

ZIGZAG

Prey
for the
Gramps

U2

U.K. Subs
RUDE BOY —
RAY GANGE

X

Mikey
Dread

Jah Wobble

Eddie
Cochran

+

Walters talks to
Townsend

green man

COMPILED FROM THE NUMBER OF PLAYS ON THE GREEN MAN JUKEBOX, AYLESBURY, OVER THE MONTH BEFORE BURP!...

1. (7) ROCKERS DELIGHT - MIKEY DREAD
2. (-) DOUBLE BARREL - DAVE & ANSELL COLINS
3. (2) WARDANCE - KILLING JOKE
4. (-) RUDI, A MESSAGE TO YOU - DANDY
5. (13) HARLEM SHUFFLE - BOB & EARL
6. (-) ANARCHY IN THE UK - SEX PISTOLS
7. (5) TRAIN IN VAIN - THE CLASH
8. (4) DE BLACK PETTY BOOSHWAH - LKT
9. (-) DANCE STANCE - DEXY'S MIDNIGHTS
10. (-) COME NURSE - JAH THOMAS
11. (6) MIDNIGHT BLUE EP - WHIRLWIND
12. (-) POLICE & THIEVES - JUNIOR MURVIN
13. (1) HAPPY HOUSE - SIOUXSIE & BANSHEES
14. (-) GARBAGEMAN - THE CRAMPS
15. (-) POLICE STATE - XTRAVERTS
16. (-) MISSING WORDS - SELECTER
17. (-) CHATTY CHATTY - TOOTS & MAYTALS
18. (-) HOT ROD MAN - TEX RABINOWITZ
19. (-) DEATH DISCO - PIL
20. (-) IS THAT ALL THERE IS? - CRISTINA

TIPS FOR THE TOP - CHRISTINE - SIOUXSIE & BANSHEES
& SILICONE CHIP - BASEMENT 5
(CHART BY RAY DUTHIE)

- 1 Dice Man — The Fall
- 2 Jumping Someone Else's Train — The Cure
- 3 Melt Away — Max Romeo
- 4 Whatever You Want — Status Quo
- 5 Got to come back — Delano Stewart
- 6 Israelites — Desmond Dekker
- 7 How Much Longer? — A.T.V.
- 8 Private Plane — Thomas Leer
- 9 Blue Train — John Coltrane
- 10 Birdland — Manhattan Transfer
- 11 Volver, Volver — Flaco Jimenez & Ry Cooder
- 12 Red Shoes — Elvis Costello
- 13 British Tourist — John Dowie
- 14 Tom Hark — Elias & his Zigzag Jive Flutes (!!!)
- 15 God Save The Queen — Sex Pistols
- 16 School of Love — Half Japanese
- 17 Dimples — John Lee Hooker
- 18 Better Not Look Down — B.B. King
- 19 Spectre v. Rector — The Fall
- 20 Kill the Great Raven — Snakefinger — from The Ayatollah Ska-Face, Southport, Merseyside

- 1 Electricity — OMITD (Factory)
- 2 Gangsters — Specials (2-Tone)
- 3 Teenage Kicks — Undertones (Sire)
- 4 Gary Gilmore's eyes — Adverts (Anchor)
- 5 Where's Captain Kirk? — Spizz Energi (R. Trade)
- 6 Can't Stand Losing You — Police (A&M)
- 7 Night Boat to Cairo — Madness (Stiff)
- 8 White Mice — Mo-dettes (R. Trade)
- 9 New wave Love — The Dole (Ultimate)
- 10 Suspect Device — SLF (Rigid Digits)
- 11 Anarchy In The UK — Pistols (EMI)
- 12 Hateful — Clash (CBS)
- 13 The Fire — Television (Elektra)
- 14 Playground — Banshees (Polydor)
- 15 Down In The Tube — The Jam (Polydor)
- 16 Family Entertainment — Undertones (Sire)

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- 17 Mine Mine Mind — Roky Erikson (Sponge)
- 18 Message In A Bottle — Police (A&M)
- 19 Critical List — Fleshtones (Red Star)
- 20 Angels With Dirty Faces — Sham 69 — Sylvie Gibory, Le Mesnil-le-Roi, France

- 1 Queen Bitch — Bowie (RCA)
- 2 Angie Baby — Helen Reddy
- 3 Home — Lene Lovich (Stiff)
- 4 Did Ya No Wrong — Pistols (Virgin)
- 5 Jah Give Us Life — Wailing Souls (Greensleeves)
- 6 Rock 'N' Roll — Gary Glitter (Bell)
- 7 Double Barrel — Dave & Ansell Collins
- 8 I Heard It Grapevine — The Slits (Island)
- 9 Ballad of Lucy Jordan — Marianne Faithfull (Island)
- 10 Into The Valley — Skids (Virgin)
- 11 Commando — Ramones (Sire)
- 12 Oh Bandage Up Yours — X-Ray Spex (Virgin)
- 13 Big Muff — Joh Martyn
- 14 King Tubby Meets The Rockers Uptown — A Pablo
- 15 Look Back In Anger — Bowie (RCA)
- 16 Shake Your Body — The Jacksons
- 17 Guns of Navarone — Skatalites (Island)
- 18 Public Image — PiL (Virgin)
- 19 Voices — Siouxsie & The Banshees (Polydor)
- 20 Last Airship To Bali — OHM — Dolores, London

- 1 At The Edge — Stiff Little Fingers (Chrysalis)
- 2 We Love You — P. Furs (CBS)
- 3 Teenage Lightning — Doll By Doll

- (Automatic)
- 4 Before They Make Me Run — Keith Richard (RSR)
- 5 Bad Man — Steel Pulse (Island)
- 6 Gangsters — Specials (2-Tone)
- 7 Bad Baby — PiL (Virgin)
- 8 California Uber Alles — Dead Kennedys
- 9 Away From The Numbers — Jam (Polydor)
- 10 Midnight Hour — Otis Redding (Atlantic)
- 11 Death Or Glory — Clash (CBS)
- 12 Jah War — Ruts (Virgin)
- 13 Danger Signs — Penetration (Virgin)
- 14 Phone-in Show — Members (Virgin)
- 15 True Confessions — Undertones (Sire)
- 16 We Are So Fragile — Tubeway Army (BB)
- 17 Jail Guitar — Clash (CBS)
- 18 Take Me Back To Babylon — Lurkers (BB)
- 19 Someone Who Cares — Only Ones (CBS)
- 20 Down In The Tube — Jam (Polydor) — Lonely Punk, Reading

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Pete Townshend
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Suicide UK Subs
Doll & Doll Richard Strange



CHRISSIE WAVES 'HI' TO ZIGZAGGERS FROM THE STATES

PI: THERESA KEENEAKES



DEAR Zigzag — Hi! Me and my mate are trying to get together a band but we've got a problem (haven't we all!). We don't seem to be able to bump into the right peoples. We are looking for musicians (to be), who are into the same music, ideas, attitude, as us, so the easiest thing to say is that any Zigzaggers would be okay! We are looking for ambitious, preferably (but not necessarily) inexperienced, male or female, around 14-16 drummers and lead guitarists who want to join us. Must be prepared for a lot of hard work and good fun. Also if you can sing it'll help cos none of us can. Contact:— Shaz, 203 Leyland Road, Penwortham, Preston, Lancs. I also wouldn't mind some penpals. Thanks.

I almost forgot to mention that I'm a mad Clash fan and I bet I'm the only one who's pissed off they've released "Rude Boy" as an X. I wonder if they realise that the majority of their fans are probably not yet 18. I'm not. Not to worry, I'll get in to see it if it kills me (probably will). I suppose CBS will decide to make a bit of extra cash out of them by releasing a soundtrack album. Help! What is the world coming to? Long live paranoia! (Who's she?)

DEAR Zigzag — Thinking I may get some support from you and fellow nutters who read this fanzine, I'd like to tell you about the way I was treated by bouncers at Pollyannas nightclub in Birmingham recently.

I'm not the type to go to a club and mellow into the background, so myself and friend decided to make fools of ourselves. IE. enjoy, have a laugh, by dancing quicker than most, who were having their Friday night grope on the dancefloor to the slow records (poor deprived souls). Next some great big, ugly creature of a bouncer came up and told us to leave the dance floor. I objected and said I would if given a reason. To this I was told, "because I said so". I didn't say what I felt to that reply, but said "just give me a reason". He wouldn't. Next thing I knew I was being dragged off the dance floor by three bouncers, not even allowed to get my money or bag. I struggled and ended up being dragged along the floor and thrown out.

I tried to get back in for my things and they THREW me back out. I got the police and, of course, they were nice as pie. As I couldn't say who had caused superficial injuries, they advised me not

to take the case to court, but I insisted they came with me to the club to prove to the bouncers that the police *could* be brought in and if I insisted I could press charges. They had a few words in the bouncer's ear and I left with his name and address, in case I changed my mind and decided to press charges. But...

Anyway, I'm glad I'm female for once or I'd probably of had a bloody nose and no co-operation from the police at all. I know there's plenty being treated like I was and worse. Is there anything we can do? — Thank you. Kaeren Mellin, Northfield, Birmingham.

(Thanks for writing, Kaeren. It seems the best way to combat the bow-tie bullies is to get as many of their pathetic doings in the open as possible. Often the Bill are no better (re: Eric's invasion where innocent punters were roughed up). So what else can ya do? Organisations like CURB, set up by the brother of murdered-by-bouncers Henry Bowles, seems one of the best ways — a concerted, well-organised effort.

SEND LETTERS TO: ZIGBAG, 69A STANBRIDGE ROAD, LEIGHTON BUZZARD, BEDS.

DEAR *Zigzag* — Congratulations on issue 100, let's hope you make it to 200 and even further.

Why not do a feature on the Soul Boys? I saw them when they supported the Stranglers (who were also fab) at Oxford. They are a new band who deserve a break and the press seem to ignore them.

Also can we see bands like the Cockney Rejects, Crass and Adam and the Ants, who the press either slag off or ignore.

Thanks for letting me have a say and keep up the good work. — Yours, Neil Fettes, Wantage, Oxon.

DEAR *Zigzag* — I like the Only Ones, Blondie, The Cure, but I also like Stuff, Al Green, Chuck Mangione and Leon Russell. Widen out *Zigzag* or you'll get very boring. Surely your tastes must be wider. How about an article on Bobby Bland? — Michael Whitaker, Newcastle.

(How about it? Who's gonna write it for a start? We have enough keeping up with all the new bands and keeping tabs on the more well-known ones. Yeah my tastes are wider — I like Howlin' Wolf, Gene Vincent, Magma, Andy Stewart (Blow Blow My Kilt Awa') and Sun Ra. Same-old-you-can't-please-em-all routine again... (we try))

DEAR *Zigzag* — How come in an age of chronic nostalgia it is still impossible to buy most of the Yardbirds' and The Who's best output? Seems a bit silly to a well-adjusted cranial disaster like myself. Maybe John Peel should do a special and advertise it before, then we could tape all the goodies and it would be cheaper.

Also may I suggest interviews with Paul Jones of the Blues Band and Mike Wilhelm of the Groovies — haven't had a history lesson recently. And how about doing the Fabulous Thunderbirds?

It has also occurred to me that the Cramps should stay in Britain, and come to Glasgow again. They have twice and missed them both times. — Maurice the Loony that isn't a loony of the Lenzie UFO-Spotters Club, Scotland.

P.S. I have a numb leg, and does anybody know if the Holy Modal Rounders still exist?

P.P.S. Happy Centenary. (I am not a Royal Spokesperson).

DEAR Kris — I have just picked up a copy of *Zigzag* for the first time and for once I really enjoyed reading a music mag. The feature on Spizz was great and I also like the Top 20s too.

Please could you print a feature on the Human League as they are the best band around — all my mates agree, their music is just great, 'specially "Empire State Human". — Thanks a lot, Liz, Westcliffe Estate, Scunthorpe.

OY, STOKE KIDS!

INNOVATIONAL musical movements outside the beeeeg smoke are about as rare as invitations for Dennis Brown to join the Monday Club. Of course they have taken place and it's fair to say that when the proles in the provinces manage to get up off their butts and strut their stuff, they manage a neat job of it. The Beatles and the consequent Liverpool scene of the sixties, in God's wisdom 10CC getting the cream at Straw-

berry and more recently Cooper Clark and the Fall from the city of illegal payments to schoolboys.

So it is good to report that a musicians collective has got off the ground in Stoke-on-Trent, a city more noted for its pots and ceramic bogs.

The Stoke Musicians Collective is run by Grainger Reece and Pat Regan (two subversive pinkos if ever there was) and the idea is for local bands and musicians to have living space to practice and play gigs. They run a directory whereby bands can advertise for members or gigs or alternatively, young hopefuls can sign on and offer their services to existing bands or ones that are in the process of gittin' it together.

It's based at Burslem Leisure Centre and although the collective receives no spangaroos from the Local Authority, it does get help with publicity for gigs and there are two rehearsal rooms available for just over 50p an hour.

Gigs are held once a fortnight, on a Friday and all ages 'n' types of music are welcome, though there's a strong leaning towards PiL and the Residents. Even if you dunno how to play that second hand guitar ya got from the local hock shop it doesn't matter, "seasoned" band members are there to offer help and advice.

Anyone in the North Midlands area who fancies the collective are asked to contact Grainger Reece, Burslem Arts Centre, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent (tel. SOT 813363), a mod if ever there was, he even wrote to me with a Parker pen.

Les Scott

Taking the fret out of the guitar!

MICHAEL CHAPMAN

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IN Dublin's fair city . . . I encountered a startling new band called U2.

These days it seems new groups still ain't concerned with what there is to be learned. They think they're there already, copying all the others trotting out ska, serious-synth-in-syndrum exercises, Old Punk, or that horrible faceless "snappy" pop-rock. Vinylised within minutes, added anonymously to the pile.

As we know, in all those fields there's the gooduns — the ground-breakers and creators. But . . . it's them outside who'll shape the 80s. The ones you can't class and who don't want you to anyway.

The latter is the only category you could possibly bung U2 in. They take passionate pains to remain unboxable and free. No wedding rings for any cult fashion, but unmarried mothers of a fresh, uplifting but provocative sound, which is coming on in leaps 'n' bounds judging by the quality gap between "Out of Control", the '79 single on Irish CBS, and "Eleven O'Clock Tick-Tock", the imminent new release on Island.

"Out of Control", despite being a strong, highly memorable slice of melodic energy, pales next to the newie. Produced by Martin Hannett (Joy Div, Magazine, JCC, etc), it propels U2 into bigger beat via a WHACKING drum sound, and greater variety of textures, both guitar-wise and vocally — these being the respective departments of The Edge (his nickname) and Bono (his nickname). Edge's guitar is spacey, chiming and flies off at tangents. Bono's voice springs effortlessly from passionate *espresso* to a rivetingly haunting choir-boy passage.

During my day's excursion to Dublin to meet and rabbit with U2 I was lucky enough to catch a short bit of rehearsing. The U2s practice in a tiny converted cottage just outside the city. Being Ireland, there was an easily-reachable pub

and I was so shocked to find them open at 4.30 pm I couldn't move for at least an hour. Funnily enough, U2 don't drink that much at all, so after a spot of interview, we adjourned to the "Gingerbread House." The mike wasn't working properly, but The Edge, bassman Adam Clayton and drummer Larry Mullen casually started on some backings. In truth I was stunned. So was Neil, let out of the infamous Island press office to accompany me on the trip. We stood there, feet going a bit but spines and stomachs a-tingle. It was magic — taut, soaring and melody-packed. Then Bono kicked the malfunctioning mike into semi-action — until now it'd been placed in front of a ticking metronome! They launched into a stunning version of "Eleven O'Clock". That clinched it. Up until the practice my only exposure to U2 had been a couple listens to a cassette of the new single, which did impress. I immediately warmed to Bono, who I met a few hours before the others. I liked his honest, open enthusiasm, which also touches the other three, though in a different, generally more restrained fashion. I was all set to thoroughly enjoy the music but that one last song in the rehearsal knocked me for six and the tongue out of me noggin for at least five minutes. I can't describe the electricity in the air at the gingerbread house, suffice to say if it's 50 per cent diluted by the London venues they were due to play near the end of May it still might be a good idea to wear rubber boots.

The four U2s have been together in a group for near on five years. They formed at school in Dublin, where they were *encouraged* to pick up instruments and write songs.

"The teachers were different", says The Edge, nursing a pint of the local brew. "They were very open. It was very much an experiment."

Adam, possibly the U2 most attracted to the traditional excesses of rock 'n' roll (though not that excessively), joins in (throughout the conversation Larry doesn't come near the tape recorder — he's busy interrogating Neil about the workings of Island Records. This was noticeable during the whole trip — the band ravenously lapped up every fact and figure to do with the business, eager to learn all the angles, for future reference. Shrewd and sharp under the surface innocence, they won't be had). "We used to get a lot of free classes, particularly if you weren't doing much work at school, and we used to rehearse during those."

Enter Bono, who speaks with firm, quiet belief in what he's up to and often catapults himself into the air and goes "WHOOOSH!!!" when he can't find words to describe the feeling he gets onstage.

"We were part of that idea that if you had something to offer then you'd work to get it over musically, not the other way round. The Edge picked up guitar — I played guitar at that stage as well. Adam was pretending he could play bass, using words like "gig", "action" and "fret" — he couldn't play at all. Larry was good on drums. It was a combination of four individuals who, apart from the band, were totally different as personalities."

As I said, this was around 5 years back, now all the group are 19, 'cept 20-year-old Adam, the OAP of U2. I wondered when they realised that it could be a serious full-time thing here. Bono leaps in:

"We felt sometimes when we were onstage that we had a spark because people were reacting, even when we only knew four chords. We thought that, even though we were technically lacking at that stage, we had a spark."

U2 hold an Irish calm about their development, rather than the high-

DUBLIN IS A MUST



speed-London feet-first instant hit mentality. It's always been that way.

Bono, who loves a good metaphor to make a point, describes U2's climb up the ladder as slow and steady. Making sure their feet are firmly on each rung before doing the next. When they realised there was a spark which could be fanned into a full-scale blaze of invention, a good business footing was Rung One. They got it in the form of Paul McGuinness, a Dublin businessman they trust without reservation — a good bloke of the Nils Stevenson school of personal as opposed to financial managerial involvement.

Next up, songs seasoned and honed sufficiently by a string of Irish gigs which kicked off the contagiously-growing U2 army, a vinyl outing in the form of "Out of Control". That was just for Ireland. They knew to get the music over to the masses they wanted to reach, a Major Deal would be vital. Some English gigs were played and interest was immediate. Punters were well-wooded and companies drooled. Island, without doubt the hottest label in the land (Suicide, Basement 5, Distractions, LKJ, Marianne, more more more — see any competition?) got 'em. The deal gives U2 plenty artistic freedom and lots of room to develop at their own rate.

Bono: "A lot of bands just stumble up the stairs and tumble back down again. We're building. We believe in what we do. We just want to give, that's all we can do."

The regular money from Island is a luxury for the lads. They've scraped by on what's left over from gig money and the odd job for the last two years.

Bono: "It sounds like a sad story. It wasn't, it gave us endurance, I think. We survived on the belief that what we had was important."

Alright, U2 are a hot new band (indeed), but there's loads of Hot New

Bands, aren't there? One every month to be built up by rave press, a buzz stoked up by gigs, the first vinyl unleashed to acclaim and buyers and then it ain't a Hot New Band, but a cabaret act expected to do three tours a year, play the ones they know and do periodic records to fulfil the contract. Some split or lose it, but there's always two more hydra-heads to replace those that go. U2 are special, they know it and Bono gets a chance to use more imagery after I've spouted roughly the above.

"What can happen is that you turn just a circle instead of the spiral. We look at a spiral so that we can get higher. I look at it like a tower with people all around. If you're at the bottom only the ones nearest can hear. You've got to climb higher for more people to hear, for those further back. It's just as important to reach those people, they might have heard less good music, have nine to five jobs. I think success and building it up is important, you must always climb. It can be a routine to climb, but I see it like a spiral getting higher, or else it can be a circle where you're staying at the bottom, just touring / album-making, touring / album-making . . ."

Words spill out of Bono like a beer-tap. It's a clean, honest torrent, no pretensions no matter how it reads. D'ya get his drift? I think it's fair.

So what do you want out of this, Bono?

"We're looking for creative freedom. If we do make money we're looking for the fact that we can buy instruments and develop, nothing else. I couldn't care less about money. We've done without it for so long that at this stage, it doesn't seem important. We're not thinking about getting married or bringing up kids, that isn't a relevant part of it."

If U2 have to have a message, a point

they wanna jab in your lapel, it's this:

The Edge: "We are four individuals. That's the only thing we play to — our own individuality. No headings, we're not a punk band, ska or whatever. Just U2."

"You've got to stand up to that total bombardment by The Media. The Music Press is part of it as well — they should have more sense."

Bono: "I think people are realising now the danger of hiding behind a mask. The new single is about the Electric Ballroom (where they supported Talking Heads to many a rampant poser). I saw these faces running away. It's like the eleventh hour, closing time. The image that they're going home, they don't want to but they don't know where to go."

You think a lot of young people are a bit lost then, Bono?

"Correct. See there's nothing wrong with looking at yourself in the mirror but you must say, 'that's me' and express that."

Yeah but it's a greater feeling of security if you're a little cog in a big gang.

Adam: "Yeah, it's like being in the cubs or supporting Liverpool, a tribal thing."

Bono: "Things are getting very right wing, because people are obviously looking away from themselves to other people. Whoever takes the authority can actually lead these people."

Do you think living in Dublin, away from the staunch tribalism of the gullibles we've got over here, made you feel this strong about people hanging on to their own identities?

Bono: "Exactly. It's given us a detachment. We have been exposed to certain of the same things — where I come from it's a high tower block area and there are gangs; I've seen the dangers, the animal instinct where they take up with a gang and go round . . . yeah,

but not like in London, being totally bombarded with it. All the time there's really forceful images in London and we've been allowed to grow, to a certain extent, so that we are actually aware of it now, whereas we feel that a lot of people in London aren't aware of it, but they're caught up in it, between the legs."

Another kind of category — the Irish Rock Explosion, spearheaded by the Undertones, SLF, the Rats and others like Protex, the Virgin Prunes and Rudi. It's obvious that U2 don't see that as any problem.

The Edge: "It's been a long time since anything came out of Ireland. The last band were the Rats and they don't really count anyway."

"Stiff Little Fingers, the Undertones

Adam: "They're both Belfast — Dublin hasn't had much. A lot of bands coming out of that time had the same feel and the same sound. I don't think that's a problem for us because we don't really have the same sound, or the same ideas as anybody that's come out of Ireland in, say, the last three years."

Would you move to London if it was necessary?

Bono: "They asked us but we said we didn't want to. We don't want to be a part of it. My whole entry into London, going down the tube — all the ads were underpants; neon signs, prostitution, masturbation, people hurrying to get places, traffic going so fast . . . I said, 'no, I don't feel a part of it already, that's not for us'."

Adam: "It's not what we want now. It may well be when we may have to. When we do, obviously our influences will change. We'll probably write about our reactions to London."

Ah yes, tell us about the songs, how a U2 masterwork is born.

The Edge: "It's different whenever we write. Sometimes at a practice you'll just come up with something that immediately strikes you as being good and develop it into a song, or sometimes Bono or Adam or myself will come

up with ideas. It's very healthy."

Bono: "The overall thing we're dealing with at the moment is: we're 19, under adult status. There's a lot of people who've been around the business for years. They've lost that original inspiration from the adolescent years, the confusion. Out of that confusion comes a semblance of what you're trying to find yourself — it can be a very explosive time. So a lot of the songs deal with that sort of struggle. I use the image of twilight, because it's neither dark nor day. It's grey, things are hard to see. There's much more confusion when you're at this age. You're fighting against it all the time."

One of U2's outstanding numbers is "Stories For Boys", which attempts to depict the reactions of a young kid reading a magazine. And you know how in 'Jackie' and all those the kids are always perfect picture dreamboats . . .

Bono: "I can remember as a child looking in the mirror and thinking, 'I don't look like that.' It's wrong, it's forced on you all the time, by television. Strength, power — nobody's like that, but you're bombarded with all these images. The effect is total disillusionment with yourself, so you put on a mask and hide from yourself, from your own soul, what you've got to offer. It's a reaction away from the individual, and we stand for individualism."

Other songs include "Boy / Girl", "Shadows And Tall Trees" (taken from Chapter 4 of the gang-pollution classic, "Lord of the Flies"), "Twilight", "Touch", "Another Time, Another Place" . . . they even tailor-wrote a Hit Single when a geezer came up and asked Bono to write a song about him. One day the bloke who calls himself Pete the Chop may find his moniker immortalised in the Top

10. I asked Bono to do one for the Green Man jukebox and he said yes.

After the interview and rehearsal we drove back into Dublin and went on a potted tour of the night-life. There was Bailey, a semi-flash pub with Studio 54-style delusions of grandeur as to who's allowed in (made it eventually and it wasn't worth it), the Captain America restaurant, bars and finally a gig in a hall, which was actually a local radio jock's birthday bash.

