

JOHN PEEL: CANDID COMMENTS ON THE NEW SINGLES

Sounds

MAY 3, 1975

12p

BAY CITY BLAST OFF!

FOUR DATES ADDED TO SMASH HIT TOUR

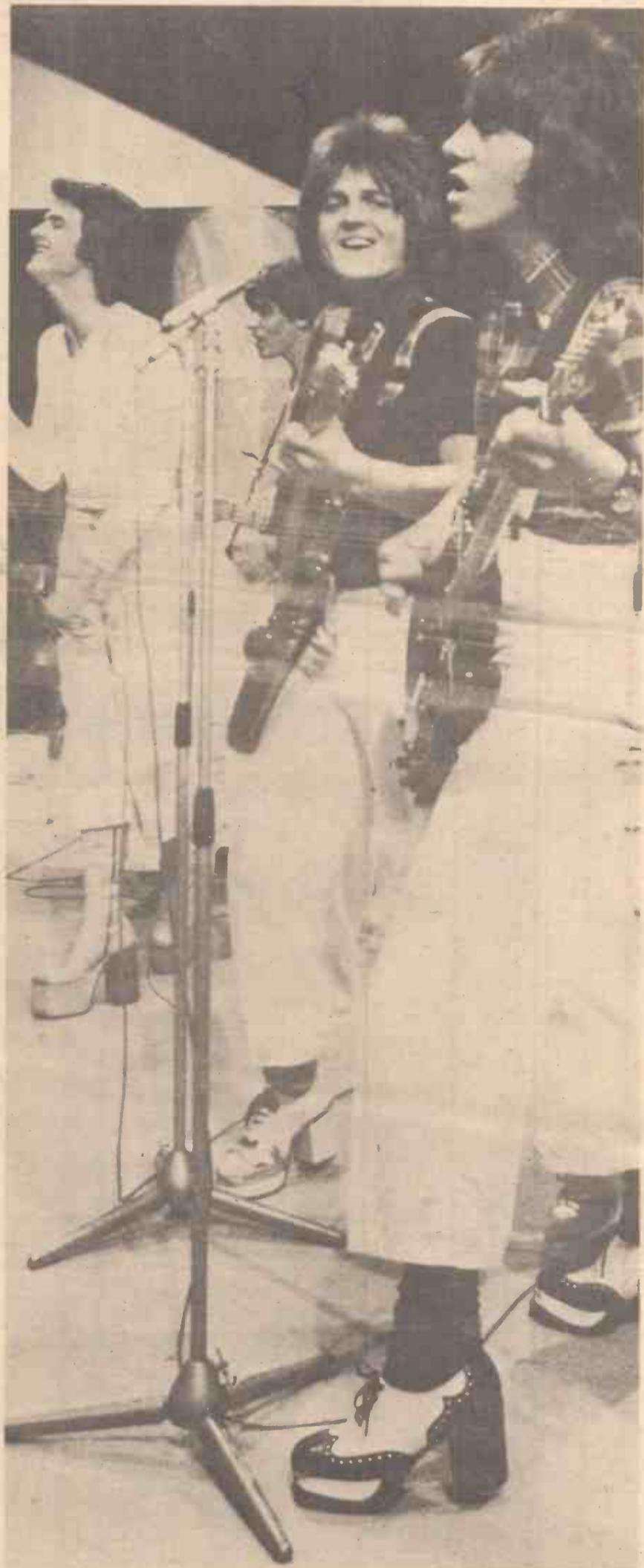
THE BAY CITY ROLLERS' marathon smash hit British tour — every date was sold out before the tour began — hit the road with two fantastic concerts at Glasgow's Apollo on Sunday.

And due to the incredible demand for tickets — black market tickets are changing hands at up to five times their face value — four extra nights have been added to the tour.

The extra dates are: Hammersmith Odeon (May 31), New Theatre Oxford (June 2), Newcastle City Hall (3), and Empire Sunderland (4).

Plans are well under way for the

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**LEO
SAYER**

INSIDE

**BEN E.
KING**

INSIDE

**Janis Joplin
Yes go soul**

INSIDE

**LITTLE
FEAT**

INSIDE

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INSIDE

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SLADE MOVING TO AMERICA

SLADE HAVE joined the pop drain from Britain.

Because of crippling tax claims on their earnings, the lads are going to live in America for two years.

According to Noddy Holder, the taxman claims 95 per cent of their income.

The group — Noddy, Dave Hill, Jim Lea, and Don Powell — are likely to settle in New York.

They first entered the charts in 1971 and have sold 90 million records since then.

GRINDERSWITCH have announced the addition of keyboard player Stephen Miller as a permanent member of the band. Miller is a well-known organ and piano player whose experience includes stints with Linn County, a popular San Francisco group of the late sixties, and a four-year association with the Elvin Bishop Group.

WINNER

ERUPTIONS. A London group, won the RCA/Record Mirror Soul Search competition at London's Hammersmith Palais last week. First prize includes an RCA recording contract and a rush release single. Runners-up were the Birmingham band Superbad.



PETE HAM

PETE HAM, leader of Bad Finger, has been found hanged at his home in Surrey. His body was found by his girlfriend. An inquest is expected next week.

HEAVIES

LESLIE WEST was in line for second lead in a movie called 'Tilt' (about guess what ... a pinball champ with all his faculties) but lost out to an even heavier Orson Welles ...

ROLLERS ROLL ON

● FROM PAGE 1

Rollers to play dates in America this summer.

US promoter Sid Bernstein — the man who handled the Beatles in the States — was at the Glasgow concerts to see the Rollers and discuss arrangements for their breakthrough to the American market.

Early plans include TV dates and radio promotion as well as some live dates.

Meanwhile the Rollers' incredible British popularity goes on. A report last week said that EMI records are currently shipping out more BCR records per day than any other artist ever — including the Beatles in their heyday.

FANS ARE GETTING YOUNGER!

TWO NINE-YEAR-OLD kids booked into Glasgow's Albany Hotel and paid the £20 room fee. Authorities are now asking why they were allowed into the hotel — apparently it was a phone booking. Crowds of fans hung round the Albany all day but the Rollers were never actually there!

NEW ALBUM

RUSS BALLARD is to begin recording sessions with his newly-formed backing unit in London's Rampart Studios in mid-May.

A new single — Ballard's first with his own unit — is planned for late June release, but the sessions will also be devoted to tracks for his second album, which is scheduled for autumn issue.

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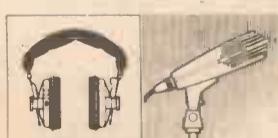
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HARTLEY SPLITS WITH DOG SOLDIER

NEW BRITISH Band, Dog Soldier, have split with drummer Keef Hartley on the eve of their debut British concert tour. New drummer with the outfit is 24-year-old Eric Dillon, who began his career with Jimi Hendrix in the late sixties and continued with Noel Redding's Fat Mattress.

Most recently Dillon has been with Savoy Brown and Nicky Hopkins. Dog Soldier parted company with Hartley after completing a 50-day American tour earlier this month.

Their first United Artists album is released this Friday — the same day as they begin a two week concert tour of Britain with Arthur Lee and Love.

Tour dates are Birmingham Town Hall May 2, Southampton University 3, Manchester Free Trade Hall 6, Salisbury City Hall 7, Stoke Victoria Hall 9, Reading University 10, Liverpool Stadium 11, Sheffield City Hall 12, Lyceum London 15 and Leeds Town Hall 16.

Dog Soldier line up is Miller Anderson, lead vocals and lead guitar, Derek Griffiths joint lead guitar and vocals. Mel Simpson keyboards and Paul Bliss bass guitar.

STARRY EYED And Laughing dates for next month are: Cardiff University May 2, Tithe Farm 5, Bristol Victoria

Rooms 6, Birmingham Town Hall 7, Lancaster University 9, Essex University 10, London Roundhouse 11, Hull Tiffany's 13, Sheffield Polytechnic 14, York University 16, Walsall West Midlands College 17p Leeds Polytechnic 22, Hastings Pier 23, London Lyceum 29, Exeter St. Luke's 30 and Crewe College Of Education 31.

SNAFU

SNAFU ARE to headline a nationwide college and concert tour in May — opening at Basingstoke Technical College on May 2. On all except the Croydon gig (May 11), they will be supported by Nutz.

Confirmed venues include Cromer Royal Links Pavilion (May 3), Barbarella's, Birmingham (6), Cleethorpes Winter Gardens (8), Sheffield University (10), Croydon Greyhound (11).

Chelmsford Chancellor Hall (18), Lyceum, London (22), Waltham Forest Tech (23), and Liverpool Stadium (24).

Confirmation is still awaited for gigs at Sterling University (9), York University (16), Luton Tech (17) and Stafford Top of the World (19).

Safu's second album "Situation Normal" is to be released in America by Capitol on May 23, and the band will make their stateside debut via a concert tour starting in late July.

REFORMED

GLEN TURNER has now officially reformed Tundra,

though the band are still without a keyboards player. They have been off the road since the departure of Chris Stainton earlier this year.

Tundra are currently rehearsing with a new line-up and are expected to be back on the road next month. An album, entitled "Glen Turner's Tundra", will be released on June 6.

TICKETS FOR the upcoming Barry White concert at London's Royal Albert Hall on May 12 sold out within one hour of going on sale.

A second show at this venue, which was added at the last moment, also sold out within four hours. Following his dates in Britain, White leaves to tour Holland, Belgium, France, Austria and Germany — where the lowest ticket price is £6, the highest £18.

NEW TEAM

ELLIE, new girl vocal team whose new Fresh Air single "My Love Is Your Love" was specially written for them by Mud stars Rob Davis and Ray Stiles, are to start work on their debut album in July.

They'll fit recording sessions in London in between a series of club and concert gigs in the provinces.

ELLIE — sisters Kathy, Chris and Elaine Hope — star for a week at La Fabrique, Edinburgh (opening on May 25), followed by weeks at Swansea Townsman (June 2), Blackpool Norbreak (June 22), Leeds Blue Angel (June 30) and Harrogate Gallup Inn

(July 6). They tour Italy between June 12-19.

BILL BARCLAY

BILL BARCLAY has a new single released on May 2 entitled "I Ain't Gonna Drink Anymore". This has been specially written and produced for him by Hudson Ford.

FIRST GIGS

KILBURN & THE HIGH ROADS who make their London concert debut with Dr. Hook & The Medicine Show at London's New Victoria Theatre on May 4, are to play their first gigs behind the "Iron Curtain" this summer.

The band, whose debut album "Handsome" is issued on Dawn on May 23, are set for Eastern European concerts in Yugoslavia and Poland between August 4-13.

The gigs will immediately follow a series of appearances in Holland, Belgium and France in late July, designed to aid European promotion of the album.

THE HIT West End show "A Little Night Music", which opened last week, is to be recorded for an original London cast album. The album will be rush-released at the beginning of May by RCA.

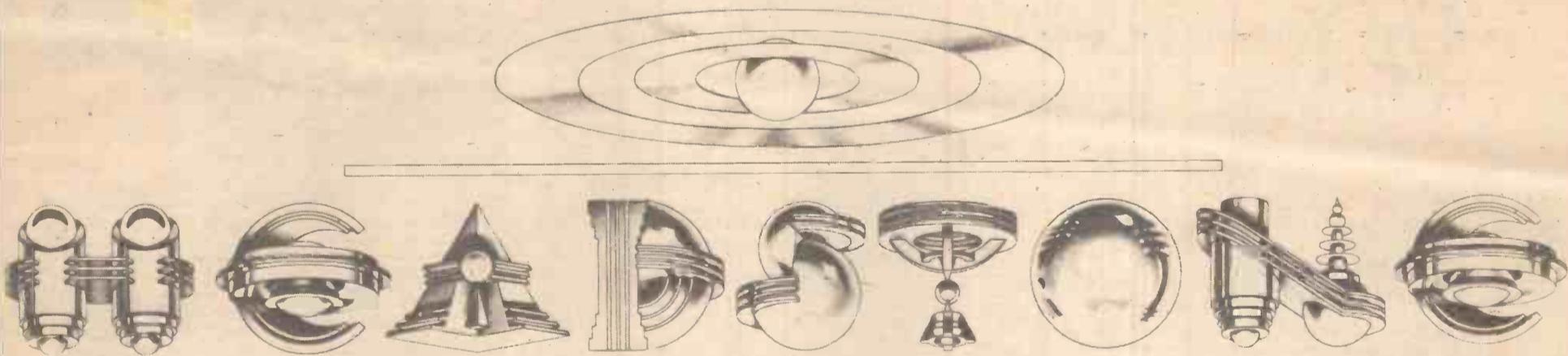
CURLY PLAY the following dates in May: Middlesbrough Polytechnic May 1, Durham University 2, Southampton University 3, Brunel University 9, Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall 10, Bristol Granary 15, Essex University 17, Glamorgan Polytechnic 22, and Coventry Mr George's 25.



BRIGHTER LINDA LEWIS!

LINDA LEWIS takes the Brighter Britain campaign to heart with brush and paint as she gives a new, bright look to her period cottage in Hampton Court. Linda's current record is "Remember The Days Of The Old School Yard".

A NEW ALBUM FROM MARK ASHTON, STEVE BOLTON JEROME RIMSON, JOE O'DONNELL & PETER VAN HOOKE



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MAY 17TH NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
MAY 18TH BIRMINGHAM NEW THEATRE

APPEARING WITH JOHN CALE

MICK RENTS ANDY'S NEW YORK HOUSE

MICK JAGGER has rented Andy Warhol's house on Long Island. With the news that Ron Wood is to join the Rolling Stones for their tour of the States it would appear that a few memorable occasions will be added to the already long list that have taken place at the Warhol residence.

Tour

David Essex due back in the States to set up his States tour to start at the end of this year.

Jean Luc Ponty has left the Mahavishnu Orch and is now signed with Atlantic with a LP 'Upon The Wings Of Music', due out shortly. Ponty said that he'll use his time from now on to work on his own music.

Feature

People Magazine had a cover feature on Linda and Paul McCartney last week ... The Allmans are recording in

Macon, with brother Greg on the scene.

Joe Walsh is the supervisor of all A&R production at Full Moon Productions. Meanwhile Joe will leave for Britain and Europe in mid June.

LA REACTION to the changes in the Elton John Band was one of shock. Fans called radio stations and trade magazines to insist that the rumours Nigel Olsson and Dee Murray were no longer working with Elton couldn't be true.

Fine

Leo Sayer did just fine during his recent engagement at the Troubadour in LA. The Troub audiences liked him much better this time — minus the clown-suit and make-up. Leo's 'Long Tall Glasses' was incredibly well-received.

In case you wondered what has become of John and Yoko Lennon's former backing group Elephants Memory they're still alive and well and now signed to Atlantic Records.

Venues

KRAFTWERK, with their album 'Autobahn' doing extremely well, have had additional venues added to their first States tour.



• JOHNNY WINTER in action at the Felt Forum last week.

'BANZAI' — Blue Oyster Cult is one of the best bands America's got'

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CHUCK PULIN: NEW YORK, ANDY McCONNELL & SHARON LAWRENCE: LOS ANGELES, PETER BODIE: SAN FRANCISCO

BARBRA CHASES ELVIS

BARBRA STREISAND is after Elvis Presley to star with her in the "Rainbow Road" film she was to have made with Kris Kristofferson.

Tull's 'War Child' has gone Platinum for over one million sales ... Bad Company's upcoming tour of U.S. halls with Maggie Bell promises to be a sizzler.

Million tour

Chicago / Beach Boys tour will reach over one million people in just twelve cities this Summer.

Rolling Stones dates set for June ... Bill Bruford playing sessions on Steve Howe solo outing ... Linda Lewis signed

by Arista, her first single will be Cat Stevens' 'The Old Schoolyard'.

Free

Rumour has it that Jefferson Starship will headline a free concert in L.A.'s Griffith Park in May or June. Heaven knows how many will turn up ... O'Days back with their first single in many, many months, 'Give The People What They Want'.

'Waga Yokotomoyo' is No 1 in the Japanese single's charts this week. Yet, even more intriguing is 'Nigayun-mida' by the Three Degrees (!) stands at No 10 ... looks like 'Chicago VIII' will replace the Zeps at the head of the album charts here.

Together

Since Chicago and the Beach Boys are now managed by the same firm, Caribou Management, it seemed like an obvious fun — and lucrative — idea that the two bands tour together. They'll hit twelve American cities this summer making it quite a special show for the fans.

Last time Lynyrd Skynyrd played LA they were the opening act for Marshall Tucker and managed to steal the show. This time around they're headlining for two nights in a row at Santa Monica Civic and their new 'Nuthin' Fancy' album was the second best-selling new album in America last week.

Recording

Alan Gorrie of the Average White Band says the next LP will be even more disco-oriented. "Lots of funky stuff," declares Alan, "and only one ballad." The lads are recording in LA at the moment and the third AWB LP will be released early this summer.

Papa John Creach has left Grunt Records to sign with Buddah although he's still pals with the Jefferson Starship and is, in fact, on tour with them at the moment.



• JAMES COTTON: played on Winter gig

NEXT WEEK

GENESIS • SLADE RAY CHARLES SCI-FI ROCK

PLUS MUCH MORE

STANDING BY BENE KING

TWO FIFTHS of Procul Harum are playing backgammon. Ben E. King watches studiously, hands in the pockets of his raincoat. A photographer and researcher from the Radio Times bustle around anxiously, one eye on the game and King, and one eye on a connecting door into the recording studio — firmly closed.

After almost twenty years in music, Ben E. King is all set to make the cover of the Radio Times.

The occasion is a reunion — King with the two men who were instrumental in giving him success, first with the Drifters and later as a solo singer, producers and writers Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. Behind the closed door Leiber and Stoller wind up a take from the new Procul Harum they are producing; the door opens and King and entourage are ushered in.

Although the singer has seen both Leiber and Stoller separately over the years, it is the first time the three have been together since the early 1960s. It should be an emotional occasion, but the stage is set for work, not emotion, and the actors seem unsure of their parts. Leiber, Stoller and King gathered around to embrace as the photographer threads wires, erects lights and primes his camera. The Procul Harum tape booms back through the studio speakers obliterating conversation. It is a merciful respite.

'I never get tired of hearing my old songs because I never sing them the same way twice'

The reunion is over in twenty minutes, King wanders around the studio with Procul's Gary Brooker. Somebody lights a joint. The photographer calls for positions. A reel of Leiber, Stoller and King gathered around the control desk. Click. Another reel with Procul Harum in the picture. Click. The photographer signals his approval. "You realise how much this is costing us?" jokes one of the group. Leiber claps his hands; the high intensity lights are shut down and a bemused-looking Ben E. King is led out of the studio.

Outside a large car stands in the drizzle, waiting to speed him away from the grey, scarred landscape of Wandsworth back to his hotel. In a couple of hours he will be on stage for the last night of the Atlantic Super-Soul package. Tomorrow he will be back in America.

It has been King's ninth visit to these shores, but whereas on previous occasions he has come as something of a passenger on his past reputation, this time around there has been a more topical reason for interest. After almost a decade in the record

Driftin back into popularity, Ben E. King has just finished touring the country with the Atlantic Super Soul package. Mick Brown watches a nervous reunion between King and his first writers, Messrs Leiber and Stoller, and finds out what he has been doing between tides



Then and now. The hits may come and go but the sweaters just keep rolling on.



the Crowns assumed the name of the Drifters (after a Clyde McPhatter-led version of the group had disbanded).

With King as lead singer, the Drifters marked something of a milestone in the evolution of R & B and, by extension, popular music in general. With their lilting harmonies cushioned in lush string settings the group revolutionised the vocal technique of black groups. Their commercial success was a crucial factor in the development of Atlantic as a major record label and Leiber and Stoller as creative musical forces.

When King left the Drifters to pursue a solo career it was in a vein faithful to the traditions of the group, but distinctive enough to establish himself as one of the foremost ballad singers of the era — a man who could take a big song and wring every ounce of emotion out of it if it to devastating effect.

King's last association with the Drifters had been on the classic 'Save The Last Dance For Me'. "I'd already left the group by that time, but I was still contracted to do some sides, and that was one of them," he recalls.

"We were planning to do 'Spanish Harlem' as the next group song, but the night I went into the studio to record it there had been some real heavy blizzard and none of the other guys were able to make it. So Ahmet Ertegun and Jerry Wexler decided I should go ahead and record the song myself, and it came out as my first ever single release."

The song (covered here by Jimmy Justice — and whatever happened to him?) was in immediate success, and King followed it with a handful of hits over the next few years. By the time the 'What Is Soul' was released, however, it was apparent that his fortunes were taking a change for the worse. With Atlantic paying more attention — and

equally able to accept defeat; you can't win all the time. I was fortunate enough to have had my head pretty well together. I didn't blame anybody, because there was really nobody to blame, except perhaps myself. The most important thing when you're down is not to lose confidence in yourself. There may be times when you'll have to do something you don't exactly want to do, but you just have to persevere and wait until your chance comes around again."

He bided his time on tours of England, and on the American hotel lounge and supper-club circuit. "It's an experience I wouldn't have traded for anything," he says. "It's a lot different from the concert scene, but it's an education. I was extremely fortunate in the hits I'd had appealed to people of all ages. It's usually hard to get a club audience to accept you when you were once hot and doing things for the kids, but I was able to go from that area into the more adult crowd because they were familiar with my material." It was during a stint at a club in Miami that King again forged links with Atlantic.

"Ahmet Ertegun came backstage after a show, and said he thought I was still singing pretty good and asked me if I wanted to do a one-record deal with Atlantic. I went up to New York and without any contracts or anything went into the studio with Tony Silvester and Bert DeCoteaux and cut 'Supernatural Thing'."

With the single breaking, Ertegun's confidence in King was vindicated, a long-term contract was signed and the singer hustled back into the studio to cut an album, 'Supernatural'.

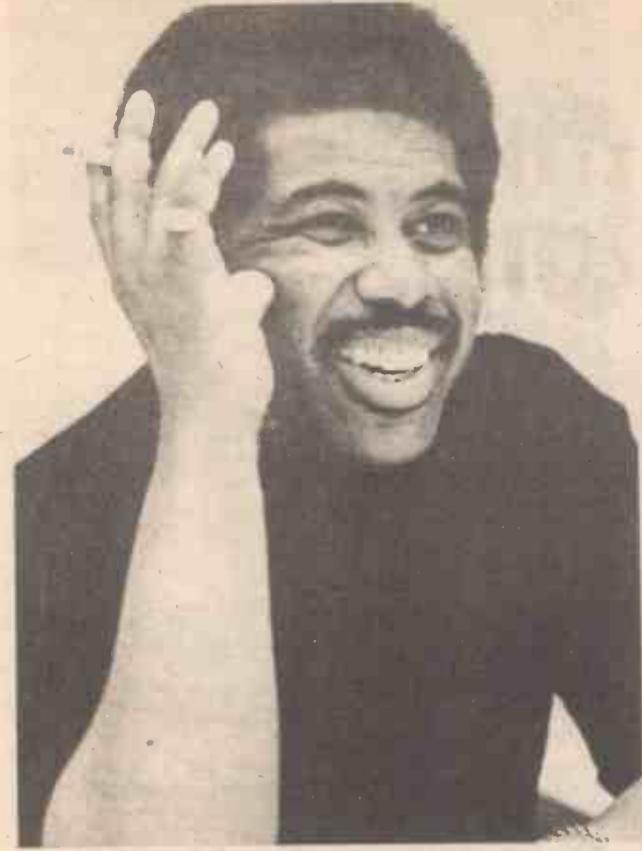
Most of the material is in the more funky, contemporary vein of the single. "I've been doing funky material in my club act anyway," King ex-

"The most important thing when you're down is not to lose confidence in yourself"

plains, "but now at least I've got material written for me instead of having to do some other artist's. One song on the album I wrote with my 15-year-old son; but I've refrained from using a lot of my own material because I write principally ballads, and you just can't do a whole album of ballads today" maybe years from now — but not today. The disco scene is strong now; kids want to dance.

"The most important time in my life was when I wasn't having hits. I learned a lot about myself and my obligations to an audience. So my concern now is more for the

●CONTINUED PAGE 8



● FROM PAGE 7
people who are actually gonna hear the record than for the producer, the arranger or the businessmen making it. The important question is 'Is this something that's gonna make my audience happy?' And the world situation now is such that we got to lift each other, musically as well as spiritually. We really don't need sad songs right now."

Nonetheless, the bulk of King's stage-act (which is surprisingly short on the Super-Soul tour) is reserved for oldies, which he must now be able to sing, in his sleep. "I never get tired of hearing them," says King with a laugh. "Spanish Harlem" is the song that first made me aware of who I am, what I am and what I'm doing. It's a standard, but one that can be done in so many different

'We really don't need sad songs right now'

ways. "Save The Last Dance" is another one I could sing all night and never sing it the same way twice. No way could I get bored with it."

The car pulls in to the hotel forecourt. King steps out, pulls his collar up to guard against the rain and briskly walks to the foyer. His mind is on the up-coming show. The reunion is forgotten.

● More Atlantic Super-Soul on page 33.

PADDY, THE chief bouncer at Newcastle City Hall, hustled up to me on the first night of the tour and explained: "Oi've heard of the land of milk and honey, but backstage there, it's ridiculous."

You probably don't wish to know that. But, Yes the funky, Yes the new soul band? Read on.

After the Glasgow gig and a hotel meal (Steak for the press, brown rice for the band) at about two in the morning the game and courteous Patrick Moraz and Alan White submitted themselves for grilling.

Patrick is a charming gentilhomme, full of Gallic garrulity with the sort of accent that makes you wish all English speakers had been born in France. Alan looked the same buccaneer Geordie Viking as on stage, but he was knackered.

They started talking about the strange experience of being back on tour in Britain eyeball to eyeball with their audiences.

AW: "The people are on top of you and you feel like you'd better put on an extra special show because they can see every mistake you make. In America they are just a blanket of people out there."

PM: "In England, every bar, every beat, every note played is important. You can see all the people on the balconies watching you intensely."

I asked how this related to the long standing accusation that Yes were an academic and cold band.

AW: "That's what the band used to be known for, but I feel it's completely opposite now. The English gigs bring out the warmth in the band a lot because of the closeness. We've developed. We are still technical, but with more soul."

PM: "I had seen Yes many times since the beginning before Alan, and with Rick, and the last time I saw them, I thought they were cold. But as soon as I entered into this rehearsal and we started to play there was so much power and also laying back to play funky in a modern rock way. I am sure now the audience will start to realise who Yes is really, and that Yes is so much willing to communicate with them."

But "funky?" Most people understand the Average White's type of sound when they hear that word.

AW: "Yes are funky technically. I am not saying the Average White's aren't good musicians, I really dig their album. There's a lot of ways to be funky. If you can do it in seven/eight time, that's OK as long as it swings. That's where we're at."

The current set ranges back to the second album. Especially with the acoustic oldies' section, did they think of it as a Yes retrospective?

AW: "We always fancied playing an acoustic set. I sit back, play vibes if I feel like it. It's nice hearing a relaxed acoustic 'Long Distance Runaround'. Every night it's got that atmosphere, a break from the other kind of intense music. We breathe a bit. It's very well balanced that way."

PM: "We have all had the same kind of evolution about music and emancipation in a way and now we play the old numbers with today's standard of making music and even improvise."

AW: "It's very open, yet it's very controlled, organised. But there's plenty of fun to be had within the organisation. It's like going to school being in Yes. You're always learning."

'Close To The Edge' is the peak of their present programme to me. But did Patrick feel trapped by thematic necessities into imitating Wakeman?

PM: "To me, 'Close To The Edge' is a turning point in Yes music. It is a meenee-seemphonee. Although the keyboard parts have not been written on actual paper at the time they were proposed I play them as an orchestra would play them

Going into the land of milk and honey

Are Yes the new soul band? Are they going funky? Phil Sutcliffe finds out when he talks to Alan White and Patrick Moraz



● PATRICK MORAZ: Thinking of growing another hand.

from sheet music. I respect it."

AW: "The keyboard part has to be there, but I play differently every night because I like messing around a bit. On stage to listen to it all as you're doing it is such a tremendous feeling, you get so much out of it."

Patrick has eleven keyboards to choose from in creation at performance. This also multiplies the chaos factor — in the last Newcastle gig a mellotron blew out ten times. And it didn't show. How does one man's brain cope?

PM: "It comes first as a dream, secondly as a night-

mare, and after that you have got to think like a computer or like a very sensible soul to organise in the studio what sound you are going to be able to play on stage. Because every sound which is overdubbed on the record is played back on stage exactly, and I don't know if there are any bands in the world who do this with this kind of perfectionism. To achieve this it's really tricky."

AW: "He's thinking about growing another hand at the moment."

PM: "It comes with years of training and experience thinking about it all the time, living with it, being married to it. I'm always thinking keyboards and how can I improve."

Yes words have never made much impact on me, except simple standout phrases like "nous sommes du soleil". Were they important to all of the group?

AW: "You haven't worked at it enough. You've got to sit down and really analyse what Jon's trying to say. It's a bizarre form of poetry. We're just the backing group behind the words really." (He was joking.)

PM: "Being foreign and not English the words of 'Gates Of Delirium', for example, are very important

because they are so representative of what we are playing. In 'Soon' at the end of 'Gates' the lyrics really transcend the number which is in a way, a quite ordinary piece of music, let's face it. Though it is beautiful, the chord sequence is very formal and simple and a bit predictable. That's when it's important. But these days, who has time to listen to an album 10 times, 20 times, and analyse it? Have you got time for that? We can, because it's our vocation, it's our lives. And yet look at the fans, they all know the words by heart, they sing them at the concerts."

At which Alan yawned his way off to bed and Patrick stepped lightly away down the corridor looking as though he'd knock you off another meenee-seemphonee at the drop of a hat.

Then I played Scrabble 'til morning with Yes's manager and promoter, Brian Lane and Harvey Goldsmith, who said that sometimes nights on the rock scene were even wilder — Monopoly. And Margaret Thatcher arrived at the hotel and was invited to that night's gig, and Steve Howe said he enjoyed listening to the Wombles (with his baby daughter). But you probably don't wish to know that.

