

POP MUSIC IS REVOLTING AND IT'S NICE

POP MUSIC is revolting! That's not an expression of disgust at the music but a statement of fact illustrated by the complete reversal of the popular music scene over the past year or so.

The music — or rather those on the receiving end of it — is almost in a state of revolution. Just as young people are discontent with politics and world order, so today's thinking youth are discontent with the music "establishment."

So "commercial" pop is in disfavor and the sort of "uncommercial" music thought to be a minority taste has blossomed into the accepted music of young people.

That's why the teenybop scene is dead (though some people won't let it die down) while the groups and artists drawing the crowds today in clubs and concerts would never have got past the leading agents' waiting rooms a year ago.

This is fact, not fantasy. The proof was there at the Pop Proms at the Royal Albert Hall a couple of weeks ago. And it is borne out by the MM's Pop 30 every week.

Birth

A couple of years ago, the flowerpot thing was hitting the headlines. A lot of the motives of that movement were fine but it transpired into just another label for clicking cash registers. But it sowed seeds and the gestation period paved way to the birth of a new idea in music — that it's the music that matters, more than the

musicians, or their clothes or the length of their hair or what they had for breakfast. Incidentally, this is exactly the principle which has made MM a success throughout the 42 years of its existence.

They called this new idea "the underground" — another misnomer; just now it's right above ground, healthy and lusty and, like a new babe, showing just how strong its lungs are.

But what has made this complete reversal possible? For one thing, rising musical standards which breeds adventure into inquiring musical minds; secondly, an acceptance among musicians in jazz and in pop that the other man might have something to say that's worth listening to; thirdly, a general dis-

enchantment with gimmickry in place of talent, of the three chord trick in place of musicianship.

The fact is that today the musical scene is better than ever — there are fine musicians working in all fields; they are not narrow minded or bigoted and most important, they are finding an audience.

Nature

The audience for today's music is primarily in the colleges and universities, by their very nature places where the inhabitants have above average intelligence. As more and more people are able to go to university, so their size increases and their audiences for music — for dances, balls, con-



JETHRO TULL: sound like jazz and in the top five

REPORTER: ALAN WALSH

certs, etc — increases pro rata.

Today's pop is thinking music. The ballroom scene is dying off, the young kids haven't got the cash or the inclination to idolise every group that comes along, and even among the non-college kids, there is a longing for something different and something musically more intricate.

Pop records of the teens type still sell of course, but in far from the numbers they used to. The reason? The economic position and government legislation which has resulted in a single costing over eight shillings; the decline in sales was inevitable. In addition, the budget album market has increased enormously, and is forecast to

be the biggest slice of the market in a few years time. If you're a bit skint, why spend 6s 6d on a single when you can get an album for under 15s? With the abolition of retail price maintenance too, this situation will grow and grow.

There have been groups — like the Who — who have tried to advance musically over the past few years. They have survived and can offer talent in today's scene. The people

who have come after them are offering real music, whatever its form, and the audiences are realising that's what they wanted all the time.

Survived

A vociferous youth — and today, that's just what young people are, outspoken and vociferous and suspicious of the previous generation — demands

similar music. An articulate mass of the population eschews facile musical entertainment in favour of something worthwhile.

That's why Jethro Tull can sound like jazz and be in the top five; why Blind Faith can draw 150,000 people into Hyde Park; why Fleetwood Mac can have a number one record with a beautiful, symphonic piece like "Albatross."

Pop is revolting; and it's nice.

THUNDERCLAP NEWMAN

IN NEXT WEEK'S

BLIND DATE

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Stink with McKenna Mendelson Mainline



McKENNA MENDELSON MAINLINE

Buy their latest revolting single — "You better watch out" (LBF 15235) buy the album — STINK (LBS 83251) AND THEN STINK

THE FAMOUS JUG BAND

present their first historic LP SUNSHINE POSSIBILITIES (LBS 83263) They are saying what we are all thinking and it's a pity that 51 million in this country couldn't give a damn anyway Buy the single "The only friend I own" (LBF 15224) and grab a little sunshine

