

**POINTS WEST — Flora Purim.** The gilded bird flew into our offices this week, straight from the cage where she's been cooped over the past eighteen months, stemming from a possession bust. While a year-and-a-half of prison might tend to waste the spirits of many, this Brazilian bird emerged as positive as the proverbial lark. Instead of relating to the negative aspects of her confinement, she spoke of 10,000 letters of confidence — all of which had to be screened by prison authorities — sent to her by admirers. She also brought in her third LP, "Open Your Eyes You Can Fly," on Milestone and, oh yes, her husband, **Airto**. Chuckles over the days when Flora and Airto shared an apartment adjacent to superbassist Stanley Clarke who would come home after gigging, catch his second wind and practice for a few hours — at four in the a.m. Related Flora: "The only one in the building who ever complained about the noise was Airto . . ." Airto, who assisted his mate on "Open Your Eyes," while taking breaks from his own recording, really lit up at the mention of **Al Jarreau**. Flora Purim, again, is the lady who was voted best female jazz singer both this year and last by *Downbeat* . . . **BULLY FOR YOU, CHILLY FOR ME — David Bowie** has always had an uncanny sense about his image. He knows what makes a star and has managed to separate himself from the public in order to create just such a mystique. Now, according to guitarist **Earl Slick**, Bowie has thrown up the fourth wall between himself and the people he works with. Slick, a former member of the New York Rock And Roll Ensemble, met Bowie several years ago when the superstar was attending a ballet written by keyboardist **Michael Kamen**. Having disbanded his Spidermen, Bowie needed a guitar player and Slick filled the bill. Over the course of the ensuing Diamond Dogs tour and recording of Bowie's new "Station To Station" LP, band and singer carried on normal, direct communication *until*, says Slick, around Thanksgiving, when "two to three" advisors began "polluting David's mind with a contradiction of facts." Since then, Slick maintains, Bowie has "kept out of touch, getting so much into himself that he would treat us (the band) like a radio, plugging us in when he needed us and turning us right off when he didn't." Put off by the necessity to go through channels in order to speak with his employer, Slick bailed out of the current tour. "Bowie," concludes Slick, "is headed for danger and I don't want to be there when it happens." Temper these comments with the fact that Slick, whose first solo LP will be available in March on Capitol, is managed by **Michael Lippman**, the attorney Bowie let go last week . . . Another (anonymous) source very close to the matter confirms the aura emanating from the Bowie camp, however: "A small group of people appear to be feeding inaccurate information to Bowie." . . . Meanwhile, **Billy Bass**, another momentary recipient of the Golden Years touch, has no hard feelings about the do-si-do, offering only that it was "unfortunate" for Lippman, inasmuch as that lawyer "had done everything within his power to bring Bowie's career full forward." Bass, a mercurial fellow if there ever was one, never lost a step in the shuffle. He's back into independent promotion/product management, representing managers, artists and indie record companies, first account being RSO and the **Bee Gees'** single, "Fanny."

**BLOWIN' IN THE WIND** took on Hurricane (Carter) proportions Sunday (25) as **Bob Dylan** and his **Rolling Thunder Revue** touched town on Houston's Astrodome. This time around, the cast included **Isaac Hayes**, **Shawn Phillips** and the one and only **Stevie Wonder** . . . **Bill Sargent**, the buck-wielding entrepreneur who brought us pay TV and "Give 'Em Hell, Harry," is back in the news with his (publicized) offer of \$30 million for the re-teaming of the **Beatles** for twenty minutes. Sargent terms these dollars a "good faith guarantee against a very high percentage of the gross" which he feels could be as high as \$300 million after closed circuit TV, film distribution and record rights are milked, with the Former Fab Four leaping back into the 90% tax bracket, pulling their share of \$150 to \$200 million. One individual who used to work



Flora Purim

with Apple, says the only conceivable reason for a reunion (aside from the money, of course) (and forgive us the indelicacy of mentioning *that* in the same breath) would be a memorial tribute to Mal Evans, who met a tragic death recently. Anyway, it's been thirty-six hours since the latest proposal was made and still no response. Up until now, says Sargent, the replies have been swift and firm: no discouragement, no encouragement.

**HOLLYWOOD HOT — Country Joe McDonald:** married for the third time . . . **Rodney Bingenheimer** (self-proclaimed "Dr. Demento of the Disco" who claims to have discovered David Bowie): back again, hosting "Rock & Roll Nights" at the Starwood . . . **Johnny, Edgar Winter & Rick Derringer:** together on vinyl for the first of three "live" LPs, hotter than a stolen bandolero . . . **Don Mangano:** with **Big M Ltd.** studios, 5615 Melrose. Formerly Audio Arts, now open for traffic with brand-new 16- and 24-track boards . . . **Blue Denim Productions:** taking **Russ Regan**, **Bob Crewe** to the judge Feb. 4, claiming 20th Century never credited their group **Messiah** to be the "real" Eleventh Hour . . . **Silvia Mora:** reaping longer and stronger press than **Deep Purple** while touring Japan in support of her Columbia single, "Fool" . . . **Jose Feliciano:** heading for Europe (sixth time) . . . **Available** drummer, keyboard player (can't mention their names) (but if that's what you need, get in touch with this writer at **Cash Box**).

stephen fuchs

**EAST COASTINGS — INSIDE RANKIN:** Kenny Rankin has never had a hit single. **Kenny Rankin** has also just sold out multiple-show runs at L.A.'s **Roxy** and New York's **Bottom Line**, with sro in heavy demand at both. "I've never been more happy musically," he told **Cash Box** recently, "I feel I'm giving people an alternative." A product of New York City, in 1965 Kenny was supporting his family and living on tips he made from parking cars. In 1967, he recorded his first album for **Mercury**, "Minddusters," which was followed in due course by "Family." Both albums are now much sought-after collectors' items, being long-gone cut-outs, but considered by many to be brilliant works. The next few years were rough times for Rankin, as he became heavily involved with drugs, eventually resulting in some time spent in a rehabilitation program. (These days are well behind him now.)



