

# STRANGE THINGS

200 HAPPENINGS

Volume 1 · Number 1 · March 1988

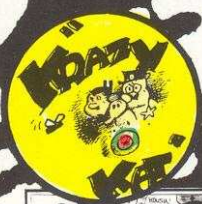
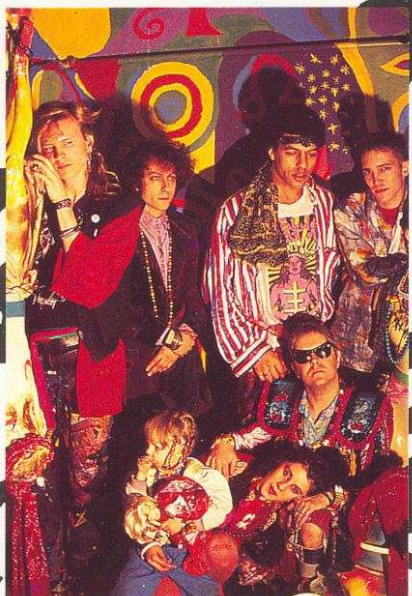
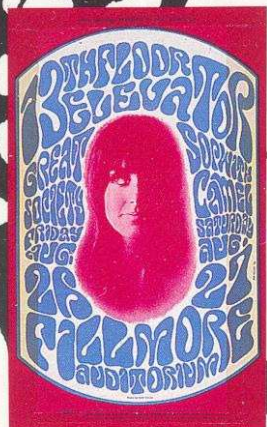


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**THE DUKES OF STRATOSPHEAR**



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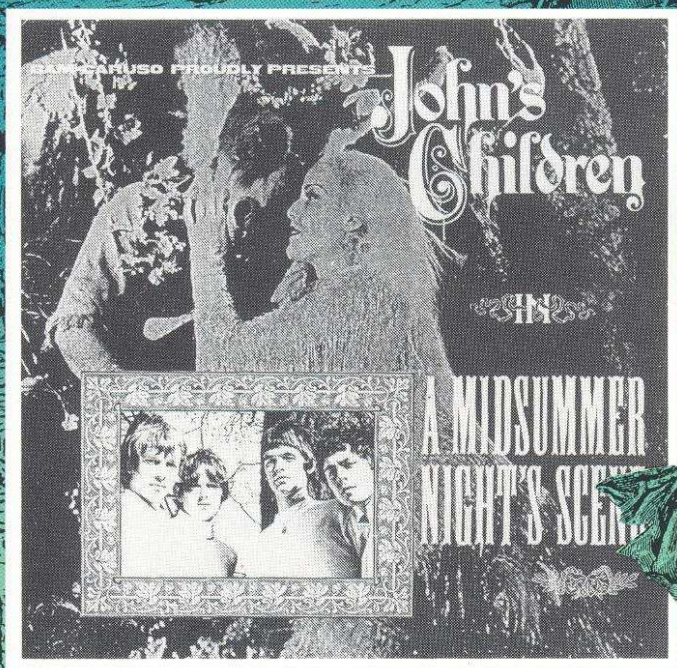
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JOHN'S CHILDREN  
"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S SCENE"  
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# STRANGE THINGS

ARE HAPPENING

Volume 1 Number 1 March 1988

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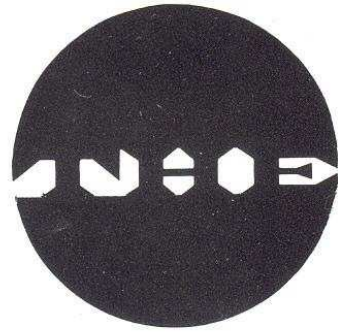
It's now a shade over twenty years since **Rolling Stone** was launched, complete with a brave new broadside on it's interests and purposes.

So we too now announce our aims and prejudices and strive to clear a path laying bare our hopes and inspirations. **Strange Things** will deal from the heart and feature items that we would wish to find on offer. Music, from whatever era, will always be the core, with in-depth studies of a sound or an individual, or a laugh and a picture whenever the situation arises. There will be discographies, reviews, rare photographs; there will be threads or themes across several issues or even, instead, a one off appreciation.

That aside, there will be literature, film and television; cult curiosities or mainstream geniuses. In short, the boundaries are limitless. Over the next few issues the tale of Greenwich Village will unfold; so too the life and work of Richard Brautigan. Frantic new pop will sit beside English folk-rock, the Silver Surfer will meet the San Franciscan scene and white Chicago Blues will rock with Thunderbirds. "Whatever Fits" is our new motto – we're there wherever strange things are happening.

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# THE BOYS ARE WELL RE



Their debut album *The Kinks* first appeared in October 1964, riding on the crest of "You Really Got Me". That single ravaged British pop — it grabbed and smashed the loose limbed, seminal "Louie Louie" riff while paradoxically staying tense and tight right up through Dave Davies' explosive guitar break. How could an album maintain such a fury?

Quite simply, it couldn't. Nothing on *The Kinks* can touch its awesome drive; Ray Davies almost abdicates all responsibility and deliberately seems to avoid competing. Instead, his own songs are more reflective, quieter, and "I Just Can't Go To Sleep" or "Stop Your Sobbing" emerge with a dignity and understated strength. However the main problem is the group's discomfort with the R&B forms they choose to cover on *The Kinks*. They perform perfunctory versions of "Long Tall Shorty", "Beautiful Delilah" etc, presenting the necessary adolescent spit, but the empathy present on *The Rolling Stones* or even the raw irreverence of *The Pretty Things* is somehow lacking. That's not to say it isn't good, I still marvel at

The fact that PRT are currently repackaging *The Kinks* back catalogue may well engender a cry of "what's new?" Few groups have had their output so mercilessly slashed and exploited; this time, however, it's different. The dodgy chaff has been hacked away, the original albums ("The Kinks" through to "Percy") have all been restored, while a new double set wraps up singles, 'B' sides and EP cuts not on those releases. For those less inclined, there's a hits package too, and thus we'll pause for a moment to salute these often essential records.

**BY BRIAN HOGG**

Dave's hysterical voice and appreciate the always adequate playing, but there's a spark missing, as if the group was already preparing to shift from its roots, their eyes and ears set for a new direction.

*Kinda Kinks* followed it three months later. By now the group was proven hit material, they'd begun a string of smash 45s and the rush for product was frantic. This second collection thus bore all the signs of hurry and a curious flatness, a lacklustre feeling, seemed to distance *The Kinks* from their material. Yet the songs

themselves were generally good enough — "Something Better Beginning", "Nothing In This World" and "You Shouldn't Be Sad" are amongst the most intriguing pieces present in Ray's early work — not necessarily in themselves but as examples of his searching out styles to blend with his declared raucous slant. "Something Better" hints at the Brill Building Drifters, while the call and response of "You Shouldn't Be Sad" runs parallel to Tamla Motown, with both indicating a certain comfort the composer felt within such fields. *Kinda Kinks* was

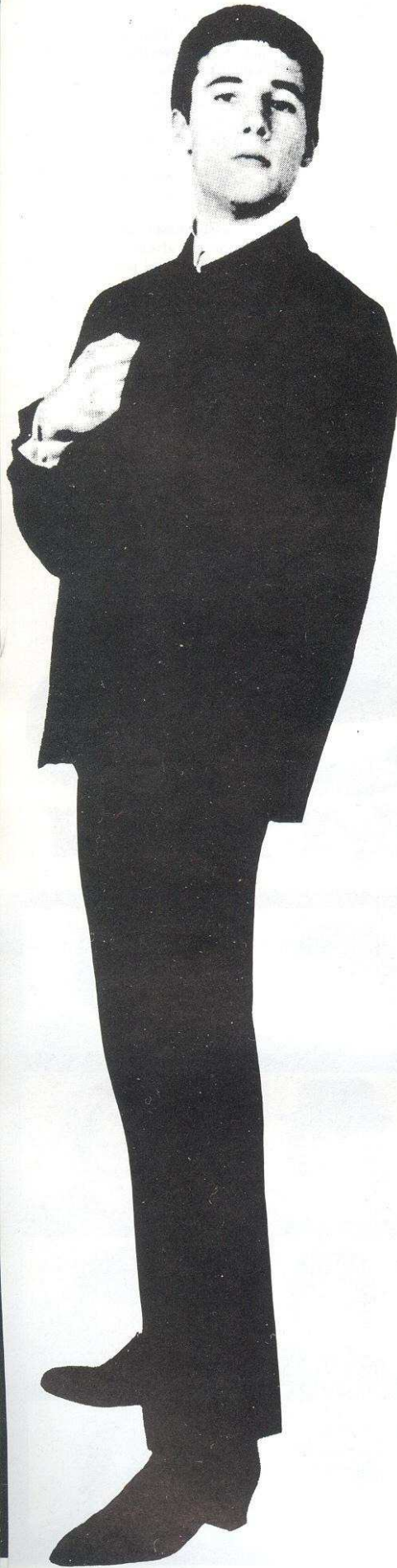
also interesting in that its almost total rejection of cover material. "Dancing In The Street" and "Naggin' Woman" made unlikely bedfellows (The Vandellas meet Lazy Lester) although the inclusion of such differing influences did indicate how disparate *The Kinks'* reference points were. Who else in 1965 dared cover Lazy Lester — such missionary zeal would not truly rise until the Britblues boom of Fleetwood Mac and their successors.

If *The Kinks* and *Kinda Kinks* were sketchy, an impressionistic glance at the group's constituent parts and possibilities, *The Kink Kontroversy* sees them all gel at last into something truly special. The album came with Beat's most exciting pinnacles — *The Pretty Things Get The Picture*, *The Rolling Stones Out Of Our Heads*, *The Yardbirds Yardbirds* — albums which if not exactly issued simultaneously, were each touched by a similar drive, a determination which caught each group finally bidding farewell to their past while still using its format. Thus, as with its companions, *The Kink Kontroversy* still boasted its R&B standards

# KINKS

## SPECTED MEN





(here it's "Milk Cow Blues"), but the group snatched it up from its country blues origins, courtesy of Sleepy John Estes, and turned it into a tense, kinetic excitement. The alternating voices, from Dave to Ray, added a special magic; The Kinks, once polite and diffident towards their influences, now chewed up and coasted through such fodder. Having provided this definitive reading, they'd no longer need to cut such tracks; "Milk Cow Blues" served as a farewell to their immediate past.

In the meantime Ray Davies' own talent had blossomed. His songs had outgrown the tentativeness present on much of the present on much of the previous albums, and every original brims with confidence and breadth. Sometimes flippant ("I'm On An Island"), at others poignant ("Where Have All The Good Times Gone"), the album overflows with excellence, making this the essential early Kinks collection. A brilliant record and one still uniquely captivating.

The **Kink Kontroversy** was followed by **Face To Face**, and the difference between the two was the difference between the early group of those early hits and that of "Dedicated Follower Of Fashion", the Davies song which alongside "A Well Respected Man" introduced The Kinks social consciousness lyric. Ray's songs were now scored for offbeat characters, observations and mini-plays; words and images both incisive and sardonic. Sometimes cruelly mocking, at others warm and affectionate, Davies now began a body of work that was uniquely English; a yearning for a mythological time when life, its demands and demarcation lines were simpler.

**Face To Face** and its Carnaby Street mock Pop Art jacket perfectly mirrored its time — "Dandy", "Sunny Afternoon" and "Party Line" document 1966 — foppish fashion, impoverished, crumbling upper classes and the joy of sharing a telephone line somehow capture the simple controversies of the day and emerge as tabloid vignettes. Property ("Most Exclusive Residence For Sale", "House In The Country") also rears its head, while The Kinks come closer to home with "Session Man", a homage to the talent of Nicky Hopkins, who would often provide the essential piano fills. These different aspects come together to give **Face To Face** its unique aura, one which was unusual in Kink history as it actually allowed the group to pinpoint time according to the external environment around it, rather than deal with internal pressures, or escape from them into third person topics.

The new momentum took a pause with **The Kinks Live At Kelvin Hall**, where they bludgeoned a path through the hits and crowd pleasers. The reception was ecstatic, the noise overpowering; the album remains an aural tribute to the 60s war waged between audience and performer.

With that completed, The Kinks then entered 1967, to begin a body of work which would remain undeniably timeless. Previously individual characters within Davies songs had generally been less important than the actual point he was making, whereas now he began constructing cameos which would be more fully realised according to their specific personality. Thus **Something Else**, the group's sixth album, proves the most satisfying; it is their lasting and most innovative collection. The



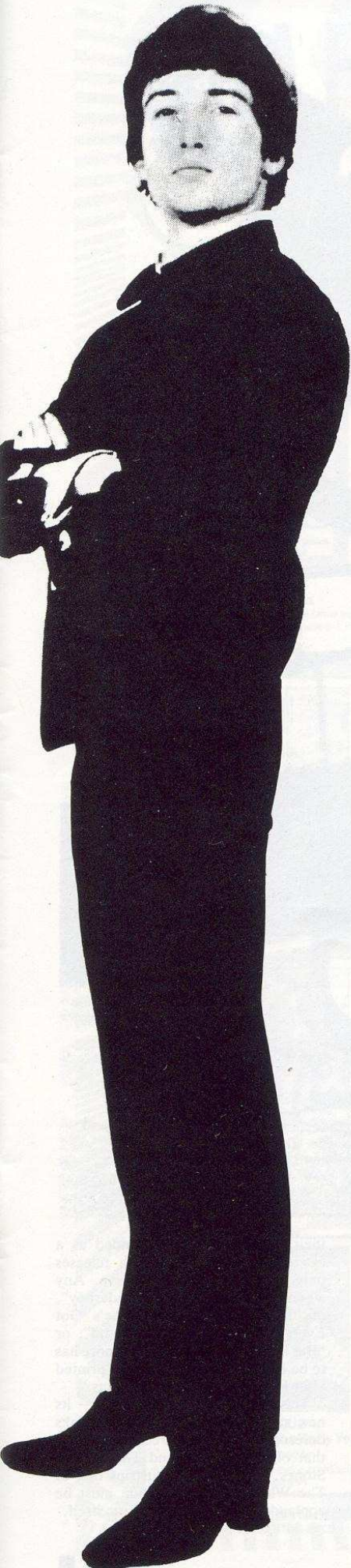
cast is perfect; "David Watts", so perfect and the object of an adolescent wishful fantasy (the implicit forerunner to the sexual confusion of "Lola"), the wonderful (but ultimately sad) "Two Sisters", the cockney kitchen sink of "Harry Rag", and most especially Terry and Julie, the starstruck lovers of "Waterloo Sunset"; pop's purest moment.

Not only was each song explicitly evocative, but their individuality was also remarkable, and could thus be taken out of the album's context and still maintain its own special atmosphere. "Waterloo Sunset" proved this when it became a smash single; so too would "Death Of A Clown" which was snipped off to launch Dave Davies' brief solo career. But what made **Something Else** so remarkable was The Kinks own playing; a blend of all their previous styles yet one which could almost be described as understated. It was most certainly undramatic, and even the tougher songs ("David Watts", "Funny Face" or "Situations Vacant") avoid rocking out as in "Milk Cow Blues". By rounding off the spiky edges and somehow warming up the basic drive, the production is altogether thicker, bringing out a depth in Davies songs sometimes otherwise missed. The fast songs sound even more confident; this newfound muscle was the final affirmation of The Kinks (and **Something Else**) special place.

Characters, care and a wonderful simplicity underscore **The Village Green Preservation Society**, the last truly great Kinks album. If **Something Else** was an accidental, haphazard scrapbook, this collection was deliberately put together under a single theme. Davies here paid direct homage to the mythical English past his newer songs were suggesting, a past forever Anbridge, where images of a simpler life blend with glimpses of steam trains, tearooms and 1/6d. As a cosy picture of a life now lost (if indeed it ever existed) **Village Green** is a triumph. The title track, "Sitting By The Riverside", "Village Green", "The Last Of The Steam Powered Trains" each provoke specific hopes, memories or longing, while others ("Johnny Thunder", "Monica" or "Wicked Annabella") again centre offbeat personalities, drawing quirky musical portraits out of such individuality.