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"NILS LOFGREN" His solo debut. ON A&M RECORDS

Evie Sands shifts into top gear

So who's Evie Sands? Penny Valentine remembers those hazy, lazy days and reckons Evie is going to do a Carole King on us



IT WAS ONE of those long summers we don't seem to get anymore — thanks to those damn shifting global plates. You know the kind, all hazy days, strawberries and 60's musical emotions drifting from radios through open windows into the streets.

Anyway ... it was my first summer as a 'rock writer' and there I was sifting diligently through my batch of 90 singles of that week when I came across this 45 called 'Take Me For A Little While' produced by the unlikely combination of Gorgoni & Taylor and sung by one Evie Sands.

Weeks later it was still whirling round my turntable on 'Repeat' and driving the people across the street crazy. It's still filed in my brain under the classics section — along with Evie Sands' second big hit 'Anyway That You Want Me'.

Two major smashes in three years didn't — as she says now — exactly make Evie Sands a household name. But somehow that fragile rather melancholic voice on those two pieces of female masochism charged into my musical psyche and stayed there.

New album

There was a long silence from Evie Sands after that. So it was quite a surprise when, sitting in New York, I suddenly unwrapped a new Evie Sands album on Haven and — on inquiry — was informed that she was currently busy shooting round America on a radio and TV promotion and would be touring in late Spring.

Interesting that this musical influence on my more tender years should suddenly re-emerge after a hiatus of some 60 months. The whole situation is oddly comparable to that of Carole King a few years back.

The new album, says Evie Sands, is really the start of a whole new cycle in her life. In 1971, after two changes of record company and the feeling that she was more "a musical computer" than an artist in her own right, she retired. For four years Evie Sands had what one might call the luxury of sitting back from her life as a musician and giving the whole thing the benefit of a calm logical reassessment.

Lay off

She wrote a lot and went into the studios just to add her own touches to the work of musician friends. The result of the lay-off, as far as her own career was concerned, is displayed on 'Evie Sands'

— a collection of tracks co-written with Ben Weisman and Richard Germinaro; and in her whole attitude to the 'business' she naively entered at 18 and that she found became, as it was in those days, ostensibly a commercial hit singles roundabout that was hard to get off.

Evie Sands was born in New York. Her mother was a professional singer so nobody was too surprised when Evie displayed musical prowess in her minor years. At 18 she was appearing at the Peppermint Lounge and the Cafe Wha' and signed to Lieber and Stoller and their new record label.

"The trouble was when I started working artists never cut albums the way they can now. It was always down to a hit single — and then maybe the chance to cut ten tracks that sounded like hit singles.

"I did begin to feel like a computer. Then when I moved out to LA in 1968 things got worse. I realised that my life was passing by trapped in the syndrome of meeting people and really only getting the chance of snapshot impressions of them. Also Chip Taylor, Al Gorgoni and I became even more separated than we had been before. They were in New York, I was

in LA, and the communication problem that had begun to rear up before I left naturally became even worse.

"Eventually it had to come to an end. I'd worked for them since I first started recording and I just realised that things weren't working out and I needed a whole new cycle of things to happen.

"So I stopped work, stopped touring and set about getting a new bunch of people around me that I could communicate with. That was on every level — management, recording, agency, publicity writing, everything. I started writing with Richard in 1971 and two years later we met Ben and realised there was something very important he could add to the work we were doing."

Evie went into the studios late last year to put down 'Evie Sands'. She is currently in the throes of forming a band for her forthcoming tour — the first in over three years — on a "you're only as good as your band" frame of mind. "I want mine to have a higher level of anticipation and commitment than most other bands."

She is taking on the current promotion tour with certainly more esoteric reasoning that most other artists who tend to do it as though the record company are sticking a gun in their ribs.

My life

"Music has always been my life and it's a job of work I enjoy better than any other. You see as people it's very important we all do something that makes us happy to get out of bed in the morning. I don't like the word 'artist' in music. It separates musicians from everyone else."

Normally I get very worked up talking to musicians who wreak such an effect in my musical past. It's pretty rough to find so many of your past idols have feet of pure mud. Evie Sands feet are placed in crystal water and she's alright by me."

Hinkley—out with the low profile

IT COULD'VE taken photos and bloodhounds to track down and identify the shadowy character. It could've. But the rarely seen, often-heard-from session spectre, Tim Hinkley, was voluntarily going public. A trial of album credits, totaling 25 for last year alone, led to the discrete hideout of Goodear Records. There, after 15 years of faceless rock and rollin' Hinkley unveiled a plan to dump his low profile.

"At this stage," he announced determinedly, "I want to become more than just somebody's keyboardplayer, an unseen face. And the only way to do that is to get your music out."

Previously confined to the anonymity of the session world, he's readying himself for his first solo album to be recorded in a sort of drifting manner over the next few months at varied American sites, New York, Memphis and Nashville. He's spending a couple of weeks in London plotting stratagems for the album and recording a single, Keith Richard's 'You Got The Silver'.

Session players over the last several years have grabbed a major role in LP-making, and if Hinkley's course was inevitable, as he believes it was, then we could very well expect a wave of veteran sessioneers heading into the spotlight. Some members of the session force like Jim Gordon, Russ Kunkel, Chris Ethridge, and Sneaky Pete Kleinow, have

attracted some glamour, and even cult followings.

A growing breed of record buyers make purchases only after scouring LP sleeve credits in search of reputed session players.

The demise in the importance of "the group" helped boost session men into prominence and Hinkley's all for it. Small, with fine black hair and the ruddy self-assuredness of someone who's been banging pianos for a while, Hinkley and his pet theories run non-stop.

Professionals

"It used to be when somebody left a group it was a big occasion," he says. "I don't think it is anymore. In America it doesn't matter who's in a group. I could join an established band there, become part of the band for a year, and then leave and nobody knocks you for it or thinks bad things.

"We're all professional

musicians now. Rock and roll is 30-years-old and is becoming a profession which is a much nicer way of looking at it."

Hinkley can't be in a bind for work. There's been no shortage for him recently. Among the many acts he worked with last year were Humble Pie, Mike Heron, Henry McCullough and Alvin Lee. One of the advantages of this line of work is that since there are no road expenses, session money goes right into the pocket. Hinkley himself was making over £200 a day during recent sessions in Memphis with French bigwig Johnny Hallyday.

"The upkeep of a group costs a lot," he maintains. "Compared to that sessions are pretty easy. You turn up at a session, work six hours, and get paid £40 and you don't spend a penny. You go to Manchester one day, Leeds the next, Stratford, Bristol, and Southampton and you've spent £50."



• HINKLEY: "I want to become more than just somebody's keyboard player"

Because they're supposed to be the instrumental kingpins of the music biz, getting to be a session player ain't that easy. "It's very hard," agrees Hinkley. "Once you've done it for a long time you know how to get back in. People know of you. You're not famous but people know what you're capable of doing. And once you get started it goes on and on."

Though it can be a thrifty, comfortable way to pass the time, session playing can't beat live work for Tim, and like anything else, it can get a bit too familiar. Tired of session work, he wants to get in some live gigging; a six week tour with a band in the States would suit him fine. He's also branching out into production. With engineer Bob Potter, he's formed Inkpot Productions which recently produced an American band, Target.

When Tim began session work in 1965, backing soul heavies (excuse the name-dropping) like Geno Washington and the Ramjets, the Coloured Raisins, and Joey Young and the Tonics, he had to play as he was told. But no more.

Acoustic

"I've been very lucky with the sessions I do now. People want me to do what I play anyway. If it got to the point where I couldn't go on simply because I didn't play the way I wanted, then I'd say no. If you want a Herbie Hancock thing, you get Herbie Hancock."

Hinkley was not, as some have the impression, a card-carrying member of Humble Pie last year. Technically speaking, he was in the group for a period of three months, but to him "I just did an album with them, that's the way I look at it."

He played some dates with Pie in Europe and found that while his keyboard fitted in the studio it was ill-suited for stage purposes. "I'm an acoustic piano player, and at the intensity they play live it's very hard to get a keyboard to come over without just filling in the sound."

Rather than tamper with any abrupt changes in the Pie format (image), Hinkley slipped out of the project. He recalls, "They were having a hard time when I joined them, and I'm not sure why they asked me to join, but I think

says, "and everytime I hear a good song I write it down. I've been storing up songs and have written a few, some with Marriott.

"I haven't just been playing other people's music. I always try to put my own music into it. When I was working with Alvin I put a lot of work into it, my own changes, feels, and arrangements. My sort of thing won't be a lot different from that."

He's not worried about the prospect of going out on his own. But would it be another rerun of the solo album caper? "It will be different. I want to get away from that concept of 'alright, we've got two weeks in the studio; we're gonna use these musicians and these songs.'"

Therefore, he'll record in New York, in Memphis with Steve Cropper ("Cropper and Keith Richards are the only original rhythm guitarists"), and in Nashville with Ken Buttrey and Dan Penn.

"I've seen a lot of people do their own albums and they just slip under the door. Frankie Miller's for instance. That can confuse people. It confused me. But again I've learned a lot about the record business. If a record's not there, not in the shops, if it's not being heard on the radio, who's gonna hear it?"

Survival

"Half the game is being good at business now. You've got to adapt to it and survive. Ten years ago you spent four days of the week playing and two days of the week on the phone talking to a manager. Nowadays you spend two days playing and five days of the week getting the business together."

His scene will now shift to New York, a place that seems to hold his musical ancestry. He plans to set up camp there for about a year. "New York is where my music is at," he explains. "Plus I need a change. In a way it's a musical change because what I'm playing is the kind of music that's based on what many New York musicians are doing."

"You can see so many good bands in New York. You can listen to their records forever but if you're going to make records like that you have to go over and work with them."

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■ What was the reason for this rest period?

Well, basically, because I wanted a chance to cultivate my level of musicianship and I found myself sort of backed into a routine. Where I was working on the road and going back into New York to record, back out on the road, doing a lot of television appearances back-to-back; and I'm from a background of discipline that says you practice. I couldn't do it and after I couldn't do it to the point where I could no longer stand it, I had no choice but to stop.

During that time I produced my own album for the first time, did all the creative and technical production, and started acting, took dancing lessons and lost 42 pounds. And just generally did the things I needed to do, worked very hard, practised, set up some other kinds of routines which were healthy.

■ Would you recommend this to other performers?

I think it's necessary: the hardest time to do it is when you have reached a level, the kind of level I had attained two years ago with the success of 'Killing Me Softly' and 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' back-to-back. And a lot of people thought that (taking a leave of absence) might have been a crazy idea which it might have been. But I felt more than ever as a musician that I needed a chance to really grow and I could only do that by stopping ... I had to make the choice.

It was very hectic and if you get strictly involved in the commercial end of the business and if you just pay attention to those people who are advising you in that area and that area alone you get very confused. I'm not a dumb person but I am a musician so I listen to the advice of people who say, 'Now is the time to do a Broadway show, now is the time to do this television show, now is the time to do that.' And I find myself bogged down with, in some instances, ill-advice, and I wanted a chance to make up my own mind about what I wanted to do.

■ Now that you've had a chance to sit back and look at the American music scene, what do you think of it?

I think it's progressing ... that's a very bland response to a very general question but I think it's positive. Popular music, particularly in our country, continues to progress under the creative and innovative genius of people like Stevie Wonder who seems to have more or less tapped the pulse of the people and who is probably the most innovative popular musician in our country today.

He does more with different sounds and different musical ideas and of course has had a great influence on the use of synthesizer in popular music,

■ What made you decide to come back at this time and do you think you've changed the direction of your music?

I don't think I've changed my direction so much as I've changed my ideas. I'm doing more avant-garde music, I'm singing music which is not so predictable in the sense that most people expect me to sing 'Killing Me Softly' for the rest of my life. Before I did that I did some other things which led me to that point, since 'Killing Me Softly' I've experienced some other things which I'd like to share in



music and it's just a continuing thing.

As far as I'm concerned the direction is an extension of what I was already doing as opposed to being that different: I mean I haven't gone bossa nova crazy or I'm not into pure jazz singing or pure rock or pure anything. It's just that I'm trying to broaden what I am doing.

I intend to use more of my classical background, I would like to include some more expressions of that because I've worked on that the longest and hardest. One song on my album is kind of set in that baroque setting called 'She's Not Blind', very classical in design and structure but really nice.

As for why did I come back at this time, I never left really. I finished the album and I decided I had not been working for long enough, I love to work. I think it's a big hang up for a lot of musicians who like to work, I'm not a lazy person, I like to work, I just couldn't stay away any longer.

■ You did all the production on the album?

Yeah I did and for the first time I realised how important a W4 form (tax) was because I never had to do any of that before. One of the things that I did learn was that most record companies and people in the business try to keep women away from this side of things. I hate to say this but they want your knowledge of the technical end of production to be limited and I guess it is because it would be insulting to have a woman who sings a love song with her boobs over the sound board working the dials.

Dealing with production I found out I was doing it all along anyway; creative production involves selection of material which I've always done, doing all the basic rhythm arrangements which

AFTER A LENGTHY HIATUS, Roberta Flack — reportedly the highest paid female recording artist in the world — has returned to recording with a new album, 'Feel Like Makin' Love'. This long awaited follow-up to her

1973 classic album and single, 'Killing Me Softly', was produced and arranged by Roberta and in this exclusive interview she discusses the new album, her absence from the public eye, money and future plans.

includes piano, voice, bass, drums, and guitar — I was doing all that anyway. And having a lot to say about the design of the cover. This time when I decided to do the whole thing I learned a lot about the things that are involved in the technical production.

I mean I can't go in and push all the buttons, but I know a lot more now than I did before. And now I can't be fooled, as easily when

needs to get a broader view of how things are done. But I think that somebody at my level, you owe it to yourself to not have people constantly tell you how to think and what it has to be. And then once you've made that discovery you can decide how involved you want to be with it.

■ Where do the lyrics for your songs come from?

I don't write them; I can write very good words and very nice melodies but I have

my new album is like that; they're not all 'Killing Me Softly's' where you have a beginning, a middle, and an end, but the basic feeling about each song is so clear I'm sure people can relate to it.

I don't think it's difficult to understand what I do musically, it's pretty simple and most people like it for that reason.

■ What happened with the plans for you to make

There's been some offers to do it for some ridiculous amounts of money like a million dollars or less and it can't be done. I think they proved that when they did 'The Great Gatsby' and however good or bad it was they had to spend eleven million dollars just to create the feeling of that period and the story of Bessie is set in the same time period so I don't see how they could do it for that kind of money.

■ You said one time that you thought television appearances could be detrimental to a performer's success. Do you still feel that way?

I think you can get caught up doing TV appearances; if you see a recording personality on three shows all at the same time ... they (the performers) think that it's good exposure but I definitely think there's a possibility of overkill there. People like to see you but they don't want to be worn out by the same face and if you have a hit-tune in the charts and you're singing this same tune on three shows that are all basically on at the same time that can't be good for you.

■ Do acting and singing run counter to each other as an energy source?

Yeah, that's a good way to put it, as an energy source and source of creative expression. A good singer who sings the same song over and over again for five or six years, one time a night even, has to have this ability to put different things he or she experiences into this song every time she does it. You can't possibly feel the same thing all day long and no good singer does that just as no good actor does that.

They get involved with a feeling or a certain character or a certain set of circumstances ... when I'm singing at a gay bar and I sing 'All The Sad Young Men', for in-

'They want your knowledge of the technical end of production to be limited...'

people start talking in aesthetic terms, it confuses you if you don't know how to approach it scientifically. They say, 'I want it to sound like a green bulb, Roberta', but what does that mean transferred into other terms? It means pushing this button as opposed to that button. I will never do it again because it's just too demanding, it stretches your energy just to the point of being ridiculous.

I wouldn't advise it to somebody who's just getting into the business and who

problems putting them together. So I consider myself basically a reader of words and in the business there are a few people who do that better than anything else. You can sort of pick them out, they're not bad entertainers or bad singers.

I mean I have to sing songs that make sense to me and make sense to the average person. So I prefer songs that have stories to tell, even if the stories are not obvious I think they should be suggested. And some of the material I do on

a movie of Bessie Smith's life? I'm gonna do it as soon as they come up with a script and some money. There's a lot of money problems and there's also this thing about bad timing. The idea to do 'Bessie' came after 'Lady Sings The Blues' (Billie Holiday portrayed by Diana Ross) and that was a bad idea. The story of Bessie Smith is one that requires the highest kind of artistic attention and I wouldn't do it unless it was done right.

stance, it has a tremendous kind of connotation. Even though the song might not have been written for that purpose. Then if I sing it on a live concert stage in front of a mixed audience it's a different kind of reaction altogether. And so I have to be aware of that and I am aware of that.

■ During the last few months you helped some new artists?

I've always done that; very audaciously I took two unknown people into Atlantic Records when I realised I had reached a point where I knew they would listen to me, where they would hesitate in giving an absolute no, and I took ad-

Iantic, and Capitol, and RCA Victor ... there were other people who tried to help me but Les stuck his neck out, took the tape and set it down in front of the man and played it.

You have to reach back and help and particularly among black performers because most people in the business just take for granted black people can entertain very well and don't give them much credit for being able to think. So I think it's up to black people to sort of help each other out and be the strength that we need. One of the artists I helped was Capo who was listed in the *New York Times* as one of the top



and I did which became successful.

■ Did you say the blues don't have to be blue to be the blues?

No, I said nobody has to come up and tell you the blues are comin'. Most people hear the blues and recognise them as blues ... I mean if you listen to all the blues singers in the world you won't hear one that sounds like another one. That statement you quoted was probably made by me in response to a question posed to me on several occasions which is if I do the Bessie Smith role will I sound like Bessie? My first answer is Barbra Streisand was not asked to sound like Fanny Bryce and I don't think Diana Ross did the smartest thing trying to sound like Billie Holiday.

A lot of people just aren't ready to accept the fact that I can sing the blues. Joe Williams, who is one of the greatest blues singers, his style is very unlike Jimmy Witherspoon's, and none of them sound like Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee when they get down. It's just a different kind of thing ... blues is a feelin'. There's some white performers who can sing the blues, it's not an altogether impossible thing.

And just like you know when you have the blues, you know when you hear the blues ... it could be a Janis Joplin performance or any number of people. Stevie Wonder sings the blues on 'Maybe Your Baby' that ain't nothin' but the blues.

■ Does your classical background and your piano playing have a lot to do with your style now?

Yeah, very scientific; there are two things involved in the end thing that you hear. That's the heart and the head, the combination of those two and classical training does require a discipline that is not necessary to perform popular music but is certainly a great help.

Most of the performers that you have seen like Billy Preston just didn't wake up one mornin' playing 'Nothing From Nothing'. I mean these guys have practised and can play the classical thing too; you check Donny Hathaway, the same way, and Stevie has studied ... the most influential ones. The ones who prepare, who work at it.

I would just like this level, of Donny's and Stevie's work to be accepted as an art form and not just as some quirky. There are people who get

lucky and you can forget 'em, they come out in one year, a big hit song, something really unique, Tiny Tim was one of them.

They're fads for a little while but they'll love Ella Fitzgerald forever won't they? And Sarah Vaughan, the list goes on forever, Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett. They're the ones who should be recognised as the real artists, not the ones who wave a flag saying 'I'm an artist' because those flags are easy to come by.

■ Do you think the success of 'Killing Me Softly' and 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' was a result of your changing your style or the people coming around to your way of singing?

I think I changed the sense of direction a little bit because when I did my first album in '69, 'First Take', I did the thing at the time which I thought I did best which was basically ballad material. And I did it at a time when the Rolling Stones, people were beginning to lean towards acid, the Stones were beginning to be a tremendous kind of artistic influence. Zeppelin, all those people were beginning.

When I came out with 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' it didn't hit in '69, it only hit in '72 but that just proves if the art is true it will last. I don't think that people have to be trained to think like that, I only think they have to have the opportunity to hear it. They know when it's right.

I do think I made it possible for the Carpenters and people with that kind of quality to sing and be heard. I think I found a niche and I think I was very fortunate to

have the good sense to take advantage of the moment. Because if I had been a weaker person I would have fled from the acid and the electricity but I felt that the truth would overwhelm anybody's doubts.

■ How did you make the change from playing tuba to singing?

Very easy. I saw a picture of me one day and you know how you play the tuba? Well I couldn't tell where my jaw stopped and the tuba began. So I went to the baritone horn which is just as big. I used to love wind instruments, I loved brass instruments, French horn, trumpet, and the band leader needed a tuba player and I read so I played the tuba. And it was fun but I wasn't giving anybody worries about me playing the tuba. I resented the fact that I was the only girl who could play the tuba.

■ Where do you live?

I usually live in New York which I thought I'd never admit to because it's polluted and gives me sinus headaches and is too close to Atlantic Records. But I got into a building called the Dakotas which is a real artistic settlement, Lauren Bacall, Rex Reed, Paul Simon, all live there.

■ Are you the highest paid female recording artist or were you at one time?

I think I am, yes, so far, but some other folks are gaining on me but I'm not gonna mention any names. Everything that I've ever recorded has been gold as the one single I released ('Killing Me Softly').

■ How much do you make?

Oh you nosy person! \$80 a week ... take home.

'Everything that I've ever recorded has been gold'

vantage of that moment. I thought these people were extremely talented and still do and got them recording contracts and produced their records.

Now the sad part about it was obviously one of those things the record company did at one level to appease me but I didn't have the production experience to make it work. I've often tried to help other people and given credit as often and as vocally as I can to the fact that though I worked hard for many years preparing my craft that had it not been for Les McCann I wouldn't have had a chance. Because I sent demos to At-

ten primitive artists in the world.

I found him in Jamaica in a very poor section of Kingston with his 12-year old daughter with the most gorgeous paintings and sculptures I had ever seen. I worked for two years to the best of my ability to get him some exposure, we had three shows for him, two in New York, and one in Washington, and had the critics there to appraise his work.

That's one thing that I've done and on the musical side there is Ralph McDonald who wrote two songs on the last album I did and also wrote 'Where Is The Love' which is the one Donny (Hathaway) did.

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Over four years after Janis Joplin's tragic death the legend lives on. Mick Brown looks at the latest in a long line of 'tributes' to rock's most controversial lady

Tough gal with a heart of gold

'JANIS' — A FILM BY HOWARD ALK AND SEATON FINDLAY (C.I.C. FILMS)

It is perhaps in the nature of rock and roll legends that one really starts to sit up and take notice of them only when they're dead. Sorting out my own recollections of Janis Joplin from all the speculation, gossip and personal reminiscences that I have absorbed since her death in 1970, I find that I actually recall very little.

A handful of albums of balls-searing intensity; some jumbled fantasies of the 'San Francisco scene' of the late 1960s with Janis in the role of empress extraordinaire and, it seemed, devil's disciple; a sole London appearance in 1969, seen by 6,000 people, but not by me. And then she was gone. It is in death that the legend has grown.

Janis was still warm on the mortician's slab when the inevitable biographers first started making their incisions into the flesh and bones of her life. The authoritative, the academic, the intimate. Want to know about Janis' role as a tragic figure of our era? What she had for breakfast, drank before meals, even who she bailed. If Janis is in rock and roll heaven the price she has had to pay for admittance is her secrets.

The picture that has emerged from this unholy deluge is as enigmatic, mystifying and contradictory as Janis herself most probably was. She was a girl who just wanted to sing the blues. Who wanted to skate thin ice on a blade of drugs, booze and cheap thrills. But who *really*, she once con-

fided to a friend, just wanted to settle down in a split-level bungalow with a couple of kids.

In glib, simplified terms (and who needs complex legends after all?) Janis comes across as something of a tough cookie with a soft centre; a rock and roll whore with a heart of gold. This is in no way intended to be derogatory to the memory of Janis — more a reflection of how others saw her than how she saw herself, or even how she actually was.

Paramount in this making of a legend is the well-loved image of Janis as the tough, swaggering, Amazonian, counter-culture broad; one of the boys; standard bearer for Southern Comfort and the sort of close-to-the-edge ethic which rock audiences delight in living vicariously through their idols.

It was a stage-prop which clearly satisfied her audience at the time; a disguise which, for the most part, effectively concealed the sort of inner despair and longing which her biographies suggest she was apt to feel.

And now, another addition to the bank of Joplin memorabilia and artifact, a movie, 'Janis', which makes no attempt whatsoever to penetrate the disguise, and, indeed, prefers to skirt around it altogether. There is no sight or mention of Southern Comfort; or any other kind of booze; just one fleeting reference to drugs, and that in a broad, social context; no suggestion of sex or backstage promiscuity; no claim to show the *real* Janis.

Whether this is all due to tact and reverence above and beyond the call of duty on the part of the directors, or simply because the only material they could lay their hands on is that which concentrates almost exclusively on Janis as a performer I don't know. It does seem odd though that the film should be as coy as to re-

frain from mentioning how she died, or when she died — or even that she is dead at all.

The bulk of it is Janis on stage; at the Monterey Festival in 1967, where she first made her name; at Woodstock; on the Festival Express tour of Canada in July of 1970, and in Europe. The remainder is a hotch-potch of filmed interviews with Janis at various stages in her career; film of a studio session, and, most intriguingly, Janis' return to Port Arthur, Texas, where she was born, for a High School Class reunion.

As a performer, Janis' most obvious musical antecedents were the traditional black blues singers. As a teenager she listened to Leadbelly: "There was an honesty in the blues that, um, Peggy Lee was missing ..." she tells one interviewer, and to

another, "singers like Billie Holiday and Aretha Franklin, they can capture the universe in just two notes. That's what I'd like to do..."

It was in her live performances that she came closest to realising that aim. Bathed in sweat, buffeted by a wall of energy from her backing bands, Janis could preach, moan and scream the blues like no other white singer before or since. She could turn on the tap to her emotions at a moment's notice, launching headlong into a frantic, strutting celebration of feminine strength like 'Tel Mama', or an impassioned cry of self-sacrifice, like 'Piece Of My Heart'.

Her greatest gift was her instinctive ability to strike up an immediate rapport with her audience; more like a friendship, it encouraged her long, tortuous and frank monologues which made it clear that Janis could sing the blues so well only because she knew what it was to live them.

She clearly loved bringing the audience in on the act, whether handing over the

microphone to a black brother at Woodstock for an impromptu bit of sermonising, or, during a gig in Germany, surrounding herself on stage with ecstatic G.I.s flashing peace-signs. "That moment, when you're up there singing ...," she says at one point — invoking the timeless analogy, "... it's like making love." The remainder of the film says less about her than her live performances do. The film of a studio session shows that Janis was a restive worker, chatting away to one of her musicians while everyone else is trying to listen to a play-back. The interviews are disappointing: we learn a little about her background, her musical influences, how she came to San Francisco and met up with Big Brother and the Holding Company, but little of her feelings about the processes and pressures of stardom and the rock business in general.

A brief excerpt from an appearance on a 'Dick Cavett Show' shows that Janis could hold her own when it came to repartee. "I

just pulled a muscle," she explains. "Wasn't that in Montana?" asks Cavett. "Nearer to home than that, man ..." replies Janis with a knowing wink.

Only at her High School reunion does Janis seem anything less than in total control. Surrounded by her contemporaries who "drove me out of class, out of school and out of the State", Janis faces a barrage of questions from local reporters, intent on finding out why she'd been excluded from the High School prom. Clearly embarrassed and angry, Janis finally recovers her composure when asked "Did you ever perform at High School?" "Only when I walked down the aisles, man," she replies...

As a documentary of her life and times 'Janis' is incomplete and unsatisfying. As a record of her prowess as a live performer, and of those facets of her character she was willing to turn to a none too incisive camera, the film is a success. I just wish I'd known her...



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albums

Chicago calling —but is anybody listening?

CHICAGO: 'CHICAGO VIII'. (CBSS 69130).

SO WHO'S counting? Well Chicago are for one, but it seems to have had much the same effect as sheep. To be blunt, the record is tired. Blowing the dust off my dog-eared copy of 'Chicago Transit Authority', the band's first album, I find that the only change in group personnel appears to be one addition. The rest are all still there, honing that typical Chicago sound down to a fine art. All those familiar brass sounds are there; so familiar to the blowers that they can probably do them in their sleep — and perhaps they did on this album. Whatever happened to the band that promised so much back in '69? When Terry Kath's inventive guitar starts taking second place to string arrangements or banal 'dream-sequence' style lyrics then, as Jim Morrison once opined, 'true sailing is dead'. In fairness, if you heard the record without seeing the sleeve you might well be impressed by a well-produced,

Lawrie Driver.

slick-sounding group with a few catchy tunes. But to think that Chicago has taken eight albums to progress so little is a mite depressing. Why? Well, maybe the livin' is easy and the tours still earn bread and the recording contract isn't difficult to fulfil, but it's really no excuse. Kath's guitar does shine through on a couple of tracks to give an air of spontaneity to the proceedings, notably 'Oh Thank You Great Spirit' and 'Long Time No See', and the opening track, 'Anyway You Want' boogies along in a memorable kind of way; but for the rest it's a matter of resorting to the well-tried tricks of the trade to sustain interest in the well-tried ideas: subtle changes in volume and rhythm for example. If you have the previous seven albums then this one won't change your lifestyle. And the obligatory poster will enable you to offer a complete set through the SOUNDS' free services when you shake yourself out of your lethargy. Then perhaps Chicago will do the same. — Lawrie Driver.



● CHICAGO: they're still at it

RAS MICHAEL AND THE SONS OF NEGUS: 'NYAH-BINGHI' (TROJAN TRLS 113).