I was severely impressed by local lads the Myster Men, who whacked out a vibrant set of catchy originals — shades of Clash 'n' Ramones, specially when they topped the set with a mauled "Rockaway Beach" — first and only time they'd played it. The Johnny Ramone lookalike axeman has a clipped, propellant style of his own. I'm sure they'll emerge — Bono recently produced them a demo tape, which showed when I got home that it wasn't just the beer.

The celebrations wound up with a bizarre jam session between U2 minus The Edge (who'd gone off somewhere) and the MM. "Johnny B. Goode" was okay, the charging U2 number was great, Bono whipping out his energy valves, all flailing arms and legs.

Then the Mod-elles, a motley assortment of Mods, Skins and whoever else was about, who launched into a hilarious "Too Much Pressure". Shortly after I said goodbye to the U2s and stumbled off to further watering grounds, Adam still in tow. It was a great day, just a nice change from all the bullshit that goes down here that you suddenly realise you've got used to. I know I've got U2 on the brain, in riffs, tunes and personalities. Their time is waiting in the wings.

Kris Needs

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SAFARI

JOHN DOE, Exene and guitarist Billy Zoom reside in a tiny duplex just half a block from the most notorious male hustler strip in L.A. Down the street you find a labyrinth of decaying pawnshops, appliance stores, straight and gay porn houses / massage parlors, and one very sleazy leather bar called the Spike. Go north along Genesee and you'll soon hit Sunset where painted girls tap their stiletto heels up and down outside of hamburger stands and liquor stores. They keep one eye peeled for roving vice cops while flashing at passing motorists. What you've got here is decay and degradation, a high premium put on self-gratification.

But while the big record companies crumble from the weight of the very same pursuit of cheap kicks and the long green, results from bad judgements thought to be "safe" judgements, banal product strewn haphazardly in record stores that even the banal masses find too boring to satiate their MOR tastes,

much," Exene continues, "Except for health regeneration after bad hangovers. No one's into the California glamour thing. These people are heavy drinkers and smokers."

JOHN: "I think the silent movie era here in the 20's is the closest thing to what we're experiencing now."

Exene was born Christine Cervenka in Chicago, Illinois 23 years ago.

EXENE: "My father was 40 and my mother 22 when I was born. My father was a carpenter so we had a nice house but not much money. I used to cry all the time because my mother had to work as a cocktail waitress."

"When I came to California I took the Christ off the front of my name and changed it to Exene like in Xmas. I got a ride out here to L.A. and carried everything I owned on my lap for 3000 miles. I had had this 1950 Cadillac and sold it the same day I left for \$300. I owed \$200 in debts so I paid it all off, arrived here

MANY ARE TIPPING X AS THE FIRST MAJOR FORCE TO EMERGE FROM THE LA PUNK SCENE. CHRIS DESTARDINS FINKS SO...

inflated prices to keep those profit margins up, Up, UP... something else has been happening. And it's been happening, too, since early 1977.

In the last three months, the club scene here has mushroomed again, but this time threefold. Along with the Germs, the Alleycats, and the Bags, X is one of the few original bands to have survived the last two and a half years and continued to grow in popularity. Writing about X, I could go on about power, charisma, dynamics, seeing-is-believing and you'd get the general idea. John Doe plays his bass, rocking back from one foot to the other, sliding, shaking and unleashing voice lines of eloquent brutality. Exene, sometimes in Depression dresses and little boys' shoes, sometimes black cords and cowboy boots, serves as the other half of the focus. She stares above the heads of the audience, delivering everything with the tightly controlled voice of contempt, her sneers and casual asides making her the dangerous counterpoint to the appellation of emotions John Doe keeps upsetting. Billy Zoom plays guitar with such fluidity and ease, the most complex progressions seem as effortless as the smile on his face. Drummer Don Bonebrake is the never-tiring engine that spurs this machine farther and farther into previously unexplored territory. They refuse to be self-indulgent rock caricatures; instead they force each concert into an exciting rave-up. They make no idle threat about returning rock 'n' roll to its basic heart-pumping rhythm and no-bullshit style.

In June, 1978, Dangerhouse Records released the single "Adult Books" / "We're Desperate". Another song, "Los Angeles", appears on the Dangerhouse compilation album, "YES L.A." released in the spring of this year. They haven't received royalties for either record.

"Los Angeles," says Exene, "is the most misunderstood place in the world. I think everyone's always surprised when they come here for the first time and find it's very different from what they thought."

John adds, "We're in the 1% of people in California, the people who play 'punk rock' in L.A. But unlike everyone else here, that 1% is an urban community. Outsiders only have the media-view of what it's like."

"Yeah, we don't go to the beach very

with \$60 in my pocket, and got a job at this poetry place called Beyond Baroque. That's where I met John. I was mean to him at first because I didn't like him. I liked these Viet-Nam vets who were mean to me and would always come in my bedroom and point guns at me. I knew this one vet who thought I was Jesus Christ and he would worship me. Then I started to like John. He said I could be in this band he was starting."

JOHN: "Billy and I had already been together for three months. We met each other through ads in the Re-Cycler (local classified ads paper)."

Born in Savannah, Illinois, Billy Zoom started playing guitar at the tender age of 6. He also plays the clarinet, the saxophone, and the piano. He comes from a family of musicians (his father played with Django Reinhardt during the forties) so you might say it's in the blood.

BILLY: "I came here in '69. I'd travelled all around the Mid-West playing R 'n B with these black bands and I got to the point where I wanted to go further. I went to both Boston and New York. I really hated New York. It's too much, not a place for humans to live. You have to do all these neurotic things to yourself to survive there. So I came to L.A."

"Until I joined X, I played with a lot of different bands. I played with Etta James for a while and used to gig some with Bobby Day who did 'Rockin' Robin'. I played with Gene Vincent the last few months of his career. Everyone was trying to rip him off, including his manager. The other guys in his band were some stupid hippies who didn't even know who he was. They'd say how they were embarrassed to play these dumb songs every night, how they hated to play three chords instead of really complex stuff like Led Zeppelin. Getting to work with Gene was such a trip. I didn't go to England with him on that last tour because I didn't think it was going to work. And it didn't. Gene got over there, and they wouldn't let him play because he owed back alimony to a wife. He didn't have any money and just barely made it back. He arrived at his house in Simi Valley to find his old lady had split with the kids and sold all the furniture. The house was completely empty. He went on a drinking binge, ruptured an ulcer and he died... all in a space of about two months after he returned. I didn't really have a prefer-

ence or focus until I worked with Gene. After the second gig I realised that was what I wanted. For the first time in years I was having fun when I was playing and I decided that I wanted to play rock 'n roll, no matter what, whether it made money or not. I started playing with a lot of people on Rollin' Rock Records. I played bass on Ray Campi's first record. I played with Mac Curtis. I played with the Rockabilly Rebels for about two months but had a personality conflict with Ray Campi. That's when I formed the Billy Zoom Band. We did some recordings of our own for Rollin' Rock which are just being rereleased now in England on Radar. At the time though, no one was interested in rockabilly here. The press were writing good things about us but we were losing money everytime we played a gig. So I broke up the band and went to work for an electronics firm. It was about that time I saw the Ramones. That made me decide to play the kind of music we play now in X. It's not strict rockabilly but it's rock 'n roll."

John Doe as born in Decatur, Illinois. His family moved through the Midwestern and Southern U.S. before finally settling in Baltimore, Maryland.

JOHN: "I remember getting in trouble when I was in fourth grade because I came from small towns. Everybody took



PHOTOGRAPH BY KANAL ORGAN

advantage of me because I was a country bumpkin and trusted people. When I was growing up in high school . . . the Social Security building was right across the street. As soon as kids graduated they'd just walk across to Social Security and get a job for the rest of their lives. My parents forced me to go to college but I couldn't stand it. There were a lot of would-be doctors and lawyers there who were terrified of getting bad marks in freshman English. I used to walk around Washington D.C. every night when I wasn't practising in a band and get as drunk as I could. I couldn't stand the idea that there were all these other kids the same age as me at home studying. Finally I dropped out and moved to downtown Baltimore. I played in bars on "the Block" (a solid three blocks of strip joints) and Fells Point where John Waters (Pink Flamingoes) and his friends lived. I knew them those last two years before I moved to L.A."

Don Bonebrake, who's lived all his life in North Hollywood, is the most secretive about his background. "My father died when I was fourteen and my mother died when I was seventeen. My mother had a life insurance policy for a \$1,000, and that's how I bought my first drum kit. John, Exene and Billy saw me in the Eyes when I was with them and asked me to audition. We got along. I liked their music so I joined."

"Friends warehouse pain | attack their own kind | a thousand kids bury their parents | there's laughing outside | we're locked out of the public eye" ('UNHEARD MUSIC' copyright John Doe and Exene)

I'm crushed up against the rim of the Whisky stage, waiting. Levi and the Rockats have just finished their set and X is about to do another. The air is stale, oppressive, but not still. It's a cliché, but it feels as if there's a storm brewing. The audience is bristling with electricity, and you can smell, almost taste the charged density of the atmosphere. The regular house lights slowly dim and a ghostly blue illumination takes its place. There's something vaguely threatening, a tension building below the surface of everyone's mood. It's been over a year since X last played the Whisky due to an ambiguously restrictive booking policy that, in effect, has banned all hard-core punk bands from performance there, no matter how popular or good a draw they are. It's taken three borderline acts requesting X to finally break the ice.

All of a sudden, John Doe and Billy Zoom descend to the stage, plugging in their instruments, tuning, making last minute adjustments with their amps. An announcement is made from the sound booth and then there's Exene poised in the centre. A spot blinks on, washing everything into a brilliant white fire. A roar goes up from the crowd; the lightning has struck, now here comes the

thunder.

All at once, there's sweat and spit gushing out from the audience turning their bobbing heads into one big blur. Glasses ricochet off stage to the floor, off tables across the room and back again. Exene sways frantically back and forth, wild-eyed, groping in front of her, clutching great handfuls of thin air while belting out the most awesome barrage of vocal ammunition you've ever heard. Billy grins back at drummer Don who's now a dead ringer for some Indian derwish gone berserk. John knocks his legs together, a mass of stumbling, convulsive, yet somehow directed pandemonium. Exene sinks to her knees and sings "We're Desperate" with the crowd . . . " . . . last night everything broke we're desperate, get used to it | we're desperate get used to it's kiss or kill."

I'm at the Troubadour where X is headlining a show with bonecrushing Fear and the incredible U.X.A. It's been sold out for the last hour, and you had to have come up with a phenomenally convincing press story along with credentials to inch by Doug Weston.

Newcomers and fans alike are packed shoulder to shoulder, and some people are literally hanging from the rafters. X is intermittently visible beyond the bodies bobbing up before the stage under the harsh lighting. Every once in a while a table or chair shoots into the air then disappears again. Mixed drinks percolate,

X-CONT...

working their way to the floor. Midway through "Our Love Passed out on the Couch" John Dee loses his footing and falls into the audience. Darby Crash, Lorna and Pat of the Germs play catch, propping him up while he fingers his bass through the rest of the song in horizontal position.

Back at the Whisky, the response as X leaves the stage is closer to a riot than mere applause. It goes on for almost fifteen minutes before there's any hint of return. But now here they are again. Their one cover, the Doors' "Soul Kitchen" erupts out into the crowd, splitting skulls. Ex-Door Ray Manzarek, who coincidentally just happens to be in attendance, stands calmly listening to this radically different interpretation. Suddenly he smiles, clapping his hands and jumping up and down. The thrashing of the audience at my back is unbearable and visions of severed spines dance before my eyes. Then all at once, it's over. X is gone and that's that. Kids are walking away from the stage with bruised thighs, bloody shins and smiles on their faces.

You know who's been telling lies and we know, too. Here in the valiant U.S. of A., across the board, and abroad in the U.K. A certain female correspondent for a certain English music paper. Her article on L.A. punk was met with shock and surprise by L.A. personages mentioned, not because she had expressed unfavourable opinions, but because she had misquoted people and told lies. Her motivation is hard to pin down, but the facts of the matter, what she put into print, is not.

Exene responds: "What is the fascination with Brits playing American music? Why is X "accused" of imitating Siouxsie and the Banshees? I first heard Siouxsie in November of '78 and I thought they were good. But X has been together since October of '76. Our inspiration comes from U.S. rockabilly Hank Williams, Chuck Berry, Etta James, Jim Morrison, and various '60s music. As far as the way I look, when I was 14 I started wearing red lipstick, the 49 cent no-name brand marked "red". The only thing that's helped to shape my appearance is the silent movies of the early 1900s. The only Brit that has inspired me is Charlie Chaplin. My sister, Mary Kathryn, and I started wearing old clothes in about 1968; our fashion is whatever we can create out of throwaways.

"I feel bad when we play and I don't have anything exceptional to wear. But fashion is secondary. I don't have to outdress the audience. I only want to sing these songs about desperation, about naive assholes, about the corporations ruling America, about sex and love on a personal level, and about money and those who suffer under it . . . Face it, anything worth writing and singing crosses all lines, all class and racial barriers. It can unite Mexican kids from East L.A. barrios with UCLA students. Our music can sink into thick bouncers at the Whisky. We incite the audience. They understand what we're trying to do.

"We're not a contrived rock band stupidly trying to get famous. We're famous with each other. I don't care about anything else."

ED'S NOTE:
X'S DEBUT LP IS OUT IN
THE STATES ON SLASH RECORDS.
RAY MANZAREK PRODUCED, IT'S
CALLED 'LOS ANGELES' AND
WILL BE AVAILABLE VIA FAULTY
PRODUCTS (YIPPEE!)

MIKEY DREAD

"IS A pity them nuh know Mikey Dread on the go,
If you don' really know come let me teach you so . . ."

The first Mikey Dread selection I heard was "Dread At The Controls"; then, in sweet ignorance to the radio show taking the Kingston ghetto by storm, I found myself halted by the concise intensity of the title, more so since the backing track was Lee Perry's profound and plaintive "Dreadlocks In The Moonlight" (a rhythm which, at the time was finding frequent use by the producer).

"I am the natty dread" snarled the "Natty" Dread, "and you are the baldhead", not at all unsympathetic to Scratch primordial sentiment. The elocution was amusing, a

high pitch child-like kind of whine, which in itself seemed to mock the lyric's gravity; the delivery was smart and shrewd — that of a rapper with more experience than Campbell's obscure disposition did suggest. Suitably impressed, I tuned into Wailing Soul and Ranking Trevor, the sounds of Shepherds Bush, and filed away the pedestrian name of Michael Campbell for any necessary future reference. This was in early '78. Within a matter of days, weeks or months, I remember not which, the name was hardly off my tongue, out of my ears or removed from my turntable, in either pristine or pseudonymous "Mikey Dread" form.

Mikey Dread. Michael Campbell. The dread at the controls. International controller throughout the world.



MIKEY AND MYSTERY DANCERS PICTURED ON THE CLASH TOUR BY BRENDA S.



Mikey Dread toast items. "Love the Dread" initiated the bedazzling Dread at the Controls label stamp; its rhythm dated from 1977 when it had powered a Patterson session with the prolific Dillinger. Campbell's own toast was a screechy medley of Mother Goose's favourite roots ditties, plus praises to King Tubby the ruler. The Dub was quite literally "Internal Energy" — slow viscous bass line, manic guitar and keyboard, bouncing toms and background noises from the secret places of King Tubby's console — all echoed to the limit of course.

Campbell prolonged his Natty Dread preoccupation with the witty "Barber Saloon" . . . "I was walking down the road one afternoon when I sight a natty dread in a barber saloon, cut off the dread and 'im a turn baldhead, what a rude lickle dread like dat!"

The first DATC production of an artist other than Dread involved Rod Taylor and

"Dread at the Controls" was Mikey Dread's third vinyl shot, a deliberate tie-in with his late night JBC reggae show of the same name. Unknown to I, that show had already established him cult infamy as a pioneering champion of roots from the yard — the man who play music to mash your soul. His introduction to the recording studio came from Carlton Patterson, for whose Black and White label he anonymously engineered Ray I's trendsetting "Weatherman Skank". Ray did give Campbell a namecheck as "the greatest operator in the world, Michael Campbell, the dread at the controls," and the tune, which spawned numerous versions, principally from Trinity and Far I, went on to become a rarified collector's item. In retrospect, the mix was prophetic — not quite as extravagant as future glories, but a sure sign of things to come nonetheless.

Patterson and Campbell worked well together and followed up with a brace of

"Behold Him"; the flip, "Parrot Jungle" (a Revolutionary version) quickly engaged the dub patrons, both first and second pressings selling out in no time and less. Fortunately for those who missed out, the excellent Sufferers Heights catalogue includes a 12in incarnation of "Behold Him" and "Parrot Jungle" alongside a later Taylor waxing, "His Imperial Majesty" (DATC), one more critical rocker.

Perhaps the definitive Mikey Dread dub single was "Robbers Roost", issued on his own 40 Leg house. Eddie Fitzroy held down the top side in a "Countryman" style (Fitzroy was a JBC spar of Campbell's) but he might as well have mimed into the mike because the dub is a killer — an unbridled spiel of mechanical anarchy, interjected by those radio show jingles which, before they became so familiar, enhanced what was a considerable element of surprise. Michael Campbell and Pam Hickling were written down as jointly responsible for production. Also on 40 Leg was the simple but innovative "Step by Step" skank, laid over an impeccable Carlton Patterson rhythm track.

Around the fall of '78, the "Home Guard" pre leapt out of the Black Ark. A stern invective against the brutal Jamaican military force who would break up a peaceable game of three card for no reason at all man, the tune, with another delayed release, "Schoolgirls" (Black Art), was a leftover from primary Upsetter / Campbell reasonings; in any case, Scratch still had his mental faculties in a fully operational state and had not yet embarked on a part time career as herbal adviser to the Nipponese authorities. Other than the toast and his rearguard rhymes of ism, schism and rhythm, the record was memorable for the version's introduct. "Let's have one thousand five hundred version of that rhythm — That's what you think Mac."

Given Errol T.'s JBC connection, inevitable was a tripartite conference between himself, Campbell and Gibbs (Campbell insists on a preference for other's sitting in on his own vocal expeditions). The conclusion was "Friend and Money", in tribute to Dennis Brown's almighty "Money In My Pocket". Uncontested, it stands as the most feted Mikey Dread toast of our time.

'I was walking down the road when I met a little girl, I tek her for me bride but she nu have no pride, this a girl wan' fe wear lipstick, this a girl think she look so slick,' all of which detracted little from the totally unrelated observation, *"When you 'ave a money seh you 'ave 'ole 'eap a friend, but when the money done them nu know you again, me seh you stranded like Daniel in the lion's den."*

By a wild caprice of reggae marketing (the kind exclusive to the music), friend Michael was peaking at the exact same time as Tapper Zukie and Ras Allah were mashing the clubs from Fatman slate, in antipodean testimony of an ongoing concord between Daniel and them lion. No matter, I lived at ease with both interpretations of scripture until the "Money" rhythm, due to over exposure, began to gnaw at my nerve ends, and the "Friends" cut was consigned to a dusty cupboard.

In these 18 odd sides is enshrined what in my opinion was the rise and rise of Mikey Dread; they outweigh in import any subsequent Dread consignment to 45rpm plastic, and mark the period when he was at the populist top of the crop, where he stayed until he flew too near the sun and melted his wings some.

If he had, after "Friend and Money", retired to "the hills" with a suitcase full of

finest Lambs Bread, never to be heard from again, I guarantee that we would all have scurried round Daddy Kool and Dub Vendor in search of anything that bore his name, and displayed our DATC originals in glass trophy cabinets as matchless family heirlooms.

Instead, as I say, he blew it and we sneered — at least temporarily on both counts.

Before a couple of months in the silent zone, Dread collaborated with Hopeton Lindo and Prince Jammy on the fine "Black History" / "Recollection Rock" retake of the "H.I.M." bass and drum lines; and he cut the acceptable "Proper Education" for Witty Reid's Steppers shopfront. "Rootsman Revival" on High Note, despite enconiums on the B.E. review page, was a hideous screed of spineless cliches, redeemed only by Marcia Griffith's soulful "I've got no alternative, in Babylon!"

And then, the miasma; a good half dozen ignominious DATC pres, starring Sugar Minott, Wally Bucker, Edi Fitzroy, Latty Guzang, the accomplished Pablo imitator, Jah "Shaolin Temple" Grundy and Dread himself. Sugar Minott retrod the "Step by Step" theme on "Bright and Beautiful" and sold like Sky Juice in the tropics; inspired, if that is the word, by a chart-topping Christian hymn of similar title, it was one of Minott's poorer efforts yet was probably the best of this ya bunch.

It was around this time, may I tell you that the various identities of Michael "Big Dread — Grove Music" Campbell became permanently preceeded, like Sound Dimension rock, by the adjective "real" — as in the *real* Dread at the Controls, the *real* Michael Campbell and so forth. I invite you to draw your own conclusions.

Partial restitution was made by the Dread's exciting "African Anthem" dub-wize novelty last year and the attendant visit to these isles. That album surpassed his DATC toast set, "Evolutionary Rockers" (issued here by Trojan as, wait for it, "Dread at the Controls") and the simultaneous Jamaican radio show style release. Never wholly out of love, Campbell became darling of the rock weeklies and The Clash, for whom he warmed up audiences in Britain and the US. While I write Dread platters ploughing the greatest turnover are the stirring "African Tribesman" with Dennis Brown soundalike, Earl Sixteen, and the melodic kitsch of "Rocker's Delight" (*"this a rocker's delight, this a rapper's delight, this a sound to make you feel alright"*), Scientist in deh on both occasions.

Campbell spoke to Dave Rodigan last year about plans to produce a whole congerie of Kingston talent, including Hugh Mundell and TeTrack. It should be interesting to see how these guys fare with Dread, outside the tutelage of the international rocker supreme. It should be even more interesting to see which musical direction Campbell pursues next. Whether he reinstates himself as ranking dread, general, or superstar is dependent strictly upon his doubtless ingenuity.

Mark Kamba

STOP PRESS: Fed up 'cos you can't get your hands on the pre's mentioned here 'cos they soon went out of stock or you live in the sticks? Fret not, 'cos Dread At The Controls has just acquired a British outlet. U.K. distribution will be handled by Kosmo Vinyl, of Dury, Stiff and Clash connection, who hit it off with Mikey on the recent Clash dates (Mikey's currently producing tracks for the next Clash album in Channel One Studio, Jamaica, as he did "Bankrobber", which must-be-stupid C.B.S. won't release).

Kosmo's aim is to break down the barriers



PIX BY PENNIE SMITH

of pre-eliteness by making DATC Records available to kids anywhere at a cheaper price (90p). Couldn't have picked a better one for the initial release: It's "Rockers Delight", which'll be familiar to same as the irresistible set — closer on Mikey's Clash support spots, which would often see the appearance onstage of the mystery skankers. Not content with just one slice of stepping Dread dynamite, the other side is "African Map", previously hard-to-get, classic Mickey, who never stops.

You need this record — to get a copy send 90p. plus 30p. (Postage and Packing). To:— Dread at the Controls, Basement, 32 Alexander Street, London W.2.

**CLASH
CITY
ROCKERS
DELIGHT**

Which brings us to the latest Suicide vinyl, about which Kris has waxed eloquent last issue. Of course, we shouldn't forget (although a lot of people did forget, which explains why it wasn't a massive hit) the ace twelve inch single of 'Dream, Baby, Dream'/'Radiation' which came out a few months ago here on Ze/Island. These two tracks are not on the new LP, so that's that excuse out of the window. . . What we have is an album called 'Suicide' by Alan Vega and Martin Rev, on Ze.

And that title? More about it after some stuff about the music. Without going into another track by track following the Needs blueprint of last ish, there's a few things to add. The extra instrumentation which Marty mentions several times is instantly noticeable on 'Diamonds, Fur Coat, Champagne' and it's interesting to note that his sleeve credit has changed from 'instrument' on the Red Star album to 'electronics' here. Second track, 'Mr. Ray (to Howard T.)' is apparently dedicated to Howard Thompson, a most pleasant fellow (and friend of Zigzag). It was Howard who was behind licensing the Red Star catalogue (catalogue? Well, one album each by Suicide and the Real Kids) to Bronze while he worked there briefly.