Musically, however, The Kinks had changed; they were most certainly suitably rustic; quiet, simple and understated. Ray Davies had, by now, assumed the role of producer. Whereas Shel Talmy had increasingly warmed out The Kinks sound, here it became stripped down again — not to the angular pop of their early sound, but into something altogether lighter, and even more effusive. That's not to say that the group would not rock out; indeed "The Last Of The Steam Powered Trains" stepped back over the head of **Something Else** and reworked the furious rush of their Beat heyday. Was it mere coincidence, or a sharp musical pun, that the song was loosely built around "Smokestack Lightning"?

Generally, however, the aura of **Village Green** was that of acoustic guitars, piano and voice, missing the charming clutter that filled up **Something Else**. Perhaps Ray was too preoccupied with the theme itself, sacrificing a more natural edge for something which would consciously fit this pastoral, rural England. My favorites are those



less specifically tied to the village green; the wonderful "Big Sky", the evocative "People Take Pictures Of Each Other" which conjures images of a rushed Blackpool prom, and "Sitting By The Riverside", another deft, relaxed song where life passes the character by.

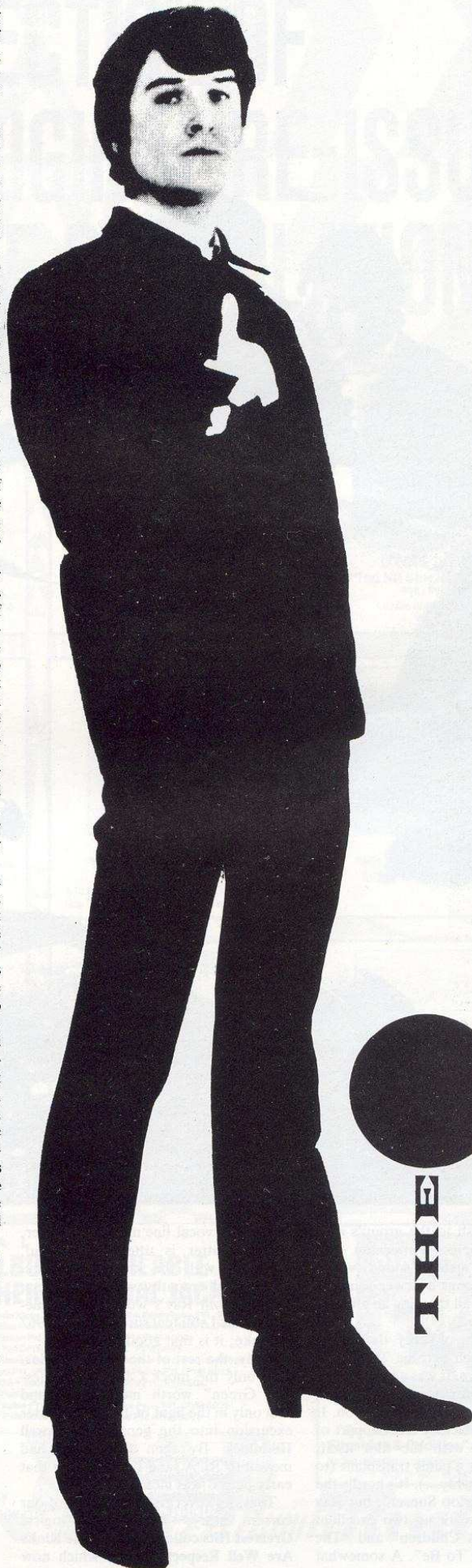
Such slight reservations over The Kinks progress become full fledged doubts on **Arthur**. I know some find this a rewarding work, and have claimed it as a triumph; to me it seems empty, bitter for its own sake, and just plain disappointing. Commissioned as a TV drama, Ray used a real-life experience, the emigration of his sister Rose to Australia, to construct a grandiose piece dealing with a post-war Britain and decline on both a national and individual basis. I can appreciate its maturity — there's no comparison between the depth of "Shangri-La" and the now merely quaint "Well Respected Man" — but I miss the wry humour, the warmth, the affection, hell, the great tunes. **Arthur** has precious few of those, and in the same way as Davies had sacrificed something of his gifts when completing **Village Green**, here more effort seems to be spent on the concept rather than its constituent parts.

Perhaps that's too harsh. Now, after some eighteen years on, **Arthur** does sound better... or is it just a whiff of nostalgia playing tricks again? "Victoria" still battles through, "Shangri-La" remains powerful, but I still tend to remember titles ("She Bought A Hat Like The Princess Marina") better than I can recall how they go. Yet again the sound is much too clear and, stripped of mystery, the songs seem rather flat. Some orchestration, some Shel Talmy fixative, both of these could have lifted the album, at least for this listener. Having said that, I'm glad that I now own a copy, but it pales beside the four albums preceeding it.

**Arthur** proved to be something of a commercial stiff which, in tandem with a fall from singles' grace, suggested that The Kinks were doomed to a Dave Dee netherworld. "Lola", then "Apeman" turned it all around, two smash hits which not only re-established the group, but were quirky and subtly hip enough to restore any lost credibility. "Lola's" sexual ambiguity ("I'm glad I'm a man and so is Lola") and "Apeman's" muffled impertinence (was that "fogging" or "fucking up my eyes"?), showed that The Kinks were one of us, even from the lofty peak of Top Of The Pops. There was thus a greater spotlight on the group's new album, **Kinks Part One: Lola Vs Powerman And The Moneygoround**, which picked up more attention than the previous three had collectively.

As I was never thoroughly convinced by either single, warming to the album proved difficult. I enjoyed The Kinks resurgence; they deserved every success, but I yearned for the subtlety and craft they seemed to leave behind in the process. As in **Arthur**, the concept of **Powerman** determined the music, rather than vice versa, and even if it proved closer to home (ie damning the music business) the point too easily sounded laboured and ultimately petulant.

There were some strong moments — "The Moneygoround", a cheeky blast at The Kinks' managers and publishers, was genuinely funny, and cameos for "Denmark Street" and "Top Of The





Pops" added flesh to the group's own individual problems. **Powerman** also brought back a meatier sound, which gave the basic songs a newer sense of purpose, but for all that, it's an album I rarely turn to.

The same is true of **Percy**, the soundtrack album which became The Kinks last release on Pye. It was a curious way to go — a total whimper — especially in the light of that new-found direction. If it was an unsatisfactory record, part of the blame lies with the film itself, which deals with a penis transplant (to his head, presumably...). It's hardly the stuff of a "Waterloo Sunset", but Ray did manage to work up two excellent songs in "God's Children" and "The Way Love Used To Be". A somewhat

throwaway vocal line mars the former, but the latter is utterly wonderful, brimming with the kind of melody, pathos and empathy which had been missing from Ray's work since **Something Else**. I still feel sure it's a lost 1967 out-take; it is that good.

Sadly, the rest of the record is filler, with only the mock C&W of "Willesden Green" worth mentioning, and that only in the light of The Kinks' later excursion into the genre on **Muswell Hillbillies**. By then the group had moved to RCA, and the legacy of that early period was closed.

That, however, is not the end of our current story. There's the logical **Greatest Hits** collection, and **The Kinks Are Well Respected Men**, which now

makes it possible to complete the group's Pye legacy.

Of course other tracks remain unissued. At the time **Well Respected Men** was put in motion, plans were also begun to add a further volume encompassing other tracks issued outside the UK but never released officially here. This would include the cracking "This Is Where I Belong", a Euro-only flip-side, sundry cuts from the two US collections (**Kronicles** and **The Great Lost Kinks Album**), as well as two further rarities which briefly appeared on a withdrawn British 10" freebie. Contractual problems may now count this second album out, which frustratingly leaves some tracks lost in limbo. But don't blame "Well Respected Men" for

their omission, it was intended as a catch-all for original British releases only, and as such is definitive. Any album with "Days", or "Wonderboy", or "Berkley Mews", or "She's Got Everything", or "See My Friend", or "Big Black Smoke" or several more has to be essential; ignore the barbs printed elsewhere and trust your instincts.

This is an important catalogue — its new sanity is no less than The Kinks deserve. Their output compares with that of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, and certainly outstrips that of The Who. Its rationalisation must be applauded, as should the music itself.



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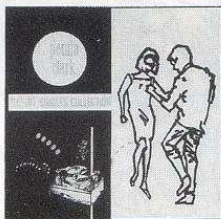
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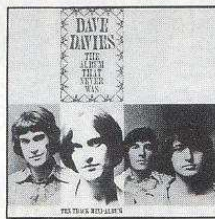
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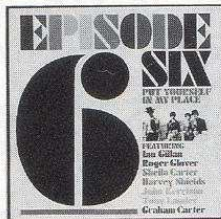
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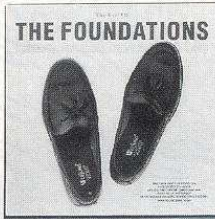
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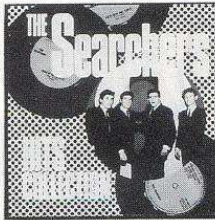
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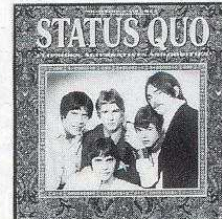


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"SURF OR DIE" ILLUSTRATION: SAVAGE PENCIL

The beach music of The Tams and Chairmen Of The Board threatens to invade these shores this summer as the latest dance hype . . . Palace Pictures are sinking their earnings into a beach music movie entitled *Shag*. . . A nation wonders whether to don multi-coloured long johns called, er, jams . . . hold on a minute! Haven't we seen all this before? Let's take a look at the suntanned shaggers prime inspiration —

# BEACH MOVIES

A glorious mess of brylcreamed bozos, cardboard acting, pouting beach belles and a severe lack of scriptwriting talent, beach films were your achetypal B-Movie nightmare. And like all good nightmares you've gotta have a few creeps hanging around, and this one is no exception. Take Connie Francis. Dick Kirshner's wonderkid not only notched up 22 Top 20 hits between 1958 and 1963, but also starred in a number of MGM teen flicks that established the exploitation genre as a megabuck investment. The frat-land box-office smash *Where The Boys Are* paved the way for countless tacky imitations. In this turkey four goody goody college pals set off for a ripping adventure away from the clutches of Mom and Pop, but, alas, they encounter high jinks, drink, sex and rape along the way — ultra shocking stuff for a mild teeny film. Naturally it was a smash, so Hollywood's B-Movie legends AIP started looking for suitable (and cheaper) ways to cash in on Connie and the gang's success. They didn't have to look far — spotting a few proto-Beach Nazis riding the local surf, the cheapskate moguls hatched up a flimsy plot, wheeled in a few likely hopefuls and *Beach Party* was born.

*Beach Party* was the first in a string of AIP Beach movies to star the Latin-American talents of Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello. These unlikely chumps had the perfect credentials for Beach Movie bimbos. Frankie Avalon (Or Avallone, as his family knew him) was a child prodigy trumpet player who had a Top 10 hit at the age of 18 with "Dede Dinah". This began a string of chart successes including "Ginger Bread", "Venus" and "Why" between 1958 and 1960 for Philly's Chancellor label. He even made a disco remake of "Venus" in 1976! Times must have been hard! Annette Funicello, on the other hand, was an ex-Mouseketeer (y'know, those teeny mice with the big ears) who recorded eight hits for Walt Disney's Vista label between 1958 and 1960. She was also Paul Anka's girlfriend; Paul, who apart from penning "My Way", also wrote "Puppy Love" for Annette for chrissake! Annette's biggest success was "Tall Paul" in 1959.

The *Beach Party* duo enter our vision with a classic piece of teen cinema — Frankie and Annette ride along, car top down, singing "Beach

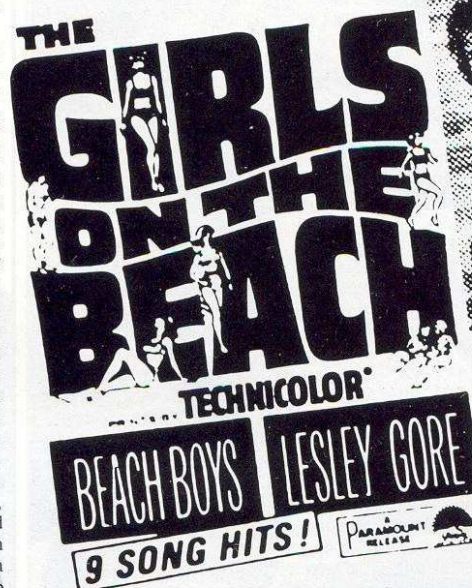
Party" for all they're worth. The spindly plot goes like this: Frankie attempts to make "Dee Dee" (Annette) jealous by fooling around with hungarian sexpot Eva Six. Eva's having none of it, preferring the attention of the bearded, middle-aged anthropology professor (Bob Cummings) who's studying teenage sex habits. Occasionally Eric Von Zipper's biker gang (which features *Columbo* star Peter Falk) attempt some macho sneering, whilst Brian Wilson pops up as a surfer. As *Cult Movie* buff Danny Peary puts it, "All the teens have IQ's lower than their ages." The females, including two ex-*Playboy* centrefolds, are all blond and short so that Annette doesn't look like a dark haired dwarf. Even Vincent Price makes an entrance as Big Daddy. As hammy as it is, *Beach Party* is a lot of fun, and is spot on musically. Dick Dale, surf music's innovator, stands out with his Deltones, single gold earring and tanned torso. Apparently he was the only person in the film who didn't need a fake suntan! Dick Dale And The Deltones were the first outfit to tailor their records towards the beach party scene of LA's Pacific coast. A similar scene was emerging along the Carolina coast, but the Carolinas were without a local record industry geared towards teenage fads. Dick's pre-LSD "Let's Go Tripping" was a minor instrumental hit in 1961, following the success of Ventures and Sandy Nelson records such as "Teen Beat" and "Let There Be Drums". Many novelty discs were appearing, like "Stick Shift" by The Duals, which heavily features a revving car engine, but Dick Dale's surf tunes became the real beach anthems. "Let's Go Tripping" was followed by 1962's "Misirlou" and 1963's "The Scavenger", which paved the way for many more surf bands. During 1961 and 1962 California developed a large contingent of local instrumental talent playing Dick Dale style numbers; many became regional hits. The Pyramids, whose angle was that they were all bald, scored with "Penetration". The Surfaris with "Wipe Out" and "Surfer Joe", The Chantays with "Pipeline", The Marketts with "Surfer's Stomp" and their surfed-up *Outer Limits* theme "Out Of Limits". Jan Berry and Brian Wilson's "Two girls for everyone" ethos was reflected

in the movies, which looked towards the plethora of local musical talent to provide the appropriate soundtrack. Among the major artists involved were junior high-school pals Jan & Dean, who had over a dozen hits in less than eight years, whilst the session musician backing of Carole Kaye's bass and Hal Blaine's drums were vital ingredients for many a beach ditty. Principle figures included Lou Alder, Steve Barri, Bruce Johnson and Gary Usher, as well as the Brian Wilson/Mike Love partnership and DJ Roger Christian.

As the Surf music industry began to roll, so too did the beach movie production line. AIP followed *Beach Party* with a handful more Frankie and Annette epics. In *Muscle Beach Party* wealthy Italian countess Luciana Paluzzi drools over muscleman Flex Martin, until Frankie arrives on the scene and cupid strikes. The adverts were typically sensational ("When 10 000 biceps go around 5000 bikinis.... you know what's gonna happen"), as is the music from "Little" Stevie Wonder

and Dick Dale. Peter Lorre crops up as Mr. Strangdour; songs have titles like "Muscle Bustle". More wholesome antics appeared in *Bikini Beach* where Frankie mimics The Beatles as Potato Bug, complete with wig and scouse vocals, whilst the ongoing Beach/Horror crossover sees Boris Karloff in a minor role. *Beach Blanket Bingo* includes The Hondells, Buster Keaton and Linda Evans, whilst *How To Stuff A Wild Bikini* stars Keaton, The Kingsmen, a witch doctor called Bwana and a floating swimsuit.