KENNY RANKIN and an incognito Atlantic staffer up at CB, NYC.

His reputation continued to grow, however, and his signing by **Little David Records** in 1972 (a **George Carlin**, **Flip Wilson**, **Monte Kay** move) marked the beginning of a re-birth for Kenny, starting with the "Like A Seed" album. Coming after a five-year hiatus, Kenny now sees "Seed" as "overproduced and stiff," but it paved the way for the more personally satisfying "Silver Morning" and the just released "Inside." For Rankin, the hardest thing is the sequencing of an album once the tunes are recorded, as there is no "concept or single message." His choice of material results in a balance between his own tunes, as well as those written with his wife **Yvonne** (with whom he has recently parted company, still friends), and his much acclaimed versions of other writers' material, as in the **Beatles'** "Blackbird" and **Jimi Hendrix'** "Up From The Skies." In the latter case, he has no system for choosing the material he will do, but just "whatever hits. I try to transmit, to assimilate and send out, deliver the song."

The focus of a Rankin live show is the artist's wide-ranging voice and his acoustic guitar playing — an amalgam of largely folk and jazz elements. He recently rejected the use of heavy electric instrumentation and has just formed his "dream band." Composed of long-time associate **Peter Marshall** on acoustic bass (also known for work with **Gabor Szabo**, among others), drummer **Roy McCurdy** (a **Cannonball Adderley** associate for 12 years), and brand new keyboardist **Wendy Haas** of **Fanny** fame. "Everybody I play with has this one thing — natural ability." Rankin himself is self-taught, and received an early set of guitar strings from **Don Costa**. He is especially concerned with "the fifth member of the band," the live sound, and has **All-Sound Audio** handling the chore this trip out.

Curiously, Rankin is "huge" in some markets, such as New York, L.A., Boston, Chicago and Cincinnati, but a virtual unknown in others. Progressive stations in some markets have aided his popularity, which has grown with very little traditional hype and exposure. In a concert situation, while headlining on this tour, "I'm not above doing second act spots. I'm a musician first, an egoist second." Kenny will be on the road until the middle of March, and if current plans work out, he will be doing his next album with his "idol" **Don Costa** (of **Frank Sinatra** and other fames) — a "very special project" complete with orchestra. At his recent **Bottom Line** appearance, Rankin had the crowd enraptured by his understated virtuosity, provoking standing ovations every time. Understandably, Rankin is "the happiest I've been in a long, long time."

**TIDS — Does the Rolling Thunder Revue benefit for Hurricane Carter at the Houston Astrodome** mean they're headed west? **Stone Faced — Ron Wood** has now made the announcement, so we're told, that he has officially joined the **Stones**. Meanwhile, the **Faces** still have a contract with **Warners** (the group exists as a separate entity apart from **Ron Stewart's** deal); and though no decisions have been made, we do know that the group has been investigating studios. Meanwhile, **Warners** also seems to have held up the greatest hits package due some time ago . . . **The Who** will be in **New York** after all, at **Madison Square Garden** in the near future . . . the new **Led Zepplin** album will be called "Presence," and is due come Feb.'s end . . . **Billy Joel** had a Steinway grand trucked from **Columbia's San Francisco studios** to the label's **Studio B in New York**, for use on his new LP, due in March. It seems that the artist and current producer **James Guercio**, so we're told, consider it "the finest piano in the country." . . . In **Columbia Studio E**, **Jon Lucien** is recording for a new LP, with **Larry Rosen** producing and **Frank Laico** and **Don Paluse** at the controls . . . **Starship** drummer **John Barbada** underwent an emergency appendectomy Jan. 15, postponing band rehearsals, but setting new LP recording back by a mere week . . . **Carl Prager** produced the "Man Who Would Be King" soundtrack LP on **Capitol**.

**NO BOXING IN SIGHT — Virgin Records** is coming up with a new rock outfit called **Boxer**, with advance reports being quite encouraging. In the English-American transition, though, their first disk may lose its original cover, which features a nude person of the female persuasion in spread-eagled position with a boxing-gloved fist thrust strategically — What, the racks won't handle it? Who said that? . . . **Back Street Crawler** will be making their U.S. concert debut in short order, with some initial dates set as an opener for **Kiss**. . . **Gamble and Huff** will be working with **Edgar Winter** on his next LP, due in April. . . **Stevie Wonder** has been cutting some tracks at **Electric Ladyland**. . . **Jake & the Family Jewels** have put down two tracks at **NYC's Record Plant**. Jake's been around these parts for around ten years now. . . **Elvin Jones** recording with **Oregon**. . . **Don Kirshner's Rock Concert** airing 1/31 will feature **Gloria Gaynor**, **Leslie West** and **Jimmie Spheeris**. And the **Midnight Special** airing 1/30 has the **5th Dimension**, **Janis Ian**, **Queen**, **Tom T. Hall**, and **Tim Thomerson**.

bob kaus