THERE IS a story on the sleeve — which makes a change. It tells how Haile Selassie was the last in a line of 323 kings directly descended from Solomon and his old lady, The Queen Of Sheba. And how Selassie was born in Ras Makonnen's summer house accompanied by the regulation thunderstorm and ritual celebrations (people cutting themselves with knives, much drinking). And how Negus Negusti means King of Kings. So the oldest monarchy in the world has become a hook to hang a batch of music on. 'Nyahbinghi' is in the 'Groundation', 'Dadawah' genre. It is a Jamaican ghetto gospel music. It gets less and less reggae, more and more fervour. Track two, side one is called 'Rise Ja Ja Children (The Lion Sleeps)'. You'll recognise it if you still have a hole in your heart for Karl Denver. The music is a route march for drums, the still, sweet voice of freedom and massed vocal chanting. It goes against the grain of the Air Jamaica plug on the sleeve. Thoroughly Old Testament, this particular branch of the Rasta tree is very nearly revalist, very nearly Presbyterian. Play it instead of Songs Of Praise on a Sunday evening — much the same thing but funkier. You can dance to it if you have a reverse gear. 'Ja Got The Whole World' is the song you'd expect it to be ('In His Hands') and 'Rasta Man Chant' is the same as the one on the end of The Wailers' 'Burnin'' but just a shade slower. 'Nyahbinghi' was recorded at Harry J's. It has a picture of Haile on the cover along with the regulation tricolour flashes for the flag. It is hillside music, looking down over the bay, watching for the ship to come. The ship that will ship the Brothers back home to Ethiopia. It is a call to prayer. Courtesy Trojan Records. This is (not) Reggae Music. — Idris Walters.

EDDIE COCHRAN: 'THE VERY BEST OF EDDIE COCHRAN/15th ANNIVERSARY ALBUM' (UNITED ARTISTS UAG 29760). EDDIE COCHRAN was killed on April 17, 1960, and 'The Very Best of Eddie Cochran' was originally released (on Liberty) in 1970 "to mark the Tenth Anniversary etc." Five years on, you get a gatefold sleeve and the tracks "re-mastered in total mono" as a double bonus. Otherwise there is no improvement — there couldn't be. It's just a case of 16 tracks, most of them classics, sounding better than ever. 'C'mon Everybody' and 'Summertime Blues' have recently been re-issued (yet again) as a single, and 17 years on 'Summertime Blues' has just made People's Choice on Capital Radio. That's justice — there must be a rock and roll heaven after all. — Mike Sharman.

SASSAFRAS: 'WHEELIN' 'N' DEALIN' (CHRYSTALIS CHR 1076).

LEAPS AND bounds ahead of their debut effort 'Expecting Company', Sassafras have come up with a thoroughly entertaining second album which confirms that they are indeed one of Britain's fastest rising young bands. While they still can't quite capture their onstage energy on record, 'Wheelin' 'n' Dealin'' drives along well enough from the Quo-like opening title track to the final trundling 'Soul Destroyer', with its tasteful harmonies. Sassafras handle the lengthy 'Ohio' remarkably well, vocalist Terry Bennett, with his distinctive phrasing



● THREE DEGREES: That Same Old Philly.

Three Degrees under

THREE DEGREES: 'TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF' (PHILADELPHIA PIR 69137).

'TAKE GOOD Care of Yourself' presents the current hit single of the same name, a vocal version of 'TSOP' and reveals a potential follow-up single with 'Loving Cup'. Otherwise there are seven similar tracks which are as bland and unchanging as the cheese which Kraft have spread from Philly to cover the supermarket shelves of the world. The whole production is professionally polished with Gamble and Huff writing seven and producing eight of

the 10 tracks. Side one is relieved only by the title track which isn't as swooningly memorable as the Three Degrees 'When Will I See You Again'. Side two gets gutsy (almost) with 'Long Lost Lover'; slips into the near dramatic on 'Here I Am', and possesses something resembling funk with 'TSOP'. 'Take a sip from my loving cup, see if you like the taste' demands the final track 'Loving Cup'. The answer is to sip something stronger like New Jersey's All Platinum productions or the sunshine sounds of Miami. TSOP has become That Same Old Philadelphia. — Martin Aston.

HUMMINGBIRD

CONRAD ISIDORE

1

Cool cats

TOM SCOTT AND THE L.A. EXPRESS: 'TOM CAT' (ODE 77029).

FIVE VERY competent tom cats stalk their way in closely knitted fashion through a good album. The L.A. Express are a well-blended band and Scott on sax, Nash on keyboards and Ford on guitar grab the solos from one another with sparkling finesse and waste little time in making something of them. Meanwhile Bennett on bass and Guerin on drums are laying down the foundations in the style that makes Joni Mitchell's 'Miles of Aisles' album such a success. And the aforementioned lady, without whom etc etc, is credited with the vocal refrain on 'Love Poem' but fanatical concentration on the headphones fails to reveal more than a few 'woos' wedged twixt sax and guitar. And for this she can get credits? Although Tom Scott is the front man for the band, the others all contribute as much in composition as in playing. The structure of their tunes, the use of repeated refrains and the solo lead-ins sometimes have a cool Mahavishnu-style approach about them. This is more noticeable on the second side of the album where the band gives itself more scope by lowering the tempo and loosening the lifelines a little. Indeed, the album could have been better put together; the first four tracks are all at the same strutting pace and should have been distributed around the vinyl more. And good as they are on this album, I can't help preferring them as a punchy backing to Ms Mitchell's talents. But then of course, every tom cat needs a little pussy. — Lawrie Driver.



● TOM SCOTT

Wince with the Guitar Man

DUANE EDDY: 'GUITAR MAN' (GTO GTP 002/2321 102).

THERE COULD only be one thing worse than Duane Eddy's return-to-the-charts-single 'Play Me Like You Play Your Guitar' and this is it. A whole album of arranged (Tony King and / or Tony Macaulay) and girl "chorus" assisted and / or dominated middle of the road music which proves that dreaminess and dreariness have replaced the raunch and rasp which made Duane Eddy the rebel rousing guitarist. Six of the 11 tracks feature the Rebelettes and little else while 'Love Theme From Romeo and Juliet' brings a hint of mandolin to Nino Rota's film score. What little raunch there is suggests that Duane — or his

guitar strings — have slackened into an easy listening world where amplified guitar is acceptable as just another part of the vocal / instrumental / catchy tune mix which is the hallmark of musical wallpaper. You might recognise a loose re-work of his '62 Top Five hit 'Dance With the Guitar Man' (the only track by Eddy / Hazlewood); you shouldn't be surprised at the likes of 'Son of a Guitar Man'; and you'll be disappointed to discover that 'Canon Ball Rag' is all rag and no balls. 'The Man With the Golden Guitar' says "They won't forget the man ... etc." On this showing you should — instantly — and find a copy of his London mid-price album 'Movin' N' Groovin''. Oh for the days when the twang was the thang. — Mike Sharman.



● DUANE EDDY: rebel to romantic.



albums

Alan Price takes the Met Line

ALAN PRICE: 'METROPOLITAN MAN' (POLYDOR 2442 133).

PRICE'S LATEST album — his first for Polydor — highlights the problems of an artist changing rather than developing over a decade where the only thread is playing keyboards and straining against the odds of under-powered vocals. Price was magnificient with the Animals; safe on covering Randy Newman songs; and swamped by the brassiness of his one time partner Georgie Fame. Then along came film director Lindsay Anderson to tug the Geordie's social conscience

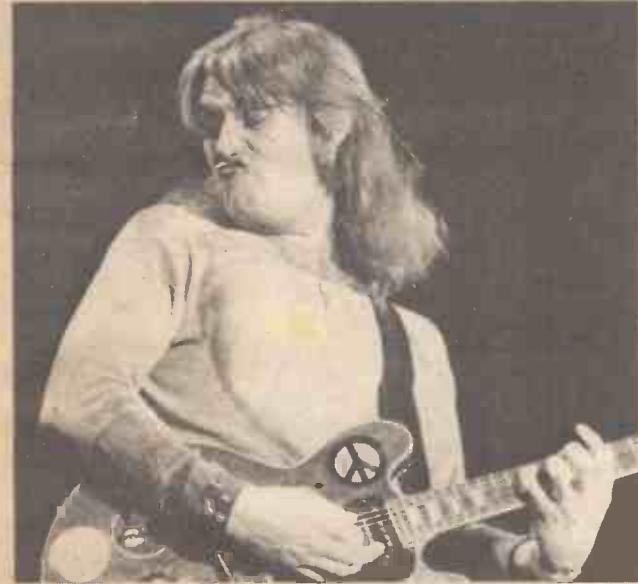
and the result — 'O Lucky Man' — was stirring stuff. Anderson seemed to act as a catalyst — he drew on Price's Northern roots to capture the inevitability and futility of the struggle between those who have a conscience and those who have cash. The effect seemed to spread to 'Between Today and Yesterday' which provided a bittersweet nostalgia for the woes of a Wearside background but 'Metropolitan Man' suggest he's abandoned his roots and the success which could have followed from developing his Anderson-inspired period. The new album slides from the

street noises of 'Papers' through the applause-ridden 'Changin' Partners' (one of the better tracks) and the single 'Mama Divine' to the near self pity of 'The Drinker's Curse' (because the sleeve shows Guinness rather than Newcastle Brown)? In between it's unmemorable and suggests — for this album at least — that Alan Price has joined what he has called "the soft people in the South". Still on past albums' experience he's bound to change so let's just hope the next one is a development of the Anderson inspiration. — Mike Sharman.

TEN YEARS AFTER: 'GOIN' HOME!' (CHRYSLIS CHR 1077).

THE SLEEVE says "This album represents the first three years in the life of Ten Years After from their beginning in small British clubs to the peak of their acclaim at the legendary Woodstock Festival." Forgetting, if you can, what's happened to TYA since Woodstock that means we're dealing with the Decca days of Lee & Co. 'Undead' (1968) is represented by 'Woodchopper's Ball', 'Stonehenge'

(1969) by 'Hear Me Calling' and 'Going to Try', 'Ssshh' (1969) by 'I Woke Up This Morning' and 'Cricklewood Green' (1970) by 'Love Like A Man'. 'Goin' Home' is Ten Years After — after five albums — got live and in the studio and comes together with THAT version of the title track which captures those 11 minutes 35 seconds of 1968 which will for ever be TYA at Woodstock. Rock 'n' roll music to the world from the fastest guitar in the West. — Maurice Cooper.



● TEN YEARS AFTER: Journey up to Woodstock.

'HEADSTONE' (EMI).

THE BAND'S second album, although their personnel has now stabilised, and they'll be supporting John Cale on his forthcoming tour. Headstone comprise Mark Ashton (ex-Rare Bird, guitars and vocals), Steve Bolton (ex-Atomic Rooster, guitar and vocals), Joe O'Donnell (ex-East of Eden, violin and mandolin), Jerome Rimson (bass and vocals) and Peter Van Hooke (percussion). Max Middleton, very much in demand at present, puts in a fleeting appearance playing piano on one cut. Production by John Anthony and I suspect that what few qualities this album has are largely thanks to him. There are eleven songs included here, with writing credits shared between Ashton and Bolton. A couple, 'Get Through To You' and 'Someone's Gotta Give' — not exactly inspiring titles, are they? — are vaguely reminiscent of Rare Bird, but lack that band's considerable energy count. In fact, there's a weariness about most of the tracks. I'm afraid I've got major reservations; yes, it's all inoffensive enough and the playing's adequate, although only O'Donnell really impresses. But are a band like Headstone really necessary? There's absolutely nothing here that hasn't been said a thousand times before, and more interestingly by other bands. The main problem seems to be the obvious lack of good material. Not one of the songs is in any way exceptional, relying as they do almost exclusively on despera-

tely predictable riffs, flat melodies, and the lyrics — 'My legs were lonely for my brain, Coming down it's all the same'. — quite, the less said about them the better. Sorry, but I just can't see Headstone making waves unless some changes take place. — Angus Mackinnon.

'IT'S ALL PLATINUM' (ALL PLATINUM 6830 200).

THIS ALL Platinum sampler brings you 99p's worth of New Jersey funk, by people like The Moments ('Love On A Two Way Street'), Sylvia — remember her — ('Pillow Talk'), and the Rimsshots current single 'Who's Got The Monster'. It's the sound of today's soul — influenced hit parade at a price anyone can afford. — Martin Aston.

JIMMY OSMOND: 'JIMMY OSMOND' (MGM 2315 329).

IT SEEMS absolutely impossible to stop the Osmond machine as it rumbles from the land of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, to excite the weeny-boppers of the world. In case you thought the Osmonds had split/gone into hiding/or even just retired on the royalties, here comes little Jimmy to prove you all wrong. He's alive and well, and singing such numbers as 'Little Arrows', 'I'm Gonna Knock On Your Door', 'The Good Old Bad Old Days' and 'Purple People Eater'. You couldn't get a more diverse collection and you couldn't get any one but Jimmy to sing them. — Douglas Binnet.

EARTH, WIND AND FIRE: 'THAT'S THE WAY OF THE WORLD' (CBS).

I'VE PLAYED this four times now, on each occasion trying hard not to allow my attention to wander. In a perverse way, it's a reassuring release; there are those who find much of Motown et al's current output somewhat uninspiring, but, when compared with this, the Temps' slightly disappointing 'A Song For You', and even Wonder's 'First Finale', to mention but two, sound quite superlative. Earth, Wind and Fire (no credits on the sleeve) offer all sorts here. Apparently it's a soundtrack, which might explain the widely divergent styles represented. 'Africano' is watered-down El Chicano and believe me, that's a weak brew. Slick percussion, a cocktail lounge sax excursion, two chord rhythm guitar effortlessly absorbed. In one ear and out the other. The nadir has to be 'All About Love', which includes a ridiculously banal Barry White rap — 'You're as beautiful as your thoughts'. Right on. You dig? Most cool. Are these guys actually serious? Really, this album is worse than awful: completely robotic — turn on the autofunk, wheeze out the strings... easy if you know how. Yes, making records can be absolutely painless, no human participation is required, not on this evidence anyway. Back to the O'Jays' 'Ship Ahoy', and quick. Now that's something really special. — Angus Mackinnon.



● ALAN PRICE: taking the Metropolitan line.

DEEP PURPLE: '24 CARAT PURPLE' (EMI TPSM 2002)

A PURPLE potpourri from EMI at a budget price. All the tracks except one are culled from previous Purple albums. Exception is a cut of 'Black Night' that was recorded live in Japan and has not been issued in this country before. Three other tracks come from the 'Made In Japan' album: 'Strange Kind Of Woman', 'Smoke On The Water' and 'Child In Time'. Making up the rest of this compilation are 'Woman From Tokyo' from 'Who Do We Think We Are', 'Fireball' from the album of the same name, 'Never Before' from 'Machine Head', and 'Speed King' from 'Deep Purple In Rock'. You get 52 minutes for your money which can't be bad, and if you missed out on either 'In Rock' or 'Made In Japan' then this

is a fairly painless way of catching up. — Lawrie Driver.

BLACKBYRDS: 'FLYING START' (FANTASY FT 522).

TIGHT AS a wound clock spring, the frenetic funk of the BBs. The backing band, and students, of original jazzfunker Donald Byrd, the BBs are midway between the likes of Byrd and Herbie Hancock and any one of the current multiple rockfunk 'outfits', like the Fatback Band or the Ohio Players. They also superficially resemble Herbie in their use of string and other assorted synthesizers. With occasional vocals (as on 'Walking In Rhythm', the current single), they're primarily an instrument-based band. The use of synthesizers and additional (real) horns gives

them a broader (and possibly distinctive) sound, though the synthesiser soloing becomes a little wearing at times. But mostly it's fine, sharp-edged and hard, if perhaps a little too clean. — Bill Henderson.

THE AVERAGE WHITE BAND: 'PUT IT WHERE YOU WANT IT' (MCA MCF 2705).

THE AVERAGE White's old record company, MCA, is cashing in on the Band's success with Atlantic, by reissuing and re-sleeving their first album, originally recorded in '73. There's one other change as well — 'The Jugglers' track of the original is now replaced by 'How Can You Go Home' an Average White single not previously available on album. All in all it's a shrewd move from MCA. — Douglas Binnet.



● POINTER SISTERS: sounding almost as good as they look.

Pointer Sisters are looking good

POINTER SISTERS: 'LIVE AT THE OPERAHOUSE' (ABC ABCD 608).

IF YOU like the Andrews Sisters it's more than likely that you'll like the Pointer gals. If you can't remember the Andrews it's quite OK for somewhere on side 3 of this double live set the Pointers pay their dues before swinging into 'Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen'.

While it's perhaps a little unfair to say that their debt to the Andrews is enormous the Pointers do at least prove that swinging girl vocals haven't really changed since the Forties. However, there is one big difference: one can still listen to the Andrews Sisters' records and 'feel' their music. Try listening to the Pointers and they don't come over

nearly as strong as they do when you see them. The Pointers are essentially a visual group which swings. The Andrews just swing and you occasionally saw them. A live album like this has the right atmosphere but one still wishes one could see the high struttin', high fashion gals in action. Half side one is taken up by the overture, side two

gets in such standards as 'Jada', and Black Coffee while the third sees them in a medley of oldies. By side four they're into Allen Toussaint and a 10 minute Gamble and Huff number 'Love in Them There Hills'. Seems like a natural for video cassette or background music for a frenzied cocktail hour. — Lawrie Driver.



These two bands have got together to make one hell of an album.



There are two ways of looking at Horslips.

There's their traditional Irish sound: bodhrans, fiddles, harps and Uileann pipes
(Irish war pipes played with the elbow).

And there's a touch of American rock about them too: punchy drumming, funky bass and whirring lead guitar.
Their latest album, "The unfortunate cup of tea!" combines both elements.

It's a remarkable combination.

Rather like Guinness with a smack of bourbon.

Horslips: "The unfortunate cup of tea!"

RCA
RECORDS AND TAPES

LIGHT BUT NOT TOO HUMBLE

IN THESE days of super inflated rock egos it has become almost obligatory for members of bands to take time off and record a solo album. Most of these efforts have proved, to say the least, rather weak although there have been the odd exceptions, such as Rod Stewart who's managed to produce fine solo records while continuing to remain a member of the Faces.

Many musicians have found filling forty minutes of plastic without the aid of their band an almost impossible task. Although obviously aware of the problems involved Ken is quite confident of his ability to cope and as he points out: "There's a hidden use in making a solo album apart from the obvious ones such as surplus songs. The main reason is the different atmosphere you get, you've got one head working on it instead of five, it helps you establish your musical identity."

Money

"When you're working by yourself you come up with a number of ideas and techniques that are beneficial to the band." Sounds very commendable but what with the new budget and so on, I wondered if it might be nothing more than part of a well disguised money grabber. "No I mean I'm hard up like everybody else at the moment but it's not done for that. If I was that hard up I'd go up and do something else. It costs an incredible amount of money to make an album and even if it does well you don't start to see any of the returns for at least two years."

'Eager To Please' is different to Uriah Heep albums in many weird and wonderful ways. It's lighter, smoother and generally more interesting than either of Heep's last two offerings, 'Wonderworld' and 'Sweet Freedom'. Surely there must have been times when Ken felt he just had to break out? Let's face it Heep are an entertaining but basically very limited outfit.

Many bands have found the strain of having individual members working on solo projects, as well as remaining with them, too much to bear. However, Uriah Heep will be able to stand the strain and if anything he thinks it will have a good effect on the group. "They're rather glad about it, they know I have a lot of material that I need to use. They know that the Ken Hensley that appears in Uriah Heep is not the total Ken Hensley, it's only a part of me and therefore the other part is crying out for release. I don't have any double identity problems but I would like to be recognised as Ken Hensley the person as opposed to Ken

SITTING RIGHT next door to the Roundhouse on a wet and dreary Thursday afternoon, Ken Hensley is not feeling particularly 'eavy or for that matter 'umble. In fact Heep's keyboard is in remarkably good spirits and seemingly prepared to discuss

anything and everything that is in some way connected with his new album 'Eager To Please'. Apparently revitalised by the addition of John Wetton to the band and more than a little enthusiastic about his new album, Ken is very optimistic about the future.

Hensley the member of Uriah Heep."

An album is one thing, but a tour is another and Hensley doesn't envisage taking fellow eager beavers Mark Clarke and Bugs Pemberton out on the road to promote the record. However when pushed he does admit that if the album did take off he would like to think that it would be possible to work something out with the other members.

Not surprisingly Ken is hoping to see it do well — he is very pleased with the final product and is undoubtedly optimistic about its chances. "I am very confident with it and think it's a good representation of what I'm doing or rather what I was doing when I recorded it. It would be great to see it do well, but it all depends on promotion because I can't promote it live."

Uriah Heep are not exactly what one would describe as a singles band although Ken would like them to do better in this area. His own single has been out about a month and as of yet is showing no signs of doing anything. If it did start to move up the charts would he not be slightly embarrassed: "Any success the record gets, on whatever merits, will make me very happy."

"I'd be quite happy to see it up there in the charts. You've got such a weird selection at the moment — some deserve to be there more than others. It's strange to see the Goodies right next to Labelle. I think it would be a foolish person that would not like to see their record a success because all that time and energy wasn't intended just to make a nice piece of plastic and put it in a pretty paper cover. The idea is to sell records and yourself to the general public."

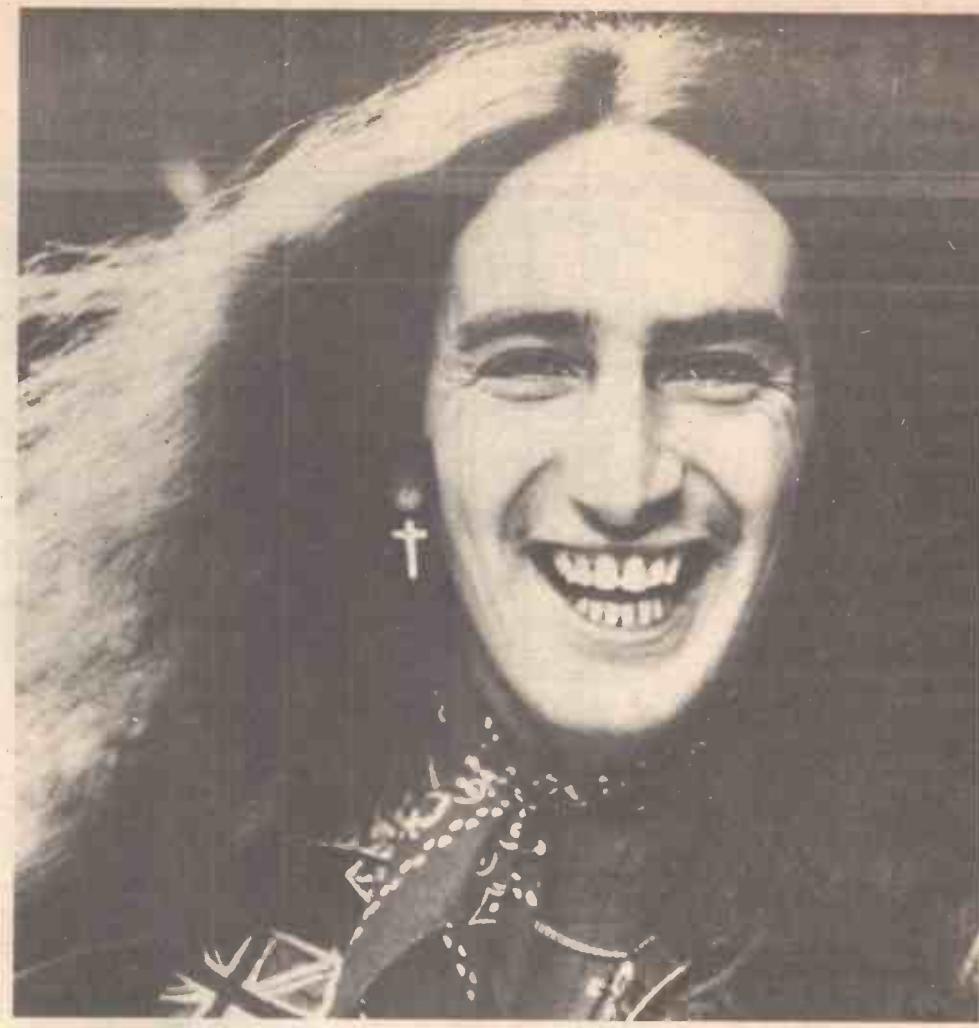
Country

To return to 'Eager To Please', (you'll probably be surprised to discover that it has a strong country influence, Ken denies being a cowboy but jokingly adds that they might include Johnny Cash on the new album. "I like that kind of music very much. There's no cowboy in me but when you're working intensely to get into something lighter.

"I'm not such a great rock and roller as an individual, I probably supply what is basically a rock and roll band with its lighter influences. Its lighter influences probably save them going completely berserk."



• HENSLEY ON STAGE: "I can't promote it live"



KEVIN COYNE Matching Head and Feet

"Matching Head and Feet not only fulfills but actually surpasses all anticipations that he'd record an album to shake the world." — ALLAN JONES. Melody Maker.



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5th May	Bristol	Victoria Rooms	20th May	Huddersfield	Ivanhoe's
6th May	Birmingham	Town Hall	22nd May	Leeds	Polytechnic
8th May	Derby	Cleopatra's	23rd May	Hastings	Pier Pavilion
9th May	Lancaster	University	30th May	Exeter	St. Luke's
10th May	Colchester	Essex University	31st May	Crewe	Crewe College
13th May	Hull	Tiffany's	1st June	Coventry	Mr. George's
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jazz

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'DIZZY GILLESPIE'S BIG 4' (PABLO 2310 719).

THE BIG four are, apart from the leader, guitarist Joe Pass, bassist Ray Brown and drummer Mickey Roker. With such a line-up one would imagine the music would be superb. It is.

'BASIE JAM' (2310 718).

RECORDED IN December 1973, this features Count Basie on piano and organ,



• DIZZY GILLESPIE

with such stalwarts as drummer Louie Bellson, trombonist J. J. Johnson, tenor men Lockjaw Davis and Zoot Sims, and trumpeter Harry Edison. No great surprises, but it doesn't half swing.

THAD JONES & MEL LEWIS: 'POTPOURRI' (PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL PIR 80411).

SURELY THE best big band in the world today. Always tasteful and inventive, and the blend of sounds is simply beautiful.



• COLEMAN HAWKINS

EVEN IF you've never heard of Kenny Clarke, the chances are that you've dug what he's been doing some time.

Back in Britain now after nearly four years in the States, touring with Tom Jones and Tony Bennett, there was a spell through much of the Sixties when he spent almost all of his time in the studios, providing the time for countless radio, television and records.

And if he wasn't actually on the session, the word got around anyway that anything tasty on the drums was obviously Kenny Clarke. Somehow popular legend even had him playing drums on the early Dave Clark hits — it wasn't, he says, but is reluctant to name which of his pupils actually did the drumming.

Much of that sort of thing faded away as the Beatles became established successes, he explains. Initially the record companies would employ experienced session men to save costly studio time. But once the groups began to make big money, then it became worth investing the time to let them do it themselves.

covers and to include a bibliography of book references which would keep a keen student going for years.

There's a touching tribute to Lady Day, in the foreword by trumpet star Buck Clayton, who played on many of her most famous records. Chilton's love of Lady Day shines through the pages. She had a rough passage (often self-inflicted) through life, and a lot of misconceptions have grown round her since her death. Billie's Blues sets the record straight. — J. H.

KENNY CLARE— STANDING UP FOR EUROPE

Kenny spent seven years as the studio drum king, until he found that playing with earphones on all of the time was driving him nuts. A trip to Japan with Stanley Black in 1967 took him out of the groove, and when he came back, there was a call to substitute for Kenny Clarke in the Clarke-Boland Big Band that was to lead to a resurgence of his activity on the jazz scene.

Though his father was a drummer, he had shown little interest until he fell in love with the drummers in the flood of big bands at the movies in the early Forties. "Buddy, Gene Krupa, Dave Tough, Don Lamond — everyone you could think of was in the movies then," he grins. "When I saw them, I wanted to start playing.

"I really got myself together in the services, working with some good players, and studying. Before then I thought I was a hot shit drummer, then I realised I wasn't."

Spells with various big bands followed, working with Oscar Rabin, Jack Parnell and John Dankworth before he went into the studios full-time in 1960. The gig as a dep for Kenny Clarke developed into a more regular affair, and he found himself a permanent fixture as one of two drummers in the band by the middle of 1967. "We did an album which wasn't issued, and then a gig in Ostend. The rehearsal was a disaster," he says. "I spent the afternoon walking around the town worrying. I checked to see if there was a flight home. And then it just came right on the concert, and it's been that way from then on.

"If there are two drummers, it's most important that you don't make a competition of it — the minute you do, you ruin it. You have to play with more discretion, and listen to each other. But Klook's got beautiful time — and I can play that way with him. I find it's difficult when he's not around though.

"But there are such differences in time. Once when I worked with Dankworth, I played with the Duke Ellington Band. The Dankworth time was good, but the difference with Duke was fantastic. With Duke you were completely free — the guys had the time, and you could join in if you wanted, or you could just add colour."

But Kenny is not disposed to accept the all-too-prevalent European assumption that anything is automatically better on the jazz scene if it is American. "It is a myth that all Americans are great and European players are second class. It is not true any more. And they don't put Europeans or anyone down in America. You just play well or not."

Pressed to nominate the drummers he admires, Kenny is reluctant to pick names. "There are so many, it's very hard to pick out anyone. I like Alphonse Mouzon, Jack de Johnette and Elvin is still beautiful. I heard Max Roach play sensational a few months ago — but maybe that was because Jo Jones was in the audience. Jo is an institution in the States, like Kenny Clarke — they're both considered daddies among drummers in the States — as is Buddy, of course. — M.W.

THE RECORD'S STRAIGHT

'BILLIE'S BLUES' by John Chilton (Quartet, £3.95) is subtitled "the true story of the immortal Billie Holiday". And that's exactly what it is.

Apart from playing trumpet, leading his own band, the Feetwarmers, and backing singer George Melly, John Chilton has written the Who's Who Of Jazz, and two books about Louis Armstrong with co-author Max Jones. He is passionately fond of the music

and is also the most exacting researcher ever to tackle the subject. This is a carefully annotated account of Billie's life and career. From the early club dates around 1930, Chilton charts her successes and failures with a wealth of detail, until her untimely death in 1959.