Over at 20th Century Fox Maury Dexter had been exploiting the teen boom. In *The Young Swingers* Molly attempts to stop her nasty aunt's plan to torch the Vanguard club. The night-erie is hangout for Molly and butch Rod Lauren, with Gene McDaniels as resident performer. The couple gaze at each other between bursts of "Mad Mad Mad" and "Watusi Surfer", barely noticing that the Vanguard burns to the ground as Molly turns 21. Maury Dexter really cashed in on the



# THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH

## FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

action with *Surf Party* and *Wild On The Beach*, in which Sonny and Cher make a guest appearance. But 20th Century Fox's real B-Movie nightmare was *The Horror Of Party Beach*. Stamford, Connecticut's inspirational offering has The Del-Aires doing "The Zombie Stomp", as some potent radioactive waste turns human skulls from the bottom of the ocean into gruesome ghouls. These charming specimens kill a nearby beach harlot, then all of the girls at a slumber party. The film was also turned into a great comic book, which dedicates whole pages to drawn out death, with text like "Eeyow!", "Rrrrip!" and "Ghaaa!" included. Along with *The Beach Girls And The Monster* this is the ultimate Surf-Horror trash flick.

Lennie Weinrib at Paramount also produced some gems. *Beach Ball* has The Supremes singing "Come To The Beach Ball With Me" and an early Walker Brothers clip of "Do The Jerk" intercut with a car chase. Later attempts like *Out Of Sight* for Universal (with The Turtles, The Astronauts,

The Knickerbockers, Gary Lewis And The Playboys and . . . um . . . Freddie And The Dreamers) and *Wild Wild Winter* (with The Beau Brummels, Jay And The Americans and others) marked the cinematic move away from the beach. *Out Of Sight* hit upon the spy theme with sub-Bond agents from F.L.U.S.H, whilst *Wild Wild Winter* headed for the ski slopes. By 1967, with occasional exceptions like *It's A Bikini World* (with The Animals and The Castaways doing "Liar Liar"), the movie chiefs were looking towards drug rather than surf culture for prime teen exploitation targets. And with a spate of biker movies and chemically-induced horrors like *Psyche Out* and *The Trip* a new market was born.

In 1988 however, things are looking good for the beach movie. Frankie and Annette recently returned to the beach, The Fat Boys charted alongside The Beach Boys with "Wipeout", and the skate-surf crossover is kicking out the jams. What with *Shag* and The Tams British chart entry, this could be the year to catch a wave. See you on the beach!

Have you ever sat in some dingy cellar restaurant, coffee bar or sleaze joint, and thought "wouldn't it be fine if some zippy beat combo complete with Hammond organ were giving it some in the corner?" That band would no doubt be THE JAMES TAYLOR QUARTET. DAWN ROMANCE took James out for a Mexican, a Dos Equuis and the Quartet lowdown . . .

The James Taylor Quartet are a band that very nearly didn't exist. James, formerly of pop-psyche thrashers The Prisoners, originally intended to set up his own record company and dutifully booked some recording time. When the day came to enter the studio, James found himself without any aspiring combos to record, and therefore decided to put down some of his own material. He'd been messing around with a few instrumentals with his brother David, rehashing cuts by Jimmy Smith and Jimmy McGriff, alongside Herbie Hancock's score to the film *Blow Up*. The duo roped in ace rhythm section Alan and David, recorded the "Blow Up" theme just to use up the studio time, and promptly went home and forgot about it. Meanwhile James moved to Stockholm and spent four months sampling Scandinavian high life. As the money ran out James remembered the "Blow Up" recordings and sold the tapes to Re Elect The President, a minor record company run by The Prisoner's old manager. A few months later James got a phone call beckoning him home to record a John Peel session, which was the first he knew of any British interest. James hadn't even heard the single! Intense practicing followed to pad out the Quartet's slim repertoire, which led to two spots at The Limelight, haunt of the underage, the past it and

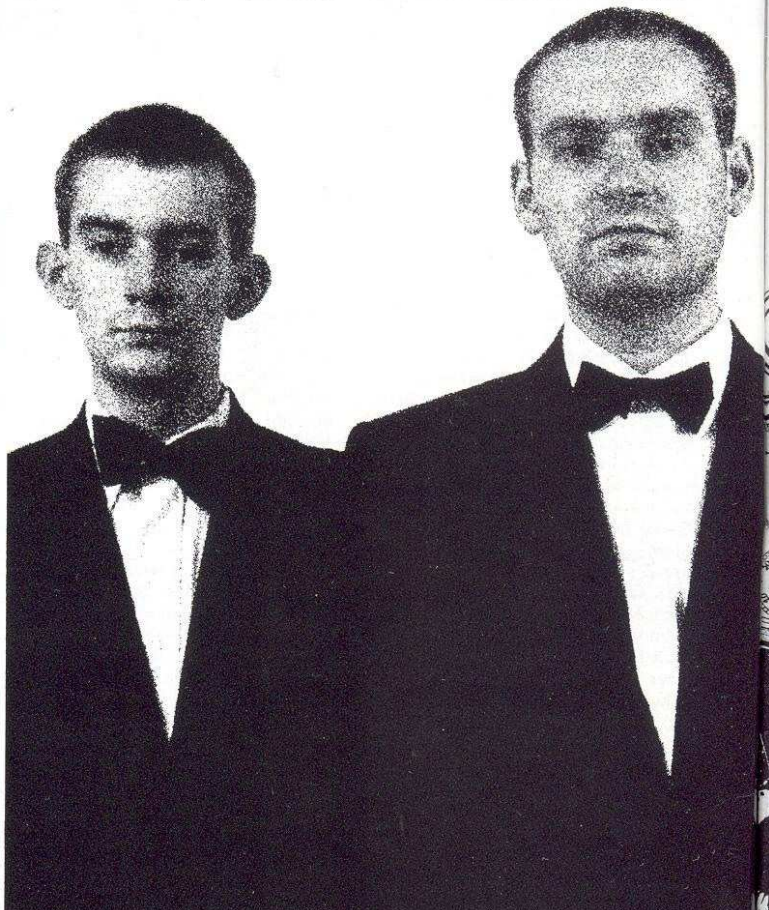
# the james

the nearly famous. European dates soon beckoned, including residencies in Hamburg and a Frankfurt cafe, as did a batch of fine records. Apart from the seering debut "Blow Up" 45, the Quartet's "Mission Impossible" mini-LP and the recent "Money Spyder" album prove that the group aren't a mere novelty. An inspired choice of cover versions ("Goldfinger" to "Mrs. Robinson", "Mission Impossible" to Peter Fenn's "Sale Of The Century"...), along with a tight, sharp live sound have earned them the attention of at least one major record company.

With such a variety of cover versions and a real authentic *feel* to their pro-



ANNETTE FUNICELLO AND FRANKIE AVALON DO THE ZOMBIE STOMP



duction and performance, it's no surprise to learn that James' influences are wide. He cites "dodgy psychedelic bands like The Nice and Iron Butterfly" (even mentioning a twenty-minute version of "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" without the slightest hint of embarrassment) alongside a variety of jazz and film composers. "Brother Jack MacDuff is a big influence — his records are never off the record player. He's got a perfect sound, perfect songs, perfect beat — he played supper bars. The LP "The

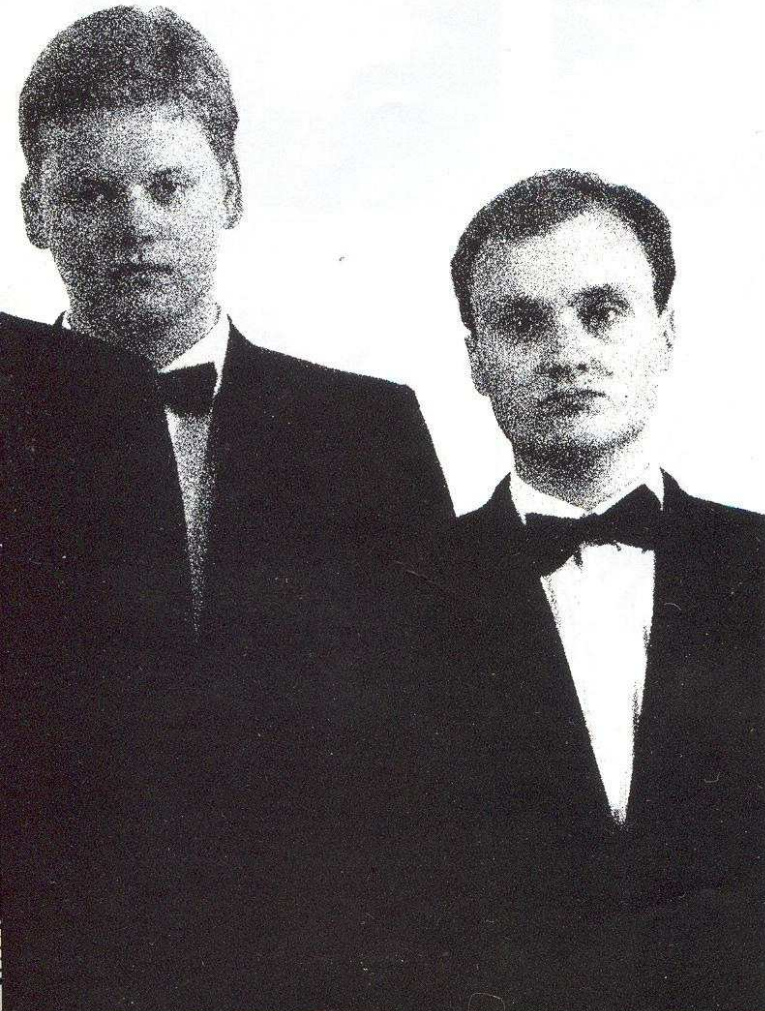
Moore's music in general, as well as John Barry and Lalo Schifrin: "a very clever arranger — he saved Jimmy Smith in a lot of ways. In his arrangements of things like "The Cat" it's the brass parts that have all the guts — Jimmy Smith plays just the same as he does anywhere else — but Lalo Schifrin structured it."

One individual they *aren't* influenced by is James Taylor. You know, the *other* one, that mindless hippy bore. The name is pure coincidence, but did

# taylor quartet

Natural Thing" is great: he covers a lot of Dizzy Gillespie stuff." All the band listen to vast amounts of jazz, and are aspiring full time jazz musicians. Miles Davies, Herbie Hancock, Coltrane, Monk and Art Blakey feature heavily on the Quartet playlist. Their jazz influence develops by the minute, although they still have time for TV and film adventurers. James rates the *Bedazzled* soundtrack and Dudley

cause some confusion early on: "at the first few gigs we did the promoters wrote James Taylor Quartet on the posters with "not the American folk singer" written underneath! There were usually about fifty disillusioned hippies sitting outside!" James denies he's having an affair with Carly Simon; "I think we're doing better than the other James Taylor" he figures. And he may be right. ■



The eternal triangle — Feline, Canine and Rodent — aglow in a sea of bricks. *Harvey S. Williams* takes a break from the Cow-Gum to present one of his all-time heroes....

Krazy Kat and Offisa Pup are sitting by a toaster in the house of Ignatz Mouse, because the day before it tossed a brick at Krazy...

KRAZY: IF IT TOSSES "TOAST" WOT?

OFFISA PUP: THAT'LL BE OK

KRAZY: AN' IF IT TOSSES A "BRICK" WOT?

OFFISA PUP: A "MOUSE" GOES TO JAIL

KRAZY: AN' IF IT DUNT TOSS "NOTHIN" — WOT?

OFFISA PUP: THEN NOTHING HAPPENS

KRAZY: IF NOTHIN' HEPPINS, WY STIGG AROUND?

OFFISA PUP: SOMETHING MIGHT...

Offisa Pup knows that something will — it always does in Coconino County — the home of KRAZY KAT, IGNATZ MOUSE, OFFISA B. PUP, JOE STORK, KRISTOPHER KATAPILLAR, GOOSE BERRY SPRIG, TERRY P. TURTLE, DON KIYOTI, SANCHO PANSY, KOLIN KELLY, WALTER CEPHAS AUSTRIDGE, MRS. KWAKKWAK, BARNEY BARRACHO, MOCK DUCK, MAURICE MUSKRAT & BUM BILL BEE.

Without a doubt George Herriman's KRAZY KAT cartoon is the most fantastic and complete example of the art of the comic strip ever. It encompasses brilliant puns, Surreal art, running gags and the most original kast of karacters ever to walk across an inky landscape.\*

George Herriman always wore a hat — a stetson. He wore it indoors and out. He also wore a piece of Navajo jewellery. He created the real KRAZY KAT in 1913: while drawing another strip called 'The Dingbat Family', a cat and a mouse, who lived under the floorboards, had their own thing going. The cat under the boards eventually became KRAZY, and the mouse IGNATZ. In fact the first "beaning" of a cat with a brick was in 1910. Herriman's early strips contained such characters as MAJOR OZONE (and his fresh air crusade), TWO JOLLY

JACKIES, PROFESSOR OTTO (and his auto), GRANDMA'S GIRL — LIKEWISE BUD SMITH and ACROBATIC ARCHIE. Some of his early characters were retained in the KRAZY KAT strips, amongst them GOOSE BERRY SPRIG and JOE STORK. Coconino's colourful cast of characters took shape early on in Herriman's formative years.

The new strip progressed, the cast expanded, and eventually somewhere for their adventures and happenings was located. The surreal look of Coconino County was based on Herriman's local terrain — Monument Valley. The valley itself is a vast desert with strange weather-worn orange rock pillars jutting out of the flat moonscape and rising into the sky. They appear in 1001 Hollywood cowboy movies. Two of the biggest of these mini-mountains, called the Mittens, appear in one cartoon "clapping" in megalithic applause.

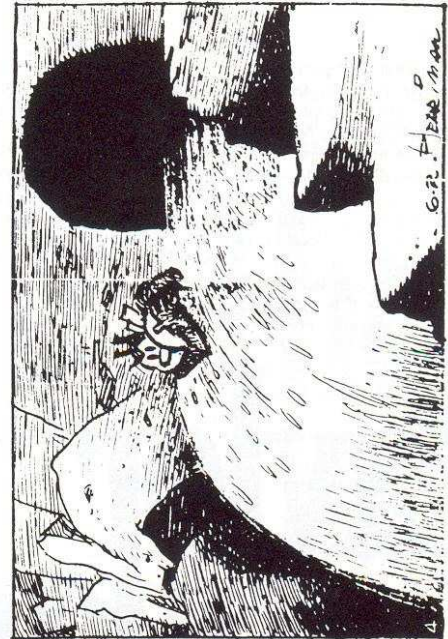
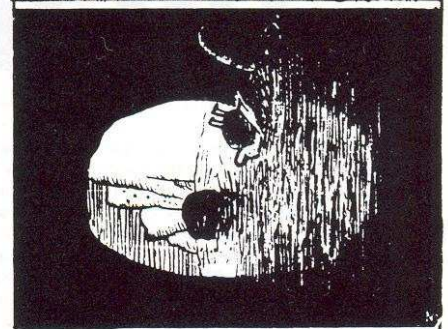
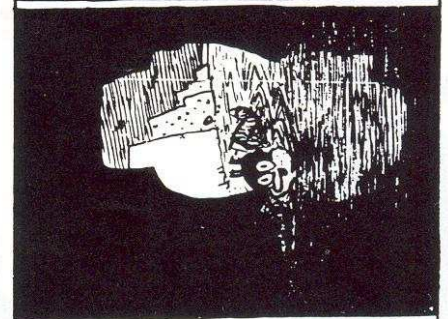
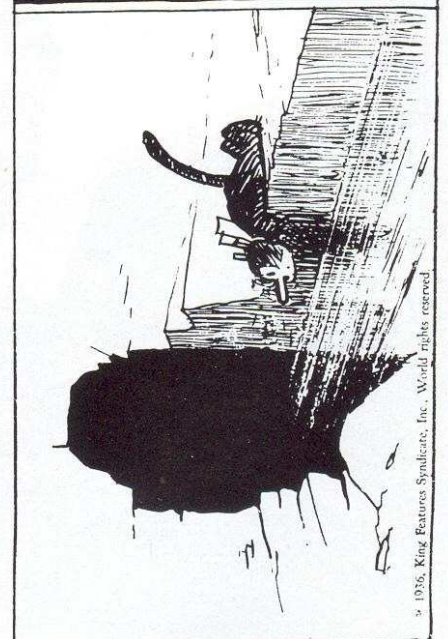
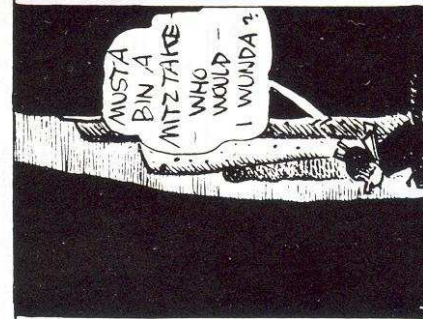
Herriman's drawing style reached a peak in the 30's — with the backgrounds in the scratchy, etched panels changing faster than the convoluted dialogue. One frame could have KRAZY in a desert — the next he might be superimposed on a ZIG-ZAG pattern. He even appears in a box with his speech bubble coming from a small hole in the top.

