

ZZ Top

TULANE STADIUM, NEW ORLEANS — Many bands have named themselves for their place of origin, but probably no other has done as much public relations for their home as ZZ Top. The "little ol' band from Texas" is currently touring a full production including flora and fauna of the big state, along with a Texas-shaped stage and lights and backdrops simulating the shifting pastel hues of the desert plains. The show's opening leans heavily on visual elements, with a curtain drawn back to reveal the burning sun as a lone wolf howls. For a few seconds a black bison and stately longhorn steer fade into view, tended by tall peaceful figures in ten-gallon hats. A windmill spins gently in the quiet breeze, and a vulture fans its graceful wings.

While this motion picture scenario might suggest the soundtrack arrangement of program rock, ZZ Top's music is the simplest and most straightforward of hard rock blues and boogie. This evening they opened as they do on the live side of "Fandango" with "Thunderbird." The three-man group displays an equality of parts where the three instruments blend into one sound, and although guitarist Billy Gibbons and bassist Dusty Hill carry this further by standing unusually close to one another on stage, they do alternate the front-man's duties. Gibbons shows the influences of many varieties of blues. On "Chevrolet" he is a strutting, plunking image of Chuck Berry, or he can lean to the deep growling

boogie of a John Lee Hooker, as well as coming close to the riffing, rapping style of B.B. King as he advises on the treatment of a lover during "Blue Jean Blues." All in his own kindly manner, appealing to the audience's ego and feeling them respond as one.

Dusty Hill's raunchier voice is featured on the single, "Tush," part of a long encore that included "La Grange" and covers of "Jailhouse Rock" and "Folsom Prison Blues." The band saluted the serpent at the tip of the stage with a novel version of Peter Greene's "Rattlesnake Shake," while a song from their upcoming London album, "Love Is The Only Thing That Drives Me Crazy," was carried along by a steady accentuation of the upbeat by drummer Frank Beard. Another bit of Texas culture was introduced in the second encore's "Backdoor Medley," with Gibbons and Hill one-upping each other in the frantic chant of the auctioneer.

ZZ Top's unrefined brand of guitar boogie is not the type that finds airplay on all stations and they certainly have made no musical compromises simply for the sake of appeasing their unfavorable critics. Their audience is young by nature, and this evening in this city about 50,000 strong (with J. Geils on the bill). Whether they crack their toughest market, the northeast, this time around, no doubt they will always remain the same.

p.d.

Sylvers Dorothy Moore

FORUM, L.A. — Even though the house wasn't full those who attended probably saw one of the best R&B packages assembled this past year. The show got better and better with the entrance of each act.

Opening the show was the lovely Dorothy Moore. Wearing a flowing black chiffon gown this girl from Jackson, Mississippi added thousands of new fans to her already growing legions. Dorothy Moore is a wonderful performer. Even though her repertoire is not loaded with greatest hits yet, it will be. Everything she sang was filled with emotion, warmth and beauty. Dorothy Moore has star quality.

Brass Construction then came on stage and blew everyone out. Randy Muller and company were wearing some very hot space costumes to go along with some very tight, crisp instrumentation. Several times during their show they had the audience up and on their feet to boogie and sing along. "Movin'," was the #1 crowd pleaser.

The Sylvers have greatly improved their show to sheer perfection. The group has really got things organized and all that can be said about them is watch out for future

Johnnie Taylor Brass Construction

developments. The choreography was impeccable and their stage presence was flawless. Exceptional numbers performed were their new single "Cotton Candy," "Storybook Girl," and their version of Wings "Silly Love Songs," and Morris Albert's "Feelings." The finale, "Boogie Fever," was just icing on the cake.

The fantastic Johnnie Taylor came on last and it was worth the wait. The man cooks. To open the show Johnnie warmed everybody up with "Who's Makin' Love To Your Old Lady." From then on the show grooved. The backup orchestra was excellent along with four of the prettiest nicest sounding backup vocalists around. Johnnie did all of the hits and in between did his famous bumps and grinds. He had total control over the audience because when he asked the sisters to scream, they responded enthusiastically. "Somebody's Gittin' It," his new single was well-received along with "Runnin' Out Of Lies" off his "Eargasm" LP. For the finale Johnnie naturally did "Disco Lady." The place went wild, enough said.

J.I.

