personal biographies only stand in the way of appreciating the music, they argue, while one of the most vital aspects of their approach is to keep a song open-ended, with a life of its own, as independent of its creators as possible.

In Mark's case, especially (for he has written all the material on both albums), the literal/documentary line of fire kills a song stone dead. When he is asked who, say, is "Harry" (the protagonist of "Sultans Of Swings" and "In The Gallery") he balks.

Mark talks in long pauses, choosing words cautiously. He was not only a journalist for several years but also, armed with an English degree from Leeds University, taught at Loughton Tech in Essex.

He explains that he uses the device of persona more now in his writing. "I feel more of a detachment now from 'me' in a song, which doesn't detract from the song. It's just a rock song. I don't feel that I should have to answer for it—I'm not trying to negate my own responsibility for them completely, but there's a whole load of natural good ticks that take on a life of their own, in terms of their cohesiveness, yet still leave all kinds of open ends for chance or whatever might crop up."

"I think that applies to a lot of people who write and play. There's a sense in which songs are like other people. You can't own them, or say that this is what was intended, because you'd be lying. It's contradictory, I know, because the whole thing is coming from you anyway. But when somebody does a portrait, for instance, I'd be very surprised if the level at which it comes out resembled what they photographically intended you to do."

It's a nice discovery to make, actually. I don't know if you've ever found that a thing might begin to take shape of its own accord, either by the dictates of the formulae that you've devised to use or just through the sheer multiplicity of the content, or I don't know what. What

I'm saying is that you've never got anything mapped out completely. Given that, I think what you do need is a feeling for format, but what I really want to avoid is all the personal attention on Mark the bloke, who is just a bloke. I really don't want any of that shit."

"Sometimes when I listen to these songs, I think, 'That's got nothing to do with me as a bloke.' For instance, 'Follow Me Home'—a nice song—is important in a lot of ways. Yes, I was on an island, and yes, there was a girl—but it's not very different from any other tourist staying on a beach, going up to a ruin, looking out over the sea, eating meat and drinking wine. But the idea goes beyond that, leading to a song which doesn't actually belong to the bloke. I like to be divorced, in that sense, from the song."

HEARING the new material (which I promised not to judge, since it hadn't been final-mixed), what struck me most forcibly about Mark's writing was its comprehensiveness. Diverse and very human emotions are given shape by an intellect which reacts to everyday events, responding to touch and visuals as well as to sound. His songs take account of atmosphere, purity of sound, sensuality, movement, change, space and tension.

Later Jerry Wexler agreed, enthusiastically over Mark's "concrete imagery." "Like on 'Single-Handed Sailor'—I can't just feel myself down at the docks and hear those hawsers creaking on the swell of the tide of the Thames, and you can see maybe a green and red lantern at the end of the ship. Or the incredible picture in 'Follow Me Home'—I see cave dwellers, in fourth century, somewhere south of Yucatan. And the music is so consonant with that."

WHEN I unleashed all my interpretations on Mark, his first reaction, after a chortle, was "Don't forget women!" I had dissected, so he began to rebel.

"Surprising as it may sound, there is a vague attempt at achieving some unity. I hope it's not too much of a contradiction, in the light of what you've just said. I do try and write a song as a whole thing, rather than midnight mumbles with a guitar. What's really pleasant is just the multiplicity of responses that goes on. We're not necessarily attempting to do one specific thing—God forbid—except just to make something whole and failing every time, I tend to be on guard against over-intellectualizing."

Mark spoke warmly about Beckett and Wexler, though there had been some qualms about the outset. One centred around the famed Wexler "sweetening" technique, which Jerry employed extensively on Atlantic product up to the early Sixties. In essence, the basic tracks were decorated with often ornate and studied arrangements, a process that effectively began in 1953 with "Money Honey" by Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters, and was developed/modified by Berry Gordy on early Motown singles.

"I thought there might be a possibility—this was before we'd sent Jerry the demos—that we might be pressurized into excessive use of other instruments, though I felt all right about it at root. I thought, never mind, because I know it can't be a bad record—not really. In fact, what happened was that he was the first to say that there should be nothing added. All the talk about using the Memphis Horns was unnecessary."

"I was envisaging fairly extensive technical changes, but I find that just isn't the case, which, in all honesty, is a surprise to me. Instead we get tremendous receptiveness and sensitivity towards what we're doing. It's simply a question of bringing it out and bringing out the best."

"What's really nice is seeing them work together. Each one of them listens to the other. When Jerry enters into a musical territory which is Barry's turf—and Jerry knows it but he goes in straight—Barry listens and alters what he's doing, if it's at all possible."