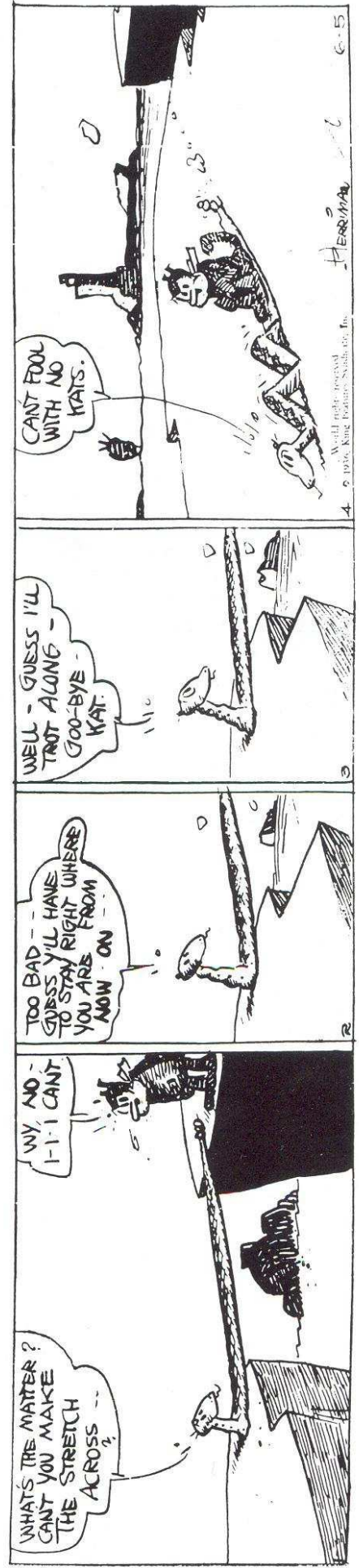
George Herriman died on April 25th 1944. KRAZY KAT stopped too. The papers ran the last few strips that had been drawn but, although other successful comic strips continued after their originators died, no-one could carry on the feel and content of KRAZY KAT. Since that date many of the original strips have been lost or destroyed. Of those which have survived, the ones that comprise the brilliant "Tiger Tea" episode must stand as Herriman's finest work. The tale, which ran for two years, turned Coconino County upside down. We will be running the whole story, in its entirety, the first time it has appeared since it was originally published.

So ladeez an' Gennalmin — we give you....

# WOPPY IN A TALE OF TWO CATS

By Herriman









# Syd Barrett

## THE MAKING OF THE MADCAP LAUGHS

It's 1969 – Pink Floyd, once deemed irrevocably underground, are beginning a climb towards dizzy commerciality. Somewhere in their wake lay Syd Barrett, the inspiration of the original group, whose quirky psychedelic odes had given them their initial style. Chemicals, nervous exhaustion, bad karma; call it what you will, Syd simply collapsed under its weight as the strain took hold. In 1968, the Floyd added a second guitarist, Dave Gilmour, to the nucleus of Roger Waters, Nick Mason, Rick Wright and Barrett, but it proved only a temporary pause – Syd dropped out of the group soon afterwards.

Rumours of strange behaviour followed; at best erratic, at saddest insane, stories which were punctuated by two albums, the excellent "The Madcap Laughs" and the more patchy "Barrett", before Syd slipped back into obscurity. There have been several further attempts to resurrect what had become a crumbling talent and personality, but as the legend grew, so too did Barrett's inability to cope. Syd sightings have become increasingly irritating affairs; an already confused person seemed hounded for voyeuristic pleasure, with only Nick Kent's NME tribute providing any lasting warmth and insight. Such furore has now died down, leaving Barrett in relative peace.

The following article is an edited version of "The Making Of The Madcap Laughs", a limited issue fanzine first published in 1982 by Malcolm Jones. Although changing it from first person to third, we've hopefully retained its original flavour as an insight to the mechanics behind the recording of what remains one of the era's most original, if fragile, talents.

# Syd Barrett

## THE MAKING OF THE MADCAP LAUGHS



In March 1969, Syd Barrett telephoned EMI's studio booking office to ask if he could go back into the studios and start recording again. It was over a year since he had parted company with Pink Floyd, and thus the request was referred to Malcolm Jones, then the head of the company's progressive outlet, Harvest.

Barrett had apparently been in the studio a year previously, working with Peter Jenner who, along with Andrew King, had managed the original Floyd. Dark references were made by EMI's management to "broken microphones and general disorder" and this resulted in a period when, if not actually banned, Syd's presence was not particularly encouraged at Abbey Road. None of these Jenner recordings had been reasonable, and no-one at EMI's A&R department had gone out of their way to encourage Syd back. Malcolm Jones was, however, determined to make the most of this contact.

At the ensuing meeting Barrett explained that he had more material for a new album, and was also keen to salvage some of the Jenner sessions. In all, Syd seemed far more together than the rumours circulating at the time

suggested.

It wasn't very hard persuading EMI to let Barrett record again; they were well aware of his successes and potential capabilities. The Pink Floyd had already said that they did not wish to release further singles; "It Would Be So Nice" and "Point Me At The Sky" had been flops and were no longer indicative of the style that the new lineup was developing. Work had already begun on what was to become *Ummagumma* and it's likely that EMI felt they could now have both the 'new' Floyd and the creative genius behind the 'old'. Contrary to what was later printed, the label did not stipulate that Syd could only cut singles, but decided to test the strength of his new material and plan accordingly. If it worked, fine, if not, they'd call it a day.

The next task was to find a producer that Barrett was comfortable with. The obvious first choice was Norman Smith, who produced the Floyd, but his commitment to *Ummagumma* coupled with a reluctance to have a conflict of interests between the Floyd and Syd made him decline the job. Peter Jenner similarly thought it wise to stay out and thus when Jones talked it over with

Syd, his response was simple — "you do it". Jones had already produced Love Sculpture's debut album, and thus seemed a logical choice.

At one meeting Syd played the rough mixes of Jenner's productions from the previous year. They included "Silas Lang" or "Swan Lee", "Late Night", two very long instrumentals ("Rhamadan" and "Lanky Parts One And Two"), and "Golden Hair", a James Joyce poem he was most anxious to complete. The version of "Late Night" was not the one finally released, whilst "Silas Lang"/"Swan Lee" was a long and rambling tale of an Indian maiden, reminiscent in some ways to the tale of Hiawatha. Syd then played his new songs, of which the most exciting was "Opel", an extremely haunting piece, very stark and poignant. Next was "Clowns and Jugglers", as well as unfinished snatches of another, "Terrapin", which was similar in feel to "Opel" though less desolate. Finally he played an old-timey song, "Love You", which Barrett was keen on largely because it was up-tempo.

There was already enough for three-quarters of an album, and certainly several sessions, the first of which was booked for April 10th, 1969. Much of the time was spent investigating old tapes made the previous year to see if anything was usable. Although guitar and vocal parts were overdubbed onto "Silas"/"Swan", and experiments were tried on "Clowns and Jugglers", neither were eventually used. The following evening work began on "Opel", but it took nine runs to get a completed take, which even then wasn't perfect, although it did have a stark attraction to it. Next were several takes of "Love You", the fourth of which was later overdubbed and issued. Barrett was, nonetheless, in great form, very happy to be working again, and contrary to later remarks, very together.

The next song, "It's No Good Trying", was much the same; the third version was the one used, although at 5.14 it needed a little shortening. Then, having discussed a re-look at the old sessions, Syd began work on another new song, "Terrapin". The guitar and vocal part, later to be the master, was successfully caught in the first take, although Barrett would later double track his voice and overdub a solo. Slide guitar (using a cigarette lighter) was then added to "Late Night", one of the 1968 songs, before they switched to "Golden Hair". The instrumentation was identical to the version Dave Gilmour and Roger Waters would later produce — vibes, bass, drums and guitar, and although this was not the one used, the remake was a direct copy of it. Jones remains surprised that "Golden Hair" was recut, as the issued recording, while technically better, lacks the atmosphere of the original.

The following Thursday Syd brought along Jerry Shirley and 'Willie' Wilson to add bass and drums. The session was to be done "live" with everyone recording simultaneously including Barrett's voice and guitar. They began with "No Man's Land", but as Syd's playing could, at times, be erratic (he'd frequently switch from playing rhythm to lead at double the volume) an overdub was later required. "Here I Go", however, which apparently was written within a matter of minutes, was all cut completely live.

These songs, however, were all that Barrett had ready, and his next idea

was to "try out something" with "Rhamadan". A long and rambling percussion piece, it lasted almost twenty minutes, with several conga drums overdubbed in seeming improvisation, but without any apparent theme or direction. Syd wanted to add some motorbike sounds on to it and ravaged the Abbey Road sound effects library for revving and gear change noises, all of which were transferred to a thirty second stereo tape loop. However Barrett then changed his mind and abandoned the project, deciding instead to put backings on "It's No Good Crying", "Clowns And Jugglers", "Love You" and "Opel".

On May 3rd, The Soft Machine, Mike Ratledge, Hugh Hopper and Robert Wyatt, overdubbed various parts on to these copies. In contrast to their own recordings Syd's tracks were very erratic and unpredictable and this, coupled with a lack of rehearsal time gave their performance a rather ragged edge. His irregular timing ("Love You" occasionally had six and a half bars or seven between verses rather than eight) made their task even more difficult.

It then transpired that Dave Gilmour had been taking a casual interest in what Syd had been doing. The soundtrack to *More* had been completed, and with it out of the way, the Floyd were back at Abbey Road recording further material for *Ummagumma*. Syd had been seeing Dave a lot, and had even been backstage at a Floyd gig in Croydon. It was only a short step to Dave (and Roger Waters) suggesting to Barrett that they too should produce some tracks as well. Jones had no objections to the new arrangement, and bowed out of the project.

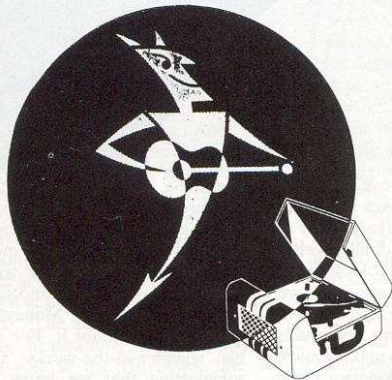
The rest of *The Madcap Laughs* was done in three sessions, on June 12th and 13th, and on July 26th. Dave and Roger supervised the re-recording of "Clowns And Jugglers" (now retitled "Octopus"), plus two new titles, "Dark Globe" and "Long Gone". Syd was obviously more comfortable with his newer songs, as the former took only two takes to find a satisfactory track, and despite a later re-try, this was the one used. "Long Gone" however didn't work and after two takes it was abandoned for another day. Meanwhile, "Octopus" and "Golden Hair" were more tortuous, and each required eleven takes.

The final day's work, on July 26th, was completed pretty much in a hurry. Songs from this session were "She Took A Long Cold Look" and the issued version of "Long Gone", which were left to just Syd alone, a rather desolate ending to the recording of an album which had taken over a year to complete and had seen so many participants come and go. Indeed as much was left lying on the cutting room floor as would appear on the album. One real casualty was "Opel", which was, somewhat inexplicably, dropped from the final listing and remains in the vaults.

*The Madcap Laughs* was released in January 1970, and briefly, Syd was back in the spotlight, with interviews and some glowing reviews. A month later he had cut four more demos in preparation for a second LP, another tale for another time. In the meantime, stand by for a new EMI compilation which will include many of these out-takes and unreleased tracks including the lamented "Opel", "Clowns And Jugglers", the different versions of "Love You" and more... ■

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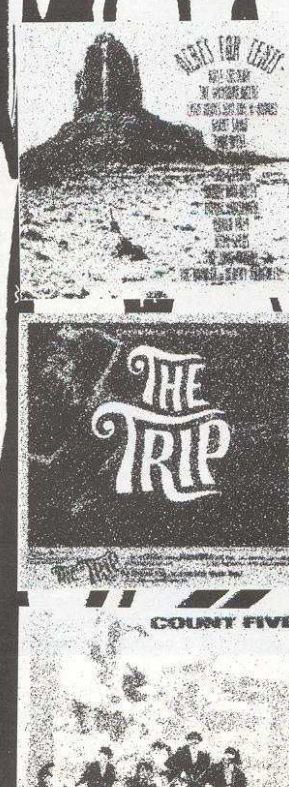
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# ROBYN HITCHCOCK

It's only when things make total sense that they become really boring. Fortunately nothing ever does." So says ROBYN HITCHCOCK, whose new album *Globe Of Frogs* sees the light of day this spring. VINCENT ENO caught up with him in a graveyard in December with some peculiar results. See him live, buy the record, and read on.....



Highgate Cemetery is quite some place. Crumbling monolithic shrines dedicated to prosperous Victorians, the imposing statue at Karl Marx's tomb, fine panoramic views over London Town. This fading piece of Old England seems a perfect location for an afternoon's debate with Robyn Hitchcock. You see, I'd had Hitchcock marked down as a late-twentieth-century throwback to an earlier, more whimsical age; some kind of modern day Decadent Victorian Romantic in the mould of Baudelaire, Huysmans, Symons or LaForge. All that stuff in his lyrics about drowning, death and decay, or those moody album covers with skulls and red wine bottles. I recalled lines like "All my favorite buildings have fallen down" as I ambled over to meet the lanky figure sitting on the park bench.

I was totally wrong, of course. Robyn picked the location because he lives nearby, and, although he agreed his outlook was romantic, he was having none of the late Victorian Decadent bit: "What, you mean old loonys with monies on monocycles? People cycling through London parks with fishing rods?" Clearly I was way off the mark. Robyn's romanticism isn't your average rose-behind-the-ear stuff: "You can easily romanticise a bunch of trees in autumn, or a load of old stones, but there's nothing there. Looking out over London I would be more interested if I could see a huge melon hovering over St. Pauls, and I'd be more interested still if I could see a cucumber oozing out of the Thames. If coloured tents started appearing in the cemetery I'd be delighted. If that guy

over there suddenly sprouted wings and shot vertically into the air I'd really be pleased."

Robyn has a habit of coming out with such sentences. Coming from anyone else this kind of palaver would seem totally contrived to gain attention (of the "Isn't he whacky" type), but coming from Robyn Hitchcock it sounds perfectly natural. It is impossible to think of some scheming, zany popster when confronted with such a friendly, genuine, honest-to-goodness bloke — he's genuinely taken aback that I could even dare suggest his creative output is contrived. "I'm not somebody who sat around saying "Well, I'm going to be eccentric; I'm going to carry a marrow, I'm going to wear goggles"; I have a lot of trouble trying to make anything make sense to me. I'm a ludicrous person in a ludicrous world. I'm trying to be as serious as everyone else — I'm not trying to wear a mask. I'm a lot more me than I bet Spandau Ballet are Spandau Ballet...although they probably want the same things — sex and central heating and drugs, only I suspect they want fame as well."