Now he's at CBS, and he gets the credit/blame for the Psychedelic Furs. I asked Marty about 'Mr. Ray'. . . Did it bear any relation to 'Sister Ray'? "It was a take off, actually — we put it together at one point when we needed an encore when we were playing in England. That was one of those rare gigs where we needed a few encores, actually, where the audience really wanted us to come back two or three times. By the third time, I just started putting things together, because we wanted to fool around with some new things anyway. We had something we'd done for a while — I used to play off the riff to 'Sister Morphine' and Al used to sing the lyrics to 'Sister Ray', and we figured we'd try it out. It came off great, because it was one of those momentary things when everything's OK and you just enjoy throwing things around. What happened was we had a situation in England at one point where we came across some of the bobbies out there

"A certain night when we were touring with the Clash, we ran into a Mr. Ray who was a real character, we had a slight confrontation out there in Black-



burn, the story of which is told in the song to an extent. So that's the sort of way it came together — the music is a little different to 'Sister Ray', it's actually closer to 'Sister Morphine' and the words are a little closer to 'Sister Ray'."

Reverting to the LP, 'Sweetheart' is about the most relaxed track I've ever heard by Suicide, and it's great, while 'Fast Money Music' seems to me to bear a distinct resemblance to 'Rocket USA', the very first Suicide track released (on the first 'Max's Kansas City' album, and later on the Red Star LP). The second side starts with 'Harlem', already the recipient of a rave review by 'Melody Maker's' man in New York, Roy Trakin, who described the song as the successor

to 'Frankie Teardrop'. "We've been doing that one for some time. We started doing it right after the first album, right after 'Frankie', and I guess it could be considered the successor — it's a little more maybe disturbing, as I guess maybe Frankie was to certain people, and it's a little heavier in certain senses. It can be construed as making a social kind of statement, if nothing else, and it is a heavier piece. It's not necessarily that easy in the way 'Frankie' was."

'Be Bop Kid' is about a rocker of some sort, although I'm not sure who. It's probably not about Presley, because that's what 'Las Vega Man' is about. 'Yeah, we've been doing that for a while too. Al felt when he was working on the lyrics that there was something he wanted to give over to Elvis in his writing, and we sort of did a nice thing on it. We sort of created a kind of landscape, sand, kind of terrain, which is sort of very ethereal, almost not there at all in a way, the kind of feeling that you sometimes get when you're out west" (Plymouth? Bristol?) "and you get around the coast or around Vegas, or flying over those things — kind of prairie, empty kind of terrain kind of thing — a eulogy to Elvis, in a way."

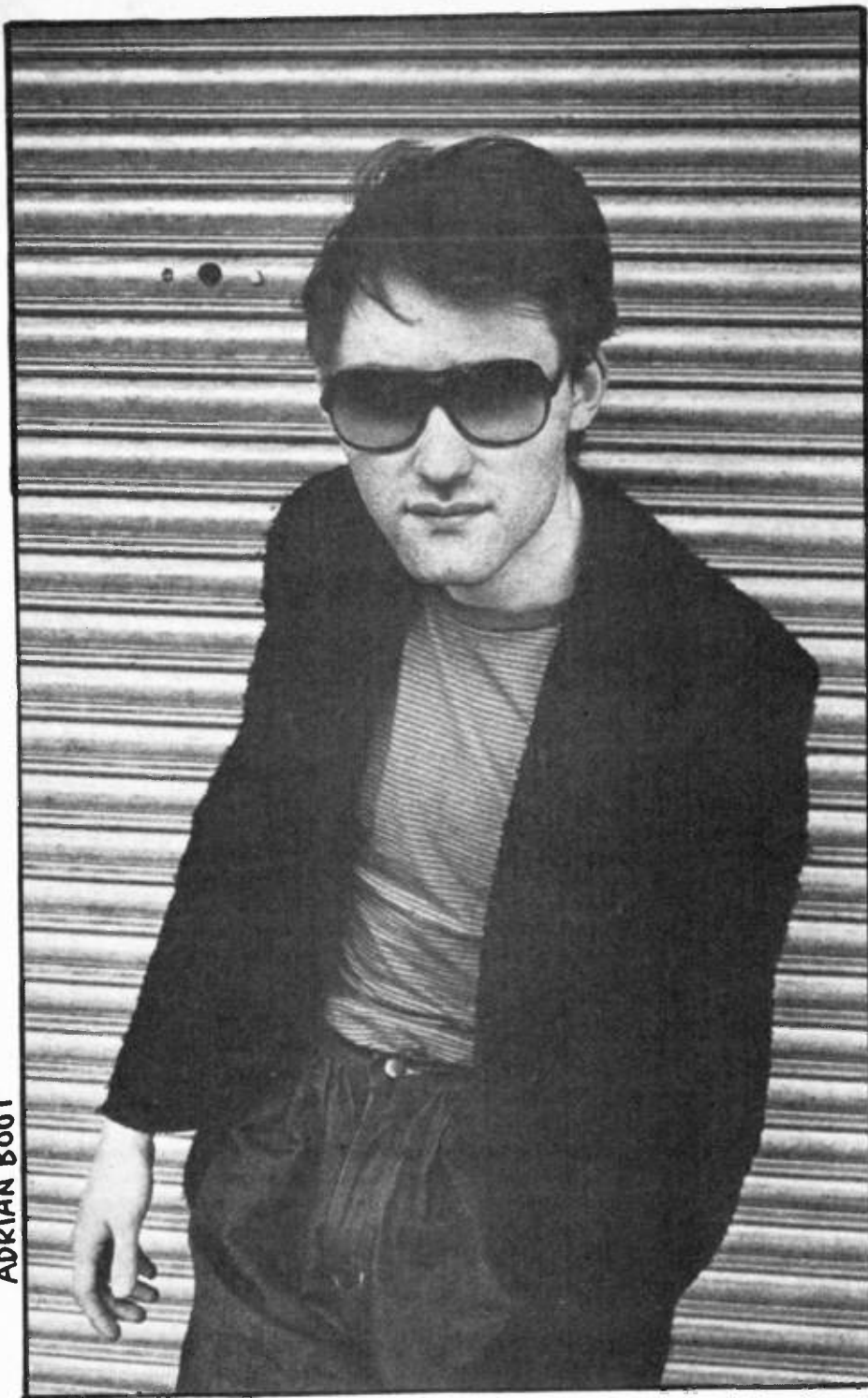
Finally, there's 'Dance'. "I think that's my favourite track. It's in a slightly different place than the entire rest of the album. I like it the best because it's the most adventurous". And it certainly is different — wait till you hear it. . .

I gather that you're considering the possibility of releasing your records under the name of Martin Rev and Alan Vega instead of Suicide. Obviously, that might make it a little easier for radio programming — is that why you're thinking of making the change?

"As it turned out, our first record didn't have a title, it was just called 'Suicide', and I guess the logical thing for a second album is to give it a title or just call it 'Suicide II', or something like that, which has been done before. I feel maybe we'll just get into the thing where we'll call every album 'Suicide', and in that way, we can keep the 'Suicide' as a title in the way that the last one was. It's also a group thing — we can also have our names on there, which was suggested, just as a way of breaking up the routine of the similarity if we start putting out two or three or four records, and each one is 'Suicide', without that much variation — which I wouldn't mind actually. This second one's just a way of breaking it up, plus we're starting to do more things under our own names, together and separately." (Note: Marty has just released an album under his own name, which the aforementioned Roy Trakin reviewed in the aforementioned 'MM'. I haven't got one yet, but it's bound to be worth an ear).

Just before we ground to a halt, I enquired about Suicide's future British tour plans. Marty was eager to return to do battle with the bottle chuckers, and it seems that this particular dynamic duo may be here any day now for some dates. I noted that most sane people fervently hoped that all bottles made for throwing would be left at home this time. Marty was unimpressed: "Yeah. Well, they can bring a few".





JAH WOBBLE, PiL bassist and Man From Whitechapel, has just sneaked out one of the year-so-far's most enjoyable albums. "The Legend Lives On . . . Jah Wobble in 'Betrayal'" has no pretensions, it's just Wob (nearly), let loose and revelling in a studio, with various instruments and technology at his disposal and loads of ideas buzzing about in his noggin.

"Betrayal" is the single, complete with the Disco love lyrics he's so fond of. Guitar is courtesy engineer Mark Lusardi, drums from PiL's Martin Atkins — the rhythm has shades of Can's irresistible "One More Night" while Wob's voice has a relaxed passion of its own. The twin "Dan MacArthur" variations for voice and melodica appear, as does a quirky, poisonous rendition of Fats Domino's "Blueberry Hill". There's a dubbed and dangerous version of PiL's "Graveyard" called "Not Another" (one of the added synth-blurps nearly knocked me off me chair when it leapt out of the speaker!). Snow White, a discovery of PiL's Jeanette, makes her singing debut on a couple of tracks, showing a fine, airy

vocal texture on the galloping workout "Today Is The First Day Of The Rest Of My Life". Meanwhile "Pineapple" boasts a vicious, thrashing shuffle-beat (Martin). Lovers of rhythm and sound can do far worse than let Wobble's album dominate their summers, right?

I met Wobble the other week to talk about the album, PiL's recently-completed American tour, and related topics. He was jet-lagged and knackered but that didn't damp the earnest enthusiasm which spilled out as he repeatedly declared his love for music and recording. The great thing is, Wobble don't take himself too seriously. He admits he wouldn't get the chance to do a solo album if it weren't for PiL (drummer Martin Atkins has got one in the pipeline too, incidentally). He's often painted as East End Jack the Lad rough kid, but Wob definitely seems to be a happier, more settled geezer than he was two years back. And that's thanks to the music, his naturally growing creativity having an outlet. Listen to him without preconceptions and petty

restrictions and pleasure is there by the pintfull.

It was a great way to while away a couple of lunchtime hours, sitting in a sun-battered garden of the Earl of Lonsdale, across the road from Virgin. Beer in hand, Wobble on the rabbit. He's a sound man (and I don't mean a roadie).

ZZ: What did you think of the States?

JW: I'm still recovering from it really. I didn't realise how it had hit me until I got back. It's a fast, brash and impersonal country and when you're touring around there it's twice as fast, brash and impersonal. You get back to little old Britain and it's really strange. I'm still reeling from it.

There's something that's dangerous as well, because you pick up on things which are more of an illusionary effect — what you're making of the situation there, rather than maybe what's really going on. It's kind of like a little game you play of how weird it is. It's been a very interesting effect for me, but that's it, full stop. No more for at least a year or two. Maybe just the odd occasional gigs, maybe a sprint around Britain or something. It just confirmed everything I think about touring. Ten proper dates we set up and a little club date in New York. It was just getting to be too much when we stopped, because we'd never done it before and it was blindingly intense, and you're gonna lose that intensity. I'm glad we stopped because once we got to LA I was getting really pissed off with it.

ZZ: Of course the cynics over here said, "PiL touring, eh?" and all that rubbish.

JW: Yeah . . . it's true because we said we wouldn't. But, believe it or not, we suddenly got this really big audience there. "People told me that and I said, "bollocks, we haven't". So we hit Boston first of all and we did have a very big audience and to do it properly it just seemed we had to do a few dates, and maybe the same should apply here soon, just do a few. Then I'd just like to stop for ages. I don't wanna do the same songs again and again, it just gets really pointless.

ZZ: That's good you've got a big following there. I mean their idea of current English music seems to be nothing deeper than Squeeze or someone.

JW: It's funny you should say that — they see the English New Wave spearhead as Squeeze. The Police are heavy to them. They haven't even got as far as some of the Second Division punk bands. Some places they're just so incredibly out of touch it's disgusting. I met a couple of people, like this 30-year-old geezer from Cincinnati who was completely crazy — he's got a dossier on PiL. It's a weird country, you've got some real mad people and some absolute dullards.

There was one incident that happened: me and Martin did a radio station, where you choose what records there you want to play. But there was none we liked, so we went down to the classical section and put on Mozart and "Rudolph The Red-nosed Reindeer". We thought we'd just have a bit of fun. The Warner Brothers reps there was having babies!

ZZ: Did you soak up any music at all?

JW: Yeah. The Disco stations are on all the time. The Disco records that are out there are out here as well, so the actual music wasn't shocking me as such, because I'm pretty well up on

BASS CULTURE

THE LEGEND LIVES ON... JAH WOBBLE NOW!

Disco here. I really like it. It's very useful, practical music. I love the lyrics. That's why with "Betrayal" I did that thing, it's that Roberta Flack "Back Together Again" record. I just love those love lyrics because they're not really sentimental, they're hard-hitting for what they are. I think they're really useful, because I think everyone with any kind of relationship can see something in them kind of Disco lyrics. It's on all the time in the States and I soaked that up because it's like non-stop music all the time, this disco beat all the time.

ZZ: What sort of set you been playing?

JW: We were just doing numbers as we got them and improvising on them and going into new things as well. They were getting really long and sometimes one or two of us would leave the stage and leave just the others playing. I hope this is a sign of things to come but you can't go too free-form. As a bass-player I could very easily, but it's maybe harder for Keith or John to get into that because you're really put on the spot as a guitarist and more as a singer — just sing a load of crap or what, know what I mean?

ZZ: Ever thought of doing your own stuff on stage?

JW: Yeah, possibly. I dunno, I've toyed with the idea of doing a couple of dates and maybe I will, I just dunno. I think if I did I'd just do something purely instrumental. I'd like to do that. Funnily enough, in the States a lot of people there are ready for that, whereas here I don't know. I'd just like to go out and do lots of rhythmic things, just see what happens. Not experiment, I don't think there's such a thing as experimenting. You're just a channel for what's around you and you just direct it out and you get some really interesting things happening.

At the moment I'm tied up with PiL and that's the main thing. This is just really a nice diversion. The aim of the album is a small one. I just want to sell enough records to get the money back and maybe make a small profit so I'll be able to make a record in the future. I'm keeping my aims, personally, very small. I wanna keep going for years and years, as long as I can keep doing it, rather than just suddenly make a big solo impact. I've got no interest in that at all. I just think if you keep it small and without too much pretension, you can just make nice music. I've made an album. I just want people to listen to in the summer and get a pleasant buzz off it and enjoy it, rather than thinking, "right, let's get this shipped up there, have big promotional stuff there". As it happens sales are disappointing so far. *NME's* on strike, and *Melody Maker*, and as I don't tour as a solo act, people have to rely on magazines. Plus the radio in this country is a sick joke.

ZZ: How long have you had doing an album in mind, cos the singles started off as a joke, didn't they?

JW: Yeah. The first one was just

something to make a bit of money and have a laugh. Funnily enough, that was probably the worst record in the world, and it sold the best! I just had the idea to do a load of singles. I was just recording for the fun of it, trying to get cheap studio time. I just love recording, I love mixing and hearing it, 'specially in a good studio. You get really deep bass coming at you, supreme fun, you can't whack it. I just found myself with a load of material, and thought, "if I edit some of this down and tidy up the production a bit I'll have enough stuff for an album". So I used about half the stuff I've done. That was the biggest problem, trying to get together what I was going to put on the album. I've got some heavier stuff which I think would probably be better for 12-inch disco mixes rather than albums. It's so much better. I think a lot of albums now are becoming fasto obsolete, 'specially the kind of music I'm into personally. Any track off that album could have been used for a disco mix. "Betrayal" made a good 12-inch.

ZZ: "Not Another" is a version of "Graveyard", isn't it?

JW: Yeah, it's dubbed up. It's really good if you hear it on a powerful system, which I've not got. I live at home and I can't listen to really loud music. That's why I like going into the studio — it's the one time I can really go over the top with everything... a track like "Not Another" is very adaptable. It's a perfect rhythm. You can put anything over it and mix it in so many different ways. You could use that for a lovers rock. I just brought the drums out so it's more punchy, used a harmoniser on the snare, brought the synth out. I got a lot of echoes on it so it's a continuous flowing movement with this bedrock beneath it. Other times I go for a more liquid sound. I must admit I go more for the instrumentals when you lose your body and soul in it — man! "Dan MacArthur" — that's a very fluid thing. A lot of people said synth but it's a melodica. I'd done the rhythm and I was really drunk and I thought it was maybe a bit iffy — I'd gone for something and it just didn't work. It was one of the first times I'd worked completely on my own and I'd lost track a little bit, I must admit. So being the adaptable person that I am, I realised I could adapt it! So I took a lot of drums out of it, and a few drums in and put a lot of effects on them. Then the melodica I made like a train in the distance — I like sounds more than anything and one of the most beautiful sounds is a train in the distance. I did that with the melodica, it's very sad and wistful. Where someone like Pablo Augustus plays whimsical tunes by streams — which I love — mine is an urban-train-in-the-distance type feel.

ZZ: Who's Snow White?

JW: She's never sung before. I met her through Jeanette who said she knew this girl that wanted to make a record. I said great, because in studios I don't like singing a lot of the time. I don't wanna

get a proper singer, I always say to people "come and sing". If you were in the studio I'd ask you to sing. Write your own lyrics or I'd give you a lyric sheet. I had these lyrics that I'd written and it was brilliant, cos this girl had the lyrics written out already. She was eager and she went and sung. The first time we had to work it a little bit, there were a few cock-ups — that was on "TV" — and I thought, "er, I don't know about this really". Everything's an effect on that really, nothing should stand out — that's the idea of that track, just one total thing, very robotic, which is what it's about. Very much muzak, but beautiful music. Then, I had the studio time together for "Today's The First Day Of The Rest Of My Life", and she just went in and sang like an angel to it. She should get herself something together now, I hope, and maybe that'll give her some bargaining power with record companies. People should remember that name Snow White, she's one of those people who's got that ability to just do it and not worry about it.



ZZ: I've read in your other interviews that you're well into natural music, seeing what comes out.

JW: Yeah, there's loads of different ways though. Sometimes, music completely comes to you in a very mystical way. Not just with instrumentals, but like in "Beat The Drum", which was formerly "Dan MacArthur" as well. That's another thing... I didn't see why I should give everything a name. So for that single I just had it as "Dan MacArthur". That's the name of the record, not the songs. That was the name of a package, kind of an alter-ego thing. Both sides of that, the melodica one and the singing one, are just things that are beautiful when it happens, but you can't force it. At other times you make very practical music like "TV" or "Betrayal". You don't have to be a musician to apply yourself in a practical, commonsense way to it. People being what they are have got lots of senses that they don't use and can just go into a studio and be very natural about it. It's a very natural thing to create music.

ZZ: You have developed your own bass sound, haven't you?

JW: Which is changing. I'm really changing on that. I'm getting more into subtleties on the top end. "Blueberry Hill" is the archetypal bass sound I'm going for now, and on "Betrayal", 'cept it's very hard to cut it. Not just cos of the bottom end but the other frequencies I got in there that you'd only notice if you took 'em out. I seen it on a televiewer — the trouble cutting "Betrayal" for the single. I had to do it 55 times! It breaks my heart to cut down the db level on anything. I like noise. It comes from that attitude of not having a big record player. If I can get big noise I want big noise. That's still the idea. I'm so in love with the music I've done — egotist right — that I go to the cutting room mainly so I can listen to it at volume! I'm not there to work out which is the best noise level to market a piece of product, I can hear my record loud. I hate people who turn things down.

What I wanna do is get my own studio together. That's the thing I'm totally into, so I can just record in the middle of the night. I just love recording all the time.

ZZ: PiL use their money to set one up or something?

JW: Financially everything I make goes into PiL. That's it, we want our own studio. Hopefully we're gonna get one together, but I dunno, things with PiL are often strange, cos things don't happen...

ZZ: John told me that you were recording for a year for "Metal Box".

JW: Over a year!

JW: We just record. It's basically what you edit out that matters. We were just cutting sections out. It's a real job. We must have another five or six hours solid, from the past year, and another six hours from before that. Maybe one day we'll dig through it.

To me it's a really natural way to record, and we're not the first — look at Can. But it just seemed a very natural way to record. I just love taping everything.

ZZ: You gonna do another album, or more singles?

JW: I wanna do some more singles. Hopefully the album's gonna start to move, enough to be a very solid little thing. I'm not into bums coming up and going, "I bought your album maan." I think I'm making a mistake here, I should be in the window-cleaning business. I mean it. I like it when I meet people genuinely into it. I met some people in the States and they had "Betrayal" — God knows where they got that from?

ZZ: Okay, what are you up to next? Recording, gigs?...

JW: I've no ideal I'm going to try and raise the cash, I think, to get a studio together for us, that's the one thing I've got in mind. Apart from that I don't know. I wanna get some more singles out definitely... I mean I'm probably the most together person in PiL, and that's not saying much! I don't see the need to force situations. They happen, they happen, you know. "Don't force it, don't push it, it will happen if it's meant to be", y'know that disco record, right? That applies to life. We got no control over what we do anyway. That's what I like.

ZZ: Yeah, like with the States. No-one knew you were there till we read about it.

JW: It was very low-key over there. They were really good venues, the kind of venues I love, really small cinemas. In

a way I prefer them to small clubs. We played the Palladium in New York and you could hear the bass five blocks away!

ZZ: I used to see you at gigs. When we were all pissed, then you joined PiL, now you seem to be getting more direct in what you want to do, more refined, if anything.

JW: Yeah, you grow up, you get older and you learn. At that time I was very frustrated because I had a really rough time for two or three years, in that I had very strong views on things and wanted things done. I was absolutely spitting full-time into the wind. Very frustrating. It changes though. When I first got into PiL, though, the first thing I thought was, "good, now I can get some money for a pair of Dr. Martin's." That is the first thought I had. It was no big artistic integrity thing. "I can finally express myself". It was, "I can get some money". I must admit, cos I was broke. Then the artistic leanings come after. It was an opening and I was absolutely determined to take it. It's worked up to now, but I'm totally aware that the situation could change. I could be back out of a job tomorrow and back in the same situation. But it's been good, I've had a real crack for two years and I can't ask for more than that. I really have had a crack, totally.

ZZ: It's been said already: you wouldn't have had a chance to do this album if it wasn't for PiL.

JW: Absolutely no way, but there wouldn't have been a Second World War without Hitler. Everything leads on. I really think this, right: I never done a lot to get into a band except hope with great intensity that I'd not so much be in a band, but be able to make music, and if you hope enough for something I think it comes to you in the end.

ZZ: How come you whipped the lyrics to "Blueberry Hill"?

JW: I did that with Mark. Whenever I do stuff with him it just ends up total aural anarchy. Idiocy. I can't resist it. I listened to "Blueberry Hill", and some of Fats Domino's lyrics are really... mystical. I mean the way he sings that and the actual words he's singing doesn't come out like the actual words on paper. I just thought I'd change the rhythm sounds, because I despise the actual rhythm, and just use the words. "The vows you made are never to be". It's so final, it could be the soundtrack to one of those horror movies. He's left the bird in a shallow grave on the top of a hill and he's burying it, and he's singing the song as he buries it, with a full moon behind! That's the way I saw the song, good horror movie music!

ZZ: What will rock 'n' roll purists say!

JW: Yeah right! What's rock 'n' roll anyway? I've never been into rock 'n' roll. I dunno why. The way things have moved I've never been in those circles, and I've never listened to rock 'n' roll.

ZZ: I like the berserk stuff, like Little Richard going potty.

JW: Yeah, or Vince Taylor. I mean I say I wasn't brought up with rock, that wasn't my cultural background, but obviously I've listened to rock.

ZZ: It's straight down the line rock I hate.

JW: Yeah, it's a real non-cultural music. I despise it. In the States we were put in the same hotel as the Van Halens, stuff like that. It was in Cleveland.

ZZ: That's the place where they reckon rock 'n' roll was born!

JW: Yeah, and that was one of the worst reactions we got. It really is a

hot-bed for the music scene. We pissed a lot of people off, because we do not want to hang out. I find it very hard to talk to those kinds of people.

ZZ: What, geezers in bomber jackets with BOSTON on the back?

JW: It's such a parody, it's unreal. I find it really hard to just blank anybody, but I did it. I thought, what the fuck? I felt like saying, "listen I'm a deep-thinking person and I'm trying to get as much out of this life as I can and the last thing I want is a bum like you coming up and offering me coke and a groupie for the evening. No. Full stop. Leave me alone". So I did it. It takes a lot for me to do that.

ZZ: It's like a bloated old elephant the US Music Biz, isn't it?

JW: That attitude where it cannot adapt to anything new. It's incestuous and it's self-perpetuating the way it's gonna destroy itself. I think there are maybe one or two people out there who recognise PiL as being something new and refreshing.

ZZ: I read about that press conference with John and Keith. Sounded like a farce.

JW: Yeah, they just went there and slagged off rock 'n' roll, which is not something I really like to jump at. It's like Virgin. I don't really like to jump on the bandstand and slag down our record company. Obviously sometimes we have friction but they're part of something bigger so I look beyond them. An intelligent man looks over the wall. Virgin's the wall. If you're intelligent you can see what's beyond the wall. Whatever's beyond the wall built it to stop you getting in there. It's the same way with rock 'n' roll. It's just an entity, just another kind of a wall.