So if Barry's sphere is the music, how does he see Jerry's contribution? "Oh, it's a whole feel thing, understanding, pick-ups, times, choice of take, a sheer response to the cadence of something, sometimes a knowledge that something's not a goer. Jerry is a great listener for a while and a sure-fire feeling that when he's not there, he has left a space. And the other important thing is that Jerry handles the vocals. Everything has been done so gratefully, so professionally, there's been so much attention to detail."

Mark consistently maintained that

their main objective was fun, but it was of a variety that lay in complete contrast to what he termed "desperation."

"There's a lot of that on the rock scene—overcompensation for whatever's missing, which comes out as a kind of fanaticism, if you like. When you talk about that kind of fun, what you're getting is like a bicycle pump which is trying to pump up an already overinflated tyre. Everything's at bursting point, including the artist, and the result just isn't substantial—it's almost every sense. And a lot of that comes from attitude, a musician's attitude to his music."

DAVE is Mark's younger brother, and plays rhythm guitar. Occasional friction, heightened by their blood relationship, arises but is quickly dispelled. Dave talks a lot about his adolescence and his student years: how he was the classic ball of mixed-up confusion at the time, an archetypal rebel who worshipped Hendrix and Peter Green; how he then turned to "progressive country" bands like the Eagles, Gene Clark and the Dillards; how he had a brief flirtation with International Socialism at the time of the miners' strike and the first wave of IRA bombings on the mainland; how he did a short spell of social work in Deptford but couldn't get through to the black teenage guys and how that worried him; how he distrusts abrasive emotion in rock and roll, because that kind of expression can lead to neurosis and danger (see example: Sid Vicious).

Dave obviously has great respect for Mark, and badgers his elder brother when he thinks that Mark isn't realising his potential. In the course of one conversation, a parallel emerged to the relationships within Talking Heads. Early in '78 Dire Straits toured with the Heads and it struck Dave how Tina Weymouth's stage relationship to David Byrne resembled that of his to Mark. It was almost as if Tina stepped into Dave's chalk marks.

It's like Mark and me: there's a kind of supportive relationship, a reinforcement."

He is also very (and maybe nervously) excited about the fact that Dire Straits could be a top-league band in the none too distant future. Is he feeling the pressure drop?

"In my case this is my first real rock and roll band, apart from the old weekend here and a couple of days there when I was much younger."

Here I am, less than a year after signing the deal, sitting in Nassau, talking to you; ginger ale, fat, half-a-million albums under my belt, second album being produced by two of the best producers going—where's the pressure? Do you see any pressure?

I just get excited about how well things are going. There's always plenty of good news to counter-balance anything that might be a bit difficult. It's like a big balloon that keeps floating on up."

JOHN ILLSLEY used to be involved in a record shop and shared a flat with Dave. He exudes an unmistakable aura of having his head "screwed on straight". There's no truck with any artsy-fartsy stuff, but he still has a sharp sense of humour.

Pick Withers, on the other hand, combines with sprightly with the thoughtful. He can switch immediately from mimicking a George Carlin skit about housewives and slimming pills to discussing the music business and what he feels about Phonogram.

"There's nobody we don't get on with, but like all record companies it's quantity, not quality. You're just on the conveyor belt, going through the mincer."

He likes things that don't aim for "academic perfection" but have a kind of living roughness, citing Bob Wills (in Nassau, Pick was engrossed in a Wills biography) and Van Gogh (in a Wills biography) and Van Gogh (in a Wills biography).

He also happens to be an expert drummer/percussionist, a craft he began professionally at the age of 17, starting with the Primitives, spending three years in Italy churning out original band material and obscure R&B oldies. He returned to England, and notched up a veritable trophy house of associations. There was a band called Spont in which he played on RCA ("The critics thought he was pretentious and, in retrospect, it was"). He became the Rockfield house drummer, which paid less than zero ("you'd have to ask for 40p for fags") but was enjoyable nonetheless

The string of names he played with at Rockfield is impressive: Bert Jansch, Howard Wirth, Mike Chapman, Del Shannon and, just prior to joining Dire Straits, Charlie Don's Back Pocket (who have recently done an album with Audie Ashworth—ironically, one of the producers originally mooted for the second Straits album). Which brings us up to the here and now and the producers...

BARRY BECKETT, a shy, bulky man, has contributed to countless albums as a keyboards player and producer.

Raised in Birmingham, Alabama on a diet of Jerry Lee Lewis and Floyd Cramer, he spent a lot of time playing local hooky tonks and lounge bars until Papa Don Schroeder, a disc-jockey-cum-producer in Nashville, asked him to go to Rick Hall's Fame Studios at Muscle Shoals to help out "I'm Your Puppet" by James and Bobby Purify.