Whether he likes it or not, Robyn Hitchcock will, in his own particular way, be treading the weary path towards fame as much as the likes of Spandau Ballet in the very near future. Recently signed to A&M America for a two album deal, his fame has been gradually escalating to hero-worship proportions Stateside. American journalists have been frothing with critical acclaim — *Creem* magazine was even preposterous enough to suggest that "God walks among us". This kind of

adulation is in direct opposition to the kind of attention he receives in Britain — for the most part he is ignored, or at best pigeonholed as an oddball novelty. You can't blame him for looking to the US for support: "For seven years we had no response here — I spent five clawing up a cliff side till my fingernails came out, and didn't even make a mark in the cliff! I started in America three years ago and things have been good. Karmically, I think that if you have the slugging then you deserve the praise. I think the Americans are over-the-top and the British are under-the-top. The British don't understand what the fuck I'm about and the Americans take it far too seriously. The truth, as ever, lies somewhere in between."

Very true. Robyn Hitchcock is certainly no higher being, but he's written some damn good tunes. "Kingdom Of Love", "Queen Of Eyes", "I Wanna Destroy You", most of *Fegmania* and a fair smattering of *Element of Light* ought to have graced our charts and airwaves. Unfortunately they didn't. Will the A&M move bring chart success? "If we had a top five hit with A&M it would be awful... you become the property of eight year old girls — like The Thompson Twins. They were very trendy, very NME, and English Talking Heads — very popular with the middle class post-punk hippies that had lots of things dangling in their hair. I thought they were dreadful. Then they started doing songs for six year olds which I thought were actually much better; they lost their credibility, made lots of money...and nobody wanted to know them at all. I don't think it's going to happen to me — if it did it

would be tough luck.... but then it's dangerous to make these statements gazing out over London because you'll probably find that in six months I'm doing some ghastly track with Stock, Aitken and Waterman and saying "It's alright man, it's only Money!"

Somehow I doubt it. For one thing, his spanner-in-the-works school of songwriting that we know and love wouldn't allow for it. Robyn describes his songwriting style as "totally ramshackle"; it is certainly at odds with your average Top 40 fodder. His lyrics aren't intentionally obscure — they just come out that way... "I read back my lyrics and I know that sooner or later there's going to be something wrong somewhere. But that seems to me how life operates — either that or I'm just obsessed by the inappropriate. It's not intentional bloody-mindedness; I just find it almost impossible to write pop lyrics. The reason I've remained invisible for so long is because I work in a conventional framework musically but not lyrically. It's far too conventional for Peel to play, but it's not the sort of thing the daytime radio people can play because it hasn't got expensive production and the words stick in people's ears." But it's songwriting, not pleasing the accountant, that Robyn is most interested in — to the exclusion of almost everything else. "It's actually quite an effort to do the washing up or the shopping — I'm really happiest when I've got a piano or a guitar or I'm going for a long walk." So how does he write? "I usually make notes while I'm in orbit, and whenever I come to rest I sing through them. I might just have a list of titles written on the train, some-

# ROBYN HITCHCOCK

thing like "Sagging Sheep", "The Catastrophic Window" or "The Empty Hydrangea"; you have all those things and you'll find that one of them makes sense. You will then find that your title, which is the springboard for a song, is a context in which you can discuss a variety of things. Songwriting is a blueprint. In the instant of conception the artist is as ignorant as the public as to what it's about. When you first have an idea you don't know why you have the idea or what it represents; the first thing you get is the idea. You may then be able to label it, pigeonhole it, discuss it, send it away... but you don't know to start with. It just occurs to me before it gets to you."

What Robyn is about to unleash on the unsuspecting public is a new LP entitled *Globe Of Frogs*. It sees Robyn in a mellower mood, a continuing trait that has spanned *The Soft Boys* "Wading Through Your Ventilator" through to the reflective rush of *Element Of Light's* "Winchester". Robyn's obsession with all things organic also rears its head: "There's lots of creatures crawling all over the place, oozing out of each other." The sea and its inhabitants is a central concern: "There's a high incidence of fish, underwater stuff on the new record — people will say "Ey up, Hitchcock's into fish again...I'll go to America and get given a few more plastic lobsters. Someone gave us a live lobster in a bucket in Chicago — at least they didn't throw it at us on stage — the guy said he would!" The sea is not only a songwriting inspiration; it also plays an active role in the Hitchcock life. He lives by the sea most of the time, and spends a fair few days splashing about in the water. Drowning crops up on numerous occasions as a songwriting fixation — on *Globe Of Frogs* there's a track called "The Luminous Rosebud" where a serviceman fails to return home because he's been drowned. "Water is the source of all life" muses Robyn. "A lot of people dream about water. Psychologists tell us our unconscious is reflected in it. Even if there was a nuclear war the sea would be the last place to die. Things at the bottom of the sea would be the last to mutate and rot. The sea is the mother." Having said this, Robyn isn't too impressed with the idea of the channel tunnel: "The crabs aren't going to like that, oh boy!"

With all this fishy business going on you might care to associate Robyn Hitchcock with Pisces. You'd be right. But not yer average Pisces: "I know a lot of people who are Pisces, but they don't rattle on about lobsters, fish and crabs! The only way I connect with Pisces is that the fish emblem is going in opposite directions at once. This perfectly sums up my life and career!"

Along with the crustacean fixation, death and decay are two other subjects that stumble onto the new LP. A recent song subject was execution in a state

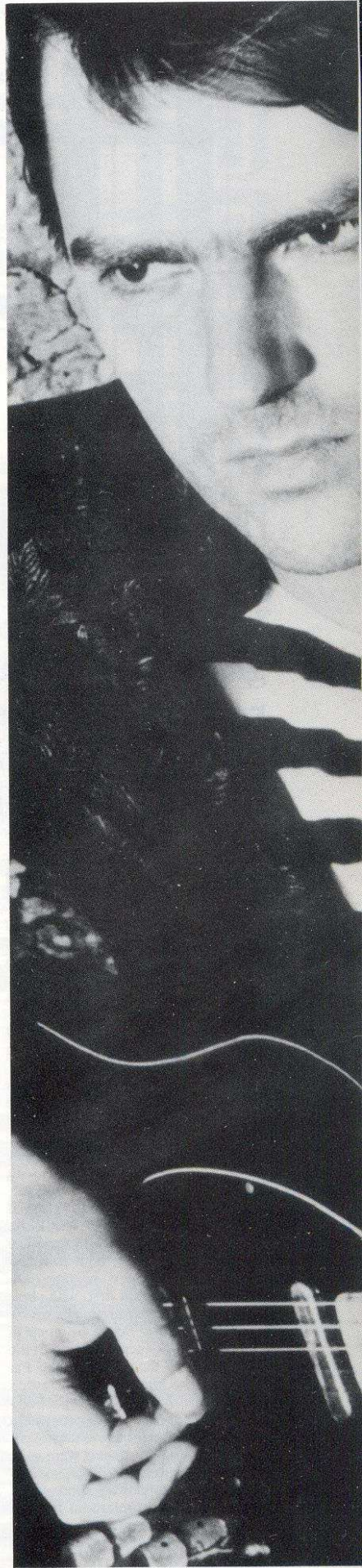
prison. Decay, for Robyn is "the law of life. You can only regenerate through what has actually rotted. In Tarot the hanged man represents the earth. If you dream about dying it is supposed to be rebirth. Death is the Christmas present nobody unwraps... but everyone's going to get it."

Quite. So it's a bag of laughs, this new disc, huh? "It's a lot about reproduction, religion and death. Nothing to do with politics or relationships or economics or slogans or media or sex. It's my most complete rejection of the so-called outside world — but on the other hand I think it's my most complete reflection of the world I see." But surely any complete reflection of your worldview must be political? "It's not to do with politics in terms of party politics or the number of hospitals that have been closed or the fact that they're charging you to even go and see the dentist, to see what he looks like... those particular things are obscene but it's very hard to write songs about them that don't come out as dogma. And I hate dogma. I hate slogans. If I had the gift to write those songs I would write them... maybe I will." However Robyn is far from apolitical. He has recently appeared in anti fur-trade and Nicaraguan benefits, because "that's all I can do. People assume that because I don't write about the things that you read in newspapers that I'm completely indifferent to them — that I'm some sort of supercilious middle class bastard who lives in a bubble. It's true in a way, but it's not that true."

Robyn Hitchcock is a sincere and immensely likeable individual. Not a god, not a genius, just a talented and unique songwriter doing what he knows best. His fans, however, would agree to differ here — some are totally obsessed. How does he cope with them? "The important thing about them is that they never meet you because it's such an awful dissolution to them. You get people that want to occupy the same physical space as you, they stand so close... they kind of wish you didn't exist because they'd like to be you instead. Mark Chapman was such a person. You've got to watch it — but on the other hand I was obsessive — rock music was what kept me going. I didn't have any interest in reality." Robyn's only other outlet was drawing and painting; he went to Art School but quit due to it's formal nature. "It was very academic and I was more interested in doing imaginative stuff. Quentin Crisp used to model there — that was about the only interesting thing about it. We didn't know who he was — he wasn't a celebrity — he was an oldish guy with silver hair that had obviously had a rinse. I got demoralised and chose the Rock and Roll path!" Yet this interest in all things artistic has led to some fine album cover artwork and excellent pen and ink sketches. Robyn is fairly modest about this: "I work very slowly, but I've

just done some paintings for the new album. I do about two and a half paintings a year. I'm not really very good at painting — I think I'm a good line artist — I'm a cartoonist basically. Painting is my hobby." So it's not a Ron Wood Rock Star pictures bit? "At least that proves that Ron Wood can do something other than chopping out lines of coke! More power to Ron! People at that stage need therapy. I'd like to see Keith Richard plant a flower bed — and do something useful for a change!"

Robyn's family are similarly artistic — his sister has just completed a radio play whilst his father has written a fair number of novels, mainly of the thriller variety. Anyone familiar with the live Hitchcock experience will recall his boundless excursions into babbled storytelling prose. Would he consider giving up songwriting to enter the world of literature? "I'm sure there will be a book of poems and lyrics, and sometime there will be a book of drawings. I'm really pleased that people are interested because it's a possibility that I'd stop making records at some point if I thought the songs weren't good enough — it could be any day. I don't think I can concentrate long enough to write a short story; I don't see myself writing novels. I wish I could but I can't. I can write plots, dialogue and characters, but I don't seem to have the ability to do any more." Still there are some strong literary influences bearing down upon Robyn's output — amongst them JG Ballard. "I've read nearly all of them: I liked *Empire Of The Sun* but thought the mastabatory car-crash stuff was a bit over the top. I'd rather read *Tarantula* or William Burroughs. I thought it was too frantic, the blood on the sheets stuff — I'd certainly take sex over technology any time! Things like *The Drowned World*, *The Draught*, *The Illuminated Man*, *A Woman From Nowhere* and all the short stories — I think they're really good. There are hundreds of short stories that he wrote up to the mid sixties. Of the more recent stuff, *Hello America* was alright, *Empire Of The Sun* very good. It explained an awful lot. The Ballard landscape of the drained river bed with the concrete bunkers and the dead wives and the dead parents hovering off into the corner..." Does this sound familiar? The Hitchcock landscape is just as vivid as Ballard's, just as radical, just as enjoyable. And ten times more humorous. As we leave, trying to cross through Highgate cemetery becomes a problem. An undertaker bars our entrance — apparently there's to be a burial later in the day. Robyn is ecstatic: "What you mean they still bury people here? How much does it cost?" On being discreetly informed the grisly details by this bemused Highgate official Robyn and I slowly walk away. "Aha", says Robyn, "Now I've solved my Christmas present problems."



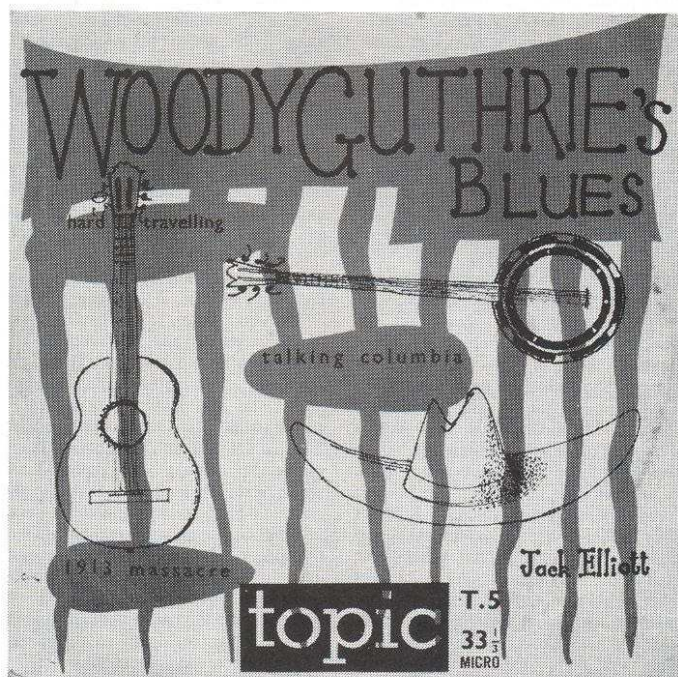
# BLUES

Even now, when the pulsebeat of Greenwich Village echoes to the ghosts of its past (Thomas Paine, Henry James or Phillip Ochs) rather than the wow of something happening, a truly touching atmosphere remains; a feeling that here, amongst the wild bustle that is New York, lies a slower, warmer pocket.

The Village is roughly bounded by W. Houston Street and Washington Square, with 5th and 6th Avenue completing its border. Within these approximate guidelines are taverns and coffee houses, random poets and optimistic folksingers; a fusion which gave its seminal years such potency. Yet those 50s Beats and 60s folkies were merely part of an evolving tradition – the area had always attracted innovative writers and artists, from Mark Twain to Thelonious Monk. Bohemia swayed from Bebop to songs of oppression, from *The Fall Of The House Of Usher* to *Howl*, but the need for self-fulfilment stayed constant.

The most direct link between history and the post-war generation came with the coffee house. It offered shelter, atmosphere and ambience; informal but somehow stimulating. The Caffe Reggio opened in 1935, with the Riezi following close behind; both provided the shape of things to come. The bubbling espresso vied, at first, with chess and newspapers, but gradually poetry and acoustic music began to creep in and take hold. Venues proliferated; the Kettle of Fish, the Gaslight, the Fat Black Pussycat, the Fifth Peg, Gerde's Folk City – while Izzy Young's Folklore Centre provided a vital core where musicians could meet and discuss.

The beats and the singers were soon synonymous with the Village, even if the two seemed largely incompatible – the dharma bums' preference for jazz was an irrevocable gulf. The massive commercial success college boy folk found during the 1950s (typified in The



Kingston Trio) tipped any balance. If the new, itinerant minstrel balked at this cheap sell-out, the resultant rush of the "Hootenany" show and media representation did bring a new prominence to folk music. Yet the Village, although affected, preferred to look to a deeper tradition, whose idols – Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston – offered a

cultural and political rebelliousness different from Beat nihilism yet still outside conformity.

Guthrie's talent was immense; his prolific output included songs rightly regarded as anthems ("This Land Is Your Land"), while others ("Talkin' Dust Bowl" or "Vigilante Man") document the tragedies of the De-

pression. It's a disservice to precis his work so harshly; it deserves a more structured tribute, but his mark on the Village is incalculable.