He has also managed to assemble the best collection of photographs of Lady Day, ever presented between two

NEWS

CLEO LAINE unveils her annual "Spring Collection" on Saturday, May 3, at the Royal Festival Hall, accompanied by the John Dankworth Orchestra.

They then embark on a nine-date tour of Britain, that takes in the New Theatre, Cardiff, on May 4, as the opening event of the Welsh Jazz Festival; then on to Preston, Lancs, Guildhall, (7); the Carlton Theatre, Dublin, (8); the Dome, Brighton, (9); the ABC Theatre, Peterborough, (10); Theatre Royal, York, (11); Fairfield Hall, Croydon, (13); Theatre Royal, Norwich, (18); and finally the Civic Hall, Darlington, May 19.

The summer music school season will soon be upon us and already the two main ones of interest to the jazz community, Lambeth, and Barry, are open for bookings.

The Lambeth New Music Youth Organisation's day school, will run from July 21 to August 1, at Stockwell Manor School, Stockwell Park Road, London SW9, with a tutorial staff of John Surman, Mike Osborne, Stan Tracey, Mongezi Feza, Harry Miller, Alan Skidmore, Dave McRea, Roy Babington, Jeff Green, Kenny Wheeler, Eddie Harvey, Dave Gelly, Paul Rutherford, Charles Alexander, and Brian Spring.

Fees will be £12 for those under 21, and £18 for those over; bookings and enquiries to the Secretary, LNMYO, 11 Mount Ephraim Road, London SW16.

The Barry school, which is residential, takes place from August 8 to 22, under the auspices of the Glamorgan Education Committee, and with assistance from the Musician's Union; as for the past two years the course director will be drummer Tony Oxley.

Details of cost, and bookings etc. can be had from D. Gwin Lewis, Glamorgan

Education Authority, Minerva St., Bridgend, Glam.

Michael Garrick is currently giving a series of illustrated lectures on the history and development of jazz for the BBC'S Schools Service, on Radio 4, at 9.45 on Tuesday mornings.

On May 3, the sextet perform Michael's 'Jazz Praises' oratorio, in Glasgow Cathedral, at 7.00 p.m. and then go on to the Black Bull in Milngavie, for a club session shared with local stars Dave Saul's quintet and the Kenny Stewart trio.

This is one of a number of prestige events being organised through May to celebrate Platform's second anniversary. Others include concerts in both Glasgow, and Edinburgh, by Ronnie Scott's Trio (May 14 and 15), with the Kenny Stewart trio supporting; Don Rendell as a guest soloist in Glasgow, (16); and on the actual anniversary, May 18, at the Glasgow base, 'Chez Gordon', a grand local derby with most of the top Scottish jazz talent taking part including trumpeter Jimmy Deuchar.

Charles Toller's Music Inc. with Stanley Cowell amongst its personnel, opens at Scott's this week for a two week run, with Ronnie's trio sharing the first week, and Dutch flautist Chris Hinze's group the second.

Eleven of the younger improvisers from around the London scene, have a concert on Friday, May 2, at the Wigmore Hall, W1.

The Black Tiger JB keep alive the memory of Bunk Johnson and the New Orleans veterans, every Sunday evening at the Pavilion, on the junction of Wood Lane, and North Pole Road, London W10.

Saturday nights at the White Hart in Drury Lane, WC2, are now home to Town Cryer, a new-music quartet led by drummer Lester Bennett; with him are altoist Max Thomas; bassist Mark Meggido; and pianist/vibist Derek Foster.

The West End Stompers have moved their Wednesday night activities from the Stapleton in Crouch End, to the Crown in Plaistow Lane, Bromley, Kent. On Thursdays they are resident at the Mitre, Greenwich, and on Sundays they are usually at the Three Tuns in Beckenham High Street.

Stoke-on-Trent jazzophiles have banded together as the Jazz Syndicate, to bring more live action to their area. Their initial project, a weekly club at the Rose and Crown in Ettruria, is prospering every Thursday, as they have installed the Eddie Thompson Trio as house band.

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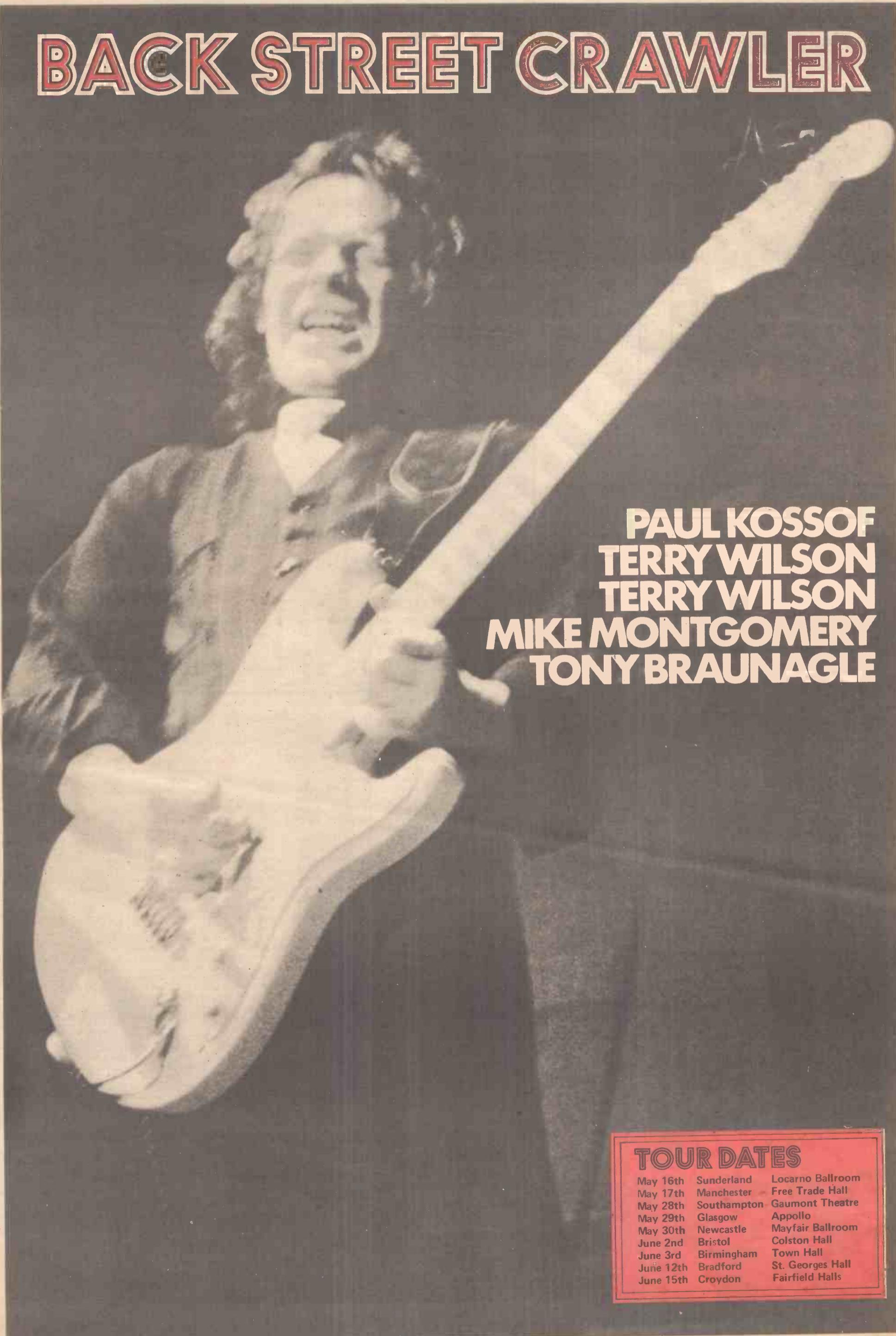
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May 30th	Newcastle	Mayfair Ballroom
June 2nd	Bristol	Colston Hall
June 3rd	Birmingham	Town Hall
June 12th	Bradford	St. Georges Hall
June 15th	Croydon	Fairfield Halls

SCENE: THE BEACON THEATRE MANHATTAN, SATURDAY NIGHT

LOWELL GEORGE

on the men who make the music

THE BEACON Theatre Manhattan is an ornate cavernous slum of a building, abounding in rococo decorations, popcorn and Coke.

It is the interval and the camera shifts to the men's room. Through it bounces a young man dressed street tat, clapping his hands and shouting for all to hear:

"Hey, Hey, Hey! Little Feat, the best band in town!" And of course they are.

Not that the dozen or so members of the British press corps zonked out on jet-lag and New York were in any shape to judge. One passed out and missed Allen Toussaint's opening set — a rare occasion.

Allen Toussaint master of the New Orleans sound, eminence grise of the Meters, and the man responsible for some of the best records of the past twenty years as producer, arranger, composer, and musician, from Ernie K. Doe to Frankie Miller and LaBelle, only once in a while makes it out of the studio in the Crescent City to play a few gigs.

Difficult

Lowell George who could be seen bopping about ecstatically in the wings during Toussaint's set, had explained how difficult it was to winkle him out for this brief tour, opening for Feat:

"That man is amazing in that he doesn't think anybody wants to hear what he has to say."

"And I told him: 'Allen everybody digs you. Don't worry about a thing.' And he went: 'Why would they dig me?' He's humble, self-effacing!"

So, with four dancing singer (two male, two

female), a strong horn section, conductor, bass guitars, drums, anything in fact to draw attention away from himself, Allen Toussaint had given of himself onstage.

All the favourites, 'Freedom For The Stallion', 'Brickyard Blues', 'Shoorah, Shoorah!' were delivered in an arresting fashion. Despite the fact that, in himself, he has zero stage presence the act as a whole comes across really strong.

Especially saxophonist Gary Brown who for ten minutes blowing on 'Going Down Slowly' did things with that instrument that would have surprised the man that made it.

The interval over, Feat turned in one of those gigs you'd have to be made of marble not to admire, and the New York audience, noisy, impatient and highly appreciative let 'em know it. "Feats, don't fail me now" was the cry of the hour, and they didn't.

• LOWELL GEORGE: bopping about in the wings

A reception at a swank French restaurant followed, and Oh yes! Virginia, everyone was there. From a bewildered looking Eric Idle fresh off the plane to an avuncular looking Albert Grossman.

Then the party-sort of osmosed itself down to the new niterie, Ashleys.

Can jam

And then for those still ligging, it was back to Allen Toussaint's room for a jam. One guitarist kept going for two-and-a-half hours while some pretty heavy dudes chimed in on anything from a spare beer can, to (in Lowell's case) a vintage champagne bottle.

Come the sunshine-bright mid-morning, Lowell who'd been up until 7 a.m., was hardly ready for an interview, but he obliged anyway. As the photographer moved around him for the early morning candid cameras, Lowell got a little wary, recalling the shot from their last Manchester gig taken with Elton which he claimed made him look like: "A bulbous street urchin. Elton was drunk on his ass and looked as bad as I looked... Oh, good! You got all this on tape? Oh, God! Yes Lord, I'm embarrassed!"

With digressions a-plenty, Lowell talked about record producers. First in line was Peter Asher and the Linda Ronstadt sessions for 'Heart Like A Wheel'.

Plan A had been for Lowell to produce it with Chuck Plotkin who does Wendy Waldman's album but: "Both Chuck and I decided Linda needed someone who was more involved in her career consciousness like Peter who's her manager and just a great producer.

"He really follows through with great presence of mind. He tries to do away with loose ends, keep it concise, a directed attitude each time and thinking of the project as a whole — which is the hardest thing to do.

"I can't work like that I have no idea from one day to the next what I'm going to be doing 'cos trying to be in a group and a producer at the same time. That's the hard part."

Van Dyke Parks: "Oh, Van Dyke was great! Lenny Waronker learned a great deal from him in some areas of sound, of listening, and in dealing with musicians.

"Van Dyke is great with musicians. If he is the producer he will work longer... sometimes he irritates musicians because they usually don't spend so much time on any given piece of music.

"But when he finally gets the ideas across and they understand what he is trying to communicate... he deals in streams of consciousness and clicks someone's brain on to accepting an abstract concept about the sound he's trying to

get. If you get it in the first half hour, which is usually how long it takes, it's great.

"The whole thing just falls into place, just locks right there. But he never comes right out and says it, because you can't do that, because music is a very indirect feeling. He can grab those feelings in someone and wrench them out of you and make you play great stuff, stuff you never played before. In terms of a great producer, Van Dyke Parks is that guy."

Lenny Waronker next. Lenny has been responsible for stuff by Ry Cooder, Arlo Guthrie, Maria Muldaur and Gordon Lightfoot among many others.

"Because Van Dyke is a player, he can take an attitude about music. Lenny is not a player so he feels he has no right to say: 'Play that note and this note'."

"He wouldn't dream of that, he does it in his own way. He says get the right people together and they will play it the right way."

Thought

"You play it the way you want, and if it ain't right, we won't use it. To me that's really the way. He tries not to involve himself without a great deal of thought."

"I mentioned that, with Maria Muldaur, Waronker seems to involve himself with music that borders on other styles, jazz, folk, gospel, country, etc. He likes that kind of music — he likes these ingredients together."

Next was Russ Titelman, whose just done the new James Taylor LP: "It was great. James was asked who

would you like to come in and play, and he asked me to play electric guitar, and some vocals. I was amazed with James' facility.

"He called off chords from across the room. He'd go: 'You know the B-flat in that chord you're playing?' I'd go: 'Yikes! This guy's no slouch!'

"Or we'd sing a background part and he'd go: 'Why don't you do this?' And sing the part. Or we'd do something and he'd go: 'Hold it! The thing you just sang was perfect. Do it again.'

"In other words Lenny and Russ were producing but James was the ideas man and they'd let him go. Low profile but great involvement."



• WENDY WALDMAN

'I looked like a bulbous street urchin'



CLIVE CHAMAN

SOUNDS MAN-ON-THE-SPOT: MIKE FLOOD PAGE

ALLEN TOUSSAINT

'why would anyone

**dig
me?'**

"Russ started with a Phil Spector approach. He has since been redirected and he's much better for it. 'Cos in fact he was trying to take responsibility for the whole track and creating this mood around it. He was a great help making Randy Newman albums. He gets together with Randy and they go over all kinds of nonsense."

"Russ goes out and finds some obscure piece of music for Randy to fool around with. They really work well together. Randy plays with his little fingers never more than ten inches apart which amazes me. All those string parts and everything are within this one and a half octave range."

"The live album is amazing because they took all those string parts off and it's all still there. Like 'Lonely At The Top'."

Next was Ted Templeman responsible for some Feat, lots of Doobies, and a little Bonnie Raitt here and there.

"Ted's very interesting as a producer. His engineer is Don Landy and they get together and sort of brainstorm these sounds that they created on the Doobie Brothers records."

Spectorish

"They get an envelope of sound and they put it in an echo chamber and it creates this atmospheric quality to certain parts. Or they'll phase the echo — do something unusual like that."

"Like Phil Spector? Oh, yes, everyone's listened to Spector in terms of creating that kind of thing. Both Lenny and Ted came from the same school: Harpers Bizarre was one of the projects Lenny and Van Dyke were involved in and Ted was in the group."

How about Francis Zappa? "He is great, he really is. He may be the most competent producer/engineer in terms of creating an entity beyond a sound... a whole thing... a jungle."

"Zappa and I worked on stuff, I'd say twelve years ago. I had a group and he said: 'It's a great group, I'll produce it.'

"He would cut two sides and they were such fun. He said: 'OK now this is what I want you to do, sing like four or five of your favourite singers and we'll go over one track. OK now this is my Mick Jagger imitation.'

"And he'd speed it up and then he ran it back at the proper speed, and I was doing a Mick Jagger."

"I don't think he knows what he's going to do before he goes into the studio. There's a lot of trickery involved."

What about Zappa on his own stuff?

"He's not as good as he would be with someone else. And that's also my problem in that I have a tendency to try

really too hard."

Richard Perry (Carly Simon, Ringo, Nilsson, Martha Reeves).

"He's the Erich Von Stroheim of rock and roll. Richard is the kind of guy who works and works and works until it's happening or there's so much icing on it that you lose the cake."

"This is a swell piece of cake, but it's all icing — three cups of coffee to wash down one bite. But he is good."

"I've seen him go through engineers — I mean stretcher cases at the end of six hours."

"He'd call up another engineer and say: 'We need you down here,' and go through another one. I mean three guys a day!"

"Engineers shaking like at the dentist's waiting room, waiting to be ripped to shreds."

"I worked on the Carly Simon album, 'Hot Cakes'. Oh, boy! It was tough!"

And to bring the wheel full circle, Allen Toussaint.

"I heard his show last night — talking about the invasion of British music and how it affected everybody's thinking, and playing."

"It's true that did happen, but Jerry Wexler was saying that Allen Toussaint never had been affected by all that. Really keeping his same attitude about production and sounds. He's an amazing producer."

"As a matter of fact I played 'Rock & Roll Doctor' for him thinking that maybe he would like to construct some horn parts for it. Now in

one listening he had counted out all the majors in the first verse of the song."

"It took Bill Payne six hours to do it, 'Cos it's mind boggling!"

There are all those clever rhythms and things.

"I don't know what I'm doing, I actually don't, I just wanna make it sound good. I never have worked with Allen as a functionary, as a musician or standing next to him back of the board as a producer or whatever I might do for him, but what I've seen of what he's done amazes me."

"Like on the Labelle album he plays an invisible piano part but he's the fulcrum of the album."

Lowell's parting remarks were about the wave of euphoria that attended Little Feat's reception in Europe, and now in the States. After all the years of hard slog, it is obvious that Little Feat is a band whose time has at last come round.

And beyond saying there is a good chance at this time of their touring Britain again in September with the Meters and Bonnie Raitt on a three act package, we leave Lowell there still recovering from a

hangover, and move on to winkle out Mr Toussaint.

The contrast between Lowell George and Allen Toussaint in interview, could not be greater. Lowell is open, discursive, chatty and full of ideas. Happy to rap anytime day or night. Allen Toussaint is shy, thoughtful, almost: Who me? you must have the wrong guy.

Feline and fragile so you find yourself wanting to reassure him that, yes Allen, people really do want to hear what you have to say.

Why has he made a rare return to live gigs? Whose idea was it?

"Warner Brothers, meaning that they believe in me," pause, "much more than I do. After the album 'Southern Nights' was finished, they asked me about doing the tour and when it became a reality I began thinking about it."

"It's for people, that's what it really is about. I feel you should be available if you're serious about it at all. At least give people the opportunity to see you."

But as he admits his album and his own work come low on his list of priorities after his work for other people as producer, musician, arranger, and composer which is why it's two years since his last venture onto wax or the stage.

Own work

"However I think as complete as that may appear, that's not all of what we're about. That's a very temporary sort of thing. Finally it gets to people. Onstage the buck stops way out there."

I couldn't resist asking how that amazing vocal sound he has on 'Southern Nights' is achieved, something he had managed to do live the night before as well as on the record.

"It's a vocal put through a Lesley cabinet. That and things like that are always in my mind and when a tune comes along that calls for that on it goes. When that song

came along, it was gonna be like that."

Now that I have met Allen Toussaint, I can die happy. Though he won't understand, he'll still think I must be talking about someone else.

The tour goes on for a few more days and Allen will be

back in the studio working on another no doubt superb album. Little Feats will be gearing up for another album, spreading their talents around several other artists' albums, and looking forward to September and England. Look out Blighty!



● MARIA MULDAUR: other styles



● LITTLE FEAT: England in September

'Richard Perry is the Erich Von Stroheim of rock and roll'

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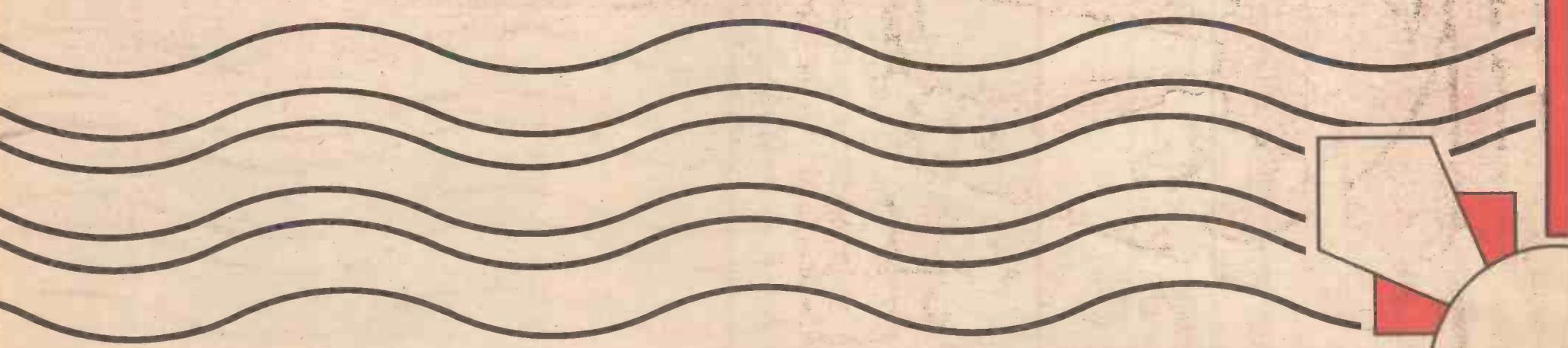
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HARDSTUFF RAMATAM ROADGUN GOLDENEARRING MC5 MOUNTAIN ROBIN TROWER JEFF BECK BARTON'S BRUISERS BLUE CHEER AMBOY DUKE SISI

Rock from 'eavy to 'umble or **THE SOUNDS A-Z OF HEAVY METAL***

P**PRETTY THINGS**

Originally an R&B band, Pretty Things have developed into a melodically orientated rock and roll band. Harvest are re-releasing 'Parachute' and 'S. F. Sorrow' in a double package. The only surviving member of the original Pretties is vocalist Phil May. They recorded 'Freeway Madness' on Warners in '72, then joined Zeppelin's Swansong label releasing 'Silk Torpedo' this year.

Q**QUEEN**

Often limp, overly clever, rather plastic band, capable of digging up a memorable riff on occasions. Guitarist Brian May has an unusual, to some irritating technique, yet he excels on numbers like 'Brighton Rock' and 'Stone Cold Crazy'. The band are enjoying much success with the teenies and in America at the moment.

R**RAMATAM**

Formed by ex-Hendrix drummer Mitch Mitchell, one of the band's main features was the powerful leadwork of guitarist April Lawton. Along with ex-Iron Butterfly guitarist Mike Pinera and Tom Sullivan (bass) they recorded an album on the Atlantic label and disbanded shortly afterwards.

ROAD

A short lived venture formed by Noel Redding, featuring Kent born drummer Leslie Sampson and L.A. guitarist Rod Richards. A basic three piece rock trio who recorded one album. Redding split to Ireland and was recently heard to be contemplating forming a band with ex-Lizzy guitarist Eric Bell. Sampson joined three piece rock band Stray Dog.

RUSH

Young Canadian three piece who play loud. The band, Alex Lifeson (guitar), Neil Peart (drums) and Geddy Lee (bass, vocals) have recorded two albums on the Mercury label - 'Rush' and 'Fly By Night'. Very Zeppelin influenced.

S**SHARKS**

Sharks started out with huge potential — Andy Fraser's loping basslines, the incisive aggression of Chris Spedding's guitar, the rolling thunder of Marty Simon and Snip's raw power — one of Britain's best rock voices. Of course, it didn't last. After making the great 'First Water', Fraser split. To be replaced by the funk of Busta Cherry Jones on bass and Nick Judd's keyboards. Their second album didn't quite happen. Live, though, they were knockout — hard, tough and mean. Then Busta split to the States in suspicious circumstances. Simon and Judd also left and the band were having difficulty persuading people to finance their next album. In came Dave Cochran on bass and Stuart Francis (from Glencoe) on drums for a few live gigs. And that was it. Sharks lied. Spedding went back to sessions and one-off tours (John Cale, Roy Harper). Snips went on to the Baker — Gurvitz Army.

SILVERHEAD

Silverhead were definitely ahead of their time. There was no room for glitter rock in the early 70's, the age of the well worn denims. Ex actor and member of the Electric Church Michael Des Barres formed the band in 72. Their first album on the Purple label featured Nigel Harrison (bass), Stevie Forrest (guitar), Rod 'The Rook' Davis (guitar) and Pete Thompson (drums). Forrest left to form his own band (Dizzy) and was replaced by Bronco guitarist Robbie Blunt who changed their sound considerably to more straight ahead rock and roll. They abandoned their stage costumery and make up at a time glitter rock was becoming extremely fashionable. After the release of their second album '16 And Savaged' the band split up last year.

SKID ROW

Their main feature was the amazingly fast lead guitar of Gary Moore who was only sixteen when he joined this Irish trio (Brush Shields, bass, Noel Bridgeman, drums), they recorded two albums on CBS and then parted. Shields went on to form many bands (including a group with ex Thin Lizzy guitarist Eric Bell) but never managed to get anything recorded. Moore formed a solo outfit who recorded one album — 'Grinding Stone' — and then split after building up a potentially large following. He went on to join Thin Lizzy and lasted for one single, he is now in the process of forming a group with Jon Hiseman which, as expected, will be in more of a jazz/rock vein.

SLADE

Wolverhampton band, formerly Ambrose Slade and then The 'N' Betweens. They started off playing Motown, Reggae, Beatles numbers with little success until they were discovered by Chas Chandler, formerly of the Animals. They were at first heavily promoted as a skinhead band, but this backfired as promoters grew wary to book them for fear of a rowdy audience. Soon enough they became a brash glitter group and refused to take themselves seriously — Dave Hill, guitarist, especially, wearing ridiculous stage outfits that were parodies of the shiny sequined suit so popular, at one time. Always a raucous, stomping, aggressive pop band, their first hit was 'Get Down And Get With It'. Other songs include, complete with semi-literate titles, 'Coz I Luv You', 'Look Wot You Dun', 'Mama Weer All Crazee Now'. Their current 'How Does It Feel' single, while far away from heavy rock, is nonetheless superb.

STATUS QUO

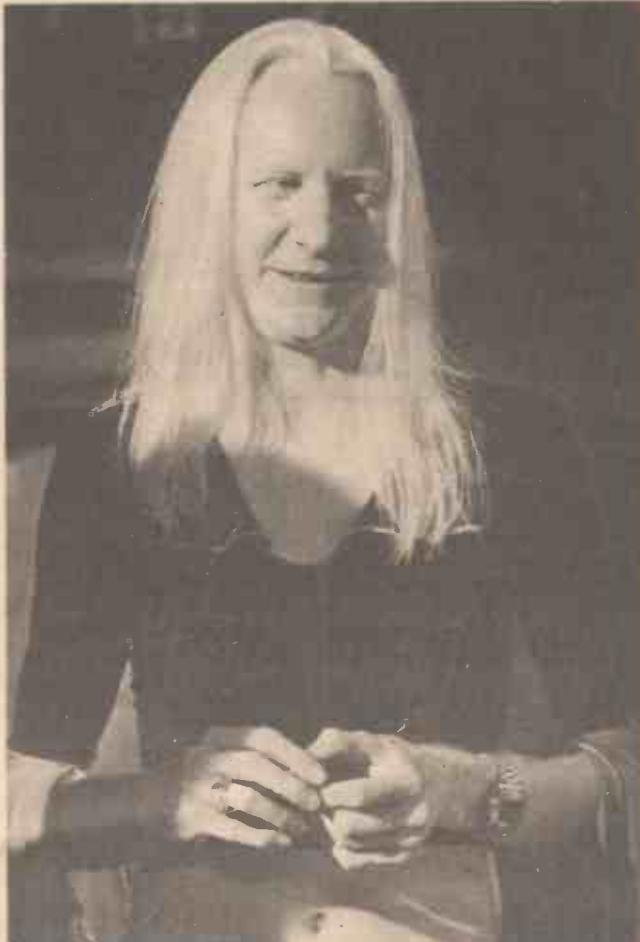
Quo began as a psychedelic pop band, became huge in a short space of time with their single 'Pictures Of Matchstick Men', then disappeared for a while, concentrated on road-work and evolved into a boogie band, scoring in the charts again ('In My Chair', 'Down The Dustpipe'). They went down under again and worked harder formulating a new style which was indicated on their last Pye album in 1971 — 'Dog Of Two Heads' and fully evolved on their debut Vertigo LP 'Piledriver'. The band, Francis Rossi (guitar/vocals), Rick Parfitt (rhythm guitar/vocals), Alan Lancaster (bass/vocals) and John Coghlan (drums), returned to the charts and began building a large following which built to monstrous proportions by the release of their second album 'Hello'. They still have to crack the States.

STEPPENWOLF

Heavy Metal Thunder is a line

PART TWO

COMPILED BY PETE MAKOWSKI / GEOFF BARTON



• JOHNNY WINTER: Revealed his hard edged sound on 'Second Winter' in 1970.

from the Wolf's 'Born To Be Wild' and captures the mood of their music. The band originate from Canada and originally began life as The Sparrow. That was German born John Kay on vocals, Goldie McJohn (keyboards) and drummer Jerry Edmonton. They were joined by bassist Rushton Moreve and guitarist Mike Monarch. Their hits and album successes are too numerous to mention, they were a somewhat politically motivated band which raised their heavy rock stature to a more socially important level. Near the end of the sixties, the band split. Edmonton and McJohn formed a band called Manbeast and Kay recorded a few solo albums. The band have reformed with George Biondo on bass and Bobby Cochran on guitar and have recorded an album on CBS, 'Slow Flux', showing that they still haven't lost their vicious bite.

STRAY

Largely underrated band, Stray started as a very young (average age of each member was 17) soul, tamla outfit in the Shepherds Bush area of London. Through contact with such luminaries as Andy Fraser, Keith Moon, they began to play heavy riffing music and developed a neat stage act with smoke, lights and taped sounds. Line up:



'Higher' on the first album is a track everyone should have in their collection.