The experience whetted his appetite, and when the legendary keyboardist Spooner Oldham left Hall for Memphis, Beckett accepted the offer of a resident gig in the studio. It was the era of the house rhythm section, and he joined forces with bassist David Hood, drummer Roger Hawkins and guitarist Jimmy Johnson. "They couldn't guarantee me Rick Hall's work, and it was his studio that they were working in, but to keep the studio doors open, outside work in Jerry Wexler was coming in, and as a result of that, a lot more clients were coming in. Business got better. We started having some R&B hits, very few pop hits."

AFTER severing his connections with Stax Records in Memphis, Wexler brought Wilson Pickett to Fame in 1966, whereupon they proceeded to smash the southern sound with his including "Land Of A Thousand Dances" and "Mustang Sally". The Wexler/Beckett collaboration had begun.

Nevertheless, though the Fame rhythm section was deeply versed in Southern R&B, they listened to and wanted to play pop. The "polish" and "colour" of pop at that time attracted them.

"We knew that if we could incorporate those elements into R&B, we'd have the best of both worlds. But we wanted to go further than that. We just wanted to play pop records."

Gradually this came about. One of the major motivating factors was when the crew of Beckett, Hood, Hawkins and Johnson decided to leave Fame and set up their own studio, Muscle Shoals Sound, in 1969—with help from Wexler and his company, Atlantic. Hits came and went.

"We had a policy not to play in other people's studios, because we had our own, and we figured that if people wanted to come and work with us, they would come to our studio. That was probably unfair to a certain extent. The only exception was that we were still going to New York for Jerry to do Aretha Franklin, because we'd been doing that before we moved."

"It was unfair because we were a little under-equipped, studio-wise. So the only thing we had was the playing ability and a way of getting involved with putting a record together, but I think that's what a company like Atlantic is for."

It marked a critical turning point. When they returned, the hits started flying out of Muscle Shoals. "Even though he isn't fashionable at the moment."

He also happens to be an expert drummer/percussionist, a craft he began professionally at the age of 17, starting with the Primitives, spending three years in Italy churning out original band material and obscure R&B oldies.

He returned to England, and notched up a veritable trophy house of associations. There was a band called Spont in which he played on RCA ("The critics thought he was pretentious and, in retrospect, it was"). He became the Rockfield house drummer, which paid less than zero ("you'd have to ask for 40p for fags") but was enjoyable nonetheless

Even though someone like Marley has managed to cross it over to a

certain extent. I don't think he's had a big commercial hit in the States yet, that's a shame, and I can see why, in a way. It's like R&B was when we started out in '67/'68. It's too raw, it's directed at a certain amount of people only. Audie Ashworth—ironically, one of the producers originally mooted for the second Straits album). Which brings us up to the here and now and the producers...

JERRY WEXLER should need little introduction. He's a genuine legend in his own time. After working as a journalist on Billboard in the early Fifties, he joined Atlantic Records in 1953, when it was a small, maverick independent label. From here on in you could pen several books about his exploits. (If you're interested, pick up a copy of Charlie Gillett's Making Tracks—The History of Atlantic Records, which Gillett virtually turns into Wexler's biography.)

"I've been involved with a lot of black singers, and sometimes black groups, but in general, black solo singers backed by studio bands which are totally controlled by the producer and arranger. Of course there are many singers who make valid contributions to that, but it's a different process from the group or rock process, where the producer is usually a fine-tuner, or a lapidary if you will."

If you combine Jerry's self-confessed musical elitism ("The original rubric of rock & roll was anyone can do it—that's why a lot more clients were coming in. Business got better. We started having some R&B hits, very few pop hits.") with the love of the Southern Groove and his treatment of artists as "valuable property", you should be able to guess his response to the Straits.

THE following words of Wexler's are surely as illuminating as anything a critic has yet had to say about Mark Knopfler and his band: "They have that Southern characteristic. It's a porous, breathing track where you don't fill it all up. Making music is always a trade off between how much you state and how much you leave to the imagination, and the answer to that is your own taste."

"It's impossible for me to categorize the band. There just isn't any analogue. Almost always you can put somebody into a box and say they're 'like so-and-so'. This band is not like anybody I can think of. So the next step in the syllogism is don't mess with it, don't spoil it—and I don't think that would even be an option, because Mark wouldn't permit it."