Conway Twitty/Loretta Lynn

LONG BEACH ARENA, CALIF. — Very few country singers have been as honored as Loretta Lynn. The beautiful lady from Butcher Holler, Kentucky has won virtually every award to be handed out for country music, and has been voted one of the most admired women in the country. One reason for Ms. Lynn's success has to be the sense of identification that people feel for her. The lady has a sense of realism that comes from deep within, and reaches out to touch the listener. The songs composed by Ms. Lynn are generally about homey subjects that a large number of people can identify with, such as "Coal Miner's Daughter," about her poverty-stricken but happy childhood; "First City," about jealousy; or "One's On The Way," about the tribulations of a small-town housewife. Some people undoubtedly find her tunes corny, probably because they hit a little too close to home.

Ms. Lynn possesses the richly emotional vocal quality to make her songs believable and enjoyable. Altogether, the lady is a total original—one of the few in music today. Conway Twitty is one of a group of fifties rock-a-billies whose careers have since turned down country roads. Most of his big hits, such as "Fifteen Years Ago," and "After All The Good Is Gone," have that Presleyesque flavor that separates them from the run-of-the-mill country song. Twitty has a rich and varied voice with sensual overtones, and uses it to best advantage on the sexy love songs like "I See The Want To In Your Eyes" and "Touch The Hand."

Conway and Loretta are the premier duo in country music today, with numerous hit singles and albums on MCA records in the last six years. The two seem to bring out the

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EAST COASTINGS — What do you want from life? According to a poll taken by Ladies' Home Journal for their August 1976 edition, **Elton John** is the second most popular hero figure among fifth to twelfth graders in the U.S. **Cher** came in at #20, one place above **Bob Dylan**, #21. **Mick Jagger** is the next pop superstar to show at #27, while **Loretta Lynn's** friendly sex education has earned her #34. **Rod McKuen** places #41, and while none of the former **Beatles** made a showing in the top 50, the **Maharishi** clinched an admirable #43. (**O.J. Simpson**, **Cancer**, was first.)

HARD TO BELIEVE — Photographs wired from Monaco evidence that **Ringo Starr** has shaved his head and face completely, looking not unlike **Telly Savalas** with sunglasses over his aquiline snout. Is this what comes of signing to Atlantic Records? . . . A new major record deal for **Dave Edmunds**? . . . **Cher** has revealed that **Sonny Bono's** agreement to return to performing on television with her came after a \$150 million settlement, payable to **Sonny** in installments as gigs bring in the cash. She readily admitted that she did not feel she could successfully go it alone professionally. . . . Speaking of the **Allman** family, **Gregg Allman's** former manager has been sentenced to 75 years in prison for drug trafficking in Georgia. **Allman** was granted immunity to testify in the trial, and the judge, anticipating a public outcry of unfair play, indicated that selling drugs was a more serious offense than simply using them. **Allman** testified at the trial that he no longer uses cocaine. . . . **John Miles'** upcoming single produced by **Rupert Holmes**. . . . Two **Cash Boxers** claim to have met and greeted **Bob Marley** strolling down 57th Street last week. . . . The **Ramones'** "Blitzkrieg Bop" has been remixed and recut for better sound quality.

THE GREAT ESCAPE — Passing through town recently, arranger, producer and Atlantic Records artist **Gene Page** described the inspiration for a cut on his "Lovelock" album, "Escape To Disco." He was sitting in a sauna bath with a psychiatrist friend, who aired theories of the discotheque as a place of "escape" and "release of pent-up anxieties." **Page** tried to effect these feelings with sound. Later in the day, **Page** fielded questions from the press, recalling that **Barry White's** "rap" over the phone to his wife was equally effective as any heard on record. . . . **Mark Radice**, who was recently catapulted into the limelight as emergency lead singer for **Brass Construction** and now has his own album and single out on U.A., has been around popular music for most of his 18 years on earth. His father was a recording engineer, and he can remember **Jimi Hendrix** in the studio. **Radice** penned **Dion's** current single "Hey My Love" when he was 13.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT — British press reports that **Robert Stigwood** plans a film of the **Beatles'** "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," a la "Tommy" or "Jesus Christ Superstar." The script will be written by New York Times columnist **Henry Edwards**. . . . The **Streetwalkers** have fired their drummer and bassist and are looking for replacements. . . . Rumor has it **Deep Purple** has finally split completely. . . . Two new studios have opened recently: **Kingdom Sound** in Long Island and **Kensington Sound** in Toronto. . . . The "Country Gentlemen" perform bluegrass music in Rockefeller Center Aug. 4. . . . Atlantic recording artist **Jean-Luc Ponty** just returned from Australia and New Zealand and will spend part of the summer recording his next album. . . . Lava Mt. Records will release "The Checkers Speech Of Richard Nixon" as well as his resignation speech. . . . **Tavares** at the Beacon July 30-31. . . . **Jethro Tull** employing rarely seen and expensive closed-circuit color television on their current large-audience tour. . . . **Hohner Harmonica** is attempting to compile a catalog of respectable harmonica instructors around the country. Write to them on Andrews Road, Hicksville, New York 11802. . . . **Michel Legrand** appearing in Montreal July 25, at Westbury Aug. 9-15. . . . **Roberta Flack**, **McCoy Tyner**, **Jimmy Cliff** and **Lenny White**, as solo artist, have been added to "Riviera 76," the European jazz-rock festival. **White's** band will include **Brian Auger**, **Al DiMeola** and the **Brecker Bros.**. . . . **Vicki and Stu Ginsburg** have a new daughter **Wendy Lauren**. . . . Revisions announced for the Schaeffer Music Festival list **Maxine Nightingale** with **Boz Scaggs** July 31, **LA Jets** with **Sha Na Na** August 6, **Robert Palmer** and **Burning Spear** August 13, and two nights with **Santana** alone on the bill August 23 and 25.