STRIFE

Liverpool band, a three piece, reportedly extremely raucous. They play the one-time Beatles haunt the Cavern frequently, and have their first album 'Rush' currently out of Chrysalis. Despite its duff production (by R. Dean Taylor) it's sold surprisingly steadily. A band to watch out for.

SWEET

Originally a first class teeny bop band, it was obvious from the start that the musical ambitions didn't lay in the direction. After a string of no 1 hits the band (Mick Tucker, drums. Andy Scott, guitars. Brian Connolly, vocals and Steve Priest, bass) decided to leave their hit writing team Chinn and Chapman and do things on their own. Their first two albums 'Sweet F.A.' and 'Desolation Boulevard' confirmed that the band were more than competent songwriters and musicians. All the band's plans were put back when Connolly got involved into a fight which resulted with his loss of voice. The band returned to the charts this year with a remixed album track from the 'Desolation Boulevard' album — 'Fox On The Run', which shows that they've found a happy medium between their musical ideals and commercial popularity.

T**TASTE**

Quite an inventive Irish three-piece headed by the very excellent Mr Rory Gallagher, 'tis a shame that he plumped for the booze in the end. Their first two albums ('Taste' and 'On The Boards' — on Polydor) are essential buys for all rock fans.

TEN YEARS AFTER

Began on a very promising foot. This two-thirds American, one third British three piece had all the dynamics and originality to become huge. Texan guitarist Snuffy Walden (who did sessions with Free) was the obvious focal point of the band with his blistering guitar. The band recorded their debut album on Mantico in '73 and then split to the States to be joined by a vocalist and keyboard player. They released an album this year, which was just as good, but not with the promise they initially revealed.

STRIDER

Much-maligned band, released two albums for the GM label, 'Exposed' and 'Misunderstood'. They split around a month ago, but had a ridiculous aggressive stage act that just didn't ring true. Two ex-members, Ian Kewley and Gary Grainger, have since joined a band called The One. Their version of 'Higher And

'Going Home' was a heavy metal. They boogied. They rock and rolled. They are no more.

TEAR GAS

A hard rocking Scots outfit that consisted of David Batchelor (vocals/guitar), Zal Cleminson (guitar), Eddie McKenna (drums), and Chris Glen (bass) they recorded two now deleted albums on the Regal Zonophone label. The band minus Batchelor, and with the addition of Hugh McKenna on keyboards, are now Alex Harvey's Sensational Band. David Batchelor now produced and writes material for them.

THIN LIZZY

Had a hit with 'Whisky In The Jar', once toured with Slade, soon to tour with Bachman-Turner Overdrive. Irish band, formed in Belfast five years ago with the line-up of Eric Bell guitar, Phil Lynott bass and Brian Downey drums. Their album 'Vagabonds Of The Western World', released in late 1973, was heralded in America as the 'best British rock album for years' and rightly so — 'The Rocker' is incredible. Bell, always a tasteful guitarist, left the band around the time 'Vagabonds' was released and was replaced by ex-Skid Row man Gary Moore, who made the band even more high-powered and extremely visual — but for all too short a time. It needed two guitarists, Brian Robertson and Scott Gorham, to replace him and an ensuing album, 'Nightlife', was a little disappointing. Still to realise their full potential.

THIRD WORLD WAR

Built around the personality of their 'chopper' guitarist Terry Stamp, the songs he wrote with Jim Avery, and the maverick, high energy working-class hero promo of their manager and producer John Fenton. They didn't make it — not enough to induce Terry Stamp to give up his truck driving gig — but Fenton is now involved with Dutch band



• RUSH: Young Canadian three piece... very Zeppelin influenced.

GYPOP CACTUS GRAND FUNK BACHMAN TURNER OVERDRIVE BEDLAM STEPPENWOLF JAMES GANG STATUS QUO SOCIAL DEVANTS SPOLISHEENAGE



ZEPPELIN: The biggest... still regarded primarily as crazed rock and roll power... running direct into the jugular vein.

Zeppelin... probably the biggest selling band in the world and the biggest draw

ROBIN TROWER BAND

Trower left Procol Harum to form Jude with Jimmy Dewar (bass), Frankie Miller (vocals), Clive Bunker (drums) but soon moved towards the Trower Band losing Miller and Bunker along the way and bringing in Reg Isidore on drums. Their first album 'Twice Removed From Yesterday' didn't break well here but the follow-up 'Bridge Of Sighs' hit Gold in the States. Since that album Trower's established his US success and made headroads in Britain with 'For Earth Below' featuring new drummer Bill Lordan.

U

UFO

UFO were probably one of the first hard rock bands to break in Japan. They were formed in 1970 by vocalist Phil Mogg, featuring Pete Way (bass), Andy Parker (drums) and Mick Bolton (guitar). They recorded one album ('UFO I') on the Beacon label and then concentrated their touring

energies in foreign lands. They returned in 1973 with new German lead guitarist Michael Schneker and have recorded a melodically flavoured rock album ('Phenomenon') on the Chrysalis label, which was produced by ex-TYR keyboardsman Chick Churchill.

URIAH HEEP

The band's raw, definitive HM music of their first two albums ('Very 'Eavy Very 'Umble', 'Salisbury') gave way (with 'Demons And Wizards' in particular) to a more melodic, extremely clinical style which has earned them great success but which I personally find rather dull and directionless. Formed in 1970, out of a band called Apice, the name was changed to Uriah Heep (it was Dickens' centenary) and Ken Hensley was brought in from Toefat at Gerry Bron's request. The first line-up was eventually Paul Newton bass, David Byron (always Heep's weakest link) vocals, Mick Box guitar and numerous drummers (amongst them Nigel Olsson) until ultimately

Lee Kerslake from the National Head Band settled in. They've also been through a number of bassists — Mark Clarke from Colloseum, Gary Thain from Keef Hartley's clutches and currently John Wetton. The early days were okay, but the last offering 'Wonderworld' is one metal fans should avoid at all costs.

V

VANILLA FUDGE

From the opening bars of their version of the Beatles' 'Ticket To Ride' on their debut album it was obvious the Vanilla Fudge were not one of your run of the mill rock bands. Their music was an interesting combination of hard aggressive music and cleverly worked out arrangements. The band consisted of Carmine Appice (drums), Tim Bogert (bass), Vinnie Martell (guitar) and Mark Stein (organ). They achieved success in both a commercial ('You Keep Me Hanging On') and progressive ('The Beat Goes On') market. Sadly their production wasn't sophisticated enough to match up with the quality of their music, which makes their albums a little less palatable to listen to. When the band split Bogert and Appice went on to form Cactus followed by a short but memorable spell in B.B.A., which was their original intention after the demise of Fudge. Recently there have been stories about the band reforming, but this never materialised, as some parties don't seem interested in the idea.

VELVET UNDERGROUND

The Velvet Underground were an unstable, explosive mix — the hard-edged street lyricism of Lou Reed, the avant-garde — influenced awareness of the possibilities of noise and biting viola of John Cale, the icecold beauty and voice of Nico. Add the lightshows, the multimedia experimentation, the mystique of the Andy Warhol connection — and the Velvets were like no other group around, making two classic albums ('The Velvet Underground and Nico' and 'White Light', 'White Heat') before Cale left that to follow his iconoclastic career (Nico left after the first). The third album ('The Velvet Underground') is quiet and reflective, a total antithesis to its predecessor, showing the importance of Cale's influence on the group sound. After that, Reed's writing and the group sound became 'popper' until he too, left, and the group stumbled on in name only under Cale's replacement, Doug Yule. Reed's subsequent solo career has been fronting a series of successively more professional hard rock bands, redoing his best Velvets songs, with his writing generally inferior apart from the grand guignol of 'Berlin'. Cale has also returned to rock having just released his third brilliant album in a row. ('Paris 1919' 'fear', 'Slow Dazzle').

W

WARHORSE

It's not surprising that Warhorse sound similar to Purple when you consider that they were formed by ex-Purple bassist in 1970. They recorded some albums for Vertigo, split then reformed for a short spell. The nucleus of the band minus Simper joined Rick Wakeman on his solo ventures.

WEST BRUCE & LAING

EX CREAM bassist Jack Bruce replaced Felix Pappalardi and Steve Knight dropped out in a familiar line-up that brought together the weight of Leslie West's guitar and the drumming of Corky Laing. With the combined talents of ex-Cream, ex-Mountain players this should have been one hell of a line-up but the band went flat after two fairly unimpressive album efforts and drifted apart.

WET WILLIE

Leaning more to the boogie side of rock at the moment

Willie switch direction frequently throughout their albums. Backed by the Willies and featuring two brothers Jack and Jimmy Hall they have a very powerful following in and around Texas.

WHO

With their singles, the Who caught the flavour of what they termed 'My Generation'. Pete Townshend admits it was the generation of his audience, borrowed and translated into the rock-song form. The audience identified with the recycled form. The Who had hits. When they took 'Tommy' on the road in America, they found they had the first dramatic device which worked since Townshend started smashing his guitars on stage — at a certain point, the audience would rise to its feet and stand in awe. It worked every time. After 'Tommy', they'd finish up the set with a medley of old hits and stuff like 'Summertime Blues' — it was what Townshend calls 'the heavy metal bit.' The Who can be as obvious, loud and un-subtle as anyone on the road — but they know how to use that effect.

Sparingly.

EDGAR AND JOHNNY WINTER

Both Edgar and Johnny Winter introduced a new element of rock into two different spheres of music. Johnny Winter the phenomenal albino electric blues guitarist revealed his hard edged sound on his first album for CBS. 'Second Winter' in 1970 was a further development of this attacking style and even further removed from the blues. Winter departed from the line up — Tommy Shannon (bass) Red Turner drums — and soon picked up a new backing band in the form of the McCoys. They recorded two hard rock albums 'Johnny Winter And' and 'Johnny Winter And Live' both successful. Then Johnny Slipped out of the scene due to drug problems. He returned in '73 with a new album ('Still Alive And Well') and has recorded two since, confirming his return. Edgar, unlike his brother, was more interested in R&B and jazz. His first album the very much underrated 'Entrance' was released

A SHORT section respectfully dedicated to the people who went 'heavy' for a single album, or even for just a solitary track. Also designed to accommodate bands worthy of a mention but slotted in here either because space doesn't permit them to have a paragraph to themselves, or because, that, although they verge towards heavy rock, that their roots are somewhere completely different.

In the former, momenarily metal section you have Randy California as Kaptain Kopter And The Fabulous Twirlybirds: the Guess Who (prima-

in 1970 without much success. Winter then formed up with singer Jerry La Croix to form an R&B soul band called White Trash who released two moderately successful albums in 1971 and 1972 ('White Trash' and 'Roadwork' on the Epic label). Winter's first real success came when he formed a glamourised rock band with Ronnie Montrose. His hit single 'Frankenstein' (an instrumental) was in fact a development of an idea on 'Entrance'.

Z

LED ZEPPELIN

The biggest. By their unprecedented successes, Led Zeppelin are as good a definition as you'll find of the term at the start of this article. These things are never really possible to prove, but Led Zeppelin are probably the biggest selling band in the world and the biggest live draw. The band grew out of the New Yardbirds, which Jimmy Page had attempted to get going from the ashes of the Old. With Robert Plant (vocals), John Paul Jones (bass) and John Bonham (drums), the band built on the Beck-Stewart sound, made it heavier, denser, even more overwhelming. Success, particularly in the States was instant. Zep made their own rules — never appeared on TV, never made a specific single release (though Atlantic released some album tracks in the States). The result was that everything they did was big, an event, untrivialised by the smaller media. Despite increasing diversity on their six albums, they are still regarded primarily as crazed rock 'n' roll power plugged into the sockets and running direct into the jugular vein. In other words, envy.

ZZ TOP

Blues played in an inimitable Texan style made this trio tough competition for the bands they supported. Billy Gibbons (guitar / vocals), Dusty Hill (bass) and Frank Beard (drums) finally received their rock and roll rewards when their single ('La Grange') and third album ('Tres Hombres') hit the charts nationwide. Their new album 'Fandango' is expected soon.

rily because of their single 'American Woman'; Peter Hammill as Rikki Nadir; Arthur Lee in his 'Vindicator' days: the Love Affair; Edgar Winter; Johnny Winter with Rick Derringer (Johnny Winter And); Chicken Shack; Black Door; King Crimson.

And the other bands — REO Speedwagon, May Blitz, Judas Priest, Stackwaddy, Black Oak Arkansas, Love Sculpture, Bloodrock, Frijid Pink, Fairweather, Animals, Juicy Lucy, Atlantis, Clear Blue Sky, Spooky Tooth, Slade, John Kongos, Quater-

Recommended Heavy Top 20

TRUTH, Jeff Beck

BLACK SABBATH, Black Sabbath

ON YOUR FEET OR ON YOUR KNEES, Blue Oyster Cult

LIVE CREAM, Cream

IN ROCK, Deep Purple

LIVE, Grand Funk

ELECTRIC LADYLAND, Jimi Hendrix

ROCKIN' THE FILLMORE, Humble Pie

IN-A-GADDA-DA-VIDA, Iron Butterfly

BACK IN THE USA, MC5

NANTUCKET SLEIGHRIDE, Mountain

KINGS OF OBLIVION, Pink Fairies

ROCK AND ROLL ANIMAL, Lou Reed

THE STOOGES, Iggy & Stooges

THIRD WORLD WAR, Third World War

VERY 'EAVY VERY 'UMBLE, Uriah Heep

VANILLA FUDGE, Vanilla Fudge

WHITE LIGHT WHITE HEAT, Velvet Underground

LED ZEPPELIN 11, Led Zeppelin

LIVE AT LEEDS, Who

EMI/Columbia Vertigo

Polydor

Harvest

Capitol

Track

A&M

Atlantic

Atlantic

Island

Polydor

RCA

Elektra

Fly

Bronze

Atlantic

Verve

Atlantic

Track

• IN RANDOM ORDER



REDS SAY HANDS OFF JOHN

THE RUSSIAN English language magazine 'New Times' says that John Lennon's musical talent has deteriorated as a result of his withdrawal from political activity and because the American authorities are harassing him. We quote:

"The authorities are harassing him for political activities between 1968 and 1972. His present uncertain position has affected his music. He has clearly regressed, due to

demonstrative political apathy. His well-preserved reputation as an inventor has been undermined by repetition, thus his last two records, 'Mind Games' and 'Walls And Bridges', are manifestly inferior to his early works. Everyone who is aware of his talent hopes he will overcome his present crisis and produce more of his militant and original songs."

They're not all red squares ...



• LENNON: sympathy from Russia

MAGGIE BELL'S current band in the States is: Joe Jammer and Geoffrey Whitehorn guitars, Paul Francis drums, Delisle Harper bass, Lynton Naiff keyboards ...

ARETHA recording with Jerry Wexler and Gene Page ...

MAHAVISHNU McL. and Carlos Santana due to guest on Stanley Clarke's next solo ...

POCO have left CBS and signed with ABC. They're already working on their next album, due out in July ...

RANDY CALIFORNIA has got together yet another version of Spirit with his step-father drummer, Ed Cassidy. Line-up is completed by bassist Barry Keene. They have a double album out in the States on Mercury, 'Spirit of '76', apparently based on the States Bicentennial with versions of 'The Star Spangled Banner' and 'America'. But it ain't the double 'Journey Through Potatoland' album that CBS apparently refused to release. California in good health too apparently ...

JERRY GOODMAN reunited with Flock ...



• 10cc: who took the teeshirts?

How nice!

GRATEFUL THANKS to Phonogram Records. When thieves broke into SOUNDS offices last week, they lifted (among other things, including Pete Makowski's tape recorder) 37 of our 10cc teeshirts. prizes in our competition. Phonogram had no teeshirts left but they kindly offered to make some more specially. So if you're a winner don't despair, your special (luxury) shirts are on their way. To again, Phonog. In the meantime, if anyone offers you a cheap dark blue teeshirt with a 10cc logo, let us know ...

Football

crazy

IT'S HAPPENED at last, as it eventually had to. Amidst the mounting tension and publicity of the Cup Final a single was recorded last Tuesday for release next Friday, in praise of West Ham United.

The song, called 'Heave Ho The Hammers' is by the same group of people who called themselves Cockerel Chorus and recorded 'Nice One Cyril' last year. This time round they've called themselves the Chicken Runners, named after a section of terracing at West Ham.

Tough

"IT'S A shame," Gryphon's Richard Harvey said, "because Glasgow was such a tremendous gig for us." Harvey, the night after Glasgow, was in Edinburgh bemoaning the fact that the band had had most of their instruments pinched at the Apollo. A blond Fender Telecaster (506232), a cherry Rickenbacker bass (683) and two black ebony descent recorders.

Total value £750 and Gryphon, due to a recent change of management couldn't say if they were insured. They played Edinburgh with borrowed guitars and a plastic recorder.

Their founder member Harvey added: "There had to be a night like this I suppose. We had our desperately flagging morale boosted here tonight at the Usher Hall with the good response to our bad show. This isn't the first time thieves have struck at Gryphon. We lost all our gear at the Roundhouse in London last year but we got it all back within days. Now we are offering £100 reward for recovery of the instruments and anybody with a clue should contact Radio Clyde."

Touching

THE JAZZ get-together to honour the memory of clarinettist Sandy Brown at London's 100 Oxford Street last Wednesday was a touching — and crowded — affair.

Musicians cancelled gigs to attend and there were queues at the bandstand to get a blow. Those who managed to make themselves heard above the boozy hubbub included Acker Bilk, Kenny Ball, Johnny Parker, Danny Moss, Jeannie Lamb, Wally Fawkes, Gerry Salisbury, Charlie Galbraith, Lennie Hastings, Stan Greig, Al Fairweather, Dick Sudhalter and Colin Smith.

It was an incredible show of affection for the late, great Brown. Proceeds from the evening are to be donated to a charity named by Sandy's widow, Flo. — J. H.

Sorry

APOLOGIES TO followers of the Winkies: Guy Humphrys and not Phil Rambow should have been credited with the fine rhythm guitar playing on their recent Chrysalis album. Sorry.

Two more

PEARLMAN AND Krugman, the eminences grises (or perhaps noirs) behind Blue Oyster Cult have produced two more bands — the Dictators and Pavlov's Dog. Now we don't know nuthin' about Pavlov's Dog (Pavlov's Dog Drools, OK) except that they have an album out on ABC in the States. Very odd, we hear. The Dictators are fronted by their very own fourteen stone ex-wrestler, Handsome Dick Manitoba. They cite as their influences the MC5, Black Sabbath, the Who — Jan and Dean and the Supremes. They claim to be a 'satirical punk-rock' band with songs like 'Master Race Rock' and 'Teengenerate'. They have a CBS album out in the States, 'The Dictators Go Girl-Crazy'. It's terrible ...

What's that?

IS A Jamaican or Italian descent a Pastafarian? Perhaps not.

THE JOHN PEEL COLUMN



Fighting the flab

IN AN HOUR or so the John Peel Roadshow will sew a fly-button back on its trousers and set off for Cardiff. I would like to tell you that the Roadshow's button fell off as the result of intense female pressure — regrettably it fell off because the trouser's contents are too fat.

The adjoining sweat-shirt's contents are even nastier, a series of pasty folds cascading down to overhang the gent's natty trousering mentioned above.

A recent visit to the bathroom scales revealed that the proprietor of both garments was tipping the scales at an unpleasant 13 stones. So now the John Peel Roadshow is on a diet and, ignoring the advice of those who have told it that it should have a cup of warm water at six in the morning, the rind of an organically grown lemon at nine o'clock, 1½ portions of Ryvita ingested through the nose at eleven o'clock, and so on, the Roadshow has simply stopped eating.

Chase

Almost. Last night the Roadshow was feeling a trifle disenchanted with the world so it called up a chum, a representative of Virgin Records, and arranged to witness a spot of rockaboojie and absorb into its system a minute salad. In accord with this notion, having first left its brief-case in someone's locked office, thus ensuring that today would be marked by an exciting chase around London, it set off for the Kensington public house, in London W14.

The Roadshow usually makes a point of going to see bands with silly names — it has been scanning the pages for appropriate appearances by Waiter, My Bill and Bon temps Roulez (French, my companion of last night was good enough to explain to me, for The Good Times Roll) but on this particular occasion it was forced to settle for The Bishops Count.

Cross

Before the band burst into action, the two adventurers crossed the road for an excellent salad, but were eventually panicked into leaving early by some exceedingly fierce waitresses. So they were well-fed but cross when the time came to effect an entry into the Kensington.

Imagine the Roadshow's pleasure, however, when it heard The Bishops Count playing a Jimmy Reed number as it swaggered into the bar. Any band that plays Jimmy Reed numbers is just fine.

Featuring an energetic, although often inaudible, lead-singer who has clearly elected to assume the role of street

punk, The Bishops Count roared enthusiastically through a selection of numbers that several members of the band looked too young to have heard in their original versions.

Treat

They have a repertoire that can't be too different from that which the Stones or the Yardbirds peddled around the Home Counties, in the early Sixties. What a treat to see a rhythm guitarist again.

Not, as the Roadshow's pal observed, the most proficient band currently on display in London, but their exuberance was worth about a dozen over-priced concerts by bored millionaires. And it was free.

Humming 'Shake', the two sensation-seekers clambered back into the Roadshow's gleaming racer, and set off for Fulham. I think Fulham will win the Cup, but that is not why we journeyed thither. Our destination was the Greyhound and Ariel. The latter have impressed me with both their albums and they did a slightly disappointing but still worthwhile session for 'Top Gear'.

At the Greyhound they sounded just fine — neither of us had seen them in action before — although the man from Virgin and I found our attention wandering from time to time to the leisure activities of a female writhing, who was practising her ancient art immediately in front of the stage. I don't know how often Ariel are on display outside London, but if they pop up in your part of the world scot along and see them.

Havoc

Earlier in the week, I'd seen in the course of another mildly embarrassing gig, a Worthing band, name Tonge. Although I missed much of their performance through chatting in an animated fashion with a group of revellers — one of whom wreaked havoc with my ego by saying, when they thought I was out of ear-shot, 'hurry up, and let's go before he comes back' — Tonge sounded pretty good too.

Although most of my acquaintances think it an odd taste, I like going to see unknown bands. There's something essentially heartening about seeing and hearing people play music for motives other than money, and without regarding their playing as just a job of work.

Doubtless The Bishops Count, Tonge and Ariel, hope ultimately to reach that sort of status, and have in the back of their minds fast cars and faster women — don't we all, but, in their own ways, they're all worth seeing now, in their relative innocence.

About time we had some more cheeky snaps for the top of this column. The previous lady seems to have disappeared. Any volunteers?



They've been awaiting publication since 1969 . . .

By
MIKE
FLOOD
PAGE

NOBODY COULD say that the ladies of this world are spared in Frank Zappa's lyrics, though that is hardly a rarity in rock. Has Frank ever been attacked from a feminist angle?

When I saw him recently he told me interviewers had taken that tack:

"One of them wound up being one of my biggest fans and the other one went away scratching her head. I don't think it's fair to point any feminist fingers in my direction, when you consider the general thrust of all rock and roll lyrics by all other groups."

Sexual

"Why should I be singled out? I've probably done more for the feminist cause than any other rock and roll type band, because at least if I'm writing something that has sexual connotations to it I make an attempt to give a fair representation of both sides of the sexual fence.

"Not because I'm a feminist fellow traveller, or sympathiser but just because I thought it was rational." The case for the defence rests.

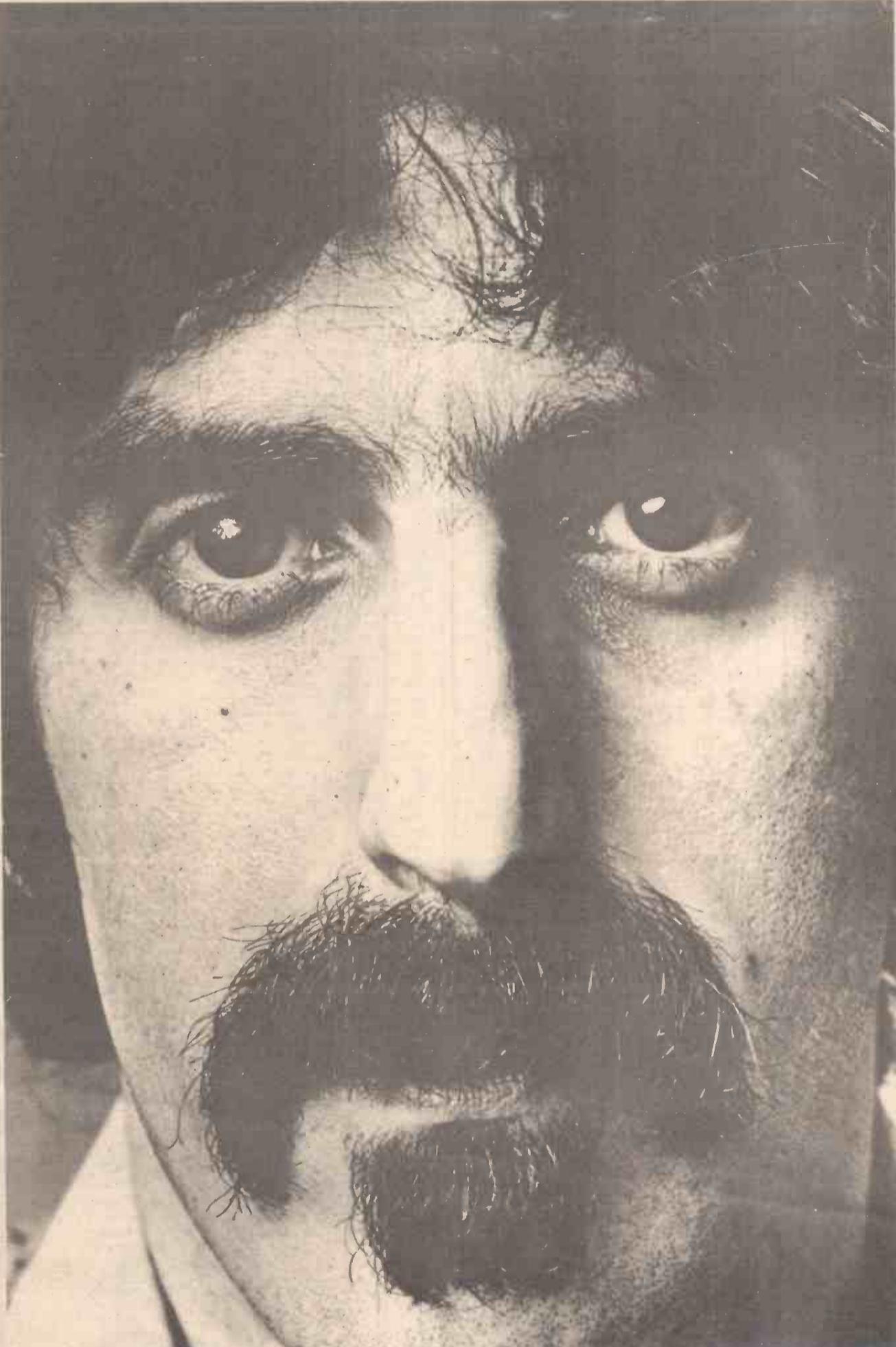
Triangle

Another sexual affair however has been threatened periodically since 1969 — the (in)famous Groupie Papers. The idea germinated when Zappa discovered three people whose lives had crossed at different points due to a common interest in the sexual side-alleys of rock and roll world: Noel, Cynthia and Miss Pamela.

Cynthia is the Plaster Caster of Chicago. In '69 she and a helper would take casts of the private parts of the flower of rock and roll manhood.

The plump little figure with her bag of specimens and the makings: plaster, alginates, vaseline, measuring scoops, etc. was a familiar sight in the hotel lobbies around Chicago anytime some new bunch of rock and roll dudes hit town.

Miss Pamela was a GTO. Never heard of that either? Well a GTO



ZAPPA AND THE GROUPIE PAPERS

was a member of a troupe of female performers brought together and recorded by one Francis Vincent Zappa.

And GTO stands for Girls Together Occasionally or Often or Outrageously; which under FZ's guidance they frequently were.

Pamela was from the San Fernando Valley in California, a blonde and

waiflike, and once got as far as banging on Mick Jagger's hotel door. These days Miss Pamela is a character in an American TV Soap Opera "As The World Turns", earning thousands of dollars a year.

Diaries

Now what these people all have in common is that they're kept meticulous diaries, since they were young. In

Cynthia's case down to how much plaster she had to use on whom.

Frank got wind of this and now has diaries which his former secretary is hoping to turn into a book, "The Groupie Papers". Let Frank take up the tale:

"Each diary starts as each of the characters are finding out about rock and roll and life and such-like. Before the end of the book, they converge through the most bizarre set of circumstances that you can imagine, and then it tells where they go after that."

As an account of aspects of the Sixties he described it as; "a hell of an historical novel, — but true.

"Noel's diary begins with him auditioning" and what happens to him, practically over-night. How that changes his life. Every page is: how many girls he did today and what he did with them.

"Pamela who started keeping her diaries at the age of nine, talking about how she cried then when they excused Caryl Chessman.

"Cynthia started keeping diaries at an early age too. Things about her father trying

'She kept clinical notes, and I mean clinical'

to attack her because her tits were so big. Going from there to art school and getting into the whole Plaster Caster business.

"How she met Noel. Noel meeting Pamela when he goes to California. And they're all having correspondence back and forth but they don't know about each other until I put them in touch with each other on the phone."

Ever the mastermind of the chemistry of personalities our Frank.

That was when he produced the GTOs and a portion of the phone conversation appears on their album.

Letters

"Pamela gets on the phone and starts talking to Cynthia something to the effect: 'Oh, I've heard all about you, and it sounds very interesting.'

"Then they start comparing notes on who they like in the business and Noel comes up, and they start writing letters to each other.

"What happens as a result of this is that Pamela falls in love with Cynthia; except Cynthia is not bi-sexual. So Pamela keeps trying to seduce Cynthia, and Pamela lives in California, has never left California, has no idea what it's like in Chicago in the Wintertime. At one point decides she's gonna hock all her worldly possessions, gets on a plane, with the intention of getting to Cynthia.