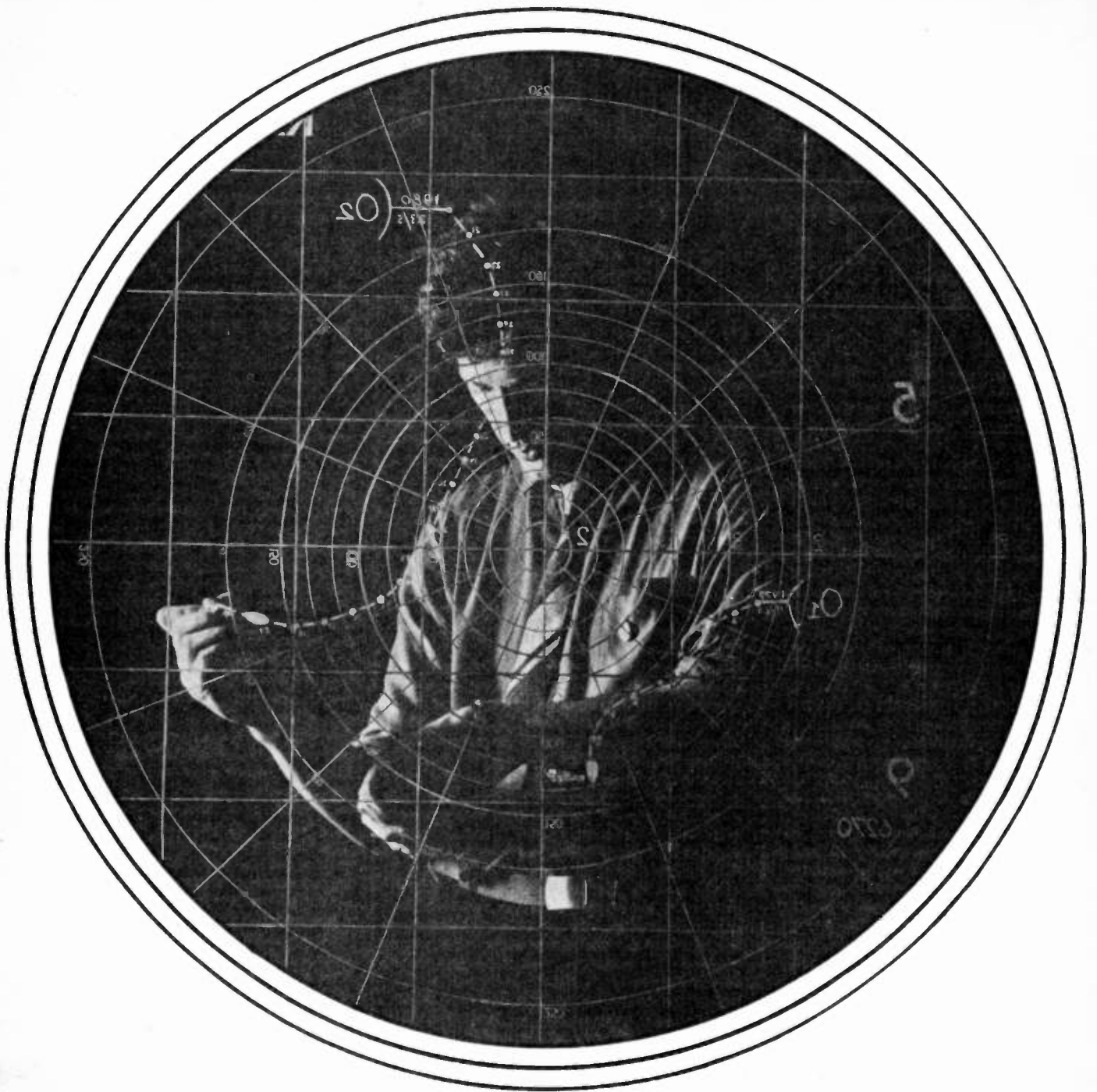
ZZ: When I spoke to John and Keith last year they were expecting a right slagging for "Metal Box" after the way the first one got treated, but there were really good reviews and the public seems to have gone along with it too. Do you think the tide's turned?

JW: I knew it would get good reviews, but the tide will turn again, and the thing is, we don't care. For that year people would be horrified at us, "how can you say that?" Then the tide started to turn and I thought we'd get good reviews, for the simple reason that we were saying to people, "why did these bums get our first album to review when there are people on the record papers who are into this kind of music?" And are probably nice people, cos if you're into that kind of music you're not normally a cunt, right, and you're not going to be that pushy. With "Metal Box" the good people got the album to review and understood it. What got me, was "Metal Box" got good reviews whereas "First Edition" was not perhaps as extreme in many ways. It had three or four numbers with rock 'n' roll structure. Yet people's reaction was disgusting. Then we do this getting more into the particular style that we're into and it's, "oh yeah, they cracked it". It goes to show it's just bullshit, it's just political games. It's hip to like PiL, in other words.

I'll usually go to great pains to avoid ending an article with the easy "check out the album now" routine, but Wobble's case must be an exception cos you simply ain't doing yourself any favours if you don't own that record. Without it summer'll be flat as a cow-pat. I'm warning ya.

Kris Needs

IF IN DOUBT ASK



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NEW ALBUM

•YACHTS WITHOUT RADAR

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JUST LIKE EDDIE

Eddie Cochran was just twenty one years old when a car smash just outside Chippenham, Wilts., ended a career which was to have a profound effect on the rock world for the next twenty years.

Cochran had just completed a fourty night tour with fellow American Gene Vincent, the like of which hadn't been seen previously in this country. They blazed a trail across the country, and took cinemas and theatres by storm. On April 17th, 1960, after the last date of the tour at the Bristol Hippodrome, Vincent, together with Cochran and his girlfriend Sharon Sheeley, set off for London in a hired taxi. A tyre burst and the Ford Consul skidded into a lamppost.

borrowing the car, making some money and having to work late, having to buy a '49 Ford and not a '58 and trying to make the best-looking chick in town. Whatever, Eddie had the looks of a youthful Elvis, dressed just right and super cool. He got by.

But what made Cochran so special was that there was so much more to him than the image of a fifties teenager who had trouble just staying alive. The fact was that Eddie was a better guitar-player than many of his contemporaries. It was not really appreciated until recent years that Eddie was a prodigious recording artist in the studio and cut a wealth of material, not to mention he played and sang on many sessions of his fellow

Paradise") and they began to tour extensively. Hank split to Nashville to become a writer and Eddie teamed up with singer songwriter Jerry Capehart, who was looking for a singer to cut demo's of the songs he'd written. Eddie spent much time in the studio and gained experience in recording, experimenting with his guitar sound and learning the art of production.

In September, 1956, Eddie recorded his first solo single, "Skinny Jim" and "Half Loved" on the Crest label. Jerry Capehart took it to Liberty Records who became interested in Eddie. This resulted in the single "Sittin' in the Balcony" sold a million and resulted in T.V., Radio and a promotional tour. But the second single

WHO WAS EDDIE COCHRAN? WHY HAVE UNITED ARTISTS JUST PUT OUT A FOUR-LP BOX OF HIS WORK? JOHN BRALEY SPILLS THE BEANS...

Vincent escaped with a broken collar bone and further damage to his already shattered left leg. Cochran died on his way to hospital and his latest single "Three Steps to Heaven" peaked at number two in the charts. Cochran died in a way that fitted his James Dean image. Unlike many of his contemporaries we didn't have to watch him grow paunched and old, his image has remained fresh — flick of the comb across the D.A., legs astride, Gibson slung low on his hips, collar turned up, as he tears into the opening cords of "Something Else." And that's what Eddie was — something else. He was the white Chick Berry. His songs told of the anguish of the misunderstood youth of the fifties. Just listen to the lyrics of "Summertime Blues", "Weekend", or "Teenage Heaven" if you want to know what the fifties and early sixties were all about. Eddie's problems centered around

artists even before his first hit "Sittin' in the Balcony." At school Cochran had gained a smattering of proficiency on various instruments settling for the guitar. By the time he moved with his family from his Oklahoma birthplace to California in 1953, Eddie had become a talented musician. He teamed up with Frank Cochran (no relation) to play local functions as a country duo. In 1955 they recorded two straight hillbilly singles for the small Ekko label in Hollywood ("Guilty Conscience" and "Mr. Fiddle") but they switched to Rock 'n Roll late in 1955 after seeing Elvis Presley in a Dallas stage show.

Eddie's distinctive rock guitar style was becoming evident on the duo's next single, ("Tired and Sleepy" and "Fool's

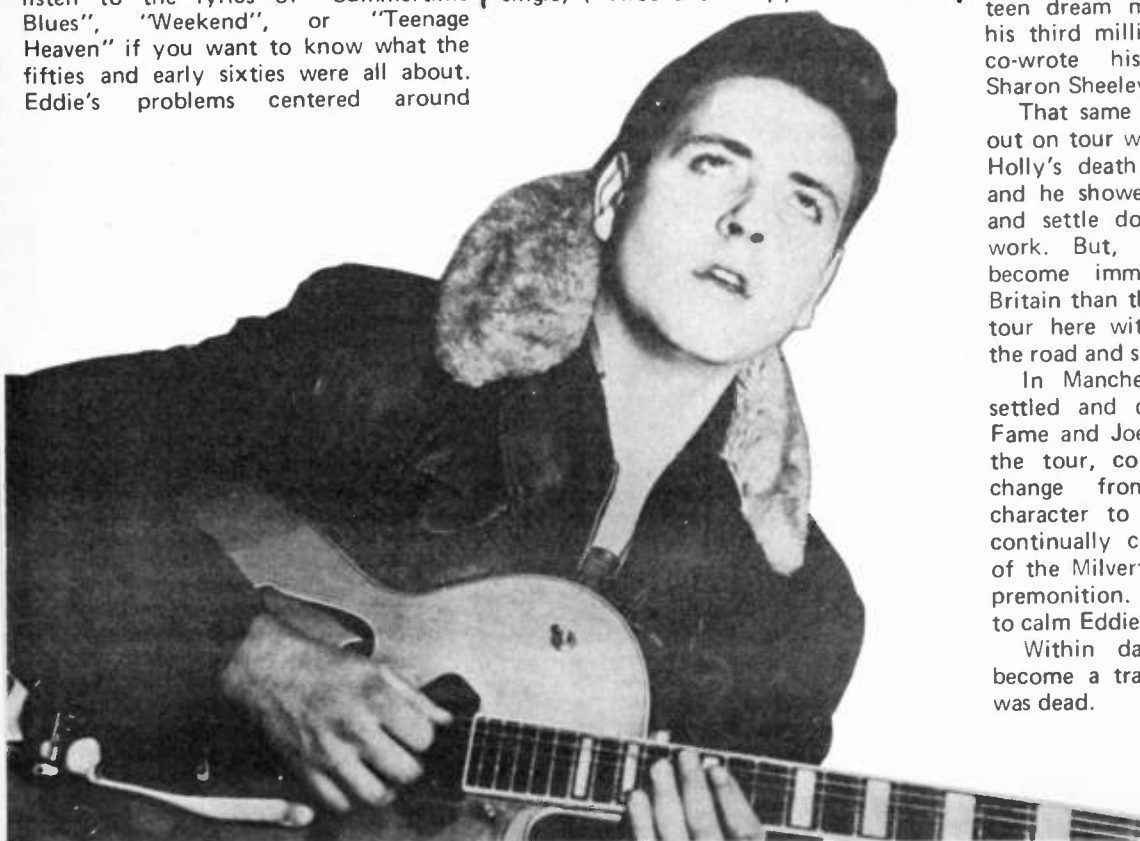
for Liberty, "Mean When I'm Mad" failed hopelessly, despite the closeness of the title to the Cochran image.

Despite an appearance in the film "Untamed Youth", by early '58 Cochran and Capehart were becoming worried that Eddie was destined to become a one-hit wonder. In a desperate search for something commercial, legend has it they composed "Summertime Blues" in less than an hour. It was to become a classic teen anthem of rebellion and frustration and will last forever. It turned out to be Cochran's second million seller and put him in the company of Gene Vincent and Little Richard for an Australian tour. The same sparse instrumentation and defiant assertion of the teen dream made "C'mon Everybody" his third million seller and in 1959 he co-wrote his "Somethin' Else" with Sharon Sheeley.

That same year he decided not to go out on tour with his friend Buddy Holly. Holly's death affected him profoundly and he showed a desire to quit touring and settle down to writing and studio work. But, like Vincent, Eddie had become immensely more popular in Britain than the States and he decided to tour here with Vincent before quitting the road and settling down.

In Manchester Cochran became unsettled and quiet. Billy Fury, Georgie Fame and Joe Brown, who were also on the tour, confirm that he seemed to change from his usual fun-loving character to a very worried man. He continually complained to the manager of the Milverton Lodge Hotel of a death premonition. A doctor had to be called to calm Eddie down.

Within days the premonition had become a tragic reality. Eddie Cochran was dead.



It is impossible to surmise where Cochran would have been today in the rock world. Maybe he would have quit, maybe he would have become a producer or drifted back to country music. One thing's certain, Eddie Cochran has had a lasting effect on both fans and musicians and this month, some twenty years after his death, the constant demand for his records has inspired a four-record box set to be put out by United Artists. With alternate takes and unreleased material it will become a welcome addition for old and new fans alike.



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I'VE been wanting to do a feature on the link up between Lurker Pete Stride and Honest John Plain ever since John first twanged his banjo onstage with The Lurkers. John joined The Lurkers because at that time his own band, The Boys, weren't playing anywhere and were in between record companies. Pete Stride, well known alcoholic / guitarist with The Lurkers, wanted John in the band because of their mutual respect for Ron Wood.

Since John first recorded with the Ick-nham terrors on "New Guitar In Town" — in my opinion, the best single The Lurkers ever recorded — Pete Stride has wanted to change direction away from the two chord thrashings of the past. Good though the old stuff was Pete wanted to progress and in Honest John he found an ideal guitarist to play alongside.

Honest John decided to remain with his first love, The Boys, but also to play with The Lurkers whenever he could. The Lurkers' last gig was supporting The Members as special guests at their New Year bash at the Music Machine. Sadly, the band has now split up leaving Pete Stride as the only original Lurker still signed with Beggars Banquet, although both Howard Wall and Nigel Moore have plans for the future.

The material on the dual-solo album by Honest John and Pete is a mixture of the material they were playing with The Lurkers and a few odds and sods that belonged to The Boys or The Yobs. The idea of a dual album appealed to both guitar men as they wanted a loose rock 'n' roll album to go alongside the new Barbarians (Keef 'n' Ron) kind of stuff. The rest of the line-up includes Plug Edwards (vocals on five songs), Lurker Howard Wall (vocals on five songs).

PISSHEAD ROCKNROLLERS' CORNER

NEW GUITARS

Merton-Parka Mick "Muddy" Talbot (keyboards), Tony Bateman (bass) and Boys drummer Jack Black. Both Plug and Tony are usually seen humping the gear as roadies for The Lurkers, although Tony was once in The Maniacs.

This motley bunch moved around about half a dozen studios with producer Pat Moran (who produced Iggy's last album at Rockfield). The album was finally finished and is now ready to be unleashed on an unsuspecting public under the title "New Guitars". Pete Stride gets his name first on the billing of "Stride and Plain" due to him beating John at a darts match decider.

First I'd better warn all Boys and Lurkers fans that this album is not what they might expect from their heroes. It's rock 'n' roll music played by Stones fans in a good time vein.

Honest John is particularly happy since it gives him a chance to step out front with a lead guitar for a change. In the Boys his normal task is usually playing rhythm guitar behind Matt Dangerfield's lead. Another big surprise is the emergence of Plug as a pretty good singer. He wraps his tonsils around an old Sonny Bono song, "Laugh At Me", for the opening track. Although Ian Hunter beat the lads to recording this commercial rocker (*By ten years — Ed*) this version is equally good.

Then comes "Schoolgirls", which brings me to the only real criticism I've got against the album. This song was the b-side to the Boys "You Better Move On" and it isn't long ago that The Boys

released it. Also on the album is Stride & Plain's version of "You Better Move On" (couldn't they have found another Stones number to cover?) as well as a new version of The Lurkers last 45, "New Guitar In Town". These numbers are all okay, but I can't see the point of including them.

However, there are a couple of gems here, like "Cure For Love" (a Dangerfield / Plain collaboration which nearly became a Boys song) and the alcoholic-inspired "Pick Me Up", which the Lurkers used to play live and originated from The Boys Rockfield sessions last year which never saw vinyl. There is a really fine version on here of "He'll Have To Go". Honest John has realised an ambition by including a Jim Reeves song. It's very commercial. Howard Wall sings the more Lurkerised "Cold Old Night" and "Half The Time", whilst Stride gets his vocal debut on a little dirty entitled "Restless Kind". He's not bad, either! Fellow Beggars Banquette, Johnny G, adds a nice mandolin touch on "Half The Time" (shades of Faces influence).

Whether The New Guitars ever play any gigs is entirely down to how well this album sells. It's probably the last time you'll hear Pete Stride and Howard Wall on record together now the Lurkers are no more. The New Guitars may not be very unique, but they don't pretend to be. This album is good for both guitarists: in John's case, the rest of The Boys can see the kind of music he likes playing. For Pete Stride it's his first major step in the direction he intends to take in the future. He wants to leave The Lurkers sound of old behind him so much that he's even changed pubs from The Coach and Horses to The White Bear!

Alan Anger



NIGHT OF THE VOODOO BARRACERS

THE CRAMPS INVADE BRITAIN. DIE! SAYS HUGH JARSE

*'You ain't no punk, you punk
You wanna talk about the real junk'*

(Garbage man)

A man clawing through clammy, clinging jungle. A thunderstorm breaks out as he hits a clearing. The lightning makes grotesque shadows dance and a terrifying countenance shrieks into view. The man screams. He'd live to regret his gruesome discovery. Just...

"We wanted to make the worst song ever. 'Lux Interior boasts. The spirit of Tom Jones' 'Delilah' and tacky melodrama of cheap, widescreen dire consequences coursed through his lofty cranium as 'Voodoo Idol', probably the next Cramps single, took shape. But any resemblance to the slime-groined curlytop ends at the corn in the vocal performance. This is classic Cramps. Another excursion into their bottomless tribal stomp-pit. The fun but authentically dark mania which is providing more and more music-fanciers with a refreshing alternative to flat, routine rock normality.

However... as I write, the song I heard down Faulty Products that day may not see light — at least in the form I heard it. Recording was sneaked in during the Cramps' hectic touring schedule, using the same studio where the Kinks done 'You Really Got Me'. The existing mix isn't yet to the band's satisfaction. Dunno what needs to be done to it, more echo I s'pose. Whatever, I hope it comes out soon.

The 'B' side is gonna be 'Drug Train', the whoop-it-up set opener which got left off the

album at the last minute cos of the nature of the lyrics (white labels include it).

One more thing you — make 'Garbage man', the current 45, a hit, cos the accompanying video is dynamite, the group cavorting in the steamy surroundings of spooky house and crypt. The boggle-eyed dementia of Lux would slay the wimpy with-it mob who feel safe with their weekly dose of 'acceptable' 'new wave' like Squeeze, the Lambrettas: Liquid Gold and other T.O.T. Punks.

Lux Interior, fresh out of bed at two in the afternoon, sits there in wire-rimmed specs and undertakers' hat and tries to reflect on the just-done UK tour. Considering the wildness of his stage act, Lux is a remarkably amiable geezer off the stage, though goofiness pervades his manner and grin.

Next to him in the hotel bar, sits Poison Ivy Rorschach, Cramps guitarist along with curtain-haired Bryan Gregory. Ivy, who has a heavy hand in the Cramps' management, can be smiling and friendly one minute, expressionless the next. I tell ya, this whole Cramps demonic persona bit is no act. They've been into it so long they're just naturally... Cramps. Interested in all the things the songs point to — Occult, voodoo, horror, enraptured in anything off-the-wall in that direction. I took to them immediately.

They're happy with the way the tour went — far better than the previous visit when they were unhappily stuck as support on the Police

tour. Can you imagine the effect these four gothic rockabilly weirdos had on the stung-out droolers? I saw a gig at Friars, the Cramps were great but the crowd was wet. They remember it as one of the good ones.

This time around gigs were full, well-received and often wild. Like that now-notorious warm-up at King's College, London, which ended in a stage invasion and Lux down to his pants. On the whole though, he found Northern gigs more berserk, but trembles with glee at the memory of a night in Bristol, where they played an old church.

"It was in the cellar. There was no floor so they had this tarpaulin where the floorboards used to be. You could see the church through the holes and there was the Lord's Prayer behind us. It was great."

That night Lux was compelled to indulge in some of his notorious onstage lunacy and got hold of some wires hanging down to swing out over the punters. He made it back onto the stage by walking on their shoulders. "They were all going, 'step on my shoulder, hurt me!'"

I wondered if Lux had incurred any injuries as a result of these doings.

"Well, my knee swelled up. Maybe it was something I caught from all the spitting. There was a lump there and this green thing popped out. It looked like the Alien, winking and waving!"

Talk got on to the last album. If you ain't yet copped an earful I suggest you rectify the sad situation immediately. "Songs The Lord





The
CRAMPS



Taught Us' is probably the only decent album parading under that old term Rock 'n' Roll which'll be released all year. Often it's held together by sheer manic energy alone as the playing threatens to capsize. Technically the Cramps are bollocks, as far as feel goes they're out on a berserk, great limb, whacking out woggles of mutated rockabilly tornadoes with titles like 'I Was A Teenage Werewolf' under the booming weight of fathomless echo and drumming of the sort which used to call King Kong in for breakfast (courtesy Nick Knox). Each new plateau of hysteria is mercilessly topped by the next. It's a classic.

You've probably read that the album was recorded at the legendary Sun studios in Memphis, host to many spawned inches of berserked-out rockabilly overkill and Elvis' early sides. To cap it, the Cramps were produced by Alex Chilton, the Boxtops-Big Star man with the loopy reputation and a way of pulling craziness out of others with a straw. Chilton's renowned as a deep-fried space case with a penchant for bevy and teenies. How was it working with him then?

Lux: "A lot of people can't handle Alex cos he's so direct. He's very honest. He'll tell you what he thinks of you to your face and that upsets some people. He used to tape everything in the studio — we've got some great arguments from the sessions. 'Fever' was done in one take, he was recording it and now it's our single!"

So many sessions haunt the Sun studios (though it wasn't the actual room that they used), did you pick up on all that?

Ivy: "There was a feeling in that studio. That's why we did it there, to get away from the outside world and the Music Business. And there was this feeling to work on too."

Unlike a lot of first albums, the Cramps managed to get their live energy and raw power onto vinyl untamed. Recorded last August, it consists of much of the live set they've honed and ravaged in their few years gigging existence round New York. Although some songs were done on the spot — like the afore-mentioned "Fever".

Lux: "We don't write songs, they just happen. I like to do them the night before."

Obviously the Cramps draw from the thousands of over-the-top rockabilly discs peppering their hovels for riffs and inspiration. Lux will semi-admit it with a sly grin. "Me and Ivy must have the largest collection of rockabilly in the world. When we used to live in Cleveland, which is like the rock 'n' roll capital of the world, we used to pick them up everywhere. Now people go there and have to pay 300 dollars for the same records."

While Lux will admit his lifts with unashamed pride, A & M, the band's US record label, had something of a hard time clearing publishing. Like 'Rock On The Moon' originally appeared on a Dutch bootleg of which only a few hundred were pressed — they still haven't traced the composer (what a nutter he must be!).

One of the things I like most about the Cramps is their total lack of falseness. They're totally immersed in what they're doing, they are the image — Bryan checks out the graveyard in every place they play, scoops a bit of dirt and pops it in the container that always hangs round his neck. Success is fine but they'd be doing this anyway. "When we started we never thought it'd get this far", says Lux, obviously enjoying the ride. He mentions the old bluesers and rockabillys he's encountered in the sticks in the States playing roadside dives. You gonna end up like that at 80?

"I guess I wouldn't mind. I can't see us making a lot of money out of this, but that's not the point. When we started that's how we expected to end up."

Don't think they will, although the signs are that the Cramps are a tad weird for our comparatively sedate punkies. When we all spout mini-aliens from our earholes and gibber at the moon. That'll be the day. I'll die happy.

Waiting for the PULSE BEAT

New label, lads!



THIS LOT - HELDON

IT'S when small, independent labels flourish that the record-buying majority get the opportunity to explore the so-called minority musical tastes. Today accessibility is its own reward and, for forsaking the cultural shadows for sunny commerciality, two contrasting musics are now satisfyingly poised for wider acceptance.

For more than ten years British rock conservatism has been questioned by European bands like Amon Duul, Can, Faust, Neu, Kraftwerk and currently Cluster, whose fascinating work with Brian Eno undoubtedly won fresh recognition for the entire genre.