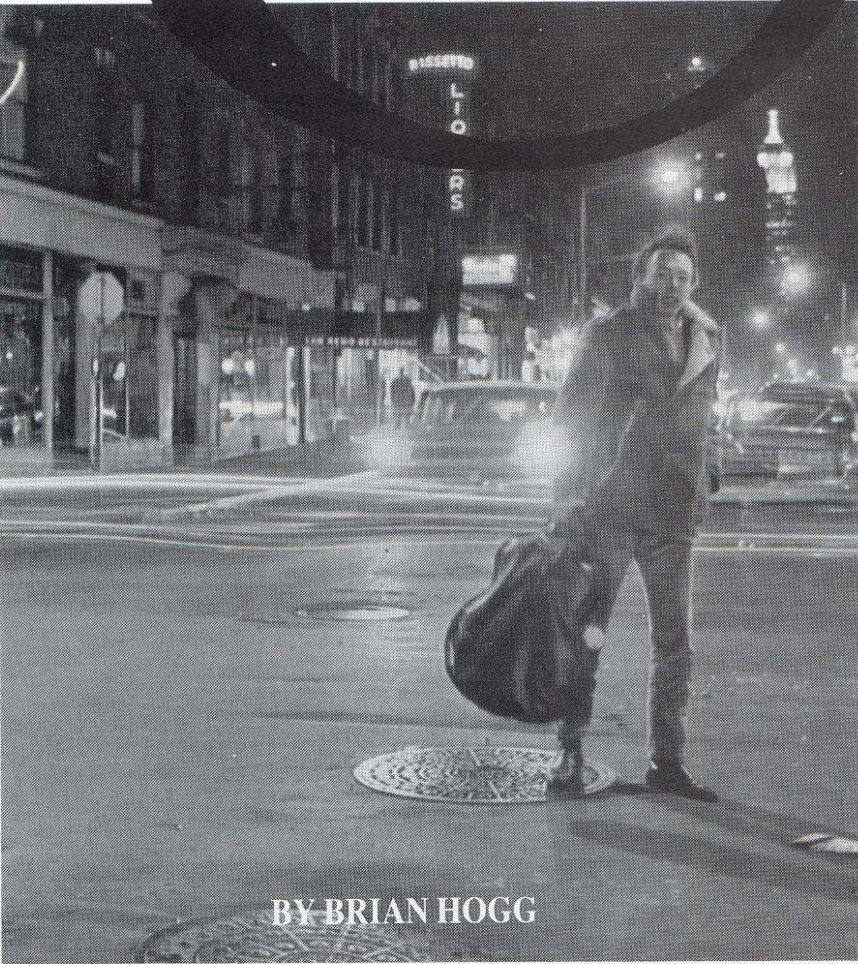
There were many disciples following in his wake; of them all it was Ramblin' Jack Elliott who formed the most natural link between Woody and the new young rebels. Yet Jack seemed the antipathy of Guthrie's vagabond ethic – he was born Elliot Charles Adnopoz, the son of a Brooklyn doctor. Infatuated with the American West, he ran away from home as a teenager and joined a rodeo. Here he learned a few rudimentary guitar chords, in time to meet and travel with Guthrie, who'd become his tutor; a Boswell to a Johnson as a later liner-note would comment. By 1949 the two were inseparable, and for the next five years Elliot absorbed Guthrie's life and times. Woody gradually succumbed to Huntington's Chorea, and thus his alter-ego assumed a new importance, inheriting and interpreting a brilliant legacy. "He sounds more like Woody than Woody does himself" became the caustic comment; in later years he'd refine this overt influence to emerge as a true original.

Jack Elliott spent much of the 1950s in Europe, joining Derroll Adams in London, where he cut records for Topic, and performed the Guthrie heritage to audiences desperate to connect with American hobo folk-culture. He drifted back to California before another stay in England, but by the turn of the 1960s was again in New York, playing at Gerde's Folk City and pre-

# KEEPER TALKS

FOLKSINGERS  
OF THE  
EARLY  
GREENWICH  
VILLAGE

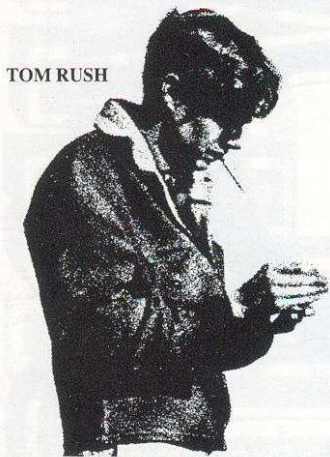
FRED NEIL, NARROWLY ESCAPES BEING RUN DOWN AT THE BLEECKER/MA CDOUGAL INTERSECTION



BY BRIAN HOGG

# BLEECKER & MACDOUGAL

TOM RUSH



paring to become a role model for others as Guthrie had once been for him.

Because of his extended trips abroad, Elliott was comparatively late in recording at home. Over the next few years, however, he'd cut sessions for Prestige and Vanguard, where his debt loomed large in collections such as **Jack Elliott Sings The Songs Of Woody Guthrie**. Others, such as 1964's **Jack Elliott** offered progress with strong interpretations of "House Of The Rising Sun", "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" and "Black Snake Moan", while later albums (**Young Brigham** for example) continued such undoubted skills. All remain excellent records, sometimes derivative but always heartfelt, while today Elliott still pursues his idiosyncratic path.

Brooklyn also provided another Village voice (ouch), one whose radical rasp was truly unique. Dave Van Ronk is a bear of a man, with a gruff growling voice to match. He came via jazz, blues and ragtime; each of these styles have sifted a way through his impressive delivery. At sixteen he played banjo in the Brute Force Jazz Band, and although Van Ronk would later embrace folk music, his debut album, cut around 1959 for the Lyricord label, was a jugband collection.

The following year Dave signed with Folkways Records, an established independent outlet. It had begun as early as 1948 when Moses (Moe) Asch and Marion Distler put the label together to issue Cuban and Native American music, as well as traditional artists such as Leadbelly. Its catalogue flourished during the 1950s; Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and Cisco Houston were amongst those most prominent, while Folkways also offered opportunities to newer acts beginning to stir in the Village coffee bars. Van Ronk made two albums for the label (**Early Ballads and Blues** and **Black Mountain Blues**) before switching outlets to Prestige and their Folklore series. His new company offered him national exposure; their Jazz

heritage was impeccable. If Elektra and Vanguard led the folk-based associations, Prestige nonetheless made several crucial signings in Dave, Rick Von Schmidt, Tom Rush and Geoff Muldaur.

**Dave Van Ronk, Folksinger** was released in 1963 and featured several classic performances in "Motherless Children", "Cocaine Blues", "Long John" and "Samson And Delilah". In **The Tradition** and **Inside** followed a year later and emphasised his barrelhouse interpretations; the truckdriver/lumberjack all-out roar Lillian Roxon once wrote of.

If **Tradition** delved into Black music ("Hesitation Blues", "Death Letter Blues"), then **Inside** gathered several songs Van Ronk had learned from his grandmother - Irish ballads, 19th century pop - and caught fiery readings of "The House Carpenter", "Fair And Tender Ladies" and "Sprig Of Thyme". His parameters were now set - there are no rules. Further solo releases were punctuated by offshoot experiments; **Dave Van Ronk And The Ragtime Jug Stompers** (Mercury 1964) or **Dave Van Ronk And The Hudson Dusters** (Verve/Forecast 1967), a ragged chase through such disparate items as "Both Sides Now" and "Roamin' Through The Swamp". The latter is truly wonderful; and funny.

These two performers offered style, knowledge and experience for a whole host of followers knocking around Washington Square, trading tales and songs. This even newer generation - Ochs, Anderson, Blue, Farina and, of course, Dylan - would bring a shifting perspective to the music and somehow overshadow others, contemporaries of Elliott and Van Ronk, artists who's influence was not quite so apparent, but whose attitude and music was equally absorbed and loved.

Bob Gibson was an essential figure. Born and raised in New York, he was already a folknik veteran, a legend in the coffee house circuit, long before the Kingston Trio blew into the marketplace. Gibson had even played Carnegie Hall, accompanying himself on 5-string banjo, something only Seeger would dare contemplate.

He first recorded in 1956, and following a single on Decca ("I'm Never To Marry"/"Marching To Pretoria"), Gibson cut his debut album, **Folksongs Of Ohio**, for the Stinson label. Much of his work throughout the decade, however, appeared on Riverside, another label (like Prestige) better known for Jazz. **Offbeat Folksongs, I Came For A Song** and **There's A Meeting Here Tonight** were each constructed around excellent, original songs, while **Carnegie Concert** caught the atmosphere of his seminal in-concert appearances. The respect afforded by his peers was limitless; The Kingston Trio, The Chad Mitchell Trio, The Limelighters and Peter, Paul and Mary all recorded Gibson songs, but although commercially successful, they often lacked the bite of their composer.

Paradoxically, Gibson struggled to attract similar fame, yet would selflessly encourage other performers. He introduced Joan Baez to the 1959 Folk Festival; brought her on during his set, played a handful of duets, then retired while she sang solo. Bob also helped others - Judy Collins, Mike Settle and Joni Mitchell for example - artists who would later overtake their one-time mentor.

He found a new outlet in 1959 when Elektra released the rather off-the-wall **Ski Songs**. The added instrumentation was then somewhat radical (if now tame), but Gibson clearly wished to press and stretch musical boundaries. Yet it would be two years (1961) before he would record again when the uncomfortable **Yes I See** saw Bob blend folk with an awkward gospel backing group. Fortunately Gibson's live reputation stayed throughout this period; he'd teamed with another performer, Bob Camp, and the combination of voices and writing skills resulted in something truly inspired. The brilliant **At The Gate Of Horn** quickly pushed the fractured **Yes I See** into the background - it remains one of the definitive pre-Dylan folk sets, and the exemplary working partnership.

Sadly, the album marked an end rather than a beginning, and the two musicians began to drift apart. It would be a further three years before Gibson returned to the studio when he cut **Where I'm Bound**, a showcase for his riveting 12-string technique. There were only two Camp/Gibson compositions, while most of the rest featured another collaborator, Shel Silverstein. Although technically strong, the record would be eclipsed by the new generation of folksingers. Indeed it was somewhat overshadowed by **Paths Of Victory**, the superb Elektra debut of Bob (now Hamilton) Camp, and the new Village partnership of Vince Martin and Fred Neil, whose **Tear Down The Walls** collection possessed the aura of Gibson and Camp as well as their own resonant strength.

**Where I'm Bound** marked a pause in Gibson's career; it would be his last album until 1971. Between times he merely dropped out of sight; a few appearances here, a quick duet with Camp there - talk of a drug dependence and erratic, irregular live shows began to circulate. They were never truly substantiated, but his re-emergence album, simply **Bob Gibson**, was nonetheless a surprise. The singing and songs were strong; so was the backup where David Crosby, Cyrus Faryar and more all appeared to show support and indebtedness, and turned in some excellent roles. It may not have propelled Bob to stardom, but its unassuming strength helped to reintroduce this

## BOB GIBSON ON THE STREETS OF GREENWICH VILLAGE



seminal artist.

Since then there have been sporadic releases, including a more substantial reunion with Hamilton Camp, who's own solo career took on a similar sporadic element. **Welcome To Hamilton Camp**, his 1968 Warner Brothers debut, was truly powerful. He worked a way through songs by Paul Simon, Pat Sky and more, but his momentum was always sideswiped by his increasing appearances in TV movies. **Homemade Music** (1978) nonetheless caught some of the duo's erstwhile verve and paved the way for Gibson's newest partnership with Tom Paxton.

Paxton was a Village contemporary; he arrived in New York from Oklahoma in 1960, determined to pave a folknik career based on an already prolific writing talent. Such a gift helped establish Paxton's name; he was virtually resident at the Gaslight club and it was they who issued his first, and highly scarce, LP. Tom's newest songs made frequent debuts in several publications; both **Sing Out** and **Broadside** provided ideal avenues. The former was founded in 1951 as an outlet for traditional and contemporary folksongs, reprinting words, music and chords to such material. **Broadside** was a much newer magazine; the first issue appeared in 1962 as an outgrowth of folk's radical fringe. The first board consisted of Agnes "Sis" Cunningham, her husband Gordon Freiser, Pete and Toshi Seeger and Gil Turner, and thus bridged the decade of the Almanac Singers with that of "Blowin' In The Wind". The Almanac Singers, a flexible 1940s singing collective led on to the Almanac House, a series of some six Greenwich Village apartments which formed a focal point for the movement. One, for example, sheltered Woody Guthrie while he worked on his autobiography, **Bound For Glory**. **Broadside** thus tended to specialise in reprinting political songs alongside liberal articles and comment. It also provided Folkways with a small subsidiary, allowing songs and artists they published a natural outgrowth and culmination.

Tom Paxton was adept at protest. His early releases for Elektra (**Ain't That News, Ramblin' Boy** and **Outward Bound**) each contained several brilliant songs ("What Did You Learn At School Today", "Lyndon Johnson Told The Nation"), but they were equally strong on poignancy - "The Last Thing On



My Mind", "One Time And One Time Only" and "Leavin' London" each possess a rare beauty.

Paxton continued his unique style through further albums (*Morning Again* and *The Things I Notice Now*) assimilating the occasional contemporary influence while maintaining a generally unsurprising mix. He switched labels in the 1970s, but his Reprise releases lacked the incisiveness of their predecessors and became increasingly cosy and undemanding. Paxton had found a comfortable niche, and if record sales slipped, an in-concert popularity stayed true. His teaming with Bob Gibson was a natural pairing; their voices blend well and Gibson's guitar technique still carries a power. Survivors both (Bob runs a folk club in Chicago when not touring), the grit of the past may now be over, but their new maturity has a measured compensation.

Sadly, there were some who would not survive that flush of Village euphoria. Pete LaFarge brought a succession of contrary experiences, mostly hard times, with him into his music. Born around 1931, the son of a Pulitzer prize winner, LaFarge later befriended Cisco Houston, who helped draw out and shape an already growing interest in folk. Following his service in Korea, Peter drifted through rodeos and boxing before returning to music. A committed voice, he sat on *Broadside's* early editorial boards and contributed a succession of his songs. He recorded five albums for Folkways, each of which blend compassion with a clear social conscience; ideals are preferred to compromise. "The Ballad Of Ira Hayes" became an anthem - its tale of a Native American harrowingly close to LaFarge's own life experience - he was of Pima Indian extraction. He was also a consummate performer, comfortable at local hoots or concert halls, and his influence and guiding hand on Village life cannot be underestimated. Yet he seemed frustrated and restless, telling several contemporaries of a need to retire from music to concentrate on his life and art, on writing and on painting. It would not be realised; on October 27 1965, Pete LaFarge was found dead in his New York apartment. The coroner's report recorded a stroke; many have called it suicide.

Similar macabre debates circulate around the death of Paul Clayton. Some sources, fired by legend, tell how he threw himself from an upstairs window following a three-day grind on LSD; how his body was then found in his bath, electrocuted, the other common explanation, is a matter for others' conjecture. Yet although such tales do contradict, the underlying tragedy itself is undeniable.

Clayton was born in Bedford, Massachusetts in 1933. A whaling port, his interest in traditional music came directly from the shanties he learned from his family. The step to musicologist was natural and Clayton began studying all forms of folklore, travelling to Europe in the process during which he appeared on a BBC series.

During much of the 1950s, Clayton travelled with Liam Clancy, collecting instrumentals, ballads and traditional songs from Virginia and the Carolinas, before re-establishing his performing career, settling in Greenwich Village and opening at Gerde's Folk City. His set showed a remarkable depth; ethnic material nestled alongside Clayton's

originals, mostly, in turn, indebted to some obscure hillbilly tune. The blend proved almost limitless; Paul cut eight albums for Folkways alone, two for Elektra (including a collection based on Robert Burns' songs) plus others for Stinson, Riverside and Everest. He was both gifted and prolific.

Like Bob Gibson, Clayton had his peer's respect. Through him, for example, Van Ronk had learned that songs he'd heard from his grandmother were part of a larger canvas, while the friendship struck with the young Bob Dylan provided the newcomer with an alternative perspective to Guthrie and Elliott. The two were close, albeit briefly, with Clayton in awe of Dylan's youth and raw talent. They worked the same circuits and Paul's knowledge and approach provided an early inspiration. At least two of Dylan's compositions ("Percy's Song" and "Don't Think Twice It's Alright") came from Clayton melodies; the latter was a simple rewrite of "Who's Gonna Buy Your Ribbons When I'm Gone". In turn Paul's came from "Who's Gonna Buy You Chickens When I'm Gone", a song he'd found in the Appalachians and thus public domain. Nonetheless, dark mutterings were made that Dylan should have credited Clayton and paid some royalties, as Paul was struggling financially. Eventually their mutual publishers settled, leaving their friendship intact, as Dylan took Clayton on the wired 1964 carathon when, in homage to *On The Road*, they, and more, set out across America.

The journey brought their closeness to an end. Although he would deny it, Dylan's "It's All Over Now Baby Blue" was seen as an address to Clayton, and their respective circles broke further and further apart. While Bob embarked on the amphetamine shriek that was Newport, then the Hawks, so Clayton's addiction to pills became more desperate. Hallucinations would tip his fragile mental balance; Paul became more and more distraught, selling off his copyrights, until insanity and finally darkness fell.