"I've still got this fading Polaroid photograph of the two of them sitting together. It just flops miserably! Then they drift apart from there.

"Cynthia is doing something that everybody in the groupie industry always wanted to do. She would set her sights on some target and say; 'I'm gonna do this, and such to so and so.'

Clinical

"At a time when she's a fat little girl living in Chicago, working as either a typist or on a telephone switchboard or something, she would figure out ways to locate groups when they came to tour that would have been great for Sherlock Holmes." She found out where they were, how to get to them. Got to them and would either ball them or cast them; and kept clinical notes. I mean clinical.

"Not only that, she drew cartoons that are naive, well-executed Little Orphan-Annie-looking cartoons of her and her assistant chasing down the stars."

Yeah, but Frank you were talking about that being published in 1969, do you really believe it will ever see the light of day?

"I hope so. It would make one hell of a movie. It would be about the ultimate rock and roll movie because everybody's in that book.

All right that about wraps up groupies for one week, how about the group?

"I think the group hasn't even peaked yet. That may be optimistic, but I really feel it. One day I hope I'm gonna wake up and find a sufficient number of people outside of our hard-core audience have decided: these guys are great!

"And I'm going to agree with them! I won't even bother to sit there and say: What took you so long?"

'IT WOULD MAKE ONE HELL OF A MOVIE!'

singles

reviewed by john peel



KINKS 'DUCKS ON THE WALL' (RCA-VICTOR)****

I KNOW we don't bother our little heads with records of the week on this lofty journal... but sod it, this is the record of the week. Ray Davies unfolds for us the harrowing story of his deep relationship with a woman of questionable judgement. 'My lady', he complains, 'has got the most deplorable taste' and although he is prepared, for love of the creature, to sit through gruesome TV programmes with her, he finds the ducks on the wall altogether too hard to take. 'I love you baby, but I can't ball when I see those ducks on the wall'. Nasty predicament. Eventually the strain begins to tell and Ray imagines the nasty plaster things coming alive. Duck calls are featured heavily and there are truckloads of jaunty piano on display. As if this excellent lyric idea were not enough, the whole is set to a Status Quo-like rompin' and stompin'. If this isn't played on Radio 1 then I despair.

DR. HOOK 'MILLIONAIRE' (CAPITOL)***

Another waxing with an amusing story line. This time — and incidentally this is not written by Shel Silverstein — the august Doctor, having started the record by thanking us all most generously for some unspecified boon, outlines some of his many faults. Having done this he mentions his one redeeming feature — through the good graces of a recently deceased uncle he is a millionaire. He has, he confides, 'more money than a horse has hairs'. The feel throughout is country 'n' lewd, tinged with leer 'n' roll. A most diverting release — I wonder what became of the Medicine Show? Towards the end Dr. Hook assures us that he is, of course, not trying to buy love but... He concludes by roaring drunkenly for some unwilling lovely to 'stop crying, put a quarter in the juke-box'. Very listenable. You will chuckle amongst yourselves.

BILLY SWAN 'DON'T BE CRUEL' (MONUMENT)****
At last a single release of the album track that several very wonderful DJs, Rosko and myself for example, have been playing on-and-off for months. RAK Records covered it recently — but without any marked success. Let us hope the original does better. Billy takes the Presley classic at a very, very slow tempo, waiting while first organ, droning, then drums and bass, establish a mood of considerable melancholy, before opening his mouth in song. He sings without undue vocal decoration, joined for the second verse by both acoustic and electric guitars, neither of which are in the least obtrusive. Later piano and support voices are added—but again without disturbing the mood.

HENRY GROSS 'ONE MORE TOMORROW' (A&M)****
Produced by Terry Cashman and Tommy West, gentlemen whose work usually veers towards the polite, antiseptic and slightly countrified. However, young Henry brings out the best in the duo and this rousing strutter, although slightly countrified once again,



● Drop out with Ray Davies on duck call

makes for a fine single. It is, you see, taken from Henry's second solo LP — he was once, believe it or not, a Sha Na Na—and he has a most distinctive voice, a voice both high and clear and heard to best advantage when he is harmonising with himself — as he does here. Good playing, good singing, a good tune — the perfect record to propel you joyfully into summer.

SPEEDY KEEN 'SOMEONE TO LOVE' (ISLAND)***

Island are doing a sort of Leicester City these days — snapping up other club's discarded players and giving them the proverbial new-lease-of-life. For his later work with Track, Speedy went back to being simple John Keen — and made some bonny records as such — but now reverts to his Thunderclap Newman-era name. His records have never been easy to review — said he, defensively — having no easily identifiable features beyond good tunes. Speedy sings this one, a soothing and mellow affair in the main, most attractively. The support is more than adequate — as you will hear from the 23 seconds of instrumental stuff before the man pops out from behind a rock. Off-hand, I can think of nothing else to say.

SIMTEC SIMMONS 'SOME OTHER TIME' (CONTEMPO)***

Here's yet another single that we played as an import — on the Innovation II label — aeons ago. Well, months ago then. Both sides of the release are most enjoyable — the 'B' side is 'Classified Crazy Man' — but the side under review has the sort of arrangement and beat that sets the feet a-dancing, dancing, dancing all your cares away. Strings shimmer while Sim croons and his pals hum. From time to time the strings go pizzicato —

don't we all — and provide a pleasing contrast with the softly funky rhythm track. Simtec (do we have any readers named Simtec, I wonder?) duets with himself to good effect.

BOB REFL 'BLOWING MY MIND TO PIECES' (BLACK MAGIC)***

With Black Magic's Sharlettes scampering up the charts we'd best turn our attentions to another of their first releases. Better late than never, eh? Bob Relf was, I am assured, half of the team that brought you 'The Harlem Shuffle' and I have some rather good doomy records by the pair back home at the Acres. Anyway, you don't want to know all that. The important ingredient here is, of course, that Northern, moving Southerly, dance beat. This is emphasised by the fact that exactly the same backing track is used on the reverse, where a Paula Russell sings the same number. The strings have a most unusual sound to them, almost like those widely used in the soundtracks to Indian films, and they don't obstruct our Bob as he struts, pausing only for a spoken 'I'm so fed up with bein' messed around' routine, through the fairly inconsequential lyric. Probably selling in zillions, or even billions, already.

MAL GREY & FLIGHT 56 'LOOK OUT FOR LOVE' (ARISTA)***

The tragedy is that dung like the Savalas single reviewed above (or below or somewhere) will be played incessantly on the radio, while this rollicking offering will be entirely ignored. It is, you see, rock music, and therefore above the acceptability threshold for the mutated listener. Mal is the man who for years has fronted the Wild Angels. The Angels have, I suppose, proved the most successful and most durable of the Rock 'n' Roll revivalist bands that sprang, fully armed, out of the clay a few years back. But this is not mere revivalist stuff, nor anything like it. 'Look Out For Love' is hard-headed 1975 rock, with Mal singing energetically, a sprightly band driving hard, Pete Gage producing perceptively, and the listener (me and hopefully you) enjoying hugely. Electric guitar dominates the proceedings but dominates very well. Don't know who Flight 56 are — could they be Fancy? — but they deserve a pat on the back.

DONALD BYRD 'FLIGHT TIME' (BLUE NOTE)***

A large plane flies through your head — in my case encountering lamentably few obstacles — and is still taxying noisily as the music starts. Donald Byrd doesn't mean much here — except to import freaks and old jazzers — but his works sell wonderfully well in America. Following on the heels, as it were, of the aircraft, pianos are tinkled in cocktail manner and Donald operates his trumpet in a tranquil manner. This elegance is somewhat at variance with the moderately athletic rhythm, which is (stand by) jazz-funk with Latin undercurrents. Care for that? The brass is brushed aside after a while when someone bursts out on electric guitar, and from that point onwards the record takes on a new urgency. Mind you, it never becomes terribly exciting.

MUSCLES 'SPACE PARTY' (BIG BEAR)***

Big Bear move over from de blooz, to street funk. 'Space Party', the slight tune of which is carried mainly on some sort of synthesizer, gets under way with party noises. Whistles are blown, folk cry out 'get down', and the impression given is that these guys just wandered into the studio and, hey, wow, there are these instruments and let's get it together and, wow, just jam, and er, you know, get it together. There's a very strong bass line, there is more jubilation to the close and one feels that disco-goers might well dance themselves absolutely daft to Muscles' debut. DJs will, I fear, play the record only as a bridge.

THE CHARLIE DANIELS BAND 'THE SOUTH'S GONNA DO IT' (BUDDAH)***

Fiddle-led Southern rock. There are rather appealing late '40s' overtones to the record as a whole, reminiscent of, say, Louis Jordan. Go on, say it. Basically the record is just a hymn of praise to contemporary Southern music. Namechecks are forthcoming for the Marshall Tucker Band,

STAR TIME

- ***** An essential buy
- **** Well worth having if you've got the money
- *** Good, try to hear it
- ** Ho-hum
- * Very ho-hum

No stars Pass by on the other side

Lynyrd Skynyrd, Dickie Betts, Elvin Bishop, ZZ Top, Wet Willie and Barefoot Jerry. As the disc struts along you can faintly discern some rather good gaiting, but this is buried in a shallow grave in the mix and can't really be enjoyed as it should be. A jolly and countrified romp. I'm not sure whether all this shakin' ole Southern boy routine hasn't been somewhat overplayed though. While we're on the subject, let me draw your attention to the title track from Wet Willie's 'Dixie Rock' LP.

GARY GLITTER 'LOVE LIKE YOU AND ME' (BELL)***

What a dozy old queen I am, to be sure. Last week, and with the thoroughness that has heaped plaudits all over my tiny pointed head ever since I started reviewing singles back in Queen Anne's time (read that without pausing for breath if you can), I reviewed the wrong side of Gar's newest bid for chart honours. Trouble is — and I'm not just saying this to attempt to lessen in your eyes the aching stupidity of my gaffe, I rather prefer the 'B' Side. 'Love Like You' is a medium thumper, which has Gary sounding slightly different somehow — as though he were trying to sing 'properly' perhaps. At times he seems to be straining for some of the loftier notes. You will not be astonished to learn that the disc features crowd-pleasing chorus, hand-clapping and all the usual Glitter/Leander trademarks. Not one of the old boy's best though.

TELLY SAVALAS 'YOU'VE LOST THAT LOVING FEELIN' (MCA)***

Oh, come on! This week, so great is my desire to be informed and to be able to

discuss with you all aspects of an artiste's career, I sat down and watched an entire episode of 'Kojak' without resorting to stimulants, either legal or illegal. I can hardly see what the fuss is about — but there again I cannot understand the current enthusiasm for the generally dull Bay City Rollers. On this monstrous travesty of the Righteous Brothers' classic. Telly hams his way through the lyrics making them sound unbelievably vapid and naive, singing rather poorly, and with the aid of a considerable choir, only on the choruses. The kind of muck which stars to the top of the charts in these 'Radio 2 Meets Junior Choice' days.



● A Raincoat: a la Roxy

A RAINCOAT 'I LOVE YOU FOR YOUR MIND (NOT YOUR BODY) (EMI)***

A midly diverting school of Bryan Ferry outing. I was drawn to the single mainly by the band's name — that's the kind of mature judgement you get with these reviews! Starting with a very fair impression of Bryan making the sort of noises the rest of us might make if we cut ourselves shaving, and continuing with a sharp Roxiish beat, the main vocal sections are rather more poppy than you might have at first imagined they would be. The record gets a bit muddled at times as the band strive hard for effect, but there are nice moments nevertheless — as when a slight cough leads us from one section to another. In fact, given radio plays, the record could well be a hit, especially with its tongue in cheek 'sex means nothing to me' message. Quite amusing — could be a future collector's item.

BUGATTI AND MUSKER 'ALL MADE UP' (EPIC)***

A lady with a most beguiling voice 'phoned me to observe, in very hurt tones, that I seemed to have overlooked this single when selecting offerings for review. I had, my dear, I'm afraid. The record comes to me with loads of biographical stuff about both Bugatti and Musker. It seems the boys met at Cambridge, fighting — with words only, of course — after a debate on pornography. Obviously both of them have all sorts of useful qualifications if they fail to make it big, big, big in showbiz. At the moment it is difficult to say whether they will or will not. This single, as were their previous releases, is well sung — their harmony singing is quite effective — and errs only on the side of politeness. The message, as profound a message as one would expect from people moved to anger by debates on porn, is, as I with my 4 'O' levels understand it, that nothing, including this record, is really real. For that reason and because 'All Made Up' has few interesting distinguishing marks, I suspect that people will not flock to buy.



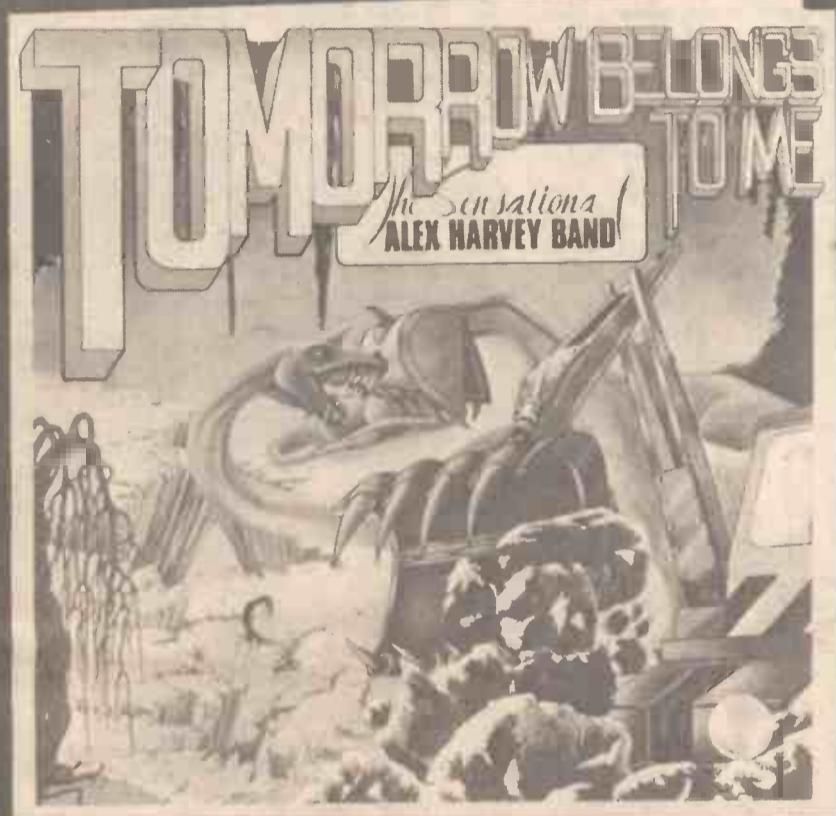
● Noosha: Big breaths and a devastating voice

FOX 'IMAGINE ME, IMAGINE YOU' (GTO)*****

Regular listeners to 'Top Gear' will have heard this several weeks ago, when we played it from the forthcoming Fox LP. I'm afraid to say I have yet to see Fox on TV — whenever I turn on any of the allegedly pop programmes I see only middle-of-the-road bores like Petula Clark or incompetent gaggles of pretty boys — but I am fascinated to know what the leading lady of the group looks like. (Now you know — Ed.) Her voice is extraordinary — almost entirely emotionless yet devastatingly effective and even erotic in an untouchable sort of way. A major find. Anyway, this is another masterly release from Kenny Young and his team. The tune is good — Kenny wrote it, those indrawn breath effects are out again, the arrangement is well-nigh perfect and the production has that special clarity that was until recently the exclusive province of 10cc. Given slightly less twee lyrics (my only complaint against the LP), Fox could be as much of a pop life-saver as 10cc have been. If you're a Floyd and/or Zep freak, your friends may tell you it's bad form to enjoy Fox. Tell 'em to get knotted.



The Sensational ALEX HARVEY BAND



TOMORROW BELONGS TO ME
Album 9102 003
Cassette 7231 003
Cartridge 7739 026

'The best produced and most carefully compiled album that the SAHB have managed to date.'

Charles Shaar Murray, NME. April 19 1975.

'All this and more makes this an album to feature in any collection.'

SC. Disc. April 19 1975

'This album is like Mickey Spillane, modern day poetry, Marvel comics, rock and roll and the rest of the world wrapped into a bumper package.'

Pete Makowski. Sounds. April 19 1975

ON TOUR

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 1st May | NEWCASTLE, City Hall |
| 2nd May | EDINBURGH, Usher Hall |
| 3rd May | DUNDEE, Caird Hall |
| 4th May | GLASGOW, Apollo |
| 7th May | LIVERPOOL, Empire |
| 8th May | BRADFORD, St Georges Hall |
| 10th May | LEEDS, University |
| 11th May | PRESTON, Guildhall |
| 12th May | MANCHESTER, Free Trade Hall |
| 13th May | SHEFFIELD, City Hall |
| 15th May | BIRMINGHAM, Odeon |
| 16th May | PORTSMOUTH, Guildhall |
| 17th May | STOKE, City Football Ground with YES |
| 20th May | LEICESTER, De Montfort Hall |
| 21st May | WATFORD, Town Hall |
| 22nd May | CARDIFF, Capitol |
| 23rd May | BRISTOL, Colston Hall |
| 24th May | HAMMERSMITH, Odeon |
| 26th May | SOUTHEND, Kursaal |

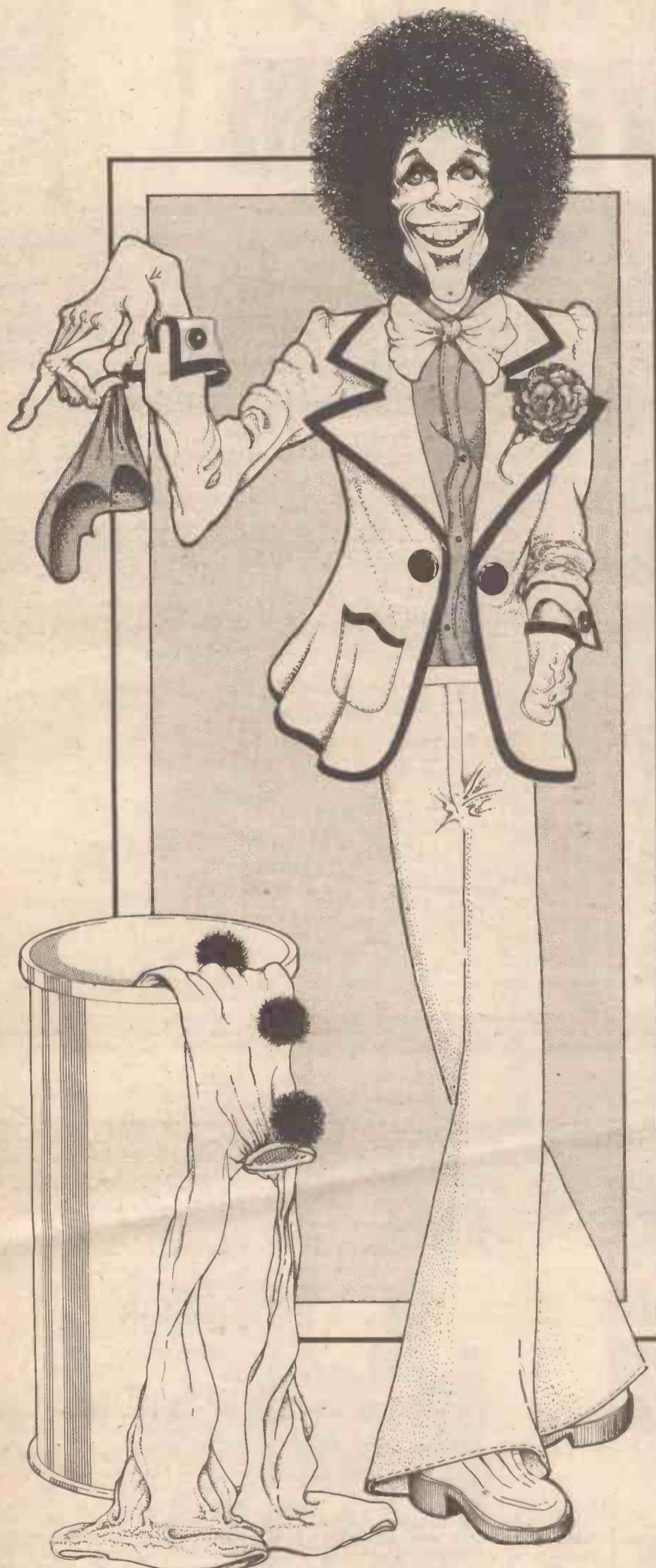


VERTIGO

marketed by
phonogram



LEO SAYER



I'd like to push Leo Sayer now as a whole complex, a whole band'

GOODBYE

glam and glitter

HELLO

to a little funk



• Goodbye to Sayer the clown.

sure Steve Harley has the same problem.

"Also when you're a solo artist, it's a helluva different cup of tea from when you're a guy in the band. Suddenly I'm paying those guys, the responsibility of having those guys underneath me ... and literally Adam's (Faith)

my manager and I'm the manager of the band."

That's OK, but why the sudden change, if it is sudden? "It feels to me like a natural growth, I only hope it doesn't lose a lot of people.

"I feel now, looking at my last two albums, maybe I moved in too fast, trying to get a finished product like 'this is the end of Leo Sayer folks, this is the pinnacle'. I tried to get my highest point over with in my first two records rather than let it grow.

"One obviously enjoys that because any reaction in this business is better than none — and don't forget it wasn't that long ago that I was completely unknown.

anonymous musicians behind Leo from time to time can't have helped his confidence, apart from his growth.

To make it big, particularly in the States, you've got to have a tight and powerful band, so they've got to have their own character too.

Leo admits though that there was an element of this in the early days and that the band was pushed to the rear a bit: "It was a little bit of both, because we got hold of the clown thing. When I took off the clown costume I was still a singer but the band were a very important thing.

Plastic

"The clown image projected me so far out of the band a TV producer came up to me and said 'Y'know you're great television material,'" explains Sayer affecting an American accent.

"And that was it, they said 'ah you're so big man we don't wanna use the band behind you, you look so big on your own'.

"That's what it became, a very plastic thing, it feels very plastic to me now because I've turned full circle ... I'm a very changeable person," (nervous half laugh), "so all this comes very easily to me."

So Leo's grown tired of the 'pop star' label, but how about the audiences that he gets? Take the New Victoria Theatre in London where girls were screaming and running on stage to touch their idol.

"One obviously enjoys that because any reaction in this business is better than none — and don't forget it wasn't that long ago that I was completely unknown.

Band call

The band to do it, Leo feels, is Dave Rose (keyboards), a man who worked with Sayer in his first real unit; John Lingwood (drums) and Frank Farrell (bass) from his recent touring band; and a new guitarist Huw Lloyd Langton.

"It's a much stronger, punchier band," Leo continues, "and I'm soaking myself back into it a lot more.

"I'd like to push Leo Sayer now as a whole complex, a whole band. For the first time I'm actually doing TV ('The Russell Harty Show') with a band, with me there just in the band.

"I know I've got some negative reports recently, I suppose most of the people have been into me and haven't noticed the band very much. As you can guess, it's very difficult to have a total appreciation for musicians when you're a solo artist anyway. I'm

LEO SAYER'S a changeable bloke, in fact he's the first to admit it. He's been through a few changes in his short dive for the top, the white face clown, a neatly turned out troubadour in Gatsby fashions and more recently just a boy in a sparkly jacket and jeans. But now Leo's aiming to get back to his roots, move away from the glitter and glam and back to a little funk.

"I don't want to be a pop singer any more, dammit I never wanted to be a pop singer anyway," Sayer reports with a sudden rush of frankness. "It's a case of 'an identity is put on you, slung round your neck and you ride with it'."

Such is Leo's commitment to this move away from the "pop" image that he's recently changed his band, is confident enough to work with — instead of out front of — a line-up that can really challenge his own power and projection..

Patches

"When I first came to Adam I was a rock and roller and part of a band — the Patches thing. Since then I've moved away and been a solo artist, been very much the front man, but I suppose I've got a face now ... a face that's recognised."

But the use of some fairly



Gatsby fashions a thing of the past

"It's only now that I'm beginning to think 'is that the reaction I want?' but before all this I was thinking to myself 'well, that's a reaction as much as anything so here we go...'"

But the real point is Leo's definition of the word 'pop' star. "I regard it as a 'plasticness' approach," Sayer confides with a half laugh, "rather than the end product being plastic."

"I must admit Adam and I were going about it in a way that said 'oh yeah that's gonna have a great effect' and, you know, you do a lot of things for effect. But what are effects, what are props?"

But with the realisation that image isn't everything Leo also came to terms with the fact that he may have been overplaying the theatrics a bit. With this change of mood's also came a change in attitude to his on stage antics.

"At first I found it very hard to actually prime those things, they're so easy to do now. They're so easy to get into, at New Victoria I think I was doing about 60 twirls a minute and a quick turn round."

"It gets to a point where every time I walk off stage I have to go like this (clutching wildly at his twirling right hand) to stop it. So I have been consciously thinking less and less of it."

States

Having come somewhere near to winning over the British market, Leo has to set his sights back on the States (where he made a short club tour) and other fields like Europe and the Far East if he really hopes to be the star that Adam Faith is sure he can be.

Did he realise at the time that the band he got together for the recent British tour didn't have the stuff to make the Americans sit up and listen?

"No the recent band wouldn't have been right at all, but the band I took over there was the right one for America, dead right. That band was more ready for the States than I was because I was still the clown, the pop singer."

"It took me time to adjust so much but when we reached the last week I was really getting into the singing, because I actually realised the people were listening to me."

So the scene's set for the next chapter in the making of Leo Sayer. Gone is the clown, the Gatsby pop star and now the "just a boy" tag won't do. You've got to be a bit older to make it. Sayer's got the goods to do it and the rest is up to him.

"Of course, being a jazzier, his timing is concrete. We've got moog now," he goes on, barely hiding his excitement, "so this shows you the way we're going."

"Keyboards now look ridiculous, there's four keyboard instruments ... Dave Rose, he's into funk, like Stevie Wonder things and the guitarist's got a sound similar to that Peter Green used to get — very emotional blues guitar."

"The band I had with Dave Rose in before was a



IS THIS really the Holiday Inn of Swiss Cottage? No, it's Tommy's holiday camp for the 45 waifs and strays who make up the Atlantic Soul Tour. In the grand circular driveway, the photographer has successfully lined up Sister Sledge, all four of them with their English male counterparts: you guessed it, Sweet Sensation. Just when the group is getting comfortable, being linked arm in arm, my taxi driver flies around the corner nearly knocking them all over. They disperse and head for something safer, the automatic tennis machine near the swimming pool. Hey, who does Marcel King think he's trying to kid without his glasses?

Directly outside the glass door are the limos and their uniformed drivers who are comparing the hours they've clocked in. The winner had to get one of the Detroit Spinners at 4 a.m. and then be out again at 7 a.m. for an airport job.

The grand lobby itself looks like a reunion of the National Union of Journalists. In one corner, looking relieved and relaxed is the soul specialist who's finished her interviews and has three days to produce 5,000 words on it. On the other side, tape recorder in hand, is the conscientious journalist who has just learnt the name of the Sister Sledge he is about to interview. The Atlantic staff members all carry overloaded notepads, and keep ticking off names each time they see each other. One of Jimmy Castor Bunch, is killing time and is passed by a teeny journalist who just has time to jump in the next cab and get her copy typed.

All this non-stop shifting panic and eventually an interview with one of the Detroit Spinners too. Tonight is the end of the Atlantic Soul package; four acts for the price of one. What started out cranky in Liverpool, has made its mark elsewhere. Now, with just two shows in London before they go back to the States, it's time to tie up the loose ends.

Bass singer Pervis Jackson sits upstairs in his Holiday Inn room sipping Coca Cola and doing nearly two dozen non-stop interviews. The furthest he's travelled today is the toilet in his room. However, between interviews, he gets his licks in: Armed with a Polaroid camera he is shooting anything with two legs that walks in the door. Pervis has a good system. The journalists walk out with reams of notes and anyone who writes a nasty review has their picture turned into a dart board.

Track record

But honestly, what can you say to a man who is part of a group that succeeds at what they started out to do: Entertain. The Spinners' track record, since they abandoned Motown for Thom Bell and Atlantic, has been terrific. Their records of today will be the classics of tomorrow. When they lost their lead singer four years ago and replaced him with Phillipine Wynne, they gained an exclusive: "I'll Be Around", "Could It Be I'm Falling In Love", "One Of A Kind", "Ghetto Child" and "Then Came You"

As the Atlantic Soul Tour draws to an end, Robin Katz talks to the Detroit Spinners' Pervis Jackson, who says . . .

'...we've been waiting too long'

with Dionne Warwick. If they never make another record, their greatest hits album will be a killer. At present, the biggest problem they appear to have is figuring out which million sellers to turn into medleys, and which to sing full length. Pervis, I'm sure, you wish you always had such heavy problems to deal with.

"The past three years have been good," he agrees calmly without a torrent of passion. "We have come from poverty level to the point where we can lead a decent life. I don't think we've hit the top. It's still uphill. But we can look back on all the things that happened in the past as experience. And we know things don't happen overnight. We've changed a bit from the days when you just stood around a mike. We want to put out a show. It's important for an artist to establish a relationship with the audience that doesn't necessarily rest on singing and dancing. A lot of the people who come to see you might not like your latest record. So you have to have more than that."

"We have taken out a lot of the better known Motown tracks, 'Truly Yours', 'I'll Always Love You', 'We'll Have It Made'; and 'It's A Shame', but now we're thinking of putting some of them together in medley form. Cause these are the songs people want to hear. And we're public servants aren't we? Also, we have more room now. A year ago on the Four Tops tour we only got about 30 minutes. Now we're contracted to do twice that, and we rarely leave till we've done 10 or 15 minutes over that."