Similarly David Bowie's recent endorsement, on BBC radio, of the music of Philip Glass. This has revealed to an eager public the whole American tradition that goes right back to Terry Riley's mentor LaMonte Young and his first minimalist experiments in the '50s. Characterised by hypnotic rhythms, strong tonal centres and interesting, often electric instrumentation, these composers' music has always enjoyed a vigorous worldwide following among painters and other artists, but apart from Riley no notable success in terms of volume sales.

Suddenly, or so it seems, the outstanding work from both these important and innovative areas is all available through the same enthusiastic distributor, Dave Lawrence of Projection Records. Perhaps the time has come for the originals to share the marketplace with all the bands who have, wittingly or unwittingly, been influenced by them.

Starting PULSE, his own label, is Dave Lawrence's personal declaration of faith in these musics. From two years' experience as an importer he is convinced that the audience is there, growing all the time, and also becoming increasingly self-reliant in matters of taste, having seen through the big-business conspiracy of orthodoxy.

His first release is "Iceland" by ex-Sorbonne philosophy lecturer Richard Pinhas, which has been completely remastered from its French Polydor version. This is a primarily electronic album with no orchestral delusions in its lush darkness. Naturally the music builds on repetition, and Pinhas shares Peter Baumann's fondness for precisely percussive frameworks (curiously enough, as their producer Baumann seems to have re-interested Cluster in the style which after all, as Harmonia, they helped to define).

Pinhas has several previous releases to his credit, both solo and as part of the group Heldon, some selling as many as

10,000 copies by mail order alone. Dave Lawrence regards this record as "a credible first release for the label. Richard has proved his commercial potential to me already. Without any pushing at all his sales were very good as import albums. I think the music is a lot warmer than most of the German synthesizer stuff, the name "Iceland" is in a sense a misnomer."

Pinhas will preside over a live event that's being planned to tie in with the album's release and the launch of the label. This will also provide a rare opportunity to see Cluster, who have never played in England before, and possibly other Sky artists. Robert Fripp has expressed interest, and Lawrence would like to bring in an English band or two. "One concert is probably going to be the only viable way of doing it. The obvious problem is financial, you're dealing with a very small audience. But they would undoubtedly all come."

Looking beyond these first moves, Lawrence is extremely optimistic for the future of his venture. He has the option of Pinhas' next album, and is busily negotiating licensing deals for a lot of other interesting music. "I'm hoping that once things sell, and there's a bit of flow going through, I'll be able to get in among some of the very fine young musicians that there are in this country, I know there's lots of experimental stuff going on."

"What I don't want is to get into that rock side of things were you're having to make split-second decisions on whether to sign an artist, because ten different companies have people in the audience watching a band. You have to decide to try to outbid Warners or CBS or whatever. It's infinitely more solid just to talk to people who actually want you to put them out. For instance Richard Pinhas has a very ambivalent attitude to the major labels — he's not impressed that Virgin and various other people are after him — and he's only with Polydor France because he works with a friend of his there. In fact I was the first person to be offered the "Iceland" tapes."

"Now I'll be the first to admit that I won't record anybody that I'm not enthusiastic about, and I have to be sufficiently hard-headed to keep the business side going. As an independent I can't automatically guarantee the sales an artist signed to a major might expect, but then I'm not going to be gambling with their careers. I don't think the music that is worthwhile is about a gamble, really."

Felix Jay

Amidst all the furore and fuss over "Rude Boy" one person seems to have been well neglected in the ensuing arguments and counter claims that the film has provoked. Ray Gange (whose name doesn't even appear on the posters) is a quiet, well built 21-year-old whose position in the film seems to have been conveniently ignored in favour of Strummer's Brandoesque appearances, when in fact it's Ray who dominates the movie in nearly every scene, portraying

with a mixture of power and simplicity a fan turned roadie turned drunkard with apolitical views. Recently Ray flew into England at the expense of someone or other to catch the premiere (he didn't make it) and to talk to the press in a flash hotel room in Knightsbridge, before flying back to L.A., his new home, with his wife Patsy where his building site job and golden beaches await him. He first got involved in the movie, in fact, through constantly bumping into David

Mingay, one of other filmmakers, either on the tube or work or in his home town of Brixton where both David and Ray lived. Mingay kept offering Ray the role and Ray went right on refusing him until he decided that it might just be worth the hassle of it all. Filming started in May '78 and the finished product (which you ought to see) finally came to the screens in March '80. 'No-one knows what the Rude Boy knows', the posters contend — well here's what he told me.

STARING AT THE RUDE BOY...



PI: JEANETTE BECKMAN

X RAY!

ZZ: What was your first contact with the Clash?

Ray: Friends of mine used to go and see them at places in Hammersmith or whatever, maybe playing with the Vibrators or someone with about 12 people watching them, and they'd come back and say 'ah there's this great group called the Clash' and I didn't know anything about it so I just like ignored it. Then I heard "White Riot" and the other side "1977" and thought ah fuck this is really good and then THAT album came out and I thought fantastic I've got to find out

more about this group having never seen them. Then I met Joe in a pub one night and we got talking. So I got mates with him and met the rest of them and we just used to hang around. Then I was going to work with them for a while but then I got offered this film so we did the film instead.

ZZ: So you never actually worked with them?

Ray: "I worked with them like a real short time, just like general fucking lackey, but that was about it. After that we did the film so we just went on tours

filming.

ZZ: What were you doing before you were offered the film?

Ray: "I was working in a record shop in Bond Street and then one in Dean street Soho. Then I worked in a sex shop in Soho for a while which is where we got the idea for the film from. But I wasn't there long because we did the film and then I went off to America and that was that.

ZZ: How true is Rude Boy? Fact or fiction?

Ray: "It's based more on what would have happened, what could have been, than what we did. A lot of it is things that have happened"

ZZ: Like...

Ray: "I don't know, I don't know what's in the film cos I ain't seen it yet. I've been living in America so as soon as we finished it I went over there and I just got back last Monday, so I ain't seen it yet. Maybe I will. But we just did a whole bunch of things that happened and we did another bunch of things that we figured could have happened.

ZZ: Seems weird that I've seen it and you haven't.

Ray: "I know. I read all the papers and stuff and there's all these things saying this and that about me. There's this guy in the Evening Standard and he wrote "Ray Gange Leaves For America Because Of His Right Wing Bigoted Views" and I thought how can he write that when he hasn't even met me.

ZZ: I can understand where they got a viewpoint from though after seeing the way you come over in the movie.

Ray: "Uh-uh, which is why I don't know if I want to go and see it or not because of that, know what I mean?

At this point Jack Hazan, who's been quietly present and who along with David Mingay co-produced the film, butted in with his view point.

Hazan: "That's not at all true. I don't think that's correct. What is shown is that all these things are happening in certain districts of London, usually working class districts. All these people are vying with each other for the hearts and minds if you like of the working classes in these areas. The left move in and say vote for me, vote for the socialist party this is the truth. The right go in there, the NF processions, and they're also trying to get the allegiance of these people. What happens is that the Left

wing point of view is less attractive to somebody living in those areas than the Right wing who say I want it for myself and I don't want anybody to interfere. The Left wing come along and say we should all share things equally. Superficially the Right wing attitude is much more attractive to the young unemployed youths if you wish living in that area and if the youths express the point of view that this is attractive what the Right wing are saying doesn't mean to say he's Right wing or bigoted"

Ray: "That's it. All the politics is all bullshit and you listen to these guys, like all these Left wing geezers, they'll tell you this and that and then you'll see them on T.V. right, going to someplace and they'll be pulling up a rolls royce and they'll be telling everyone that they don't want anyone becoming richer than anyone else, but how many people can afford to ride round in rolls royces? So you know that's all bullshit. And the Right I don't give a fuck about anyway — and that's the truth."

ZZ: There's that scene of you though with Mick Jones in the dressing room where you're talking about the Clash and black people in relation to their audience...

Ray: "All I was saying was that it's the same as these white guys shouting Rastafari! It's ridiculous. The thing about 'White Riot' was that it was saying that the black kids are prepared to fight but the white kids ain't, and saying that they want them to fight and there's black kids singing that they want white kids to fight — and to me things like that if it ever got all taken seriously it would be ridiculous because everyone would be fighting one another like back in the Sixties. (Remember he lives in LA now and this talk took place well before Easter)

ZZ: Given your distaste for politics then, how come you picked up one of the most political bands of the time?

Ray: "I just tried to ignore the politics of it all because the music was real good. They were great to watch and they did songs like 'Garageland' and stuff like that which didn't have no real politics in it. So like anytime there was politics in it I just tried to ignore it so I could just appreciate their music for what it was. I don't like it when politics get involved."

ZZ: How many people did get involved do you think with that side of it though?

Ray: "I think 99% of the people were just in it for the fun because there wasn't nothing else to do. Like you used to sit at home bored and then there were groups like the Clash to go and see and you'd go and see them and have a real good time. It was great. Maybe a few people got affected by the politics but not a whole lot."

ZZ: This was your first filming experience wasn't it?

Ray: "Yeah. At first it was real weird. You'd stand there and the cameras would start and you'd be standing there scared to move, feeling real awkward. After a while you got used to it though."

ZZ: You also helped with the script and story didn't you?

Ray: "Yeah I tried to make it as much as I could feel it myself, like how I would be. I just tried to write that into it and

hopefully it came out good. The character that I play is loosely based on me but I also thought about all the other people I met from the clubs and that and tried to work it all into one whilst adding and extending it. It's like all different parts of mates have got into it."

ZZ: How did you write the film script?

Ray: "We'd work out basic ideas as we were going along. Like I didn't know what their storyline was, what they had up in their heads. So we'd turn up and say 'how about doing things this way' Then we'd sit down and write a rough script, work out what we'd do and just do it. And if it didn't come out great we'd change it a bit and do it again until eventually it got done. But it was kind of 50/50 between the script and improvisation, which was like the kind of fun of it."

ZZ: In a way because it documents the Jubilee times so vividly and ends with the Thatcher Govt, getting in, it's already looking quite dated."

Ray: "Maybe, but it was done a long time ago and since then a whole other bunch of things have happened. So at the time maybe it was ahead of it's time, I don't know. But at the time it was good and I just hope people realise that and take it all in context."

ZZ: What do you feel about the Clash's supposed dislike of the movie?

Ray: "I can't comment. I just hope that when they see it they like it."

ZZ: Do you still dig them as much?

Ray: "I like them but their new album is already hard for me to get into. They're alright, still a good band to watch."

ZZ: Last question. Do you still consider yourself a punk?

Ray: "Yeah! Of course, Definitely."

So for the present life is treating Ray Gange very nicely thank you. If another film offer comes his way he reckons he'll be more than interested in taking it up, though for the present he's quite content to enjoy getting suntanned on red hot LA beaches whilst thinking about Blighty and his old friends back in Brixton. One thing's for sure though, if it hadn't had been for those heady days of 76-78, Ray Gange and a few others would never be in the positions they are now, and that has got to be worth something. But then who said that Rudie could fail?

PAULO HEWITT



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A couple of hours before the UK Subs gig, I found myself inside an Edinburgh bar, nursing a Lager and listening to a large, fanatical Subs fan giving me the run down on why the Subs were the last true Punk band. Vaguely pondering what questions to put to the Subs, I asked for his advice. Somewhat dejectedly he replied, "Oh just say something decent for once." I make no promises.

Standard-bearers of Garry Bushell's absurd 'OAP New Punk Club', the UK Subs plough on posing to past ideals and wallowing in sickly layers of nostalgia. Punk was/is about change, challenge an excitement, none of which seem part of the Subs ageing charade. Backed by a flabby, raucous noise, the assorted growls and obligatory outraged grimaces are about as convincing as a smile in the dentist's chair. Of course the Subs 'believe' in what they sing about — police brutality, state oppression and all 'heard it before' related anguish, but it's really just a game with straw dummies. Build 'em up, knock 'em down and everyone's happy again. Safe, seemingly justified and purposefully vague, the Subs deal in teenage fantasies. Everyone can sing along to the Subs while the real world slowly passes them by. It's all good fun and what's wrong with that? Fine by me, just please be careful whenever you choose to take a squint outside your isolated cell. Personally I prefer my own dreams, at least they're original.

Back at the hotel after a dull gig, all the band members except Paul Slack (bass), who felt ill, were in high spirits and reminiscing over the evenings performance. Friendly, chaotic and a bit drunk Charlie Harper (vocals) amused himself by addressing loud belches in the direction of my tape recorder, while Nick Garrat (guitar) marched round parading his smashed guitar, occasionally making snide

continued.
CHARLIE: "In our music we allow everyone to express themselves, in fact they can't express themselves enough, and our music allows that, which is why we get off on it and the crowd get off on it."

NICK: "I mean I expressed my anger tonight by smashing my guitar in half. I mean can you imagine the Bee Gees guitarist doing that?"

Expression and progression, or imitation and stagnancy? Something tells me by the sarcastic excuses/replies the Subs offer that this one is a little close to the bone.

CHARLIE: "We rip off lots of people, like the latest craze is we went to Europe and gigged with the Ramones and we're ripping off the Ramones now. You listen to all the future Subs songs and they're all going to sound like the Ramones. We rip off anyone."

NICK: "We thought about being a Mod band then we could be really out of date."

Very droll but the Subs view of the contemporary rock 'scene' is a hopelessly narrow one, in which Punk (with a capital P) is the be all and end all of music. The Clash are slagged off for deviating/progressing from the Gospel, The Skids as being a bunch of poofs, Simple



anyway. We don't even think about it."

I pressed my point, but found no opening in the Subs blanket denials, until bored by my insistence Charlie finally let his guard down.

Do people follow the Subs for their music or for their image?

CHARLIE: "Yeah I admit that. They follow us for our image rather than the music. I really think we could play anything . . . I mean especially tonight when they couldn't even see us. I mean let's not beat about the bush."

NICK: "Anyway it makes me laugh the way that when you do an interview you'll criticise what the guys wearing, criticise his politics regardless of the fact that the guy could have played a great guitar solo or a great song. I mean I just object to guys criticising the way I dress."

Aren't the music and the image inseparable?

CHARLIE: "Yeah, the image is important, and that's one thing we feel really strongly about, that in the rock business the image is more important than the music, it just happens like that."

The Subs image of righteous, teenage(?) revolt, like their music is second-hand and dull.

Third and Final Round: Beliefs.

NICK: "We're anti-political. We hate politics."

CHARLIE: "We think politics is a load of rubbish and we really don't like talking about it."

Isn't that just running away from it?

CHARLIE: No it isn't because we believe in fair play. I mean the politicians are just conning people. . . the whole system is geared for them to have a good time and to keep everyone paying taxes and things like that."

NICK: "And at least the Punk cult isn't extreme politically, well at least our lot aren't. I mean okay it might contain individuals who are either right or left. . ."

CHARLIE: "Yeah well they're basically anarchists who don't want to be shoved about by people, they just believe in fair play."

The Subs naive beliefs complement their music and their image — it's all loud and empty, without substance or direction. A mindless thrash where everyone can close their eyes and delude themselves. No questions asked, no risks taken; stable, placid and shallow the Subs specialise in redundant postures.

So this is the Subs, a head-down pogo band, which is all fine and dandy were it not such a blatant case of sticking one's head in the sand. Nobody is asking for a tedious party manifesto effort, just a glimmer of awareness and honesty, but then people might have to open their eyes and the game would be spoilt . . . ssssh let baby sleep.

Salvage some sense from the wreckage if you want, I'm off to bed now. Nighty, Night.

Norman Smith

GERIATRIC PACEMAKERS

comments about Zigzag's apparent ignoring of the Subs. Fortright, independent and sober (Nick never drinks nor abuses himself with drugs) tempers frayed between us as it became apparent that I wasn't the Subs' number one fan. Going nowhere, getting testy, we argued into the small hours of the morning, then I left, unconvinced and depressed.

Round one: The Subs are in a dead rut.
NICK: "Agh! but we're not because unlike Sham 69, the Clash and the Sex Pistols, they started out writing good songs but now their songs are getting worse, whereas ours are getting better. They started pretty bad I admit, but now they're getting good."

I mention the Clash's 'London Calling' and suggest that three albums just filled with variations of 'White Riot' would be totally boring.

NICK: "Well I don't know so much about the London Calling album, but look our songs aren't a copy off the first album ('Another Kind of Blues'), they're better. I think our second album ('Brand New Age') is just much better."

CHARLIE: "The whole thing about our music is that nothing is planned. I mean people say you've got to progress, but we don't really plan a progression because progression is just something in the air, it just happens. We appear slow at progressing to other people because we just write what we feel like."

NICK: "But at least it doesn't come out

Minds as Roxy Music imitators, Two-Tone as a boring Jamaican copy and Nick hadn't even heard of Joy Division. The Subs have locked themselves inside their own padded cell and seemingly thrown away the key. Introspective and closeted, certain of their own logic, contemptuous of others, their progression is that of an unending circle.

Round Two: Image and Conformity.

CHARLIE: "Punk isn't a dying breed, it's a growing breed. It's the truth and we are the truth. The only truth. People who start doing arty farty things, their hearts are not in it, and the kids are not silly, they know when you're acting or it's a sham, sorry Jimmy. As long as we stick to what we believe in we can't go wrong. No band can go wrong if they really believe in what they're doing. Emotion comes over the kids can feel it."

My thoughts went back to the Subs fan in the pub. The last true Punk band eh? What did it mean? Could there ever be such a thing? Wasn't it all a gross fashion parade where everyone could strut around in their mail order tartans and D-rings before returning home to mummy?

PETE: "No that doesn't happen at Subs gigs. . ."

NICK: "Our lot sleep in haystacks. There may be one or two locals like that but that's not the case with the majority of our fans."

CHARLIE: "That happens at Siouxsie and the Banshees gigs. I don't think that happens at ours. . . I mean we really don't care about it

Cup final day and I've got to write this. If it was any other group I'd have chucked it out the window ages ago. But this isn't just any old group. This is THE group, this is the Fall. A group ZIGZAG has missed out on these last couple of years, since Danny Baker gave them first exposure in March '78. I had toured with the Fall in the autumn of '79 and fallen in love with them. I'd been running round record companies, trying to be nice to idiots, to get them interested in a band I believed in (Daf), no one was listening, then comes a phone call from Kay Carroll, the sixth Fall member, offering the band some support gigs on the Fall's tour. That tour blew my head off (typical writers exaggeration!). Mark Smith, Marc Riley, Steve Hanley, Craig Scanlan and a new drummer are the Fall. But anyway to business, we met in a pub in M/C, after the band had finished rehearsals for an Electric ballroom gig, the next day. The first thing to clear up was the drummer situation.

Z: Ok, so what's happened to Mike Leigh?

Marc Riley: Mike left because he wasn't playing enough, so he joined a cabaret band so he could play every night. We've got Steve's brother Paul in to play drums, and when we go to Holland we've got this guy Steve to play congas, because Paul is taking his 'O' levels then!

Mark Smith: We were a bit upset about Mike, because we'd nurtured him. We had a good arrangement, he played and we paid him, but I feel sorry for him, he's wasted there, four hours a night, it's good money... but so's mining!

This is the thirteenth line-up change, so I asked Mark who has been there since the start to explain this.

M: In the early days I used to con a lot of people into the band, I couldn't offer them anything. I used to lead a lot of them up the path, and they deserved it. I think most musicians have got low IQs, I don't understand them really. I've been reflecting on this a lot... it can't all be their fault!

Z: Did they fall, or were they pushed?

M: Well, I've only sacked about three of them (laughs), it's not my usual style, although I'm vicious when I'm crossed, or used to be.

Z: Why are the Fall in this?

M: It's got to be said, I think we create art, I honestly think that, and I don't mean that in a pretentious way. I find it weird you know, everyone says we're the mad ones. The situation in the Fall is similar to somebody who writes books about how books aren't necessary, and that's a very insecure place to be. We create what we're good at, and I know we're good. I think we make a statement and that's as valuable as anything else.

Z: What about the success/compromise business?

M: As I said we're talking about art, and I think record companies corrupt art, they divert

it. You have to recreate your own self, which is another reason why I'm in it, because I want to be my own man. It's something I've always wanted. You see my dad was like that... ha ha. It sounds daft, but he was. It's great nobody tells me what to do. But with a record company I wouldn't be my own man. I think that's what people have to do in life, have as much control over their own life, as opposed to opting out, I don't think we've opted out of anything, we're still in there.

This new wave thing it makes me laugh, I'm astounded when people say that the new wave didn't change anything, what do you expect it to change? And if you wanna change things you've got to set up your own separate systems. Bands can't understand it, they're coming along now and saying 'it's still the same, it's still the same' then a guy comes along with fifty grand, and they're saying 'great it's still the same'. You can't attack the system by opting out of it, which is what earlier members of the band did. When it wasn't going their way they just copped-out. Not because they hated playing the guitar anymore, which is what it's all about, but they'd rather play the guitar at home, than get into all these hassles. We're trying to set up a unit, but a unit is forced by human nature, and we can't do anything about that, so we're not gonna get successful and it's as simple as that. I don't think we are successful, maybe we will be, maybe not, but it's a very small point it doesn't really matter. If you've got something to say, and you know it's viable, and you know it's good then that's the end of it. We've got letters that we haven't answered yet, but I'd rather those letters waited three months than have some guy to answer them for us. The attitude of a lot of people is 'I wish the Fall would get out of it' which is a good enough reason for us to stay in it. I believe the record industry needs the Fall like it needs oil, it needs us a lot more than it needs the streamline bands. Because I know we've innovated a lot of changes in attitudes. That's why I'm sticking up for Rough Trade, because I used to really bad mouth them, cos I used to think they were just like socialists, which I don't like, and they thought that was really funny, and they still want to work with us, and I thought that was great, at least they had a sense of humour.

KC: We're not in it for the money, I think all of us could go out and char three nights a week and still make more money than we do. We survive on the money, and it's like Mark said, you're your own boss. No one's fucking walked down this road before.

Z: Lets talk about what's happening between Step Forward and Rough Trade?

M: Well there's a live LP coming out on Rough Trade, it was a cassette recording put on to vinyl, so it'll go out cheap, it's redundant for us anyway. Our deal with Step Forward is like, we make a record and they bring it out and take their percentage. But we're free to do something like a live LP with Rough Trade. We've told them about it, it's no secret. We're not too happy with Step Forward at the moment. When you want them to act like an independent they act like a record company, when you want them to act like a record company they act like an independent. When you want someone to meet you at the airport, no one can make it, the casual approach. And then they've got half the work force, mailing out for the police fan club, and that's the record company side.

ZZ: I got the impression there's a lot of tension between the two camps, mainly due to a tour the Fall did with the Cramps.

M: We played with the Cramps, and they're on step forward, and we were just treated like a heap of shit, and we were the only ones bringing any dough in, and you get a lot of Americans over wanting to act like weirdos,

THE FALL GUYS
SAY THINGS TO
BOB GIDDENS



HH OO BB GG OO BB LL NN SS

ON THE LOOSE

could just about understand cockney, but can't quite grasp manxian. In LA I was getting mad and coming out with these fucking vitriolic rants, and no one understood a word of it, they thought we were from Scotland. But still I've got to face it that I write words and not everybody can understand them, it's an interesting limitation in a way, and I think Europe will be like that. I mean I don't give a shit if they understand them or not, if they can't feel the emotion...?

Z: You don't particularly like playing live do you? (directed at Mark).

M: I like going out, but it winds me up. You see that's the paradox of it, cos I think the only place you can rehearse is on stage. I don't mind going on stage, it's just the crap around playing that I hate.

MR: You either hang around the club, which is the worst thing you can do, or you sit in the pub for five hours before you go on, which is naturally what we do!!

M: Gigs are like an exercise really, a way of saying 'we're here, we're here' you play then go away. It's mad, when you think of the draining of energy that goes into forty minutes.

Z: Recording?

MR: We're doing a single at Cargo Studio, playing a bit more and then doing an album.

M: I believe we are on the tip of an iceberg, because I'm writing a lot more naturally, it's a lot more flowing, a lot more me.

Z: Does it come easy to you?

M: No, it goes on for days and days, I don't write a lot. I like to throw things together. People know I'm a writer so they expect things from me and always compare you with what you've done before. But I don't let that affect me. A lot of things I throw out now, I would have kept a few years ago. I know what I want to say, the problem is to get that down to a

form that communicates. The best writing I think is subconscious writing, that's hard to attain! When you don't know what you're writing it usually turns out to be the best

stuff. Although everything I write is shit anyway!

Z: You like to record live in the studio, don't you?

M: Yeah, because I think it brings out the best in the group at the time, people do things subconsciously, like on 'Cowche rumble', I sing that wrong. I never sung it like that before or after.

Z: What role does the producer play then?

M: It's technical really, Grant (Showbiz, who produced 'Dragnet') was totally useless in a way, but it worked out well. You see that was how he thought our LP shouldn't sound! He was always floundering, which brought a lot of good things out, like quick fades. We just bullied him into everything. The great thing is that Grant is making a career out of 'Dragnet', he's getting all these naive London bands going 'oh, you produced 'Dragnet'? and Grant's saying 'yeah, yeah, it was nothing really'. His only previous production experience was with like Steve Hillage groups, where you spend three days getting the guitar right!