\*\*\*\*\*

This glance at Greenwich Village is almost impertinently short. Missing are other important figures; Logan English, Len Chandler, Erik Darling and Gil Turner, singers and musicians who threw something of a spark into the coffee house stew. But it shows that the 60s folk boom, its denim cap and songs about the Bomb, was but a small part of a larger flow; its attitude was what made it special. Van Ronk, Gibson, Paxton et al breathed life into their chosen material, refusing to be mere curators. They'd add wit, fire and virtuosity to the songs and, on a good night, hang them out to dry. Conflict of course came later, when the old guard balked at their seeming irreverence and those who once sang songs of intolerance suddenly sounded hypocritical.

Yet a Paul Clayton revered the folk form, while recognising, in turn, that a true people's music must necessarily chronicle its time. Thus it would be those fired with a contemporary edge who would ultimately survive, an Anderson, a Dylan etc. That is another story; folk's life and times seemed simpler before such battle lines were drawn.

TO BE CONTINUED



PSYCHIC  
TV

In Uptown Hackney a commotion is breaking out - PSYCHIC TV are about to unleash their ACID DANCE upon the nation. Richard Noise and Nick Haeffner investigate . . .



The doorway of The Temple Ov Psychic Youth slowly swings open, revealing a pale, tired looking deaf mute butler with a wicked number one crop. He beckons me in, staring knowingly at the menacing axe that lies embedded in the oak of the closing door. As he turns along the dark corridor, leading I don't know where, I notice the small, perfectly carved incision just above the nape of his neck; the shape of a cross, with two additional bars augmenting the usual crucifix. He draws back velvet curtains to reveal the inner sanctum of Psychic TV. There, amongst life-like waxwork effigies of Brian Jones, Charles Manson and Dennis Wilson, amidst the heavy swirling smoke of sweet incense, sits Genesis P.Orridge. To the hypnotic sound of a dull, thudding tom-tom, he slowly embarks upon a sacred, ancient ritual involving Paula P-Orridge, 23 sixteen year old virgin schoolgirls, a large, gleaming blade and a ghetto blaster. He is about to endure the magick rites of thee interview.

Okay, okay, so this is total fabrication, but isn't it the kinda stuff people associate with Psychic TV? Pain, rituals and magick? With the odd Charlie Manson gag thrown in? Let me tell you it ain't so. PTV happen to have thrown their dark side into a temporary cupboard, and are letting their warm, misunderstood, colourful selves shine out in the open. Only watch that cupboard door. . .

Present at the *Strange Things*/PTV meeting were Nobody, lead guitarist and T.O.P.Y. volunteer, "cooking, babysitting, abuse, receipt thereof"; Daniel Black, ex-Squeeze, Savoy

Brown (!) and Then Jerico (!!), resident keyboardist, arranger and librarian; Paula P.Orridge, T.O.P.Y. coordinator, player of "percussion, vibes, wriggling and vocals" (one word on the new "Love War Riot" single - "Love", of course) and Genesis P.Orridge, whom the Groucho club deem to be an "Entrepreneur". Hold on a minute - the *Groucho Club* - that exclusive Soho media hangout frequented by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Peter York? Surely Psychic TV aren't members? It, um, appears they are. . . "It's the only place we get left alone and looked after" mutters Gen; "And the

booze is cheap too. It's one of those wierd things where its reputation isn't quite like how it is."

A bit like Psychic TV, really. Instead of the avant-garde mystic mutants I expected to encounter deep in the heart of Hackney, I find a friendly, approachable working unit whose main desire is to communicate; to fight the information war with a viable alternative network. There's a Temple set up in Holland, another in Denver, USA, plus a growing number of self-perpetuating groups acting as "access points" around Britain. A small army of volunteers is helping spread the T.O.P.Y. message worldwide. And Genesis isn't some McLarenesque guru either; just an enthusiastic springboard for plans and ideas. Take it from Dan Black, who in any other outfit would be relegated to token session musician: "Liking PTV as I do is like playing for your favorite group. . . there's a degree of autonomy, but there's also a degree of involvement. There is a sense of involvement that goes beyond playing." Nobody, whose real name is withheld since his recent trouble at customs (he was nearly deported before Genesis contacted his local MP!) agrees: "We work with people on different levels, rather than just trying to be a commercial outfit. There's a lot of loyalty and commitment involved for all participants of Psychic TV." Even practicing as a group is a fair task, since Gen never sings during rehearsals - new members hear the total PTV performance for the first time on stage.

Dan reckons this "makes it demanding in the best possible way. . . instead of merely being demanding on a technical level one is forced to rethink the premise under which you go on stage and play. It's a sort of *structured disorder* where one very carefully applies oneself to making sure that nothing gets too looked into so that you can't take it somewhere else." Structured disorder, huh? As a recent sleeve note (in true situationist style) suggests, "deconstruct to reconstruct." This is central to PTV thinking - "It seems to permeate everything that Psychic TV represents," says Genesis, "both on a philosophical level and on a practical level. Things are structured so that there's always a degree of uncertainty available that you can either use or reject."

As any William S. Burroughs reader will tell you, structures and control can be pretty hairy now and then. And Psychic TV are no strangers to Burroughs - they even released an album of his spoken material, whilst Genesis is currently compiling more for *Demon Verbals*. He first met Burroughs in 1973 when he was living in London, and persuaded him to release the tapes over a period of seven years. Bur-

roughs has written references for various PTV/P. Orridge projects, and acted as a witness in court when the mail art scam grabbed the Royal Mail's attention, resulting in the threat of prosecution for indecent mail. He even stated that Psychic TV's work was "the most important work with communication that he knew of in the popular medium."

Bill Burroughs also alerted Psychic TV to what has become a recurring, talismatic theme for the Temple gang: the number 23. It has become for them "the symbol of random chance, and also the opposite, which is that unwritten law which makes things occur, apparently approximately, but which are illogical. 23 is well documented as occurring more than is statistically viable - we've done computer analyses to discover how many times the number appears under circumstances of random chance, and 23 was several hundred per cent out. Nobody knows why - it that doesn't really matter. What interests us is that it appears to act as though it has a mischievous personality." To which end Psychic TV have begun releasing 23 live albums on the 23rd of each month. "It's a record in a sense of a file or a document", Genesis explains, "it may be useful for people to have a great encyclopaedic body of work, as a reference at the very least. It's basically saying that we don't arrive at a specific point; we're working along the line and leaving trails of debris in our wake. We accept that it is an experiment, we accept that some of our experiments don't work. . . we don't always pick the best gig or the best songs from any concert. We pick the areas which seem unique or unusual or reveal a certain aspect of what happened at any given event. We don't try to impress people with our prowess all the time. . . far from it."



## LIVE IN TORONTO

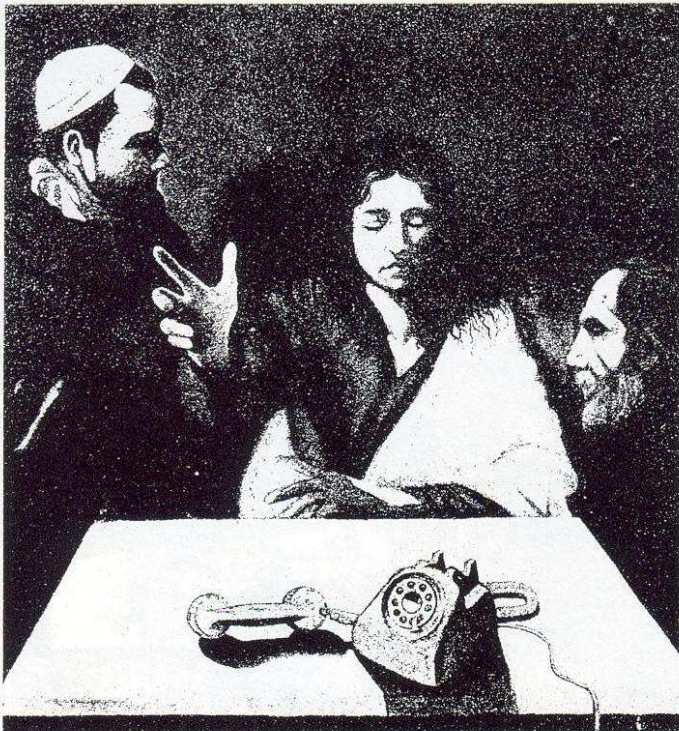
What Psychic TV do attempt, however, is to combat systems of control or lack of access for the individual. Burroughs' ideas in this area were inspirational to Genesis: "The things that inspired me most about Burroughs' work was the underlying theme of how control operates; how it has insinuated itself into almost every nuance of life to a point that it is invisible. There isn't a person or group of people in charge of control - it has its own amorphous, almost biological, self-perpetuating nature which develops regardless."

Taking a cue from Burroughs and Hassan I Sabbah, PTV see language as a primary form of control. Genesis' interest in communication goes beyond Western European language: "We're trying to discover a way through language towards other forms of communication, such as various forms of celebration, shamanistic ritual and song; some of which rely more on



## LIVE IN REYKJAVIK



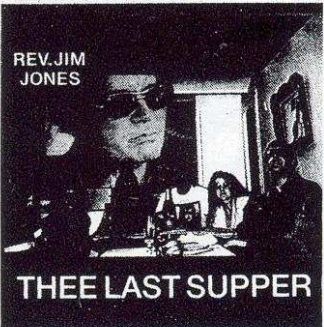


sound than words, evoking certain types of mental state. There are many forms of communication which are discarded and even ridiculed. Dreams, for example, are considered to imitate some vaguely amusing state but without any real significance. In other societies, and throughout history, dreams have proved highly significant and with an equal reality to the waking state, certainly worthy of documentation, note and consideration. Most societies take esoteric mental phenomena to be completely normal; they're integrated into everyday life.



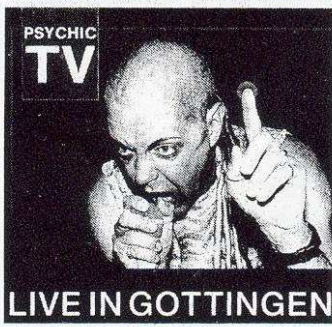
**LIVE IN GLASGOW**

They're not considered separate, or weird, or threatening – they're just part of the human condition. The aborigines, for example, are apparently able to communicate telepathically over massive distances, and meet at certain points in the desert – these so-called "primitive states" are something



REV. JIM JONES

**THEE LAST SUPPER**



**LIVE IN GOTTINGEN**

we are all capable of, but have been discouraged from doing. In Western European culture such phenomena is dismissed as evil, ridiculous or unprovable." So are Psychic TV a Primitive organisation? "We're trying to reclaim our birthright, which is the right to investigate every aspect of feeling, emotion, every possible mental and physical state we encounter during life. We take that as individuals and present it as an event, a band or whatever, which reaches the participants only by their active decision to make the trek to the live show, and cannot be documented properly or recorded in any other way than in your memory. That's the application from us to the outside, based on the assumption that people would prefer it." Are we therefore heading for a more caring Psychic TV? Recent sleevenotes state that PTV have discovered that they prefer to care – Genesis describes it thus: "an ongoing crusade. Caring seems to be one of the most uncool, unhip, frowned upon activities in Britain at the moment. It seems a weakness – our "Angry Love" concept (in which anger and frustration is used to positive ends, kinda like creative tension) is in a sense saying that caring can be strong. It requires action, but that action can be both angry and constructive." Psychic TV are declared humanists, an aspect of their work they feel has long been misunderstood.

But then again, it's no wonder Throbbing Gristle and Psychic Tele-

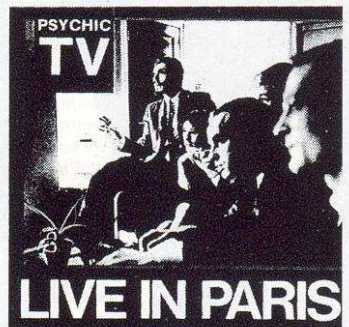
vision projects are misunderstood – as Genesis pointed out in *Research* magazine's *Industrial Culture Handbook*: "Just about every (TG) record had some reference in it towards the one that has gone before or the one that is coming next – so there was this strange spider's web building up. A lot of people weren't sure what it was, but they got this feeling that if they could just get the pattern on the kaleidoscope, it would suddenly all become clear. We used to put in enough red herrings to prevent that!" And they still do – all PTV projects are littered with in jokes, sneaky references and black humour. Gen also employs his "double bluff technique"; "one of the best ways to confuse authority is to be as close to them in terms of style as possible so that they get really confused." Witness:

*"During thee visit of Psychic TV and Thee Temple Ov Psychick Youth to Iceland it was arranged that Paula and Genesis P-Orridge have a pagan marriage in thee old religion's way. An ASTRU MARRIAGE. This marriage was performed in sub-zero temperatures, out in thee wilderness beneath a statue of Thor built upon a sacred place. Caresse was present. Ancient drums, Tibetan Thigh Bone trumpets and Tibetan singing bowls accompanied thee ceremony... for thee first time we felt close to reclaiming our birthright and emasculating the imposed oppression of sham X-tianity."* (Sleevenotes to "Psychic TV Live In Reykjavik")

People don't always get the joke: *Sordide Sentimental's* Jean-Pierre Turmel, frinstance, wrote the following in his limited edition "Roman P" package:

*"The new haircut of Genesis P.O. is equally revealing. The largest part of the skull is shaven... but what do we finally see? Less the absence of hair the appearance of a network of points, finally forming a woven (or screened) surface. Behind the hair has been preserved but braided. A new clue."*

I mean, if it had come from Mr Porridge himself I would have chuckled, but this guy's serious! What d'you reckon, Gen? "I love his stuff because it's so outrageous – he puts forward a



completely ridiculous theory and then supports it. It's a bit like science – he builds this edifice because, if nothing else, it suggests something that otherwise might not have been suggested. I've always said that it's nice if people use us to grind their own axe... half the time I think 'what the hell is he talking about now?'. . . but he often pinpoints recurring themes that we've not noticed, which are interesting as a back-up way of receiving things." But despite the usefulness of the likes of Jean-Pierre, the majority of the record-buying public are fairly dazzled as to what's going on in PTV-land. Even staunch supporters raised more than an eyelid as the bleak, industrial pranksters suddenly added a splash of colour and turned all psychedelic. "It caused a lot of anger – there are still people who come up to me and complain bitterly as if we've betrayed them." No one even got near to recognising the dark humour of the "Magickal Mystery D-Tour" EP, which includes the common link between The Beatles, The Beach Boys and Roman Polanski – one Charles Manson. To those looking behind the sheen of the poppy production it seems a perfect twist to the Psychic tale. But even the media didn't pick up on it. Genesis was even worried whether it was too obvious: "We were thinking 'will the media go completely bonkers over this?' and they didn't. You could call it media mischief – that was a very mischevious record. I was surprised that nobody noticed, nobody hinted that they'd sussed what was going on at all." Paula thinks it may have been



# PSYCHIC TV

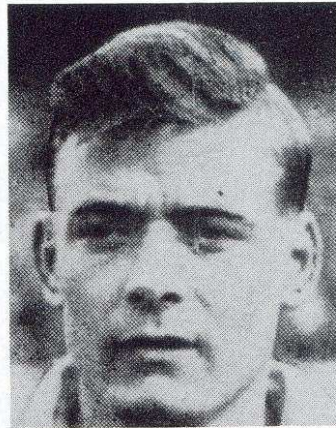
because of its slick presentation: "If we presented it as a live LP it would have been picked up, but it was so commercial, and was marketed to a certain group of people, that it didn't cross their minds."