phil dimauro

POINTS WEST — THEY DON'T MESS AROUND, BOY — A stellar turnout for the opening night of the CBS national convention. Who was there? Who wasn't? **Bobby Womack**, **Chick Corea**, **Loggins & Messina**, **Bob Seger**, **Aerosmith**, **Elliot Murphy**, **BS&T**, **Southside Johnny** and the **Asbury Jukes**, **REO Speedwagon**, **Vicki Leandros**, **Small Wonder**, **The Isley Brothers**, and on and on, all witnessing the great show put on by **Burton Cummings**, **Rick Derringer**, **Tower of Power** and **The Miracles** and the announcement that **Rick Nelson** has signed with **Epic**. **Pete Bennett** negotiated that deal and is currently in the process of seeking out a network television show for the artist.

POINTS WEST — SMOKE SIGNALS — **Dream Merchants Unlimited** of Atlanta has joined forces with the **T-Shirtery**, a big distributor of what their name implies, in a new merchandising scheme which will aim at the same market that's been so responsive to **High Times Magazine**. The two firms are now producing rock 'n' rolling papers with album graphics on the outer cover and ad art on the inside of the paper package. **Dream Merchant** president **Norman Penfield** says the plan will offer artists "triple value." Not only will the product promote albums and concert appearances, but it's an additional royalty source as well. The papers will be marketed in retail record stores as well as traditional outlets that service an estimated 30 million Americans with some 200 million packages of rolling papers a year. First two acts involved in the promotion gimmick are **Camel** and the **Atlanta Rhythm Section**. For further information, phone **Norman Penfield** at (404) 434-8794.

BEN FRANKLIN LIVES! — **Gene Brawn**, who's been involved in radio consultation and television commercials with **Woffman Jack**, describes himself as a "media jack of all trades." Thus, he's lately a publisher of **Road & Show**, a performing/recording/touring classified sheet which also accepts display ads. The paper appears bi-weekly at seven different outlets around Hollywood for 25¢ a copy and is also hand-delivered to local recording and rehearsal studios. Just a service **Brawn** felt the industry needed, **Road & Show** also offers a pat-on-the-back column called "On The Road" which gives "a little credit to the backstage pros." If you'd like to subscribe or be listed, call **Gene Brawn** at (213) 469-9173.

GALLSTONES — It had to happen. On the heels of a **Theta Records** single, "Pet Rock" by **Michael Andrews** (which comes in the dust of **Cin-Kay Records'** country hit, "I'm In Love With My Pet Rock" by **Al Bolt**), a young lady named **Jannene Swift** exchanged(?) wedding vows with a fifty-pound stone. Billed as the world's first inter-rock-cial marriage, the event took place at a park along Wilshire Blvd. July 10, the happy couple off to visit the groom's parents, immediately after, in . . . Boulder, Colorado. . . .

JOKE OFF — At the **Improv** last week various members of the 100-strong writing/performing repertory company called **The Groundlings** got together in front of local television news crews for a "comedy Olympics." Lots of potential spoken-word label talent down at the **Improv**, folks.

DON'T GARBLE THOSE WORDS — **Shure Brothers, Inc.**, has expanded its SB 3000 sound reinforcement components once again. For information write: **Shure**. . . .