MR: Grant only made the tea then!!

M: At the end he said 'well I would have liked another three weeks'. But I'm really proud of it, the sound starts to take over from the material.

Z: What does the future hold then?

M: I think it's about time this group was heard properly.

MR: Things change anyway, when you get someone new in the band.

M: 'Fiery Jack' is very clean sound, but that would have been completely wrong for 'Dragnet'.

Z: What music do you lot listen to?

M: Ask them

MR: Well I like...

M: He's got the most diabolical fucking taste!

MR: Well you've heard that, and that's from someone who plays us the third ear band everytime we're round at his house.

Craig: He's trying to get rid of us then!

when they're just straight middle class jerks, we got our own back on them by taking them up North to Scotland, where nobody wants to see the Cramps in a million years.

Z: OK lets talk about the American trip.

M: Well it took a while to get over it, put it that way. We played the East and West coasts. I.R.S. the record company, who are a bunch of fools, and didn't really know what they were doing. No, playing there was a great experience, cos they view their rock differently, it's like going for a meal, everyone sits around eating. We ended up in LA, and stayed on an extra week and did two gigs of our own. They were great, the LA underground scene, Slash Magazine, great. But before that we were playing gigs with the Buzzcocks, Iggy Pop, but I got a lot of songs out of it. It's a very evil place. The audience reaction was great, they didn't know what the fuck was going on, we had really violent reactions from some of the punks. The clubs over there are clubs, it really shocked me, they wouldn't serve us beer, things like that.

The reason we went to America, was that I thought we were getting taking for granted over here. We were going down very well. America put the Fall back about four months, we went there and played to audiences that were like aliens. I think it did the audiences a lot of good.

Z: What about gigs in Europe, where people don't understand what you are saying?

M: That was the problem in America, everyone was saying 'tone your accent down', they



BOTH PIX: HELEN DAVIES

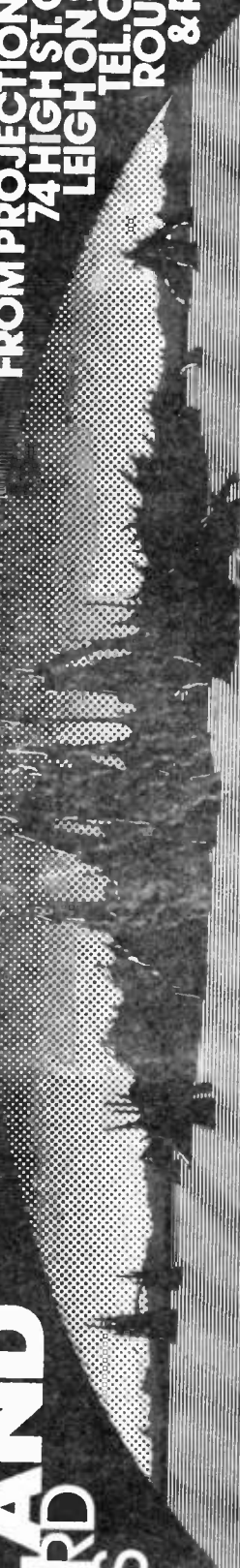
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fall 7

MR: When he plays that we take the hint!
 M: Anything with guitar chords in they can't understand.
 MR: No if you want to be serious, I like Lou Reed, Velvets, T Rex. Go on scorn me, scorn me. But I got most of them off him anyway so he can't call me.
 M: You didn't get fucking T Rex off me!
 MR: We go round to his house and he plays all this rubbish.
 C: Yeah Mark Smith changed his life!
 M: These guys had a cultural dearth, this the advantage of being in the Fall, having a true...
 MR: Shit-bag leading them!
 M: Having a true god among men. Have you a cultural dearth? Join the Fall.
 We're trying to get that Northern thing more into it. We played a gig the other day with this black guy supporting us. He's a female impersonator and we took him to the factory, which is like a rasta place, and you should have seen those bastards reek out. Them with their sexual hang ups. There were fella's coming up to the stage, going 'get that guy off stage'. The black man is proud of his dick.
 OK that's the Fall, hard to take for some of you, but well worth the effort. I'd follow them into the jaws of hell. 'Dragnet' is one of the best LPs you'll ever hear, but I guess it's up to you. No one's forcing you to listen but when you suddenly hear yourself uttering those murmurs of discontent with the music scene - well this is your lifeline, friend. Even Zigzag can learn something from this! Bob Dylan, about fifty years ago wrote 'don't follow leaders, watch out for parking meters'.
 Now hipster, why are you smiling?

Bob Giddens


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SAFARI



CONCLUDING our conversation with Jackie Leven about the past, present and future of Doll By Doll. The bells of Southwark have just struck up . . .

ZZ: Can we talk about your bass players? There was Nick Wiffen, who I just saw at one gig (Reading), then Tony joined.

JL: Nick's doing quite well actually. I think he's about to pick up Iggy Pop's rhythm section — Iggy Pop's drummer played with Nick in his last band, The Pylons. I think Nick's about to pick them both back up now that Jimmy has become disaffected by them.

Tony's a very interesting person. He's a virtual scholar of Aleister Crowley, and he's taken a bit of a drubbing since he joined the band, purely because he understands fundamentals of Magic and life as a magical process, but only within the confines of someone else's words. Now he's coming to terms with the fact that the one thing we do insist upon is that people describe themselves and their situations in their own words and not other people's words. He's throwing up very, very vital ideas at exactly the right times. He's reflecting the discipline which is imposed upon himself and now he's prepared to impose upon us, through his magical understanding of Crowley. That, in turn, has made Jo and Dave wake up quite a lot to their own self-importance. I think because I tend to play down my own self-importance — I may often feel like it's played up, but in actual fact I don't feel that my output has very much to do with me. I feel very much that I'm very much an amalgam of all the sponsors around me. I think, Jo and Dave have finally realised that this band, and its future, is as much a result of their efforts and their deepest feelings, as anyone else's. Suddenly there's a complete new enthusiasm about putting material together. I think that's reflected in that new material.

ZZ: It's a shame this new upsurge of creativity coincides with business hassles.

JL: I think it's pretty good. If it hadn't happened now the Paul Morleys of the world would probably be able to have a good wank over the cover of "Gypsy Blood". But as it happens, the band has risen to the occasion, so's the management of the band, and it's one hell of an occasion to rise to. We're talking about the occasion now where, in the Underground's case, first John Cale left, then Lou Reed left, and the Underground became emasculated and much as I love what Lou Reed's done since, I do feel he hasn't really bettered what he did then. And we're at the point where Jim Morrison turned getting smacked out and crashing cars into buildings into a hobby and finally died of a heart attack in a bath in Paris. I really don't want to end up disassociating myself with Doll By Doll. I can't think of anything more unhappy, more unnecessary, and I certainly don't want to die quite yet, but if the band hadn't had the courage to look to historical precedents and work out their fundamental role at this point, they'd have never had another opportunity. In other words, lately it's been put-your-heart-on-the-line-or-fuck-off time for everyone, and that's been my message to everyone I work with. And they've put themselves on the line.

I think when we re-enter the arena as regards the UK we've either got to do it with tremendous force or not at all. At the moment it's not at all, because, quite frankly, it's not economically viable and it's also utterly fucking boring. We're

expected to play out this ridiculous role as a band which we don't play up, and audiences get pissed off because we're not entirely cosmetic. They get utterly furious because we don't conform to the fashionable idea of who we are and it's very boring.

It's led to us getting more and more spiteful towards our audiences and it led to a period where our gigs were extremely savage, virtually murderous affairs in which we just pinned everyone to the wall with slabs of controlled, torturous violence, and that's not really actually the way we feel. But we'd just got to the point where we'd taken enough of the orchestrated Media kicking that we were getting, and we turned, to an extent, on the people that supported us. Luckily for us the people who have been into the band have understood phases that the band's gone through. We just did a gig at Porchester Hall and that was a glimmer of the direction we're about to launch ourselves into now.

ZZ: Anything else planned, Jackie?

JL: One thing: we heard something obscene a while ago. I don't know if you're aware of it but did a publishing

deal with Virgin — quite a large one. It was more or less based on the understanding that we were capable of writing above and beyond just pure albums and stuff . . . we heard that production would start on a film about Artaud called "Wings of Ash", starring Mick Jagger as Artaud. We understand that Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits has been approached to do the music. We told Virgin it would be like an artistic travesty of justice for anyone else to at least have the opportunity of putting together the music for such a film, anyone other than Doll By Doll. So that's what we're pursuing at the moment, and I think we've got a moderately good chance of getting it.

We've also just released an earlier solo album of mine on cassette. It's selling frighteningly well to members of our fan club. We're thinking of giving copies to people like yourself and possibly Chris Westwood and Paul du Noyer, but I'm not sure — it was made entirely on drugs — If you're not smashed it must seem very self-indulgent. It's well-constructed musically and quite wide-ranging — there's eight-minutes of interplay between electric piano, bass and

hell games 2



PIC: SANTO BASONE

flute, echo effects and stuff. I think the album's very good.

But at the moment I really want to do that "Wings of Ash" thing. We've got so many ideas. The one big thing in business terms that "Gypsy Blood" proved was that we have a backlog of ideas which is difficult to get to the bottom of, there's so many. To do something like that would be utter fun. Our deal with Virgin was described as unusual in the Press, and I hope what's unusual about it is we stand a chance in situations like this, where we're vying with someone who's turned out some of the most turgid, unlistenable, meaningless music in years. The difference between what Mark of Dire Straits would do, and Doll By Doll would do, is almost too great to contemplate. We'd do it for nothing if we had to. I've seen productions on the life of Artaud and they've all made me walk out before half-way, they've been so turgid. I feel we can lend an authenticity and a depth of understanding that any gink guitarist in a pop band never could. Hopefully things like that will come to fruition. If they don't it will be an indication of the immensity of the job that lies before Doll By Doll.

The main thing I've got to emphasise at this time is we're just not going away. We really feel that we're on course. We're really happy with our recorded work, although I must consent that the actual pressing of "Gypsy Blood" must be in the Top Five diabolical pressings of all time. I think the album in its pure recorded state is fabulous, but the pressing is disgusting. The music alone pulls the pressing through. It says a lot about the priority that we've received that the pressings are so bad — so much rolled off the top and bottom ends — while the cutting was great, Yeuch!

Essentially our problem is we don't have ... we're not middle-class chappies who have been to university and know so-and-so in such a record company who knows so-and-so in an agency. There's not intrinsically a lot of difference between us and a band like the Angelic Upstarts. This country is in a situation where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. You've got to decide in which category you belong. I think it's possible to avoid both categories. In fact it's vital to avoid both concepts to stay sane.

We're still the dark horse. It doesn't surprise us at all that we are. But at the end of the day it comes down to one thing. That is, you can only expect a market to be saturated with non-events for so long. You throw stuff at the public and eventually they throw it back. I think sooner or later the public are gonna throw back what they've been getting from the recording industry over the last five years. And all a band like Doll By Doll can do is continue to write from the heart and anticipate that turnabout. I really believe that in the next couple of years people are gonna become very hard about what they're prepared to part with money for.

Someone was talking to me recently, and saying, Brian Eno has this amazing idea that in the future, people will buy mood music. They'll go into supermarkets and look under romance, or melancholia, and just buy albums of mood. I just said, isn't that what they're doing already? "Oh yeah!" It is, all they're doing is buying moods. That's what's going to change. I've got to reiterate what I've said elsewhere, which is, I really feel at the end of the day music's got to be useful. In other words it's got to do, for instance what our music's done

for you, which is it's made you able to go out and face the world with, to an extent, a new-born inner conviction about yourself and the reasons for the decisions you take and the way that they affect the people you personally are gonna reach, and that's how I feel. The music I listen to has that effect on me, not that I've listened to a lot recently that's had that effect on me. I really feel that that's what it's about. It's very odd talking to you at the moment, knowing what we're saying and our attempt to contrive any kind of rapport is set against a background of Southwark Cathedral bells and a complete lack and almost fear of identity by all the music which is being issued by the major corporate labels. Look at the albums coming out at the moment — the Tourists, Original Mirrors, all these people, it's so forgettable. It's very sad. I'm sure it's what those sort of bands want to do, I'm sure within their own terms they're doing well. I think the distance between a band like Doll By Doll and the Pretenders is the distance between Lou Reed when he was in the Velvet Underground and the Monkees. Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground couldn't have got too upset about the Monkees having Top 20 hits when they were doing what they were doing, and that's our position. We're establishing something ... that song on "Gypsy Blood", "When A Man Dies" by Akhmatova. Akhmatova has never sold at all, but she's also recognised as one of the great Russian poets of all time. Everything she does is utterly fabulous. Joe and I at the moment are working on an entire album of material that I've put to music by Akhmatova, which we'd like to release in a limited edition on a fairly ethnic label. Because her poems are staggering. Just how much they lend

themselves to our musical ideas is frighteningly close, so we're gonna do things like that. It's the sort of thing that if Bryan Eno did, it would be considered utterly fantastic. When we do it it'll be considered fairly boring. I'm not very interested in what my peers think about what I'm doing, cos I don't consider what I'm doing to be of particular interest to the people that are alive and ostensibly a viable market for me during my youth. I do consider that the effect I'm gonna have is a long, durable and finally a historic effect. It's a bit sad in a way because it would be great if people could get behind the ideas which are acceptable at the time and totally acceptable once the people who have dealt the ideas have disappeared, either into the grave or into asylums.

The rest of the conversation strayed into relevant small-talk. Jackie mentioned that he'd told the excellent Irish *Hot Press*, he knew he'd die onstage in Detroit in 1982 and had no intention of refuting what some might consider a sensationalist statement or avoiding doing gigs in Detroit. He also talked of the photo session for the "Gypsy Blood" sleeve, which nearly cancelled any hopes of Jackie making the 80s.

They were shooting at a Thameside dock at night. Jackie caught his foot in a length of chain and went over the side. He managed to grab onto something and for endless minutes hung desperately over a 15-foot drop into hard, nasty clay. Finally he managed to climb back up and the picture which adorns the front cover was taken as he stood there, shaken and shattered. The river ain't having him and neither are you.

Kris

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Wednesday night and I'm down The Marquee, strictly pleasure, getting legless at the classic OTWAY-BARRETT RE-UNION binge. I'm about to head off home when Cherry Red Records supremo, Ian McNay, tells me RICHARD STRANGE is playing at 'Hell', a gay club in Covent Garden; why don't I come along? 'Well I'd love to, but it's not on my way home, opposite direction in fact, and . . .' Further arm-twisting from STRANGE'S dynamic kid-manager, Mark Dean, and I'm knock, knock, knocking on Hell's door. I kiss goodbye my sex life again!

Via the bar I make my way downstairs to find two guys jiggling on a small dance floor, lights flashing and disco rhythms pumping. The room fills up and the music suddenly changes from disco to decadence. Berlin decadence, with no light except one spot trained on a stool up one end. Either side I see speakers, a guitar, a mike and a Revox — meet the band! STRANGE, dressed in full length, belted coat, perennial shades and a broad brimmed hat, slumps on the stool.

"THE PHENOMENAL RISE OF RICHARD STRANGE" is about to begin. Just before it does, though, let me explain the story behind the story. "THE PHENOMENAL RISE OF RICHARD STRANGE", (words and music) has been composed over the last two years, during which time STRANGE has picked up the pieces left by the demise of the DOCTORS OF MADNESS; and survived

a stay in a psychiatric hospital. This is the story of those two years, and a whole lot more. THE DATE: 1988. . . LOCATION: HOLBORN, LONDON. STRANGE is a back street lawyer, a futuristic legal-eagle, who becomes the puppet dictator of Europe, and eventually, having foreseen his own death, is killed by the very people who have made him what he is.

A Hitler-type overture breaks into the title track of the album, tentatively scheduled for July. Behind STRANGE is projected weird film of the Kennedy Family and other world leaders. The Revox is working perfectly, (at the sound check it had refused to revolve at all — "Like four members of your band dying simultaneously" STRANGE told me later).

The Revox is an economic necessity at the moment, as STRANGE is not able to afford a band, but that is going to be remedied over the next couple of months. "RICHARD STRANGE WE NEED YOU" is the message and STRANGE accepts the invitation to become dictator. "I'm on top of the world" is the next song — it really shows off STRANGE'S voice.

"I'm on top of the world,
it's like the first time
I kissed a girl". . .

and he runs into the audience and does just that. On through into "I make plans" ("Such crazy plans they say that empty hands do the devils work"). A wonderful

song, spoilt only by a long, indulgent untidy finale. "THE HERO RUNS AWAY", a very powerful number despite a very similar riff to "She's got a ticket to ride", with wonderful rhythm changes. The tape is switched off and it's just STRANGE, playing acoustic and singing. "Always walking into Walls" a song of real poignancy, with STRANGE analysing and examining his values in a way that is refreshingly open. Straight into "Triple Vision". . .

"The kids on the streets are preparing for take-over time,
There on the wall in words eight feet tall,
They're advising you all to join parties and watch the T.V.
When up in the sky there's a vision of mercy
But it might just as well be a fortnight in Jersey for me".

"The T.V. stays on when I'm out so I'm always at home". . .

Back on with the Revox and STRANGE is joined by Secret Affair's sax-man, Dave Winthrop. Next is the single "International Language" (on Cherry Red Records — GET IT and don't forget the B-side it's MAGIC). The next two, "Pre-Play" and "I won't run away", (both aided by Brilliant swooning, roaring, spitting, teasing sax) bring the story to a brain-damaging finale; STRANGE being gunned down by the people who once set him up.

This is one of the best "concept shows" I've seen — I strongly recommend YOU go see it. It's remarkably unpretentious, and intelligently conceived. Individually there are some outstanding songs. If STRANGE is ahead of his time, it's us who should speed up; it would be criminal if this gets lost through apathy. Meanwhile, I'm going to see STRANGE freak out New York — he's playing HURRAHS at the beginning of June. You can expect details of the madness.

CHARLIE VILLIERS



Irate reader M. Black of Norwich and Annie Mossity our oppressed minorities representative are watching the racing on the telly. M. Black speaks:—

(Well if he doesn't show soon I'm going to sod off — I've got my own career to think of)
A. Mossity speaks:—

(We shouldn't have let him go to the Zig Zag Party — if he doesn't turn up this'll be the second issue he's missed).

The author, wearing a balaclava woolly helmet and a certain amount of Cherry Blossom boot polish bursts through the French window.

What an experience! Held hostage in the Iranian Embassy, a BBC man speaks — send in coffee, sandwiches and an expenses form!

(Nonsense! shrieks A. Mossity — Needs and that nice Mr. Banks got their copy in on time — don't forget Zig Zaggers have short memories — what happened to John Tobler, Crispin St. Peters?)

Blimey thats true — I'd better pull a star — how about my old chum and confidante Pete Townshend. Well Pete...

P.T.: Who are you?

(We will ask the questions!!! bellows Helmut O'Helmuth, the Irish Nazi — sought on several continents for having meticulously showered countless prisoners of war while assuring them that they were only going to be gassed).

Ahem as I was saying,

J.W.: Right, well what are we going to see on stage next time the Who work — not just four guys presumably?

P.T.: No. We spent about fourteen or fifteen years of our career with four guys in the band and probably pioneered that heavy metal kind of line up but I think about two years before Keith Moon died I started to get disenchanted, not with the sound itself, I can take as much of that sort of thing as anybody, but as a player I found I was going round in circles a bit. I've always wanted to expand but the Who have always had this very strong sense of tradition, in particular the American fans who've got this sense of the Who being the Who and you don't muck about with it.

J.W.: But I'm the sort of guy who'd be disappointed not to hear the old stuff but presumably you get a bit fed up with the 'see me... hear me' business, will you be getting rid of some old repertoire?

P.T.: No, we're not getting rid of the old stuff but you see when Keith died the Who tradition went out the window really. Roger and I both acted in a deeply emotional sort of way — I mean sure we missed the bastard but we were really emotional because we realised Keith's death had released us from being tied down to the old format. We couldn't carry on as we were anymore because one quarter of the cake was missing and it was an opportunity to expand the band so we brought in Rabbit on keyboards and now we've added three brass players because John's always done brass parts — I mean on Quadrophenia I think there's brass on every track and on certain numbers on stage you miss it so much, so now we'll really be carrying a lot more old material but different material. For years the act has been basically something like 'Live at Leeds' but now we could play anything from Quadrophenia and even 'I Can See For Miles' which is a recent inclusion so we've actually widened the repertoire of the older material.

J.W.: So to be frank, do you think the death of Keith was artistically, something of a release?

P.T.: I think there's absolutely no question about it — you see Keith was a very powerful personality and very resistant to musical change. He had his own way of playing and that's what he stuck to and it was stimulating and exciting working within the style. Keith wasn't holding us back but the thing was that the Who as a band and the fans of the Who and the history of the Who were weighing us down and you'd go out on stage and there's fifteen

JOHN WALTERS

MEETS

years of music — I mean thank God we never made as many records as the Stones or the Beatles or there'd have been endless material that people insisted on hearing. They write and complain. So Keith's death, although at first it was shattering, I think made us all think, 'Well thats the end of the Who' and it was the end of the Who as it was, the end of the old four way magic but also a great opportunity. I think it was Roger, when we were at a meeting sorting out all the financial arrangements and all the bloody boring things that have to be done when somebody dies, sure it sounds corny but we said, sort of we ought to carry on for him. Like a bad radio drama you know, 'He would've wanted it'.

J.W.: Course in some ways Moony's gossip column life overlaid the fact that, well you don't hear Ringo or Charlie Watts stylists but right through rock since the sixties to Rat Scabies the drummers are Moony in a sense?

P.T.: Yeah, but Ringo and Charlie Watts are really American style drummers. Keith never listened to blues, never listened to black music, didn't like it. Now Charlie Watts is a jazzman, listens to Charlie Parker all day and Ringo's American in style. The interesting thing is that Kenny Jones, whose basic approach is early English is now changing not growing towards Keith's fluidity which was like flowing patterns but Kenny and John and I are building a sort of intuitive relationship.

J.W.: There was always the feeling that the Who split into camps a bit but do you find that now there's a social change and you're coming together more as a foursome.

P.T.: Well the basic personalities haven't changed. I think Roger's still resistant to change and can be very unconfident about things 'til the public's accepted them. He can do a track and be knocked out but take a copy home and somebody from the pub says, 'Here, I don't like that' and thats it, it's off the album! John's still reasonably quiet and I don't think I've changed much. If we are growing closer together it's because of something that happened even before Keith died. We were already growing together, we were growing up. Caring more about each others good points and less about each others faults and the one thing that is sad is that Keith was starting to stabilise and Roger always says that that's probably one of the reasons he died, he could never have stood being normal.

J.W.: You say you were drawing more together and yet I can remember John and Keith coming into the BBC to talk about 'Who By Numbers' and they couldn't identify the tracks by the listing and there was this feeling of leaving Pete to sort things out. Had you taken on the role of group leader at that time.

P.T.: Well that was the first album I really went in to shoot from the hip. I took in nine songs and said that's it, that's all I can do 'cos I was going through a period when I'd done Tommy with Ken Russell, heavy touring, I was unhappy about booze, I was unhappy because Roger was unhappy with our managers at the time Chris Stamp and Kit Lambert and they

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SAT. 7 DERBY, THE AJENTA

FRI. 13 SCARBOROUGH, THE PENTHOUSE

SAT. 14 NORTHAMPTON, THE PADDOCK

WED. 18 LONDON, HOPE & ANCHOR •

FRI. 20 BIRMINGHAM, THE CEDAR BALLROOM

SAT. 21 RETFORD, THE PORTERHOUSE

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NEW E.P. 'NEAR THE SOFT BOYS'

NEW ALBUM 'UNDERWATER MOONLIGHT'

PETE TOWNSHEND

were'n't just managers but friends and the group became messy and dissipated and the camps you were talking about were at their most acute so I just wrote about how I felt. When I first played the demos Keith cried, he actually burst into tears! But after that period I had to get my head together. Actually after '75 right up to Keith's death I wanted to get out of the band and we all knew it. I just wanted to change my life. I didn't like life the way it was.

J.W.: Yet that period coincided with a time of change in British rock when there was a feeling that the old order had played itself out and with the punk thing coming up everything changed. And yet with the punks, Rat Scabies and so on, and the mod generation you and the Who seem to have survived as heroes.

P.T.: Maybe the reason is that we've never been afraid of self examination or recrimination.

J.W.: But the mods very literally associated with the sixties and the Who. Did you see any of the mod bands because they'd usually include a Who number to wild applause from fifteen and sixteen year olds, did you see any of these bands?