"Mark doesn't play that kind of screaming, mindless guitar that's been so popular, which depends on just the sheer flights of the sound, but he improvises melodically, which to me is the hallmark of a great musician, as opposed to just improvising within the chord structure and being harmonically oriented. He can do that and still have a familiar relationship to the song. The ghost of the song is always there, it's good improvisation, in my opinion."

"They represent a very contemporary aspect of British society. They're young and for the most part quite well-educated people, with a very strong sense of self and where their best interests lie. There are elements of a certain consciousness of maybe a lower-middle class and working-class outlook with the benefit of college education, but it's very good because it's a view that's anti-establishment without a lot of blatant sloganeering."

"How can I put it? They respond very immediately to anything that smacks of hypocrisy or sham. There's definitely a sense of the greatest good for the greatest number."

"We all feel the same way, so we're not afraid to sound as if we're gushing. We really feel as if we're involved with something special. I don't have a notion that it was going to turn out like this when we set out on this little journey."

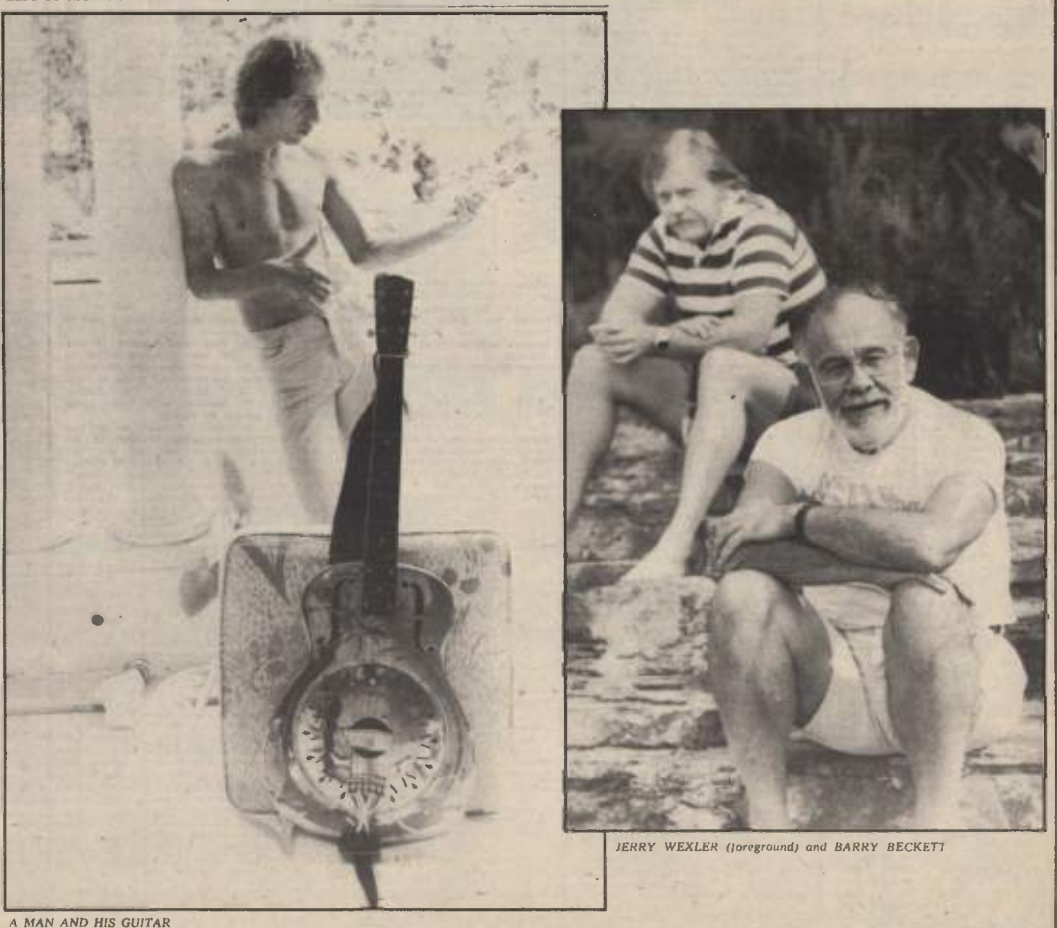
Funky Nassau: a preview

THE album is tentatively titled "Communique", though when I left, Jerry was still arguing that it might sound too arty. He prefers that to something more direct, more Anglo-Saxon, and suggested another track title, "News", as a possible contender. They were going to sleep on it.

Listening to the rough mixes, every cut sounded a stone winner. It



LEFT TO RIGHT: DAVE KNOPFLER, JOHN ILLSLEY, PICK WITHERS, MARK KNOPFLER



JERRY WEXLER (foreground) and BARRY BECKETT

A MAN AND HIS GUITAR