"What we've got now is a live album coming up with things from the first album, the 'Mighty Love' album, the 'New And Improved' and singles that weren't on any album, like 'Love Don't Love Nobody' and a version of 'Then Came You' with our songwriter Linda Creed. It was done at the Latin Casino in Cherry Hill, New Jersey."

"As far as the lifestyle of music goes . . . well, I like being a group singer. I'm the kind of guy who doesn't like to be alone in any way. I don't think most artists mind going from place to place so much, it's part of the work. We grew up together, except for Phil (Wynne) we've all known each other since school days, so there's no problem in getting along."

It was Dionne Warwick who in-

troduced the Spinners to the big rooms of many of the major clubs and Las Vegas. In return they gave her her first chart hit in years. The problem is Vegas has always been synonymous with selling out your soul. However, Pervis disputes:

"An entertainer should always go where the job calls. Whether it's Vegas or your old neighbourhood. Why not? Otherwise a person who is narrow minded won't be around very long or he loses himself. A lot of artists get to Vegas. They start doing Sinatra instead of being what they are and doing what they do. Why else did the man hire you? But you can't be so polarised not to adapt for your audience, let's face it, don't blame them. It's not their fault they come from all over the world and don't know every one of your hit records. So, you do a few things they do know. Then you hope, when they leave, they will know you. Vegas is just one job."

Sweet sensation

"When we get back to Detroit, one of the radio stations there got together with a sweet manufacturer called Peter-Paul and they've auctioned us for a day. The High School that sent in the most wrappers from their sweets gets us. So we're going to a school all the way in Erie, Michigan to do a free concert at two in the afternoon. Don't hear about those kind of gigs do you? I do a lot of lectures with Jr. Achievement winners and I used to take kids out camping. But we haven't had as much time these days as we used to."

My biggest ambition is to win a Grammy Award. We've been nominated three times and three times had a speech ready. I just keep looking at it. But that's what I really want. That's what keeps any artist trying to do better. An award for achievement is priceless. It's an official acknowledgement of all the competition you're up against. That's what gives you drive. I'm just gonna hold onto my speech, and when the time comes, I'm just going to walk up there with it, put a little powder on the paper, and blow it off like it's dust. Man, we have waited a long time."

folk sounds

ONE RECENT estimate put John Denver's gross earnings for last year at over 12 million dollars. Four of his myriad RCA albums have become not merely gold records but platinum ones, which means they've sold a million copies each, not just brought in a million dollars. And that's just in North America.

In Britain, Denver's popularity has climbed steadily since Stanley Dorfman booked him for a six week BBC 2 series two years ago, and you can expect to see his latest double-album, 'An Evening With John Denver' in the charts any day now.

All of which must make him the most successful folk singer ever, in economic terms at least.

The critics, of course, can't stand him.

Denver's rise and rise has been accompanied by a barrage of reviewers' raspberries on both sides of the Atlantic. "There he is on your colour TV" wrote one American critic "blond bespectacled and peach-faced — the sight of him makes you want to adjust the hue, because John Denver's flesh tone is just a shade too flesh-toned. He's the balladeer for the masses, sweet-voiced, ingenuous and completely devoid of human characteristics. He seems sincere enough, but it's hard to sense any character in anything he says or does."

There he is
on your
colour TV,
blond,
be-spectacled
and peach-faced
- the sight of
him makes you
want to adjust
the hue.
— American
critic

Even worse, he's become a casual term of abuse in the SOUNDS letters column: last week, someone referred to "trite pseudo-significant Denveresque lyrics."

Before reviewing the case for the defence, let's try to put John Denver's music into some sort of context. Because the most surprising aspect of his success is that what he's basically doing is something which evolved 15 years ago, in the white heat of the American folk revival. Here it's necessary to introduce one Milton Okun, a shadowy figure whose part in the career of J. D. Superstar, has generally gone remarked.

Milt has produced every one of Denver's records, from 'Rhymes And Reasons' to the current live set. But his career as an arranger and producer stretches back to the very early Sixties, when he worked with Harry Belafonte, perhaps the prototype of the pop-folk singer.

Okun's next assignment, though, was the clincher as far as the Denver connection is

... or, how does a man like John Denver sell that many albums?
Dave Laing puts the case for and against—the letters page is available for the summing up.



● JOHN DENVER: the tall cowboy, blond and bespectacled and giggling with Mary of PP&M.

concerned. A small-time folk entrepreneur called Albert Grossman decided there was room for a more contemporary group alongside the Kingston Trio, so he set about devising one. The result was Peter, Paul and Mary, and Milt Okun was engaged as musical director, to mould a sound and a repertoire.

The formula set for Peter, Paul and Mary, was followed by other folkies who moved out of the clubs to seek fame and fortune on the campuses and on record. At the time PP & M were subjected to much the same kind of criticism that assails John Denver today. They were too sweet, said the diehard folkies, they watered down folk music for mass consumption.

But, though the group had been consciously created by the artful Grossman and carefully groomed by Okun, they

still brought to pop a lot of the virtues of contemporary folk song. They paved the way for Bob Dylan by taking a creditable version of 'Blowin' In The Wind' into the Top Ten, and they introduced the songs of other new writers to large audiences. Among them was 'Leavin' On A Jet Plane' by John Denver.

By this time, Denver himself was fronting a well-scrubbed folk group called the Chad Mitchell Trio, which he'd joined in 1965. He had

been born Henry John Deutschendorf, the son of a champion Air Force pilot, and hung out in Long Beach, California, trying to break into the folk scene.

His chance came when the Chad Mitchell Trio, yet another of the pop-folk threesome, shed itself of its leader, and auditions were held to find a successor. Out of the 250 hopefuls who applied, Denver was chosen. He spent the next few years plodding round the clubs and campuses

playing within an increasingly outdated format. (Mitchell himself, by the way, had a disastrous career as a solo singer and was recently reported to be facing a heavy prison sentence as a result of drugs charges).

With the demise of the Trio, John Denver picked himself up, dusted himself off and started all over again. "He was out there singing his songs to the people", says his manager, Jerry Weintraub. "John wasn't selling any records and being out there was the only way he could get his message across. It was like a grassroots campaign. We went to the people first, and the people said, 'You're great!' John was selling out in Texas, Iowa, St Louis and Kansas City, before anybody in New York knew who he was."

The years of experience with live audiences have produced Denver's slickly spontaneous stage manner, with his boyish sincerity and exclamations of the 'far out' and 'freaks me out' variety.

FOLK NEWS

■ Steve Ashley has just embarked on a two-month American tour which will take him to 10 cities. His 'Stroll On' album was released last month under Gull Records' link-up with Tamla Motown and already US sales have equalled those in Britain. The tour will include week-long residencies in Miami, Philadelphia (where Steve plays the Main Point with Tom Paxton), Atlanta (with Jimmy Buffett), Boston, New York's Bottom Line, Chicago, Washington DC, Denver, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Steve returns on June 21, when he will be going into the studio to record his next album.

■ Contraband, the Scottish electric folk group have disbanded. They had recently been inactive because of the decision of lead singer Mae McKenna to pursue a solo career. The reasons for the band's split are entirely economic. Despite a promising first album on

Transatlantic, the difficulties involved in finding enough suitable venues to keep a six-piece amplified band on the road proved insurmountable.

■ Mae McKenna's own album is due for release this month by Transatlantic. It will involve a move away from the purely traditional material she performed with Contraband, and will include songs by Elton John, Neil Sedaka, Jimmy Webb and Collin Blunstone.

■ Dates for the High Level Ranters during May include Barnsley Civic Hall 3, North Shields Arts Association 16, Middleton, St George's Training College 20, and Newton Aycliffe Arts Association 21.

■ Loughborough University students have organised a one-day folk festival for this Saturday, May 3. It will include morris dance workshops and a ceilidh in the evening. Artists appearing include Jasper Carrott, Doug

Sherriff and Sliproad, Carters Green, Rabbags and Tubby Reynolds.

■ The date of the Thurso folk festival has been changed this year to avoid a clash with the Cambridge festival. It will take place on July 11, 12 and 13. In addition to the regular contests for song-writing, traditional singing and fiddle playing, the guest artists will include Five Hand Reel, Tam Lin, Saffron, Vin Garbutt (who has a new album out on Trailer), Ray Fisher, Pat Cooksey and poet Brian Patten.

■ The six finalists in the Anglia Television contemporary folk contest have been chosen out of an entry of over 150. They will appear one by one each Monday on the 'About Anglia' show, with the finals taking place in June. The judges will be Julie Felix, Peter Fenn and Ken Woollard, organiser of the Cambridge festival. The first prize is £75, with the possibility of a recording contract.



But, as 'An Evening With John Denver' shows, he is also capable of a far wider range, emotionally and musically, than his big hits like 'Jet Plane' and 'Take Me Home Country Roads' might suggest. There's a Tom Paxton satire about the American funeral racket ('Forest Lawn'), a couple of rousing country/folk pieces including the new US single 'Thank God I'm A Country Boy' and 'Sweet Surrender' perhaps the most durable of his ballads, with its swooping chorus.

To that extent, Denver is the old-style folkie par excellence; the man with a bagful of well-chosen songs drawn from all over the place. But there are dozens of equally worthy singers doing just that who didn't make 14 million dollars last year. Denver's added ingredient is what's sometimes called 'Colorado consciousness'.

Triple screen

On live gigs in the States he likes to use a three screen backdrop onto which is projected film of wildlife of his beloved Rocky Mountain countryside. Thus, while Denver sings about 'The Eagle And The Hawk', the projectionist offers an action replay on the wall behind the band.

It's overkill, but the audiences love it. Denver belongs to that strand of American folk music which emphasises heady romanticism rather than tight-lipped, witty realism. Paxton and Baez, rather than Ochs and Dylan, though some of the stuff on 'Planet Waves' almost outdoes Denver in its marital euphoria.

The Colorado songs are as varied in their quality as they are unvarying in their soaring optimism. They are message music, just as the early songs of the folk revival were. But while those lyrics were about making changes in the world around you, Denver's message is more or less the opposite.

He presents a picture which often comes too close for comfort to a Seventies version of 'Home On The Range' — "where the deer and the antelope play, where never is heard a discouraging word ..." The best of the songs, 'Rocky Mountain High' (incidentally, his first major hit) admits some tension into the idyllic picture of country life, and gains from it.

Country music

At present, the most intriguing aspect of John Denver's work lies in his relationship with country music. Olivia Newton-John headed the country charts with an insipid version of his 'Country Roads', and recently Denver himself has begun to have hits there.

And while he has fully explored the popular folk idiom to the extent that he can go on repeating himself without much trouble should he want to, the growing openness of country to new ideas and singers might provide a fresh stimulus for John Denver's undoubtedly abilities as singer and writer.



● JOHN DENVER: "Spontaneous stage manner."

**SHORT PLAYING
ALBUMS: YOUR
VERDICT**

• We've had enormous response to the piece in Fair Deal two weeks ago on the length of long-playing records.

Many readers make the point that if a minimum playing time/price code was introduced record companies might then simply add on either old or 'duff' material to make up the time. This is a valid point certainly, but surely most performers have enough integrity and at least enough say in the production of their own records to make sure this would not happen.

Apart from a couple of stalwart David Gates fans who would never consider 'using a stopwatch' everyone seems to be in agreement that at the very least, the playing time of each album should be clearly displayed on the cover.

It does seem that many record buyers are becoming wary about the packaging and extravagant promotion lines used in selling records these days. In that category, I think that Mr N. E. Copperstone of Bristol says it all:

"Thanks for putting the spotlight on 'short playing' albums but it's by no means exceptional because having worked in a record shop for nine months, I have adequate proof that this is going on throughout the record business. The worst recent contender is the new Greenslade album 'Time And Tide' which clocks in at 30 minutes 13 seconds and retails for £2.99! Other Greenslade albums have been over 40 minutes long and cheaper too, so what's happening?"

"To emphasise my point, compare the above with the

IT'S UP TO YOU RECORD COMPANIES!



• TODD RUNDGREN: a good deal



• GREENSLADE: not a good deal

new Todd Rundgren album 'Utopia' which now costs £2.99 and has a side two of 30 minutes, 22 seconds duration and a total playing time of 59 minutes 55



Liz Cooper

The SOUNDS service which investigates your problems

(13.03 side 1, 12.04 side 2) and it cost £3.25 from Virgin Records. We got this information from Michael Long of Romford who described it:

"I have an album by three of the world's top guitarists, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page which works out at 13p per minute. Although it is by the above-mentioned guitarists it is no more than simple backing music."

Another reader, Jack Haynes, of Manchester, felt that the music Press could help a lot:

"You asked for readers' comments on short playing records — well I've been a member of the gullible record-buying public for some years, buying records of my favourite groups and not taking any notice or the playing time until my collection grew to such an extent that I became choosy. The price of the LPs helped me in being fussy about the length of time on records and I wouldn't buy an LP if it was under 35 minutes. I speak on behalf of friends of mine who feel as strong as I do on this subject."

"Why do record companies label their LPs 'Super' / 'Super De Luxe' and such like when we know full well there is no difference between standards and Super De Luxe. The Government should wake up and listen to us, the public, and introduce standardisation on records in

lengths of time, price of LPs, quality of records, quality of covers etc. We don't want gimmicks like posters, lyrics, badges, T-shirts or anything else. What we want is good music, group information on covers and quality records that aren't warped, scratched or have inner sleeves sticking to LPs."

As far as the listing of playing times goes, I have suggested this idea to some of our album reviewers but as far as the quality of pressings is concerned it's no so easy. The variance in the quality of equipment used by reviewers would obviously influence their comments on the sound of albums so although some reviewers can and do comment on bad pressings it would be difficult for all reviewers to do this regularly.

Having worked in a record shop, Andrew Dunne, of Dartmouth felt more than qualified to comment.

"I would like to thank you for your investigation on the David Gates LP affair. It is about time some protection was given to the public regarding playing time and the quality of pressings. Again SOUNDS and your Fair Deal column are the first to show concern for the public.

"May I suggest an idea to put SOUNDS even further ahead of the rest when reviewing albums in the future. The reviewer, where possible, could give the playing of the LP* and most important, the quality of the pressing. When I read a bad review of the forthcoming LP by my favourite group, I dismiss it but if the reviewer told me of a bad pressing I would be very interested."

*Judging by the reaction Fair Deal has had, it looks as though it is now up to the record companies to state clearly on the record sleeve the total playing time of an album. To that end Sounds' reviewers will, from next week, quote the total playing time on their album reviews, and Fair Deal will endeavour to get the record companies' views on the subject.

Watch this space ...

No Yes tickets? They're on their way

ON WEDNESDAY, March 19, it was announced in SOUNDS that advance bookings could be made for the Yes concert at Queen's Park Rangers ground, from John Smith Entertainments.

The next day, I sent off a cheque for £5 and a stamped addressed envelope. A check with the bank showed that the cheque was cashed on April 4. So far I have received no tickets.

Unfortunately, I have lost the address of John Smith and so I am unable to get in touch. Please could you help. — Andy Hannaford, Sheffield.

• As we've had dozens of phone calls and letters similar to the above we thought we should put the matter straight for all the people who are worrying.

Although at the outset of the Yes promotion plans were made to deal with ticket applications direct at John Smith Entertainments, it was soon decided that this was not the most efficient way to deal with the operation, and all applications were passed to Harlequin. This is the reason why John Smith Entertainments name was included in the early posters for the concerts but not the later ones.

Having got over that problem another one arose. A setback occurred over the printing of the tickets and in fact they were not ready until last week. However, all tickets should have been sent out by the time this issue of SOUNDS is on sale. If you have not received your tickets by then please contact Fair Deal again.

Please do not send stamped addressed envelopes to Fair Deal, as Liz Cooper is unable to enter into individual correspondence.

For a heavy rock album
Leslie West's
has got a whole lot of style.
*Few rock guitarists have a better pedigree
than Leslie West: Mountain and West, Bruce and Laing.*
Leslie plays heavy rock.
But it's not just a solid wall of noise.
It's fast and funky. Yet you can hear every note of his guitar
and every word of his vocals.
You'll hear what we mean on his first solo album,
"The Great Fatsby."

The album includes songs by The Rolling Stones,
Tim Hardin, Andy Fraser,
Paul Kelly and Paul Rodgers.
Great songwriters' songs can rarely
have been in better hands.

RCA



readers' letters

WRITE TO: SOUNDS LETTERS, SPOTLIGHT HOUSE, 1 BENWELL ROAD, LONDON N7 7AX.

Minimum playing time 'full of flaws'

YOUR 'FAIR Deal' plan to campaign for a minimum playing time on LPs is well-intentional, but unfortunately is full of flaws and could not effectively be put into practice.

To impose such a limit would mean that tracks would be included on a record where normally they would be rejected as sub-standard. Or that a track which is best given a short treatment is spoiled by deliberate elongation to make up the minutes.

Either way, the standard of the finished work *must* suffer.

To say that the playing time of a record should be the criterion for its price is to advocate quantity in quality's place.

And in this way you are declaring that Mike Oldfield's 'Tubular Bells' (nearly 50 mins.) is worth more than the likes of Beefheart's 'Uncon-

ditionally Guaranteed', J. J. Cale's 'Okie', 'Album III' by Loudon Wainwright III and Frank Zappa's 'Overnite Sensation'. The list of excellent LPs which last about half an hour is near-endless.

Granted, it's nice to buy a

good, long record, but this is an added bonus.

You cannot tell an artist how long his songs should be. And if he makes a short record there is nobody forcing anyone to buy them. If nobody does, presumably he will make the personal decision to lengthen them — depending on his ethics of course.

I for one am all for printing track tunes on covers — some kids have album collections and financial situations which mean they must shop around for length as well as enjoyment. But to stipulate a minimum time or to say that a price/length ratio should come in, is rubbish. — A. J. Ashworth, 7 Every Street, Nelson, Lancs.

PERHAPS IF the 'hard listener' B. J. Ewart got hold of some Quo albums and listened

CONGRATULATIONS to Bob Heers for his superb caricature of Joe Cocker in SOUNDS April 19.

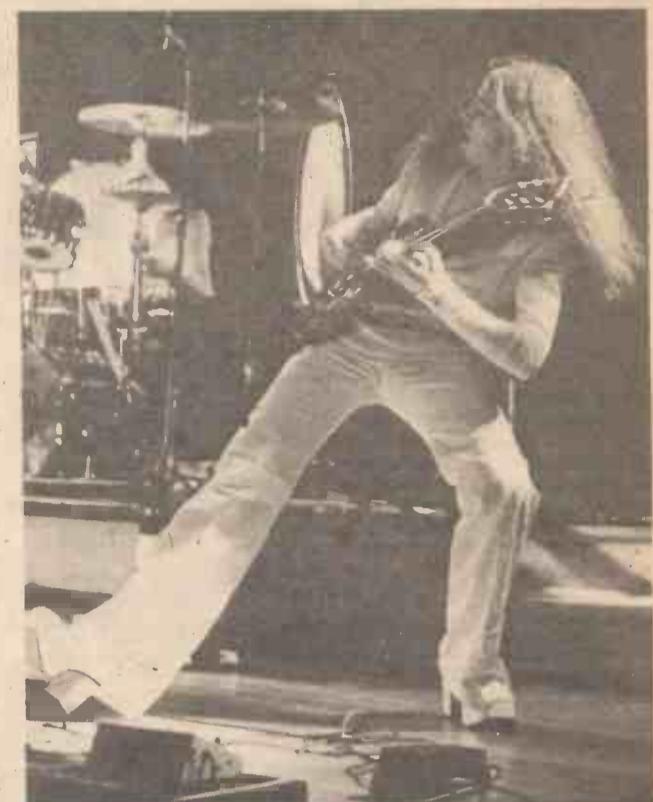
Incidentally, Alvin Lee admired Joe Cocker's voice so much that he named his beautiful little Cocker Spaniel after him. — Alvin's Mum, Nottingham.

Don't know what you're missing

I WOULD like to let people know how much good music they are missing. I thought it might make a pleasant change for your seemingly endless Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple contributors to realise that other good musicians besides them do exist.

Have you critics and contributors ever heard of Todd Rundgren? I really feel sorry for people who haven't had the time or the energy to listen to anything else but Led Zep.

Todd is one of the most brilliant musicians of our time. The trouble is, he hardly gets a mention by anyone. His latest album is a gem called 'Utopia', it is put together so brilliantly that it's hard to imagine he's in 1975 and not 1985. — David Ashcroft, Failsworth, Manchester.



• JOHN GRIMALDI: Argent not fighting a losing battle.

Angered by 'inaccurate Argent review'

NOT ONLY was I angered by Alan Edwards' criticism of last week's Argent show, I was also amazed at the inaccuracy of it. To say that Argent are probably "unrivalled" in the field of gimmickry shows a gross lack of awareness.

On page 35 of last week's SOUNDS we see Alice Cooper surrounded by smoke, half-clad women, spider's webs, skeletons and grizzly bears. Surely these things are more worthy of being classed as unrivalled in rock gimmickry. Argent's innocent trapeze artist, highwire walker and clowns seem paltry by comparison.

Our inscrutable Mr Edwards' also states that Argent were fighting a losing battle during 'Trapeze'. Well it didn't look that way from where I was standing. Maybe he was out at the bar or something while I was being squashed, trampled upon and having my ears perforated by ecstatic crowds around me.

Alan Edwards may well be an expert on these matters, but I found the musicianship most pleasing. There was some lovely playing from all the members, and I didn't find any of the numbers finished up as 'just another riff' as Alan Edwards made out.

I feel sorry for Alan Edwards, he must've been about the only one who derived little, or no enjoyment out of the show. Had he not been so determined to slag

Argent he might've found himself enjoying it for one teeniesie moment.

His final line "Sod off, you're not at all hot, Rod" shows not only his superficiality, but his gross exaggeration (yet again) and his sheer coarseness. I was quite disgusted when I read that to think that this guy is sent to review concerts in all seriousness. Well SOD OFF ALAN EDWARDS, Rod Argent isn't the only one who's not so hot. — Miss L. Mann, St Albans, Hertfordshire.

• I am sorry to hear you didn't like my little piece on Argent. My reaction, although possibly a trifle overdone, was meant to illustrate just how easily a rock audience can be won over by side effects. The music was not bad at all, it's just that I have a sneaking suspicion that the audience's enthusiastic reaction was mainly as a result of an undying love for spectacular visuals.

I did in fact quite enjoy myself, and you are right when you say that most of the songs didn't end up as just another riff. They started as just another riff. I am not superficial but I am coarse — I always thought rock music was basically a rather coarse form of self expression.

Is it just a coincidence that you, along with such notable musicians as Rod Argent and John Grimaldi hail from St Albans? — A. E.



• THREE DEGREES: Sexy but not enough.

Brummy Bolanoids

I WAS absolutely disgusted and amused by J. Howman's letter in SOUNDS April 19.

He claimed that Marc Bolan planned to disappear at his peak, thus creating a rock hero. I cannot understand how anyone could conceive such a thing! Okay, so Bolan & T. Rex are no more, but I can assure J. Howman that if Bolan did a month's residency in Brum, I, and a lot more Brummy Bolanoids would attend each concert without fail.

When 'White Swan' was released, rock music was at a loss, but thanks to T. Rex, 1970, '71, and '72 are years which I personally will recall as Bolan's years. To all the Bolan critics who could not wait to see him die, I suggest that they play 'Electric Warrior'. — Terry Tinsel, Newtown, Birmingham.

Hey! We're not teenyboppers



• PINK FLOYD: David Gilmour.

WOULD YOU lot stop inferring that all adolescents are by definition teenyboppers. I am 15, into Yes, Floyd, Genesis and 10cc, though not necessarily in that order, and many of my friends are also heavy rock fans.

We may be in the minority, and be overrun by fans of 'young, Scottish bands,' but it gets rather irritating to be forgotten.

I have been buying SOUNDS regularly for quite a while and this is my only complaint, so keep up the good work. — Andrea Hampson, Rochdale, Lancs.



• YES: Chris Squire

as hard to them, as it is suggested we listen to Naz albums (which I do anyway), then this so called 'hard listener' would realise that 'same, same, same' when used to describe the tough boogie of Quo, is utter bullshit.

People seem to judge Quo by 'Caroline', and 'Down Down' — what the hell do they expect as singles; maybe the 9 min 50 sec 'Forty Five Hundred Times', or perhaps the superb 8 min 'Roadhouse Blues'?

For God's sake! Will you Quo slingers quit talking through your hats. — Devoted Quo fan, Liverpool

Listen out

FOR ALL you jerks who keep whining 'rock is dead' keep your eyes and ears open for an original and brilliant new band called Krakatoa. They're a hard hitting funk/rock band with a distinctive sound and style all their own. We've only seen them twice, and we're convinced they're gonna be bloody huge. — Dave and Tony, Rainham, Essex.

At last

AT LAST, someone has recognised the talents of one of the most outstanding guitarists in Britain.

I am of course talking about Pete Makowski's review of the new album by Gong's Steve Hillage. — R. Cliffe, Warrington, Cheshire.

MANY THANKS for the articles on Mike Heron's Reputation — a band which deserves much praise.

Their recent British tour only showed that Heron still has the ability to do a really good live show.

His album also shows his endless skill to write really fine songs. — Anne Rowley, Edinburgh.

Amazed

I HAVE just read the article about the new David Gates' album and was equally disturbed to hear it lasted 28 minutes, and retailed at £2.95.

Last week, I borrowed the 'Three Degrees' album and was amazed to find it lasted only 30 minutes (approx.) although the label did have the length of each track printed on. I don't know what the retail price of this album is.

Although the cover is quite acceptable, showing the three ladies wearing rather revealing dresses, I don't see that this compensates in any way for the inadequate duration of the album.

Anyway, I hope you get enough response to enable you to do something about it. — Tim Knowles, Leeds.

RORY DOWN UNDER

WITH REFERENCE to a letter printed in your magazine on March 1 1975, written by a girl who attended the Rory Gallagher concert at the Hordern Pavilion in Sydney. Please find herewith a copy of a letter from our office in Australia who deny her statement that the concert was inadequately promoted. — Ralph Gurnett, Executive Director, The Paul Dainty Organisation Ltd.

"THE PAUL Dainty Corporation in Australia have been touring International acts for over three years.

In February this year we decided to tour Rory Gallagher, despite the fact that his total album sales in Australia were around 2,000 but we realised he had a very strong and devoted following of people who have seen him work overseas.

The concert was held at the Hordern Pavilion in Sydney, with a seating capacity of 5,500. It was promoted with 1,000 posters, T-shirts, stickers and 12 press advertisements, plus a

21 day radio promotion on 2SM, which is the only commercial rock station in Sydney.

The Sydney concert was attended by 3,200 people who gave Gallagher one of the best receptions on the Australian tour. In the course of the tour around 18,000 people attended the eight shows. Considering the album sales prior to the tour, myself and the Gallagher management were very pleased with the outcome and hope that he will tour with us again next year.

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soundsontheroad

*For those of you
who thought that
God didn't have
'off' days, read on*



ERIC CLAPTON

NOW DON'T get me wrong. Eric Clapton is as much God in my books as anybody else's. But I really don't expect to trek the length and breadth of New Zealand to be treated to a display of musical nonchalance that honestly didn't endear him to me — or any of the other 17,999 disciples who came along to hear the sermon.

I suspect Eric, who played a one-off New Zealand date in Auckland before moving on to Australia for a series of concerts, is suffering from an acute case of I've-been-on-the-road - too - long - and - seen - it - all - blues.

Maybe 18,000 people — the biggest crowd in Auckland since the Elton John visit last March — caught him on a bad night.

Certainly, Clapton was caught up in the Dionne Warwick syndrome. Immigration officials had refused to allow his current No 1 partner Patti Harrison into the country on the grounds of an old drugs conviction — so endorsing a decision earlier this month in barring Miss Warwick's drummer Ray Lucas in setting foot on Kiwi soil.

Eric became very petulant and broody over the move and refused point blank to grant me or any other pressman an interview.

On stage, he let his feelings be abundantly clear when during one of his frequent bouts of strolling around, yapping with his tight, new American band, lighting a cigarette or quaffing a drink, he informed us: "It wouldn't hurt my feelings if I was kicked out of your country." Tut, tut.

Well, that didn't exactly set the tone for a night of Slow-hand wizardry. Clapton's super-hero status was acquired in the days when the rock mill brought him to the top of the pile; when he was the fastest guitar in the West with a technical expertise to match.

With two girl singers in his band — Yvonne Elliman and Marcella Levy — the whole tempo has gone out of Clapton's preaching. Sweet and soulful is the new criterion, and it's apt to make Eric a very dull boy.

Gone is the old tension in of his music-making — the laurel leaves have slipped badly, even since the days of Derek and the Dominos.

"Layla", "I Shot the Sheriff", "Badge" and "I'm A Steady Rolling Man" tripped lightly from the strings with well-practised ease. But there was nothing urgent about this Eric Clapton as he spent most of his 80 minutes (the concert was billed as two hours) on walkabouts.

There were moments — albeit pitifully few — when proceedings almost caught alight. A stomping version of "Tell The Truth" and an old favourite from the Layla album "Little Wing" were ones but the atmosphere slumped as quickly as it lifted.

What a supreme pity ...

Fairport Convention

IT'S A small but changing world. I remember about this time four years ago — or was it three? — when Fairport Convention returned to the road in triumph after regrouping from the tragic shock of losing drummer Martin Lamble in an M1 road smash.

The place? Plymouth's illuminated Van Dike Club when happier days decreed bouquets for Sandy Denny and vino all round.

Now, an eon later and 13,000 miles away, Fairport were as strong and vigorous as ever, playing at the huge stone artifact known as the Town Hall, Wellington, New Zealand. And nicely.

Dear old Fairport, lordly exponents of British folk and soft rock, you brought many happy memories flooding back in an evening reserved for nostalgia.

Musically, they were restrained — not nervous but more unprepared to make any errors in complex riffs containing difficult chord and time changes.

Sandy Denny won instant favour and proved she was as capable and lovable as ever — one of her solos "Listen, Listen" was received with thunderous applause. Playing some numbers from their new album "Rising From The Moon", Fairport took the opportunity of showing just how far-reaching their musical knowledge is — from Irish jigs and reels to blues and pure country.