P.T.: I saw some of the punk and mod bands, sure but I think it would be a great mistake for me to acknowledge this hero worship. Let me tell you a story. We were rehearsing at the Rainbow 'cos of Kenny joining the band and Rabbit and we were going to Cannes to

promote Quadrophenia and we thought we might as well do a live concert at the Rainbow, first in about two years. Well as soon as the tickets went on sale there's immediately a great queue of parkas line up. All the targets and Who badges. So I roll up and go up to the kid at the back of the line and said, 'Look what do you expect?' and he said 'Who are you?'. That's exactly what he said to me. And I think the Who badges for the mods are just something they've got to have, like swastikas with the Hells Angels, and half of them just don't give a shit for the Who, its just that they've got to have the stuff. A lot of the mod bands I've spoken to resent this sort of thing and say that the current mod movement's a new thing and that the Who machine, through Quadrophenia and so on is exploiting them.

J.W.: So they think you're cashing in on them (laughs).

P.T.: Yeah well they've probably got a point but there's a difference between that sort of heroism and Rat Scabies or Steve and Paul of the Sex Pistols because there you've got genuine affection not heroism. They genuinely care and when I'm with them I feel I'm with fellow musicians not somebody who says 'Wow there's God himself'.

J.W.: But apart from admiring fellow professionals do you still have heroes or has the gilt fallen off the rock gingerbread?

P.T.: Well for years, since 1967 I've followed an Indian master called Meher Baba and he's the

only hero I need. I've got past the need for other heroes 'cos Meher Baba's the boss who stands above all people in all fields and I feel there's a tremendous shallowness in the entertainment industry. It's the very fact that someone feels the need to be a hero that makes them get up on stage in the first place and that's something that people seem to applaud yet it's a weakness. It's a weakness to want to be a hero. It's a weakness to go up on stage and jump up and down. But it's a weakness that makes some of us a very good living, I don't know why.

I had heroes, like Jimmy Reed, Chuck Berry, Mick Jagger and so on but I've met 'em all and they're just people and if you hang on in this business long enough you meet everybody - Margaret Thatcher, Jimmy Carter . . . who else can you meet but the people who rule the world and then you feel perhaps people who idolise you have got you in the wrong perspective as well.

J.W.: So really you think the need for heroes is part of growing up, the young process?

P.T.: Yeah, I suppose so really.

J.W.: How old are you?

P.T.: Thirty-four now, thirty-five in May, (animatedly) and then in five years I'll be forty then fifty and so on . . .

J.W.: So do you see yourself continuing towards becoming a middle aged rock 'n' roller?

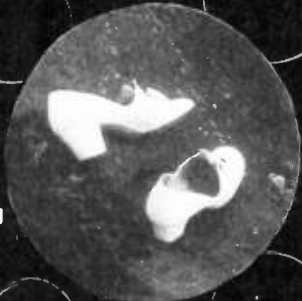
P.T.: Well I've found the only way to get through the next month is to not give a shit about things like that - not to not care, I still care about people around me and so on but I've spent so much of my time worrying about things like that that now I don't worry and in fact it was a couple of guys in the Sex Pistols who said to me what are you worrying about things like that for, so you're getting older so what, who cares and I suddenly realised that the whole punk attitude that looked like anarchy pointed at the establishment was actually true anarchy and meant just live, enjoy yourself and don't get in your own bloody way!

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THE AUTHOR SHARING A JOKE
WITH HIS OLD CHUMS, PETE TOWNSHEND
AND NINA MYSKOW, THE SUN'S QUEEN
OF POP. THE QUEEN OF POP IS ON THE LEFT.

PIC: DICK BARNATT

NIC EGAN



RON WEST



CALLY



MARK WILKINS



NICK HAEFFNER



"EXCUSE me, miss. Waitress, person. Could we have some more milk please?"

It seemed like a good idea at the time, to interview the Tea Set in the Monmouth Coffee Shop. There was only one table in the place big enough to hold us all, and after we'd ordered five cups of coffee, I dumped my tape machine in the midst of the chaos and asked my first deep probing question.

"Could I have the sugar?"

Our Cups Runneth Over

The Tea Set believe in organisation. They hold group meetings to discuss their songs. They devise their own elaborate packaging for their singles. They prepared their own comprehensive seven page biography, and gave it to me.

This is what it told me. They were formed in late 1978, and cut their EP "Cups and Saucers" that Christmas. It sold out. They played various gigs, some as support, some as headline band. Their second attack on Waldo's Records resulted in a single "Parry Thomas / Tri X Pan" which is selling better than hoped. Is that enough?

I don't think so, as I asked them some questions which were quite unrelated to coffee. Their newest member Nick Haeffner plays guitar and was once a Hopeful Chinaman. I asked how he became involved with the Tea Set.

"Through Waldo's Records really. My old band all wanted to be stars in their own right. When that went kaput, I spent six months doing nothing until Nick called me saying Duncan had left the Tea Set."

Duncan Stringer was their previous bass player, and when Nick joined he took up lead guitar while Ron West switched to bass. Drummer Cally explains, "We heard a Clive Pig and the Hopeful Chinamen demo where Nick played some pretty good guitar, so we got him in. But the important thing was that we liked him. In our previous band The Bears the trouble was that the members didn't really know each other. With the Tea Set we try to get friends in the band."

Cally is a drummer and a half. Influenced by everyone from Epic Soundtrax to Phil Collins, his work on the singles is tighter and more inventive than he gives himself credit for. "I think I could get as far as Epic Soundtrax of Swell Maps. He's like me, which is basically a very metronomic pulse rather than a flash thing."

The Tea Set chose their name with care. "We wanted a name that people couldn't use to pigeon hole us. Tea Set doesn't really conjure up any particular type of thing, except that it's obviously English, and we really enjoy being an English band. Funny, the single sells well in America, because they're all into the Englishness of it."

The cover of the new single shows the band dressed as characters from the Mad

Hatter's Tea Party in 'Alice in Wonderland'. Very English. It's worth a minute of your time to think about their covers. Their first release, an EP, was packaged with obvious care in a plastic sleeve including a glossy eight page booklet with pictures, lyrics and reams of useless information such as "Recorded at Hallmark Studios on November 23, 1978. Ground: soft, visibility: fine, going: good." And they did it all themselves, selling for just a quid. Continuing the tradition of lavish home made packages, the new single comes in a fold out sleeve with a poster and all kinds of goodies within. The Tea Set try harder.

Slippin' Away

The Tea Set includes a singer, Nic Egan, who has much in common with the Frankenstein monster. He's about nine feet tall, looks like he was put together out of spare parts, and seems to have a heart of gold underneath. Asked about the packages, he declares, "I think, no matter how big we get, we'll always want to make our things well packaged. Good value."

"We managed to lose a lot of money on the single, because the cover was silk screened, there was a lot of time in the studio, and our accountant is totally out to lunch. We put a lot of effort into it all. When a band puts something out, it's a package of three things. Live gigs, records and the packaging of both those things. Some bands get one or two of them right and the other one flat on its back. We try to get all three right."

Despite their lack of money, Cally has been known to make up tapes of the EP to send to fans who can no longer buy it because it sold out.

An important part of their music is the use of keyboards. Mark Wilkins takes the blame for tinkling the ivories on their behalf. (In fact keyboards are now made out of synthetic materials, but 'tinkling the synthetic materials' just wouldn't sound right, would it?) He's not ashamed to admit a liking for Tangerine Dream, as well as acknowledging the importance of contemporaries like Human League and Devo.

Thinking that I detect more than a trace of art school rock in their lyrics and musical concepts, I subtly introduce the subject into the casual flow of the interview. Heads shake.

Ron 'Total Entertainment' West defends their stance. "Not at all. We're more of a new wave open university."

"More like Remedial Studies, or Adult Education" suggests Cally helpfully. "I wouldn't go as far as Open University." They have a way of turning my questions into nonsense at the drop of a mad hat. "Seriously though," Cally continues, "I think bands playing music is one of the greatest untapped sources of education. Just look at the way rock music has changed things over the last twenty years."

"I think it's more like subversion," adds Nick. "The Gang Of Four, who I don't

the tea set

care much for, have a theory that simply by playing music you are effectively stating that the status quo is all right . . ."

"Status Quo? Yeah, they're all right," laughs Ron.

Cally acts as chairman when the band are in this sort of mood, and he urges Nick to carry on with his comments.

Nick resumes. "In the whole style and presentation of a song you stick to a set structure that everybody recognises, which rhymes everybody recognises. In that way you re-affirm the status quo. But if you do something new, you can change the way people think and act."

Half-empty or Half-full?

The parallel ideas of education and revolution are very important to the Tea Set. Even the music and lyrics of their songs are shaped by their desire to avoid the obvious.

Cally does the explaining this time, "A lot of the time a band writes 'I like the way you walk', and whether or not they like the way the girl in question talks, they've got to write it, because it rhymes. What I like about our writing is

dite explanation, and the conversation turns to more important things. Like money.

"We're not worried about commercial success. When we started we just wanted to have a single out on an independent label. We've done that, so you could say we're already successful in that sense, because we've sold out the EP. But that opens up whole new areas. We could go on to be a successful touring band, we can be successful on a bigger label. It's all relative to the stage you are at. There's no fun in having ultimate goals. The next stage at which we'd like to be successful is to have an interview in Dark Star. If you could arrange that . . ."

I make no promises amid the laughter, and Cally goes on, "Our next aim is to be taken seriously as a band and a bit less as a joke."

New member Nick continues the theme. "Hopefully we can do what we want to do and make a living at it. That's all. But it's not easy. Apart from a few small labels, it's not possible to make any money that way."

Nic Egan feels the same way. "I'd like

Like their name, their music defies easy categorisation. 'Parry Thomas', probably their most accessible song to date, could be described as menacing disco punk, 'Grey Starling' as experimental thrash-pop, 'On Them' as tongue-in-cheek power-chord electronic rock. And they wouldn't have it any other way.

As Cally says, "We get people come to watch us, and they say 'It's all right, but is it rock and roll?' That's the worst. Makes me cringe. Some bands are always going to subscribe to standard rock and roll cliches of taking drugs and beating women up. That kind of band gets signed up because of old school connections. Maybe we can find an A & R man with lower sights who'll sign us because of my Hatfield Grammar School connections."

Paying The Bill

Whatever their connections, the Tea Set work hard to create a music that is worthwhile as well as enjoyable. For just a little of your hard earned cash they'll deliver black plastic full of good music, wrapped up better than the average mummy.

So maybe their subject matter and their stance looks a bit arty. At least their art's in the right place. Why not join?

Johnny Black



PIX BY MICK YOUNG

that we don't feel obliged to work to the rules. With a song like 'B52-G' we can say a lot in fifty seconds with no rhymes at all. It's simply a list, a chant, but it works. It can be used as a means of communication of ideas, or of non-communication, to put certain people off."

To their own surprise, this policy has already resulted in a number of letters from fans. "We got a letter the other day from a bloke who said one of the things he likes about us is that we don't write about politics or love and marriage." How true. Their subject matter ranges from attempts on the world land speed record to Yugoslavian Expressionist movies. And 'Tri-X Pan' is about . . . let Nic tell you. "It's based on a friend of ours who is obsessed with photography. We had this joke once, about people who get obsessions. Ron has a big pile of Hi-fi magazines beside his bed, and we were imagining that he'd go to bed at night and open up this centre page spread of a flashy tuner-amplifier. And this other bloke with his camera mags, if you look at them they're like dirty books in a way, with glossy pictures of cameras . . ."

"Just look at the size of the lens on that then . . ." Ron interrupts Cally's eru-

to re-iterate that, because I have trouble with the Social Security people. They think that because I'm in a band I must make lots of money."

Cally too warms to the subject. "I work half days as a cleaner. It's my aim to be able to buy my own vacuum."

Down To The Grounds

A new band like the Tea Set, has to make up in enthusiasm and hard work what they lack in polish and business know-how, but already their native wit is telling them a lot about The Biz (as she is known).

"We realise that at the moment, companies like Warners and CBS are out of our league. It's also nice in a way to be with a little label and keep our principles. But if somebody in a major company would do what say, Steve Lillywhite did at Virgin for XTC, that would be amazing. There are very few people like that around."

Some idle moments pass in contemplation of all the people who are not like that, and for legal reasons that portion of the interview will be forever lost. However, the Tea Set are heartened by the actions of some members of the biz. John Peel, for example, has helped and encouraged them and they have recorded a session for his show.



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I always thought rock bands stayed in their beds till at least two o'clock in the afternoon. The Revillos managed to shatter that illusion by being up and bouncing at ten o'clock in the morning. But then again, the Revillos are one of the most active bands on the circuit. They are too full of zest and vitality to lie about on their beds.

Felix (bass) and Hi-fi Harris (guitar) were in Edinburgh, the band's base town. The rest were in London, recording a video of "Scuba Scuba", the latest single. They had recorded some of it the day before, all dressed up in scuba suits. A lot of the video was shot underwater. Not being able to swim didn't bother Eugene or his brother, drummer Robo Thythm — they were game to get their lungs full of water for the sake of their art. Robo emphasised that people are often game to do things until it comes to the crunch, then most back out. Not The Revillos. They seem to revel in jumping in up to the neck. That's why they think they are more likely to succeed than the average group, because they are prepared to get up off their butts and do something, and see it through all the way.

Fay Fife, the band's infamous female vocalist, says that actual musical ability is not the group's strongest point. Fay and Eugene did not take up instruments until after the Rezillos split. Fay can now play keyboards, as can Eugene, who also played guitar on two singles, "Motorbike Beat" and "Scuba Scuba". The main reason for learning to play was so that they could write songs. Fay and Eugene write most of the songs, but the other members of the band write as well. Robo has written a slow ballad-type number called "On the Beach", which, at time of writing, hasn't been played live yet. The band want to record it first, and experiment with the sound, drums in particular. There is also quite a backlog of new songs waiting to be rehearsed, due to the band's heavy schedule.

With three singles under their belt, many reckon it's time for a Revillo's album. The band don't want to lock themselves away in a studio for a couple of weeks like most bands do. Instead of bashing down an album all at once, they prefer to lay down tracks one at a time. They use the Barclay Towers Studio in Edinburgh, because it is handy for them, and they know the studio. They know which button does what, and that's the way they like it. They produce their own recordings, because only they know what they want to sound like. And eight track recording is enough for them as well.

Eugene has pretty set ideas about what the album should be like. For a start, it is a long player, not an album. It will include all the singles, and enclose an era of Revillos history. So now you know.

The band seem to be succeeding in their ideas. They said they would take the sound back to the original 1977 Rezillos style and expand it along different lines. In my opinion, the sound is still very early Rezillo-ish, but they are definately advancing the sound and ideas, while still retaining the originals. It's not an easy task that they have set themselves. They now also have total artistic control, due to setting up their own label, Snatzo Records. They design their own covers

SIMON REEVES



SPIRAL SCUBA

THE REZILLOS ARE DEAD. LONG LIVE THE REVILLOS! SAYS FRITZ, WHO'S MAD ON 'EM AND SAYS SO HERE: GURGLE GURGLE

and labels, and handle all the recording side of it as well. They fix up their own gigs, have their own P.A. and a van to shunt it about in, as well. Due to not hiring a van and P.A., the money from gigs pays the band and a road crew. They seem happy with this arrangement.

The original idea of doing gigs only at weekends has now been adapted into a format of doing two or three gigs running, then rehearsing, running Snatzo Records or indulging in their various other pursuits till the next batch of gigs is on them. This removes the need to go on long, rigorous tours (touring was a major factor in the Rezillos split).

The band's first single, "Where's the Boy for Me", sold very respectfully, and the second "Motorbike Beat" charted in France, and sold more than double the amount of the first, despite the

total lack of airplay. Eugene reckoned that "Motorbike Beat" didn't get played on the radio because it was too "yobbo-ish". "Scuba, Scuba" might get airplay; it's a catchy, bubbly little ditty, and could have the housewives singing along as they kick the babies for shitting on the floor. The flipside is another scuba song, "Scuba Boy Bop". I asked what the obsession with scuba diving was. They said they were more into voodoo now, jungle rock and all that. Hmrrrrrr.

Babs and Cherie, the two manic/back-up dancers, didn't seem to want to talk much, they preferred to talk amongst themselves. I dragged them into the conversation by asking how they got involved with the group. Turns out that they were the only ones to fit the required bill. They were young, female and... clincher... willing to get up off their butts and rip up all their roots and get involved in the band. Most of the other applicants wanted to stay with their boyfriends and pump our babies. Babs and Cherie were perfect as the cave girl rockers that Fay wanted. Again, this was a throwback to early Rezillo days, when Fay Fife (then Candy Floss) and Gale Warning danced and bawled behind Eugene.

Fay Fife made a point of saying that she was not happy with the band. If she was, there would be no point in going on. The Revillos seem to be moving from strength to strength, motivated by a powerful driving force, and a determination that makes a mule seem wishy-washy. On record, they are boppy, danceable and catchy. Onstage, they are the best live band going, zany, deady and impossible to stand still to. But don't take my word for it. Go and check for yourselves.

ellie jay
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Sid (wearing Sex Pistols shirt, photo)
Sid and Nancy (photo)
Johnny Rotten (photo)
The Clash (White Man single, single pic)
The Clash (spaced photo)
The Clash (on stage photo)
Mick Jones (portrait photo)
Throbbing Gristle (Gary Gilmore Memorial Society photo)
Suicide (first album cover)
Ultravox (pic and logo)
Angelic Upstarts (Liddle pic and logo)
A.T. (Flying Up The Spindle Way, logo and bird)
999 (stickers logo)
X-Ray Spex (2 colour logo)
UK Subs (multi colour logo)
The Undertones (1984 Tour shirt)
The Undertones (You've Got My Number, logo)
Siouxsie (leaving photo)
Siouxsie (portrait pic)
Adam Ant (stage photo)
Billy Idol (leathers photo)
Billy Idol (stage photo)
Ian Dury (stage photo)
The Wild (into the Valley, single cover pic)
Stiff Little Fingers (fingers design)
Stiff Little Fingers (inflammable material)
Stiff Little Fingers (Kurs for Sale)
Wire (pic and logo)
N.Y.C. (pic and logo)
TRP (first logo)
Pretenders (logo)
Gang of Four (logo)
Gang of Four (photo)
Pete Dinklage (modern dance pic)
Devo (Are We Not Men, single photo)
Patti Smith (I Me I Love Me, logo and logo)
Patti Smith
B52's (pic and logo, album cover)
The Daily Union (Blue logo)
The Daily Union (Even Nappies Shine pic and logo)
The Daily Union (photo)
Fashion (pic and logo)
Ramones (Ramones Racket to Russia pic and logo)
Bob Marley (burnin' pic)
Peter Tosh (portrait photo)
Magazine (in the Move, Round Your Ws, pic and logo)
Will Norman (No Rod, Noice, pic and logo)
Femot (single cover pic)
Lonesome (No More, group logo)
The Tronics (photo and logo)
The Who (Max rdn logo)
The Specials (Gangster Standing pic, with logo)
Vishnu (Gangster Running pic, with logo)
The Selector (Gangster With Radio pic, with logo)
AKA (check design with logo)
Secret Affair (leather design with logo)
The Jm (pic, with logo)
Police (Mutando's photo with logo)
Scotter Photo (Brighton Made on Parade)
Scotter Photo (Battersea Power Station, Quadrophonia)
Scotter Photo (rashed Scooter, Quadrophonia)
Mod Target (three rings, red and blue)
Horizontal Stripes (three)
Multicolour squares
Faint Tapes (interference pattern)
Bullet Hole (red and black)
Subway Photo (Quadrophonia)
Margate Pier (photo, Quadrophonia)
David Bowie (collage of pic as)
David Bowie (low cover, two colours)
Pop (metallic K, photo and logo)
Pop (top line stage photo)
Gary Numan (inner sleeve photo, Hepatics)
Eno (Before and After Science, pic and logo)
New York Dolls (photo 1)
New York Dolls (photo 2)
Johnny Thunders (photo)
Lou Reed (Transformer album cover)
Lou Reed (Silver Mirror 12" single pic)
Talking Heads (photo)
Heartbreakers (bullet wounds photo)
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Motorhead (first 12" single pic)
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SINGLES

BY STACEY BRIDGES

About a year or so ago, I used to buy on average about 20 singles each week, none of which were on established labels or had any affiliation with major record companies, and a lot were, besides being obscure, of foreign origin and difficult to get hold of. My motives for undertaking this perverse practice was a genuine belief in the popular theory that a good deal of the most important, exciting and just plain interesting rock 'n' roll being made was filtering out on these small 'amateurish' labels thereby escaping the general media and therefore the public. But if that was true then (and in hindsight I'm not quite so sure it was), it definitely isn't the case now. There are just as many, if not more singles being released on independent small labels, but assuming this pile before me to be a representative cross-section the overwhelming majority of them are in one way or another simply duff. This is not an absurd, hysterical backlash to a trend in the record business that almost everyone considers to be healthy and necessary, but a simple statement of fact. Small isn't always beautiful — it can often be insular, shoddy, and dumb. At the time of writing there are some great singles about. 'Geno' is the best record to top the charts for at least six months, Squeeze have released two of the years most memorable singles from the stunning 'Argybargy' album, and a couple of my personal favourites are 'Treasure' by the Tear-drop Explodes (Zoo cage 008) and 'The Lonely Spy' by Lori & The Chameleons (Korova Kow 5) — how these two records have escaped mass acclaim is entirely beyond me.

When I spoke to Needsy declaring my interest in writing a regular singles page he immediately sent me over a pile of stuff which I shall crucify later, but first I'd like to mention a few of the records I had in mind to talk about anyway. JOHN CALE, Welshman, one of the reasons why the Velvet Underground will be recognised some day as one of the most influential bands ever to come out of America, one of rock's true pioneers . . . John Cale has a single out 'Mercenaries (Ready for War)' b/w 'Rosegarden Funeral Of Sores' (Spy IR 9008). If you've heard the recent 'Live Sabotage' album you'll know that the A-side is as venomous and dramatic a piece of rock 'n' roll as anyone's ever recorded. This version here is a studio cut but it's lost none of the excitement and power that distinguishes the album . . . in fact the delivery, especially Cale's deranged 'target visibility countdown', is more refined and intense, and ultimately more potent. The B-side is one of Cale's eerily putrid little numbers, and the whole record left me wishing he'd be more prolific in his recorded output. WAH! HEAT are being talked about quite a lot at the moment and their single, in case you haven't heard it, 'Better Screams' b/w 'Joe' (Inevitable 001) is excellent. It opens with the sort of chord sequence that has kicked off many a great record and then proceeds with a wall of sound/jangle guitars effect that is hypnotic and relentless. John Peel played a recording of Wah! Heat's performance at the last night of Eric's. Liverpool, and it confirmed all the promise that this single suggests. Shake Records is a new label from America formed by Alan Betrock and their first release is The d'B's 'Black And White' b/w 'Soul Kiss (Parts 1 & 2)'. The under-rated Chris Stamey is in the d'Bs along with the even more under-rated Peter Holsapple, and if this peculiarly poppy and seductive single is an accurate reflection of their forthcoming album they can have my five quid right now. 'Black And White' has a very clean, crisp sound and is almost frantic and rushed in its exuberance . . . one of the freshest records I've heard for a long time, and all three of the above are strongly recommended, which is more than I can say for the aforementioned records that



Kris gave me. . . there were several that would drive sane and reasonable men to acts of wanton depravity, such is their overwhelming awfulness, but most of them were just mediocre and instantly forgettable. There were however a few that were really not that bad at all.

In no particular order they are:—

ZAINE GRIFF — 'Ashes & Diamonds' b/w 'The Haunt' (Automatic K17610).

This one's beginning to get quite a bit of air-play now and if I were a gambling man I'd stick my neck out and predict at least Top Twenty status for it. Despite the obvious Bowie pose and vocal inflections it has strong appeal in its own right due largely to a very good synthesiser hook and interesting if rather enigmatic lyrics. Produced by Tony Visconti.

RENT BOYS — 'Kick Down The Door' b/w 'Feeling Ice' (WEA K18230).

Reggae-tinged, echo on the vocals making all but the title undecipherable. Good tune, strong arrangement, this does grow on you as they say, but whether it will be allowed to be another matter. In my blissful ignorance I know nothing about Rent Boys but will definitely look out for their next record.

GRAHAM PARKER — 'Stupefaction' b/w 'Women In Charge' (Stiff BUY 72).

Parker is back after his excellent 'Squeezing Out Sparks' album on a new label and with a song that just about maintains that excellence. Not as volatile and intense as Parker at his very best but solid enough and with a chorus line catchy enough for surely even the most insensitive radio programmer. Nicky Hopkins is on there playing piano somewhere too. Some people might say that Graham Parker is still making the same records he was three years ago, which if true, is not I think an altogether bad thing.

REGINA RICHARDS AND RED HOT — 'Tyger' b/w 'Tug Of War' (A & M AMS 7516).

Took me by surprise a bit this one. Produced, very sparsely I might add, by Richard Gottehrer, it has an insistent beat to the chorus that rescues it from the jaws of mediocrity. Regina sings well enough, the song itself is reasonably attractive but overall it's a record that leaves you expecting more the next time you play it. Deceptive.

ENGLISH SUBTITLES — 'Time Tunnel' b/w 'Sweat'/'Reconstruction' (Small Wonder small 22).

Probably the least commercial of all the records I'm reviewing here, but quirky enough to appeal to anyone with anarchic lug-holes and brain to match. I first heard this on Peel's show (where you'll probably be able to hear most of the records under discussion here) and I thought it came over quite well. It has a good, melodic riff, plenty of drive and energy, and thankfully there are no frills. Have a listen.

HEARTBEATS — 'Talk To Me' b/w 'Don't Want Romance' (Red REDS 002).

One of the first releases on what in terms of hit records could turn out to be a highly productive new record label. The lead singer of Heartbeats sounds alternately like John Lennon, Eric Carmen, and someone else I can't think of at the moment . . . novel but hardly that interesting. This record is workmanlike rather than inspired and will doubtless be played on the radio a lot because of its conformity and obvious hit potential.

BUBBA LOU & THE HIGHBALLS — 'Love All Over The Place' b/w 'Over You'

Another new label as low-key as one could possibly get. This record is anything but low-key though — it's a dancing record, a party record even, based largely around the title and chorus, and with sweeping strings and the highest standards of intelligent, provocative and demanding music to which you are all obviously accustomed it is of course hopeless muzak. But not altogether unpleasant.

THE PULSATERS — 'Modern Man' b/w 'Cos We're Squatters' (Street Beat Lamp 1).

Yet another new label and a good record to start it off. There is an awful lot going on throughout the duration of this record (including some bizarre Osibisa-like whistling and drumming), but listen especially to the really outstanding guitar work and the snappy convoluted bass playing. Above it all there is a good strong chorus, melodic enough for even the simplest of tastes. More interesting than most things here and good fun t'boot.

THE CATHOLICS — 'Tropical Russians' b/w 'Echo Echo' (Clerical CL 0001).

This could almost be the best of this month's



ENGLISH SUB-TITLES - ANOTHER PRICK IN THE WALL (ONLY JOKING)

bunch in its own small way. It falls down by sounding far too lightweight in places but mercifully has more substance to it than you might think on first hearing. I envisage this being played on the radio, hopefully instead of the thoroughly tedious and lame Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark. It encroaches on roughly the same territory and although it's not my own personal preference in music, when conceived and performed with panache and intelligence it can sound most effective. The Catholics nearly get there but the longer this record goes on the further away they get, and the ending is decidedly unsatisfactory.

THE AMBER SQUAD — 'I Can't Put My Finger On You' b/w 'Tell You A Lie' (S & T ST1).

'The Sound Of Leicester' according to the label. The only other band of any repute that I know (or knew) of from Leicester is and was Family, which probably immediately marks me as an ignorant prig. Maybe we'll review only singles from Leicester in next month's issue to improve my knowledge and redress the balance on what appears to be an under-rated town. The Amber Squad on the evidence of this record aren't exactly inspired or original, but they are solid and their enthusiasm and general competence is evident. The sleeve notes on the back of what is an unusually informative sleeve begin 'The Catalysts to spark Leicester's Cultural Revolution — or just another bunch of social wasters tossing good money to the wind?' I rather think (and hope) the former.

Right, those were the acceptable records — from now on it gets worse, much worse. The following records are mediocre, some verging very strongly towards being completely duff.

THE RIVALS — 'Here Comes The Night' b/w 'Both Sides' (Oakwood ACE 011).

How to ruin a good song using an ancient Pete Townshend guitar technique and a surplus of unharnessed exuberance.

THE CARTOONS — 'Lunchtime Love Affair' b/w 'Dark Alleys' (Hot 001).

Could have conceivably been a good record but is irretrievably doomed by an exceedingly wimpy chorus.

THE VYE — 'Five Hours 'till Tonight' b/w 'Right Girl, Wrong Time'/'Staying In Bed With The Phone' (Dead Good Dead 8).

Very disappointing because I've heard other things by this band and they are, despite this, a good little outfit.

STIV BATERS — 'Not That Way Anymore' b/w 'Circumstantial Evidence' (Bomp 128).

A very tired sounding 'power-pop' work-out totally lacking in conviction.

REAL TO REAL — 'White Man Reggae' b/w 'One Of These Days' (Red REDS 001).

I'm genuinely undecided about this one and I've only put it here because I'm sure it will get better the more I play it. More next issue.

THE HUNS — 'Busy Kids' b/w 'Glad He's Dead' (God 001).

Sounds like Yogi Bear's mate Boo Boo backed by the Stooges on valium.

THE PUSH — 'Geraldine' b/w 'Victims Of The Moon' (Fabulous JC5).

A single that does absolutely nothing for me at all. As non-descript as any record I've heard this month.

THE TREND — 'Polly And Wendy' b/w 'The Family Way' (MCA 583).

One of those clever clever impeccably produced pop records that are nauseating beyond endurance.

THE SUSSED — 'I've Got Me Parka' b/w 'Myself, Myself & I Repeated' (Graduate GRAD 7).

Ditto.

Now the following records are so indescribably rotten they should be withdrawn from circulation as soon as possible and the perpetrators apprehended and reprimanded with a good clip round the ear.

ZIRO BABY — 'Goodbye' b/w 'Time Off' (Tronics 002).

VOMIT VISIONS — 'Punks Are The Old Farts Of Today' (Rock-O-Rama).

THE MANCHESTER MEKON — 'Not Forgetting' b/w 'Have A Go-Go'/'Jonathan Livingstone Seafood' (Newmarket New 102).

Here's hoping next month's bunch of singles will prove all my pompous theorising at the beginning to be a load of tripe.

STOP PRESS

LATE ARRIVALS, BY HUGH JARSE

REMA — REMA : WHEEL IN THE ROSES (4AD)

Just over a year ago we did three pages on REMA — REMA: thought they were good and destined for a few things. Then . . . nothing 'cept a few gigs. They appeared to dissolve in confusion after they lost their support dates on the aborted Banshees tour of last Autumn. (Ironical 'cos John McKay was living with their old manager). Whatever, guitarist Marco (of Banshees 100 Club one-off and Models fame) has resurfaced in the Ants, drummerette Max is dancing and the other three I dunno.

Here's four tracks recorded live last June when they were shaping into a distinctive ensemble — 'instrumental' 'Fond Affections', and the climatic set-closing double shot of 'Feedback Song' and 'Rema-Rema.' The sound is dense, growling, synth-laden and unbroken by such things as choruses, like a less-streamlined Furs. Marco is everywhere with his Hendrix-style guitar heroics. Vocals are unintelligible 'cept for 'Fond Affections.' One for the archives.

TEX RABINOWITZ: 'HOT ROD MAN.' (Silent)

Silent is a new independent of highly discriminate taste with quality rather than chartable quantity the aim — hence the limited 1,000 pressing of the first three releases. Silent manager is the infamously unsilent Jock Scott, of Zig-Zag party Master of Ceremonies renown. I reckon they made a good start with the first three — Janet Armstrong, Bubba Lou (which *Stacey* shoulda reviewed elsewhere) and my fave, Tex Rubinowitz, rebel maniac from the Lone Star state. This red hot dollop of choo-choo resided immovably at the top of the Rock 'n Roll charts for weeks when it came in on import on Ripsaw Records. Now's your chance.

All three Silent Records available by mail order only. (£1.20p inclusive of postage and packing). From: 118, Talbot Road, London W.11.

VIC GODARD AND SUBWAY SECT: 'SPLIT UP THE MONEY.' (Oddball).

And it's nearly four years now since I saw the sixteen-year-old Vic Goddard take a stage and thrust out 'U.S. Cunts' with the original chaotic, sprawling Sub-

ways. Over the years he's developed into a prolific evocative poet-songwriter, an under-rated and unpredictable influence, who seems to spend a lot of time lying low. This is the third single he's done (the last 'Ambition' remains a neglected classic) and takes a few plays. It's off the wall and insidious Northern Soul bass but light drumming, a mandolin and Vic's vibrating vocal tones. Album soon — just deserts round the corner?

BASEMENT FIVE: Silicone Chip (Island)

THE Five make their vinyl debut with a sly dig at computerised leisure activities. Electronic ping-pong goes bip-bop as DM intones the fun chorus, 'Silicone chip, ain't fish and chips.' The rhythm is stop-start and irresistible. The B side is a talkover version called 'Chip Butty'! Great debut single that lives up to the promise, but bigger guns still to come.

SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES: Christine (Polydor)

DIVING deeper than ever for new subtleties, the Banshees come up with a strong, dark but highly catchy chart-stopper. Built on a relentless Budgie-beat, the song is about a lady with multi-schizophrenia; the understatement and compassion in Sioux's vocals is a real contrast to the stark terror of 'Eve White—Eve Black', the other side, which sees the group in a raging cauldron of conflicting emotions. Ain't nothing stopping 'em now.

K.N.

The Beast — Empire — Thrill (order 101)

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STOP PRESS 2

S.P. 3

IT'S seven in the morning and the last *Zigzag* page has been glued, the old brain's stewed, and I stagger downstairs to see what the postman bringeth. Horrors! At least four spanking hot new elpees I'd love to get in the mag, but it's too late. As ZZ is done at least a fortnight before it appears in the shops it is with a sunk feeling I realise it'll be about six weeks before a review can appear.

Normally we just miss out on the average albums cos they're well-covered history by then. However, some we still really wanna remind you about or just record the ZZ view for posterity.

For instance, I think "Colossal Youth" by the *Young Marble Giants* (Rough Trade) is one of the year so far's debuts. They had a couple of tracks on the Cardiff label Z-Block's recent sampler which boded massively. The YMGs dare to be different, scoring on sheer subtlety and insidious melody. There's only three of them — Alison Stratton (voice), Philip Moxham (bass) and Stuart Moxham (guitar-organ). No drummer, just percussive instrument backing. It's quiet music with nifty lyrics, not for when you feel rowdy but great when the old barrage turns from exhilaration to headache. Alison's voice is well up in the mix — good good good, cos it's like an individual instrument in its own right, which eats through the grey matter maggot-style.

Also on Rough Trade comes the *Pop Group's* "For How Much Longer Must We Tolerate This Mass Murder?", a stewpot of slogans, clipped funk, gauzy noise and convoluted singing of Norman Wisdom intensity. I love the funk. Will their ever-escalating conviction concerning world strife turn into what would be its matching natural course — will they become good missionaries? **be**

Glaxo Babies seem to be treading the early footsteps of the Pop Group, fellow Bristolians who lend 'em their bass-player (ah!). They've abandoned the effective song structures of the previous two singles and gone for funk, electronic noodling, assorted tapes and a powerful slice of racey, distorted jazz. At least it's a change from the subhuman syndrum-stomp of joyless divs. The album's on Heartbeat and it's called "Nine Months To The Disco".

MCA must've really moved to get *Joe Ely's* "Live Shots" — a "souvenir" from his recent UK tour — out so soon. Lotsa Clash pix on the inner sleeve . . . but you know I don't think they're on any tracks! Can't hear any which sound like they come from the Hope 'n' Anchor gig Jones 'n' Strummer helped elevate. All seem from the Venue, where Carlene Carter leapt up for a spot of vocalising. Maybe if they'd used material from the steamy Hope gig the record would've been blessed with a bit more atmosphere. Instead it sounds like a vinylised Venue! Nonetheless you get "Finger-nails", "Boxcars" and the other delectable ingredients performed to perfection. Yes, a good souvenir (Good luck Greeny).

I've loved *Burning Spear* with a vengeance since "Marcus Garvey" exploded into reggae like no force since Marley in '75: the ultra-heavy slow-dry ridims, smokey, impassioned vocals — it all added up to an immense presence and power, which has charged every subsequent album — "Man In The Hills", "Dry And Heavy" and "Social Living" — plus assorted 45s. Now comes "Hail H.I.M." (*Burning Spear*, released through EMI), after a long wait.

Winston Rodney is intensely devotional as ever — the sentiments are Jah, Gar-



ALBUMS

vey and Africa sure, but the man's passion is all. The music is hypnotic and atmospheric as ever. He uses assorted Wailers for the backings — they play with economy and feel — and if anything, the mood's more "up", (though "Jah A Go Raid" ranks among his dooziest).

Alternative TV could've conquered the world but Mark didn't want to (fair enough). "Action Time Vision" (Deptford Fun City) charts the recorded career of ATV from '77 to '79 and the final mutation into the Good Missionaries. Compiled by Mark, it consists of the "pre-freak out side" (the super-tuned, super-aware, ground-breaking-for-the-time punk-tones of the title track, "Life", "How Much Longer", "Love Lies Limp" and the under-rated slinky reggae of "Life After Life") and the "Freak out fully accomplished" side (say no more).

The second album by *The Cure* met with a non-deserving drubbing on its appearance, but "A Forest", to my furry ears, is a severe achievement — but it's easy to see why it wouldn't go down well in certain quarters. The blurred tree photos, slow-to-medium tempo tracks, and use of subtlety means there isn't much of the immediate impact which bounced out of "Three Imaginary Boys", their debut of last year. It might seem New Musicky and vague, 'specially with arty-titles like "A Forest", "A Reflection", "The Final Sound", "M" and "Three", but this music sees a matured Cure, less naive, more steady.



HELLO LOU

LOU REED: *Growing Up In Public* (Arista); MINK DE VILLE: *Le Chat Bleu* (Capitol)

We'll probably go into the lengthy saga of "Le Chat Bleu" at some later date, but basically, Willie De Ville went to Paris to record his third LP cos he wanted to use the singing string arrangements of Jean Claude Petit and liked the city's atmosphere. However, on completion, he found he'd been dropped by Capitol and the album seemed destined to gather dust in the vaults.

Since then the episode has received a dollop of outraged Press activity. Now finally, "Le Chat Bleu" . . . on Capitol! And yes they would have been bonkers not to put it out. Paris seems to have drawn WDV's multi-cultured street romance obsession into full bloom. With total assurance he drifts from the clutched-heart simmering passion of "That World Outside" to "Slow Drain", a steamy Puerto Rico percussion vamp with sizzling brass. Then again to the Cajun swing of "Mazurka", night-club doowop of "Bad Boy", rock 'n' soul of "Lipstick Traces", more castanet ballads . . . good old Willie, knew he could do it.

Lou keeps 'em coming and, as usual, there's the same mixture of slick throwaways, sly humour and glimmers of brilliance. This time no ground-breaking excursions like "Street Hassle" or "The Bells", but a much greater reliance on the words, always Lou's forte if he felt like it. Alright so you still get choruses of "Love Is Here To Stay", but Lou hasn't managed such an incisive mouthful as the stop-starting "So Alone" since "Berlin". This time you don't get the feeling he dashed 'em off the top of his cranium in the Max's bog. They're thoughtful, witty, bitter and observant, and mainly inspired by his life. Stuff about his mother, school, the playground . . . an uncharacteristically candid look at Lou. Unfortunately a lot of the music is still that smooth, ungutsy yank-rock (Michael Fonfara gets a joint composing credit), but "Growing Up In Public" sees Lou Reed, fourteen years after "The Velvet Underground and Nico", still a force not a farce.

MIDNIGHT RAGS: *Werewolf of London* (Ace); THE TEARDROPS: *Final Vinyl* (Illuminated Records); HICKS FROM THE STICKS (Rockburgh)

THE rise of the Indie-album . . . In some cases they're a necessary platform for full realisation of the artist's ideas — as in Midnight Rag's case. They can be an excuse to piss about in a studio for half an hour, like Manchester's Teardrops, or it's a good way of bunging a lot of local bands onto one record — "Hicks From The Sticks", which ploughs Up North and gathers together outfits from Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, etc. Different intentions, varying enjoyment levels.

Midnight Rags is Paul Roland's vehicle. Assisted by various cronies he strums his stuff on such titles as "Lon Chaney (1883-1930)", "Blades of Battenberg", and "Werewolves of London". Yes he has a fascination for horror movies and the macabre, the tunes ain't bad and he's a (slightly hipish) name to watch.

The Teardrops' album is another dollop of Mancunian jolly fun — instrumentally wackiness, experiments and smatterings of songs. They include Buzzcock Steve Garvey in the lineup and ex-Fall drummer Ca Burns produced. For mates and the Clique.

"Hicks From The Sticks" takes on the fashionable task of lumping an area's tal-

ent on one disc. So naturally the result is patchy. Compiler Des Moines wants to spread Music Biz domination from London to the North. Fine if you got the bands to back it up. Here they've sure got the numbers but not many guns. A lot of it's arty, a lot of it's pleasant, some — like Wahl Heat (silly name), Clock DVA and Section 25 is good. The rub is, it's all reminiscent of other's achievements, no matter how far-out. However, better than most other indie-samplers and well-meaning.

MARTIN REV (Infidelity)

THE instrumental half of the incredible Suicide duo turns up a "solo album". You'd imagine that such a creature would simply be Suicide minus the Vega vocals, a collection of backing tracks. Sort of, but...

Martin Rev has an arsenal of keyboards, rhythm boxes and sound effects at his disposal which he uses to conjure amazing woggles of jigsaw terror with customary manic cool. This is essentially an album of moody rhythm, more sprawling and lengthy than the Suicide workouts, but very powerful. Six tracks ranging from the radiant melody of the opening "Mari" through the creepy exhorting of "Baby O Baby" (the only "vocal") to the clattering thrash of "Jomo". The dominant sound on "Nineteen 86" is booming church bells.

This is the fourth ish running I've raved about Suicide. I can't help it, they're amazing. Check this after the new duo album.

CRIS
LATE ONE TOYAH: The Blue Meaning (Safari)

"The Blue Meaning" is the first album project by Toyah, excluding 'Sheep Farming in Barnet' which was really more of a compilation of singles and out-takes. Treating this twelve inch plastic platter as a debut album enables me to praise it very highly indeed. The main reason being that Toyah Wilcox (who supplies verbals and unusual sounds) and her band have delivered us with a most varied album which has only been surpassed once this year, as far as I'm concerned and that was by the excellent Psychedelic Furs album (another first, I might add).

That Toyah and The Psycho-Furs gain practically the same kind of audience is purely coincidental. When I spoke to Toyah earlier this year she said that she wasn't too worried if people called her music pretentious or not, since she has the kind of black sense of humour to over-ride any comments such as that. Both her sense of humour and the pretentiousness come across on this album — which features the self-styled orange-flamed punk queen tied outside a haunted looking house on the cover, looking rather like The Bride of Frankenstein's lovely young daughter!

The opening track is called, "IEYA" and for me, it's probably my favourite, despite (or perhaps because) it's rather a lengthy track. This is the song where Toyah lets her love of magick run away with her and she sings of 'The Great Beast', the name which magician, occult practitioner, author, poet, artist and drug addict; Aleister Crowley called himself before his death in 1947. Crowley is probably the most famous of all

practitioners of occult and magic and his number — or rather the number belonging to the Great Beast — is/was 666. Not surprising then that the label number for this album is — IEYA 666 — eerie? pretentious? or simply Toyah's weird sense of humour shining through? The spitting amidst the vocals is not merely "A sense of gobbing". Spitting is treated very seriously in black magic circles.

Variation begins now. The second track on the album is called, "Spaced Walking" and features the Birmingham Banshee singing on a speeded up vocal which makes her sound almost like a little girl (or even Kate Bush — is this a bit of a piss-take, Toyah?). Actually it's haunting enough to work before she and her band enter a number called, "Ghosts"

The producer of this album is Steve James, who produced Toyah's first 45 — "Victims of the riddle". This time, the band are a lot more settled down and sometimes even quite conventional in their style of playing. Pete Bush provides some excellent atmospheric keyboard playing, whilst Joel Bogen, on guitar, surprisingly doesn't go over the top at all. All in all, the band play more than adequately, but it's Miss Wilcox's sense of dramatic vocalising which makes the band different from any ordinary rock combo.

It's on a song like the title track — "The blue Meaning" — that she is able to build up the song from the start to finish, whereas on a song like "Insects" she is able to create a more eerie atmosphere than on anything else she's ever done since. "Victims of the riddle" was first released. "Insects" is another satanic tale of imagination and features Toyah at her wailing best.

It's almost like your own soundtrack for a George Romero of John Carpenter film. Which brings me onto another movie soundtrack influenced number — "She". The song opens with echoed voices straight out of a "Cleopatra-meets-the-Mummy-on-the-river-Nile" type Hollywood movie. In fact, Toyah must have a thing about Egyptology since another track on the album is called, "The mummies of Guanajuato". "Vision" is obviously based around books such as 'Chariots of the Gods' and 'Mysterious Visitors' since the inside sleeve of the album even features a caveman-like drawing of a space being.

Which brings me onto the only other two songs on this superb debut album — "Tiger, Tiger" (based around a poem) and "Love me" (which is a frenzied song about wanting attention — and more!). Pete Bush is particularly good on "Love me" and is emerging into the most identifiable musician in the band. This album, however belongs to Toyah Wilcox (with a good deal of help from producer, Steve James — who is a member of a band called, 'Blood Donor'). Toyah's fans will love the album, though it's slightly more sophisticated than her previous discs. Toyah is bizarre, pretentious, has an original sense of humour and the absurd and I, for one, like her a lot.

Alan Anger

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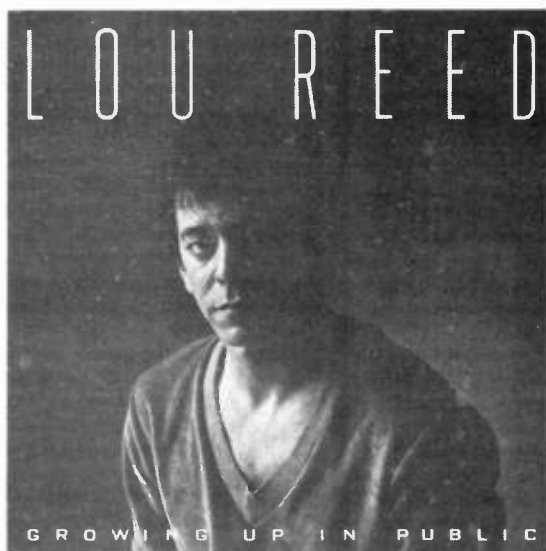
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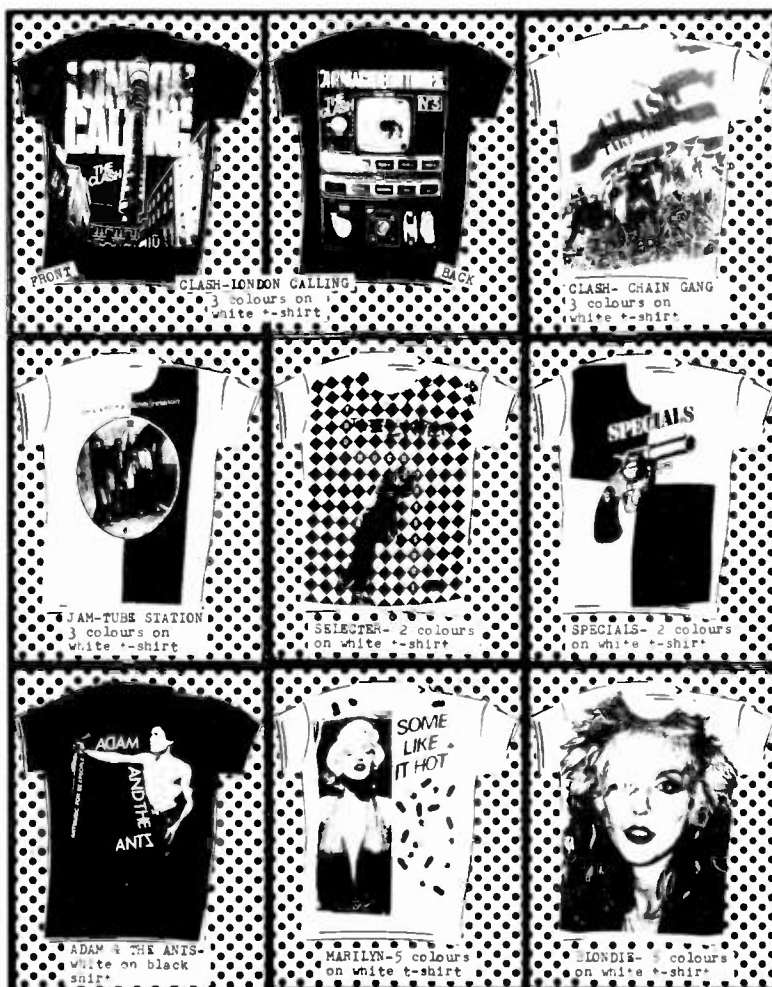
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