Dave Swarbrick — he has good cause to recall the Plymouth law system at work — fiddled fast and furious as he hopped around the stage in green dungarees, and the use of an echo chamber added a fresh dimension.

Lead man Jerry Donahue also had a posh box of tricks set up between guitar and amp and this was put to subtle effect on a variety of Pink Floyd-style riffs.

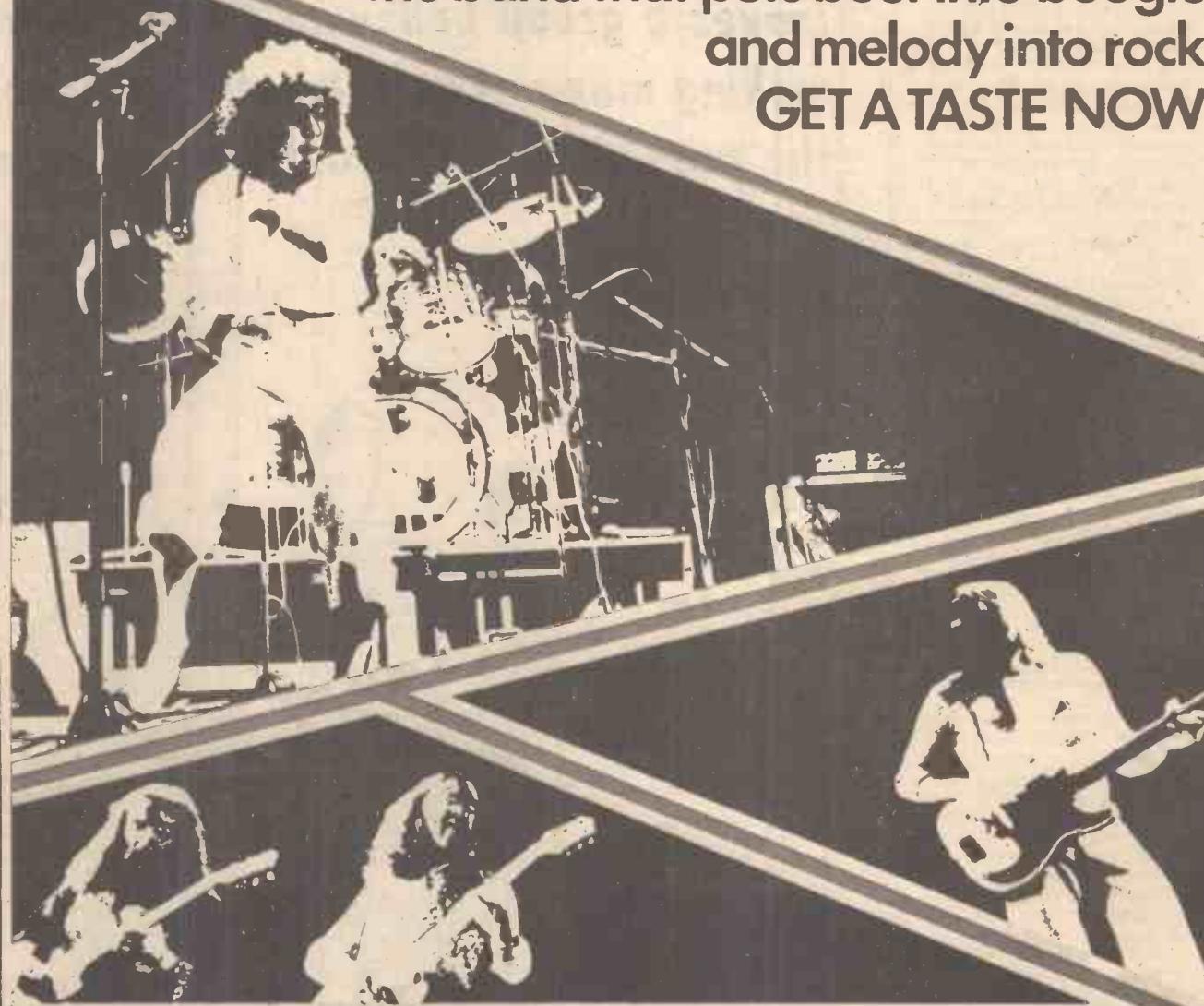
Dave Pegg and Trevor Lucas screwed some quite beautiful harmonies out of an assortment of six and 12-string guitars and new drummer Bruce Rowland appeared relaxed and assured. Without a doubt, one of the most talented and consistently good groups ever to have visited New Zealand's fair ports. David Harris.



CONTINUED PAGE 4

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**Their album
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ALONG WITH the now sadly defunct Faust, Henry Cow have remained the most persistently uncompromising of Virgin's signings. Their music is not easily described, but, over-simplifying somewhat, it's a mixture of intricately arranged (formal?) pieces, such as 'Ruins' off their 'Unrest' album, and free improvisation.

The unusually radical, exploratory nature of their music begs the question concerning their aims in a wider context, which is best answered in their own words from a booklet they produced to compliment the recent Slapp Happy / Henry Cow album, 'Desperate Straights'.

"Our field is not doomed to glorifying the Superman, the Banal and the Great Escape — it is as possible to be pertinent, critical and constructive in this as in any other field — but it is not yet as usual. Our aim is to make it so."

It's a strong, confident manifesto, justifiably condemnatory of much current music and its degrading orientation towards financial profit, etc. The situation in the music industry (and elsewhere) is rightly regarded as amounting to, in Fred Frith's phrase, "a conspiracy of taste". Cow themselves wish to eliminate these prejudicial filters.

At present they're rehearsing in preparation for an upcoming tour of France, and the line-up is as follows: Fred Frith (guitar, violin), Tim Hodgkinson (keyboards, alto sax, clarinet), Chris Cutler (drums), John Greaves (bass, piano), Lindsay Cooper (oboe, bassoon) and Dagmar (voice).

But what of the recent departure of Anthony Moore and Peter Blevin (two-thirds of Slapp Happy, Dagmar being the other member)? A longish pause before Cutler replies:

Problems

"It's primarily a practical business, although in the end it comes back to being a theoretical one. But as a performing group, which is what Henry Cow are and Slapp Happy weren't, working to become this became more and more of a problem the deeper we got into it. 'Desperate Straights' was no problem, our album was no problem; the material was there for both of them already. Slapp Happy were really concerned with permanently being a group."

Were there differences of opinion over Blevin's lyrics? "Yes, at the time," offers Hodgkinson, "the ideological differences gradually emerged. Well, perhaps not so gradually. As far as I was concerned, they mainly concerned Peter as a lyricist."

And Henry Cow as a vehicle for songs? "Definitely", Greaves enthuses, "it's something we really wanted to do."

"I thought of it more from the other way round", Hodgkinson explains. "Songs as more of a vehicle for what



• HENRY COW: persistently uncompromising

Henry Cow was doing. We've been wanting to do songs for a long time. We've always been concerned with communicating more directly, but we've never had people with vocal ability or technique.

They're keen to play the whole thing down, feeling that the extent and effect of such changes are all too often exaggerated in the music press. They view the orthodox conception of "the group" with dismay, insisting that group identities (frequent alterations in personnel, formation of super-groups, et al) are readily exploited. Obviously some degree of stability is needed though, in order to create — paradoxically — an intensified state of mobility, both in musical and ideological expression, within the group structure.

But evidently the merge with Slapp Happy didn't allow them to maintain such a mobility. Hodgkinson sees the band rather as "a continuing project, in which we must have the freedom to change our minds, to develop. People always want you to decide what you want to be, become it, and stick to it."

The 'Straights' album is regarded as having been itself a successful project, with very definite positive qualities. It's

excellent, certainly, but I feel the positive qualities lay more in the musical content, especially the arrangements, than in the lyrics. Dagmar herself remains with Cow, and added some effective wordless vocals to the tail-section of 'Ruins' when they began rehearsing again later.

Back to songs for a moment. Are there going to be any on the new album, 'In Praise of Learning', scheduled for May 25 release? "Yes", Hodgkinson says, "and more optimistic, more explicit than what we've done before. For me it's a beginning as a lyricist; I've got a long way to go, but to an extent I've committed certain views to song, whereas a short while ago, I'd have been very surprised at that".

Cow are equally unconventional in other ways; their recording methods, for instance. Basically, the studio's considered an instrument.

"You can't just get into a studio, play the music and have it come out", says Greaves. "You have to be aware of production techniques." Their side of the Greasy Truckers album and 'Unrest' both have a remarkably open feel to them, with each instrument given ample

room to create its own dynamic. It's not just a matter of cross-spread, but of layered depth and perspective added to the sound quality.

They achieved this by ambient-making, setting up and scattering as many microphones as possible in the studio, so that an almost complete (circumferential) tonal/aural impression is constructed. Here they've been guided by Manor engineer Phil Béguin. Cutler elaborates. "The second side of 'Unrest' could never be performed, and it could never have been written otherwise. It actually required the studio, and on the new album, even more so. We've relied on the DBX noise reduction system, which is even better than the Dolby."

Similarly, their use of tapes. 'Legend' and 'Unrest' both contain slowed, speeded and backward tape sections: "The studio", says Cutler, "enables you to improvise. Instead of music being played and then lost, you can record something to alter it afterwards, to select, to piece together structures from this material and information lying in front of you, and then to work on that, to shape it, to use the tape itself."

"We were doing mixes", Hodgkinson adds, "each track was a tape, instead of an instrument a piece of music. We were then playing back pieces of music". Layers again? "Yes, the layers thing is quite important to us. We're just beginning to get the effects of what we've learnt in recording into live performances."

They hope to arrange a London date to tie in with the album's release; Robert Wyatt will be appearing with them. After that, more of Europe, and, in the Autumn, a festival in Berlin, where, Hodgkinson grins, "they specifically asked for 'Unrest' music."

And Cow in this light? "Very much so", Cutler answers, "the area in which we're working more or less prepares people for thinking in a different way."

Europe

I can't help feeling that all too few musicians stop to consider that there's more to making music than just cutting the new album, promoting it, etc. Music's a communicative medium after all, or should be, and I'm sure Cow's pre-occupations with the broader potential of what they're doing go some long way towards explaining the strength and quality of their material.

They believe in the beneficial possibilities of drastic social change, for a start, and what they're trying to do is nothing if not thoroughly admirable. I doubt that it's an easy path to take either. They're not naive — dogmatic, yes, you have to be sometimes. 'It's only a beginning' is a phrase they preface much of what they say with; true, but it can only get better. — Angus Mackinnon.



• SLAPP HAPPY: Dagmar stays to vocalise

sounds on the road

Trapped on the moon

FROM THEIR West Coast debut in Vancouver, B.C., through the final night at San Francisco's Cow Palace four shows later, Pink Floyd's performances ran the gamut from tentative to inspired. It was the initial leg of their first tour here since 1972 (four more South Western cities and five nights in Los Angeles are scheduled), and it adequately covered their range.

All the shows were sold out well in advance, because, as any Floyd freak will attest to, the band has too long been absent from these Pacific shores. Consequently, crowd enthusiasm was high, particularly in Seattle and San Francisco. Vancouver was essentially non-committal, an attitude eventually reflected in the show itself. It lacked cohesiveness throughout the first set (all new material) and only partially coalesced by the night's end.

Pulsating

'Raving And Drooling', a pounding rocker was the opening offering. In Vancouver, it seemed the wrong choice, but the song had tightened up considerably by San Francisco, sending pulsating waves of energy to wash over the agitated audience. Floyd followed with 'Gotta Be Crazy'. Thematically close to the tone of 'Dark Side Of The Moon', it proved most effective of the material destined for the band's still untitled new album — due in late May.

The set closed with 'Shine On You Crazy Diamond', a tune heavy with references to one time Floydian, Syd Barrett. Long and sectioned — it also contains a brief song within, 'Have A Cigar' — the number was an on and off affair. It ended with the first of Floyd's anticipated special effects — a 30 second tease via a revolving mirror ball. If nothing else, it created an expectant mood that bridged the gap between sets.

The final half was the familiar 'Dark Side Of The Moon' in its entirety, complete with accompanying film rear-projected on a giant screen hung overhead. The Seattle version was the most moving of all, as the band, normally non-communicative onstage, seemed to hook into a common sense of excitement that evening.

Vocalists Venetta Fields and Carlena Williams and saxophonist Dick Parry all added their own stunning moments, and in combination with the smoke and fire belching plane swooping across the hall just prior to 'Money' and the well made film, this segment served to unify any disparate elements remaining in the audience as the show neared its end.

The Floyd encored with 'Echoes' from 'Meddle', employing the usual dry ice smoke and geysers.

While a long-standing cult following and the success of

'Dark Side' obviously had lots to do with the enormity of Floyd's turnout in each city, the band managed to have everyone listen to the new material quite attentively. Even lack of special effects (and, no doubt, many folks are now going to see the band because of the theatre involved) made no noticeable difference.

But the question must be asked. Will the band (has the band) become trapped by Dark Side? And, has the newer material progressed beyond it? Are the Floyd engaged in a desperate search to top themselves instead of moving with their usual freedom into previously uncharted sectors? The space-rock classification has done more to allow the band room to explore than it has to define them. Any careful listener will realise their music is at once both simple and complex. Songs are often built on a two chord progression, but they're surrounded by technological wizardry emanating from the minds of the members themselves. No galactic choreographers hired on here. So despite Pink Floyd's apparently average musicianship, they continue to compare favourably to many of today's more 'advanced' bands.

The answer, I believe, just lies in how you look at them and what you expect. Pink Floyd are still unique, undaunted by hordes of Teutonic mimics, and their show is that rare combination of music, theatre, pretension and communication so important to honest enjoyment. They are still a viable force even though they may be occasionally boring and monotonous. That is Pink Floyd.

Own terms

One would not do well to demand certain things of them. Excitement is kept to a minimum, as compared to, say, Led Zeppelin. But just like Zep, the Floyd must be accepted solely on their own terms. Either you love them or hate them. 'Dark Side', however, created that grey area of confusion where many were introduced to the band via radio and learned to like various single releases without any real knowledge of the group's history and prior ventures.

If they came to see 'Dark Side' in concert, they might not have been particularly receptive to other material. The band knows this and it has caused some worry as to direction. Pink Floyd have never been a group to rely on image making in the Press for fame. Albums and touring are responsible for everything. Now, with this immense onslaught of popularity the band is caught in an awkward position; to cater or not to cater. To evolve or remain forever on the 'Dark Side Of The Moon'?



If the new material is any indication, they are still somewhere in between. Hopefully, their finer instincts will win out in the end. With no album

out as of yet, they are still in a period of transition. How they fare in June on the East Coast could be the indicator everyone is waiting for. But

for now, the band is cruising on a comfortable level, working out bugs in the show and adopting a wait and see attitude. — DAVID RENSON.

Maria—I only had eyes for you

NOBODY HAS any right to be this good. At a hundred paces she can stop your heart before she's hardly opened her mouth.

There is a pink rose in her hair and another in a vase on the table, she has a loose white blouse, blue jeans, and she moves, oh how she moves!

The band, thrown together only two or three weeks before, play with the easy mutual understanding of a family who just grew that way. From the first song, Allen Toussaint's "Brickyard Blues", no-one can take their eyes off her.

She yodels, she soars, she caresses a song, she makes you want to throw away your notebook and just go with it.

Each song is introduced with due deference to its origins: "This is a number by the singing brakeman Jimmy Rogers" and she launches into a slow jazzy version of "Any Old Time"; or again, "This is about achieving the state of Nirvana in the State of Tennessee" introducing Dolly Parton's "My Tennessee Mountain Home".

And her material, it glides between blues, jazz, rock, country and gospel superbly at home in any field. And for once she has a band that can move across the boundaries

with her and come on like past masters of any music.

Two members get spots to themselves, Earl Palmer, old jazz and soul veteran, does things with the drums that hide a superlative technique simply because it's his feel that's so good; Bill Dickinson's bass lines are sheer liquid heaven; trusty Amos Garrett shows once more that he is a great individual stylist among guitar players; and David Wilcox on guitar, mandolin and harmonies is a constant pleasure. But the solo spots go to Ellen Carney on acoustic guitar and vocals who takes a country song on her own with ease; and surprise of the evening is pianist Mike Finnegan whose blues voice knocked you back in your seat.

Finnegan has one great blues voice, words literally cannot do it justice. But always it was Maria, whether it was Tammy Wynette's love-lorn lament "Too Far Gone" or Duke Ellington's svelte "Prelude To A Kiss". She was magnetic.

Just when the atmosphere seemed to be reaching a peak, Maria called Odetta up from the audience and they launched into a bunch of gospel songs with everyone handclapping and harmonising like a revival meeting, and the spirit infused the whole hall.

Roller hits, forcing one American publicist to split for the dressing room in fear for his life.

Each movement of the band brought a roar. Each wiggle a yell. The Osmonds were never like this.

Even their manager gets the star treatment from the kids. Our limo was mobbed outside the hotel and Tam Paton signed autographs like mad. That was the closest they got to the Rollers. So they made do with that. STUART HOGGARD.

weenies in the balcony as seating arrangements were soon abandoned and the balcony became a scene of total chaos.

(Diddy) David Hamilton played MC and announced that the pipes and drums of the Royal Scots Guards would play the Rollers on stage but I wouldn't have believed it had I not stood up, leaned over and seen the uniforms along the front of the stage.

I couldn't hear them, the volume of the screams obliterated even the sound of six bagpipes playing at full pitch. The volume of the screams

varied as the kids thought they got a glimpse of the band.

Then they're on stage to a eardrum shattering... ovation is hardly the word. They ran through the set coming across like an average top band but it wasn't the music (but it was inaudible) it was the whole weight of mass hysteria which flung the kids forward to the lip of the stage for a wave from one of the band. Anyone, it didn't matter.

The balcony shuddered ominously as 3,000 pairs of tiny feet stomped through the

Roller hits, forcing one American publicist to split for the dressing room in fear for his life.

Each movement of the band brought a roar. Each wiggle a yell. The Osmonds were never like this.

Even their manager gets the star treatment from the kids. Our limo was mobbed outside the hotel and Tam Paton signed autographs like mad. That was the closest they got to the Rollers. So they made do with that. STUART HOGGARD.

The "Bump Bump Set", so called because of Robin Morton's recurring punctuation with the bodhran, produced another Shetland oddity in a tune for Aly Bain's glorious fiddle that, the volatile Cathal McConnell said, was in 21/8 time. I didn't count but Bain's arithmetic seemed sound enough.

McConnell's flute never appeared to stop flying and the integration between him and Bain was breathtaking in places. All the way the togetherness of the Boys was something to marvel at. — JOHN ANDERSON.

Ray Charles

EDMONTON'S NEW multi-million pound Pickett's Lock Sports Centre, was the unlikely looking venue for Ray Charles' second and final London appearances recently, and the prospect became almost surreal, as we made our way between gasometers and sewage farms, to be finally greeted by a car park attendant who warned us "you've come on a bad night, they've got that Ray Charles on."

Inside the theatre however it was a different story. The acoustics were good, the two thousand seater was packed, and the Charles orchestra roared into an opening set, that was no-nonsense big band jazz, at its best. Solos came fast and furious, among them the booting clear-cut baritone of Leroy Cooper and Philip Gilbeau's fine trumpet breaks. But it was Ray Charles everyone had come to see, and the band's first half was merely a prelude to the singer's entrance after the interval.

Strutting on like some jerky puppet, the man who was hailed as 'the genius' 15 years ago, went straight into an up-tempo 'Think About You Girl' and the lilting 'Busted'. His voice sounded as good as ever — possibly better than in recent years — and the promise was really fulfilled in a magnificent 'Georgia' that added new dimensions to his classic version of the song. The standard 'You Made Me Love You' and 'Be Mine' followed before he actually paused for breath between numbers, introducing in what sounded like a mock James Stewart drawl, the Raelettes.

The five girls gave us a funky 'Rock Steady' and the powerful 'Shadow Of My Mind', before Ray joined them on a soulful and faster-than-usual version of 'Lonesome Roads'. A slow blues that reminded one just how important Charles has been in the evolution of modern soul styles, led to the inevitable 'I Can't Stop Loving You' that again was a spirited re-working of the original. Another up-tempo, a rather too fast run through of 'What'd I Say', and the concert finished with an instrumental that pointed to Ray Charles' stature as a pianist as well as vocalist.

It was good to see and hear one of the all-time giants of music still on form and with something fresh to say on largely familiar material. — MIKE EVANS.

ROLLERS GO ROLLING ON

FROM THE word go the Bay City Rollers' Glasgow gig was a sellout within days of its announcement. The two extra gigs were inserted into the itinerary to deal with the demand in the Rollers' home territory.

On the Sunday evening all heavies were there casing out this phenomena, US film and TV producer publicists galore and Sid Bernstein, their American manager, the man who broke the Beatles in the States.

All these were surrounded by hundreds of screaming



sounds on the road

WITH ITS high-vaulted ceiling covered with absurdly detailed neo-classical figurines, Oxford Town Hall's hardly the place to create any degree of intimacy; the acoustics are dreadful too.

However the Thompsons proved otherwise. Hedgehog Pie were billed to open, but had been delayed by a blow-out on the motorway, so it was left to the one member who arrived, Martin Jenkins, to play a short set by himself.

Predictably — the house was full — he was nervous, but put a brave face on it all. Accompanying himself on electric mandolin, he worked through a variety of songs, the best being a traditional number, "New York Trader", and a version of Dylan's "Forever Young".

I admit I had doubts about the Thompsons playing relatively large venues. Such misgivings were soon dispelled, with the second song, "Nobody's Wedding", demonstrating amply how strong Thompson's material is.

He draws on a wide number of influences; some songs are strictly traditional in format, some combine a traditional approach with one more contemporary, and others are, well, all sorts. What he'd like to call English Rock, I suppose. But, inevitably, his eclecticism has led him to stamp everything he writes or interprets with a convincing freshness, despite the fact that his most cherished lyrical themes verge on the melancholy.

Apparently, Linda explained, a national paper had reviewed them ambivalently, suggesting that 'the content of their material far outweighs their shambling stage act' — on the contrary, it's precisely their engaging hesitance between songs, etc., that lends the songs greater strength.

They played selections from all three albums, "Henry The Human Fly", "Bright Lights" and "Hokey Pokey", some new songs, and a couple of country things, "The Wild Side Of Life" and the Everly's "Love Hurts". This last was particularly fine. — ANGUS MACKINNON.

Helen Reddy

WARMING UP an audience is never easy, especially when the majority don't need warming up anyway. On Helen Reddy's opening night at Southport on Friday, this thankless task fell to songwriter/singer Peter Allen.

His capably performed act was well received but the audience was obviously waiting for Ms. Reddy who finally appeared, the slight figure in blue trousers, top and scarf, at 10.15.

After the opening number came a rap about how good a year it had been where she set up the plot of her first movie and said how grateful she was for her first hit here, her tenth in the States.

She underlined this fact with the medley of three of those hits — "Ruby Redress", "You'll Be A Star Someday" and the superb "Delta Dawn".

Ms. Reddy is no dummy; she uses the whole stage for most numbers and when she does stand still, uses much body English instead. Both houses were recorded by BBC TV for a future "In Concert" and the close-up cameraman often had problems keeping up with her.

A top hat and tails read mental alarm but they turned out to be legitimate devices for a version of "Showbiz", a devastating put-down of all the pretences associated with the business.

"Raised On Rock" was at full throttle and she took great pride in the fact that "I Am Woman" had been chosen by the UN for International Women's Year.

Helen Reddy sounds on stage as she does on record — the voice is unmistakable but the fine rhythm and



Top: Richard and Linda Thompson. Left: Helen Reddy. Right: Linda Lewis. Below: Ella Fitzgerald.



Richard and Linda beat the acoustics

vocal trio which came with her from the States have much to do with her successful sound.

And so to quote "Angie Baby" and ironically, "I Am Woman", the song that established her and yet is now her follow up single. By 11.10 the curtains were closed, leaving the capacity crowd vainly shouting for more. — GREG MURPHY.

Ella Fitzgerald

IT'S ALL a question of respect. Even before Ella Fitzgerald elegantly walked out onstage at Ronnie Scott's it was obvious every member of the Standing Room Only crowd was filled with admiration and love for the first lady of sophisticated vocals. She commands attention by her very presence, always the sincere professional. Unlike other aging legends, Ella's voice is just as rich and pure as it was 30 years ago. While Sinatra today barely shows signs of yesterday's genius, Ella's voice has only matured, aging like the best of wines and just as potent.

Backed by the tasteful Tommy Flanagan trio, Ella opened with 'Too Close For Comfort' instantly exhibiting large doses of inspired phrasing adding to the depth and emotion of her vocal tone. The appreciative audience eagerly and lovingly digested it all, picking up each vocal nuance. It wasn't merely a case of

paying tribute to a talent that once was, for Ella Fitzgerald is just as powerful as ever. The silent adulation was overwhelming, a stunning tribute to the lady's omnipotent staying power.

Several merry worshippers sang a chorus of Happy Birthday but Ella was quick to point out 'It's not till Friday dear.'

After an emotionally charged version of the Billie Holiday tune 'My Jim' moving everyone to tears, an overzealous fan presented the lady with fresh cut roses and a kiss on the cheek. Always gracious, Ella accepted. The lady has more than a touch of class.

Most of the tunes were Fifties standards. Her one concession to today's sound was an elegant rendition of Stevie Wonder's 'You Are the Sunshine of My Life,' showing her true vocal prowess with each rhythmic beat.

The highlight of the evening naturally enough was that old classic 'The Lady Is A Tramp' and from there on Ella built a momentum which carried everyone out into Frith street running on euphoric energy.

'Ain't Nobody's Business But My Own' was an emotional testimony to her individuality in a business that thrives on trendy mediocrity. From there she exploded with a heavy samba beat on 'Boy From Ipanema' with just a teaser of the classic 'Fly Me To The Moon.' For encores we were treated to a heavenly rendition of 'Wives And

Lovers' as the audience sat begging for more.

Ella Fitzgerald is definitely one of the all time greats. Ever. Seeing her in such vibrant form makes it obvious that today's ladies still have a long way to go. It's all a question of respect. And Ella Fitzgerald deserves all that and more. BARBARA CHARONE.

Pilot back

IT MUST have been a funny week for Pilot starting their first headline tour. Hundreds screaming for them when they flew into Glasgow airport, a technical disaster at Stoke and then a solid set at something like their best in front of a Newcastle City Hall crowd which was the smallest since Maggie Thatcher and her exotic Tory Lady Dancers did a gig there.

Pilot knew about the ticket situation for the tour and to their credit held their heads up high. The happy few kept their part of the deal by chanting for the lads to come on, swaying with their Pilot scarves above their heads through the numbers like a tartan mini-horde, screaming Rollers style and hooraying hockey sticks style on every chord and mobbing the stage-door afterwards.

Pilot began with a bold surprise — the instrumental, "Fifty Five Degrees North, Three Degrees West", from

their new album. It opens with Billy Lyall's synthesiser soaring in a joyful riff over funky guitar, then Ian Bairson takes the lead with some big extended notes mixed with flickering runs.

It seemed easy, casual and yet it caught some of that exhilarating freshness they get into their singles. Still quite a gamble hitting such an audience with music like that, nothing familiar, not a sing along.

It worked but probably for the wrong reasons. The ensuing screams were for the four bodies on stage rather than what they played. Perhaps anticipating a state of shock they went straight into "It's Magic" which I find magically joyful every time I hear it.

It's something to do with the way they go for those high notes that makes me feel high too. Apart from a little too much harshness on the essential cutting edge of their vocals they'd set the standard.

There was the vibrant combination of synthesiser and bass on "You've Heard It All Before", a dazzling break in unison between the synthesiser and Bairson's guitar on the encore, "Don't Speak Loudly."

But best of all they really began to show what the average Scottish band can do on a couple of jams, one a rocker ("Do Me Good") and one funky ("Hold Me"). — PHIL SUTCLIFFE.

Blues, blues and more blues!

BLUES MEN can smile and be happy again now because the first American Blues Legend tour, organised by Big Bear Records, is under way.

The package started off at Barbarella's, Birmingham on Sunday delivering well over three hours of blues, blues and more blues.

The evening opened with Eddie 'Guitar' Burns who first of all played a couple of quiet almost conversational style blues then stepped up the pace, exchanged guitar for harmonica and had the show's first major success with "Do It If You Want To".

Next off was Little Joe Blue on his first visit to this country but hopefully not his last. He proved to be an excellent guitarist whether playing lingering chords or hitting out a succession of quick riffs.

To close the first half Tommy Tucker, the writer of "High-Heeled Sneakers", a song covered by about 150 people, displayed both his vocal talent and his ability on piano.

Part two commenced with a lonesome Jimmie Lee Robinson who strummed and sang in a quiet vein and then proceeded on to Billy Boy Arnold who played some up tempo harmonica and set the mood for the final artist, Homesick James.

James is the sole survivor of previous ABL tours and received a great reception. He's a dapper young man of 65 who obviously seems to get better as he gets older.

An enterprising and authentic blues show that should ensure Blues Legend '75 is as successful as its predecessors. — PHIL HOLT.

Linda Lewis

IN EVERY fairy tale worth its salt there's always a Cinderella figure, the down-trodden victim who eventually arrives at the palace of social acceptance.

This melodramatic parallel does not exactly fit the career of Linda Lewis but the outline is suitable. Coming from yer 'umble East End, the lure of showbiz glamour is obvious and at the moment Linda seems more attracted by cabaret and film than rock.

At Barbarella's last week it was clear that the bouncy little girl with the engaging, squeaky voice has grown up. The songs were laid back and the overall approach far more sophisticated — music for candle-lit tables and soft whispers.

Fair enough, but the majority of the set was boring. Linda's vocal range has widened but it is far too extreme, either high or low without a middle in sight.

Even "Rock-a-Doodle" was slowed down so that it lost a great deal of its original vitality. — PHIL HOLT.

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I'LL PLAY FOR YOU



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