Despite such tactics and the loss of a few narrow-minded fans, Psychic TV are now producing their most competent music yet. Warping psychedelia and current influences, their new "Love War Riot" single is the battle cry for the new acid dance. Produced by PTV & The Fon Force (responsible for Krush, Chakk, and Age Of Chance's "Kiss"), this blend of Jimi Hendrix, Timothy Leary and Euro disco is a good reference point for the months ahead. Plans are already afoot for more hyperdelic crossovers, so watch the racks! Psychedelia is "the music I play in the car", says Gen, "that and trash disco - Pet Shop Boys and Madonna. I like disco music because it's functional . . . it may be the last vestigial remains of trance, of tribal desires." The acid dance crossover makes perfect sense for Psychic TV: their rhythm section (Matthew Best and Dave Martin) are rooted in funk and dance music, whilst the rest of the crew grew up with radical acid music. But this isn't cheap bandwagon hip-hop or an imitation of past psyche

gems - PTV are instead taking the more interesting elements of psychedelia (the extremes, the mis-use of available technology) and putting them in a more relevant context for the late 1980's. "We've changed it to hyperdelia," explains Genesis, "to go beyond and further than psychedelia ever did. It was taken pretty much as far as it could go considering the technology of the time, but now we're in an era where there are more toys, more new equipment that can be abused and mutilated. We can take the original intention to a new stage. That's what's so exciting about it - the idea of stepping out into some new area that is stimulating to us."

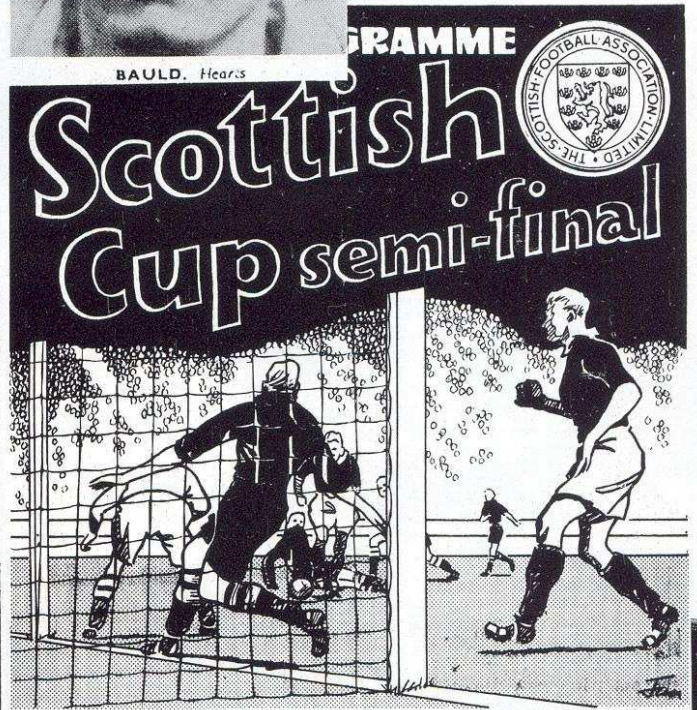
And Genesis, Paula, Nobody and the rest aren't bluffing. Amidst hours of talk on subjects as diverse as Scriabin, Brian Jones, Humes problem, the holistic conception of nature (y'know, the everyday stuff), the most enthusiastic project discussed was Psychic TV's current desire to push outwards and onwards. Genesis will even risk his sanity for the cause of development: "If the option is to not think, or to think and risk insanity then yes I'd think and risk insanity. I'm not scared of self-destruction, but I don't believe that's the path that I've chosen. I've been close . . . sometimes . . ."



BAULD. Hearts

## TOP TEN HEARTS PLAYERS

- WILLIE BAULD
- WILLIE HAMILTON
- ALEC YOUNG
- DAVE MACKAY
- ARTHUR MANN
- WILLIE WALLACE
- ALAN GORDON
- JOHN ROBERTSON
- JIMMY WARDHAUGH
- CRAIG LEVEINE



### HEARTS v. RAITH ROVERS

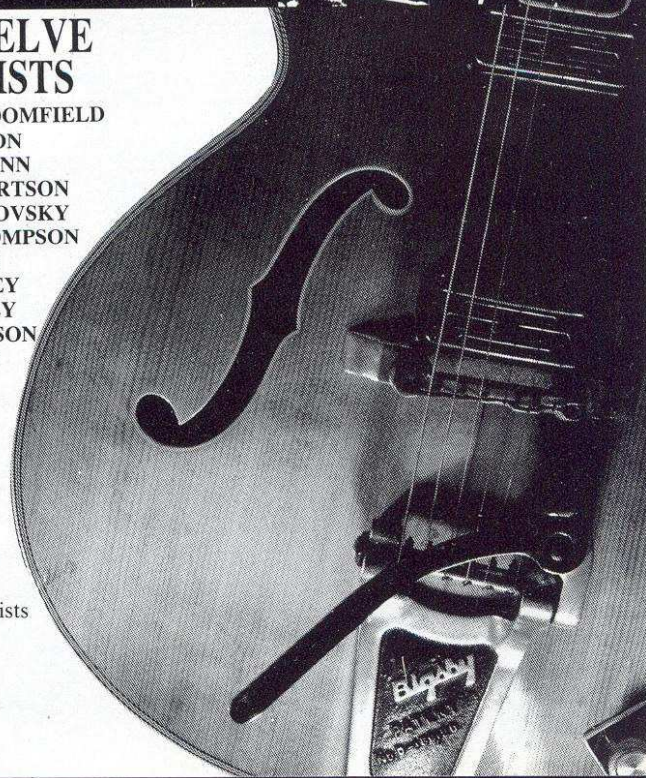
**EASTER ROAD**  
**MARCH 24** KICK-OFF  
**1956** **3 P.M.**

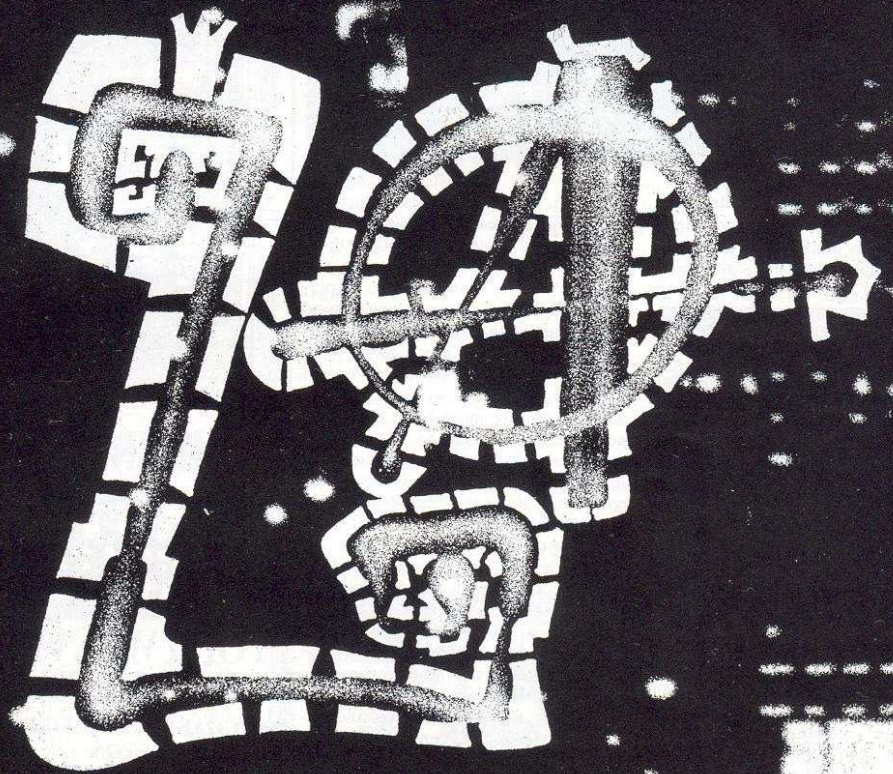
PRICE  
**6<sup>CD</sup>**

## TOP TWELVE GUITARISTS

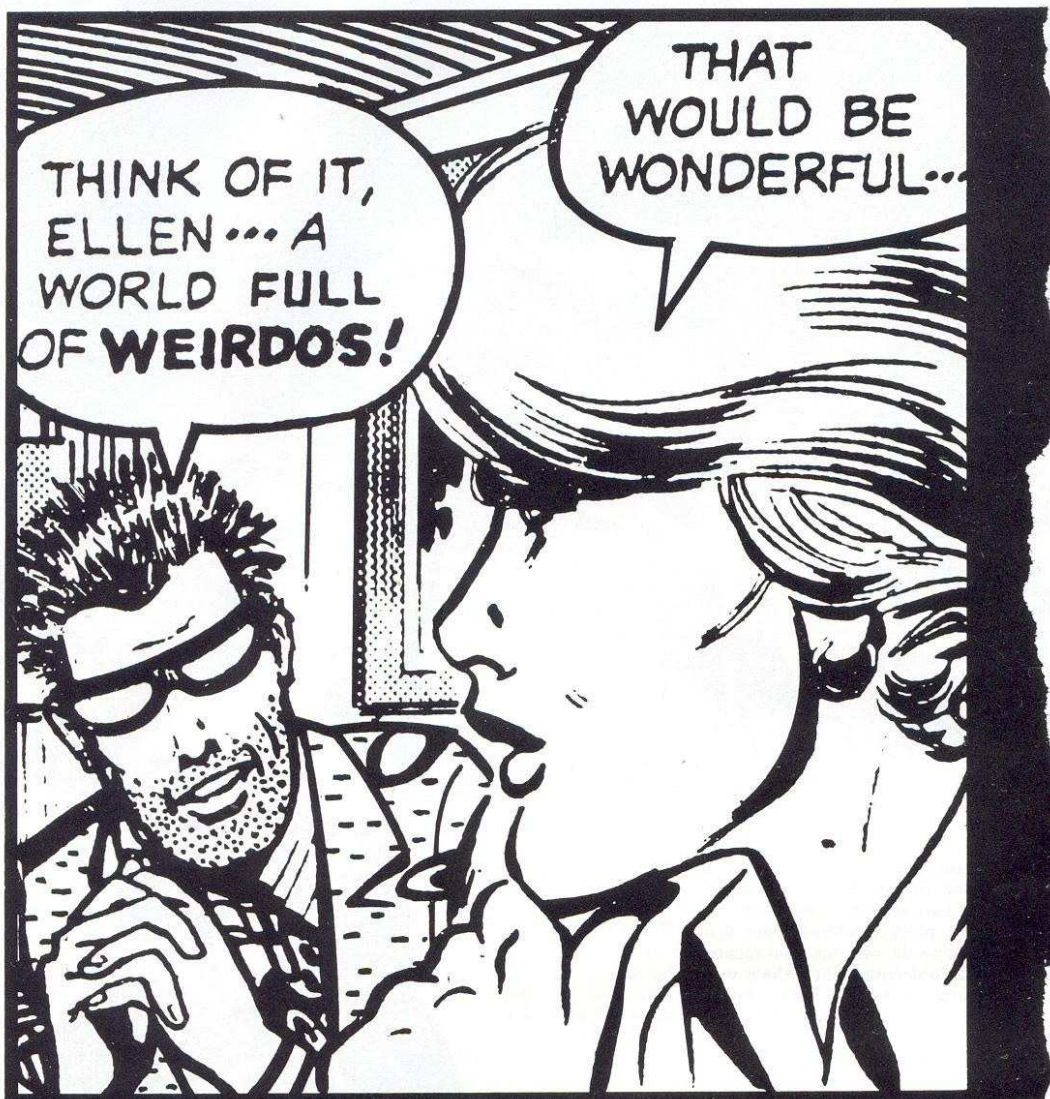
- MICHAEL BLOOMFIELD
- BARRY MELTON
- ROGER McGUINN
- ROBBIE ROBERTSON
- ZALMAN YANOVSKY
- RICHARD THOMPSON
- PETER GREEN
- DAVID LINDLEY
- JAMES GURLEY
- DAVID ROBINSON
- JEFF COTTON
- DANNY KALB

Compiled by  
 Strange Things'  
 Fretwork Fetishists





Cars sprawl along the freeway, kids hang out in malls, the tanned, rich Californese get fat on their excess wealth. The LA of *The Dils* and *The Wierdos* was snuffed out years ago; Jello Biafra got bullied by the PMRC (but the fight goes on, kids); Dan Stuart of *Green On Red* splits for Mexico and *The Long Riders* split for good. Over the next pages *Strange Things* catalogues LA's rise and fall, dancing gleefully on the Los Angeles grave.



THINK OF IT,  
ELLEN... A  
WORLD FULL  
OF WEIRDOS!

THAT  
WOULD BE  
WONDERFUL...

# THE LOST ANGELS

*Jon Savage*

**25.8.78: Laurie O'Donnell picks me up in her Beetle around 7pm. I'm so prostrate from jet-lag (this is my first time in the US) that I don't need my usual London drug diet. Laurie and two of the men from W.Im.P (World Imitation Products) come into Norma's open plan living space up Beachwood, in the Hollywood foothills; a nice culture clash between post hippie and post punk, cool black 50's against demonstrative rainbow 30's, although Norma has stranger stories to tell than they will ever have.**

I accept their deadpan aesthetic as one of the ways with dealing with the extreme peculiarity of Los Angeles. I really do think I'm on another planet, particularly when, from the Griffith Park Observatory, I see the blood red moon bathe an endless strip of free-ways with an apocalyptic, killing glow. Laurie has driven me round that day to a variety of thrift shops, where I buy Martin Denny albums – a recurring theme on this trip – and tab collared shirts, impossible to find in the UK. We hit Sunset to the strains of The Sonics' "Boss Hoss": abrasive kitsch seems like a good place to start making sense of all this alien familiarity.

W.Im.P are an outpost of the mid

seventies Mail Art/Neo Dada scene: the introduction has come through Genesis P.Orridge, whose friend Skot Armst worked with them on Science Holiday, a tiny montage magazine. W.Im.P don't quite have Armst's skewered brilliance, but they shower me with their magazines, exquisite playthings in editions of 50 with titles like "Computer Buddy", "Teslarama", "Trapped", "Hula Dance", "I Hate This Trip", and my favorite, "Alien Roundup". They produce about one a month. I understand them immediately: they don't have Linder's viciousness or pain, but their playfulness is liberating. Not for the last time, I feel part of a dialogue that is being carried on over 5000 miles.

*"We're told, then we're sold  
Affection's conspiracy  
Life is so meaningful with pop  
sensibilities  
Teenage self-pity, the feelings are  
all wrong  
The ideals don't apply, my life's  
not a love song"*

The Azteca is about forty minutes drive away, through a gap in the Hollywood hills and deep into the Valley. When we arrive, there are a few people on the pavement – an extreme rarity in Los Angeles, and tantamount to provocation. Inside, the change from the deserted streets is startling: groups of people dressed in the US equivalent of Punk – 50's clothes from the profusion to be found



**THE WIERDOS: SCOWLING FROM THEIR MABUHAY RETREAT, 1978.**

in thrift stores supplementing the standard black outfits — rotate urgently, swimming in this Chicano bar's red and gold zglitter. Some local faces are pointed out to me; some, like The Screamers and Claude Bessy of "Slash", I've already met. It's all very similar to what I've lived with in London (and, by this stage, become totally disillusioned with); as I pass a pillar, the 5000 miles between Los Angeles and London are totally wiped out as Mick Jones comes into vision, sitting at a far table.

The first band walk on the low, long stage and plug in. Four young men, dressed down in sixties jackets, jeans, nondescript shirts. Three of them look very similar, with long noses and pissed off expressions beneath tousled black hair. I later find out they're three brothers from Santa Ana. Their band, The Middle Class, play punk speeded up to what, in 1978, sounds like absurdity (now, it's familiar as hardcore): words, melodies and instrumentation telescope into a queasy blur. "1!2!3!4!" they yell regularly, as if their very own creed; "OUT/A/VOGUE!" they bark before the blur restarts. Their very velocity makes tangle the desperate urge to communicate — something, anything: before... what? The door is reshut? — that is a hallmark of these times. There is also a stuttering self-critique — a harbinger of the moment when Punk will finally fall in on itself. "Growing tired of the S-S-S-Situations that you created in your own mind"

(Two days later: Claude Bessy's flat right on the beach at Venice, Cal. I look out onto the sea and pinch myself: there is only a few islands between here and Japan. A few isolates perform complicated yoga postures on this beach at the edge of the world. Punk

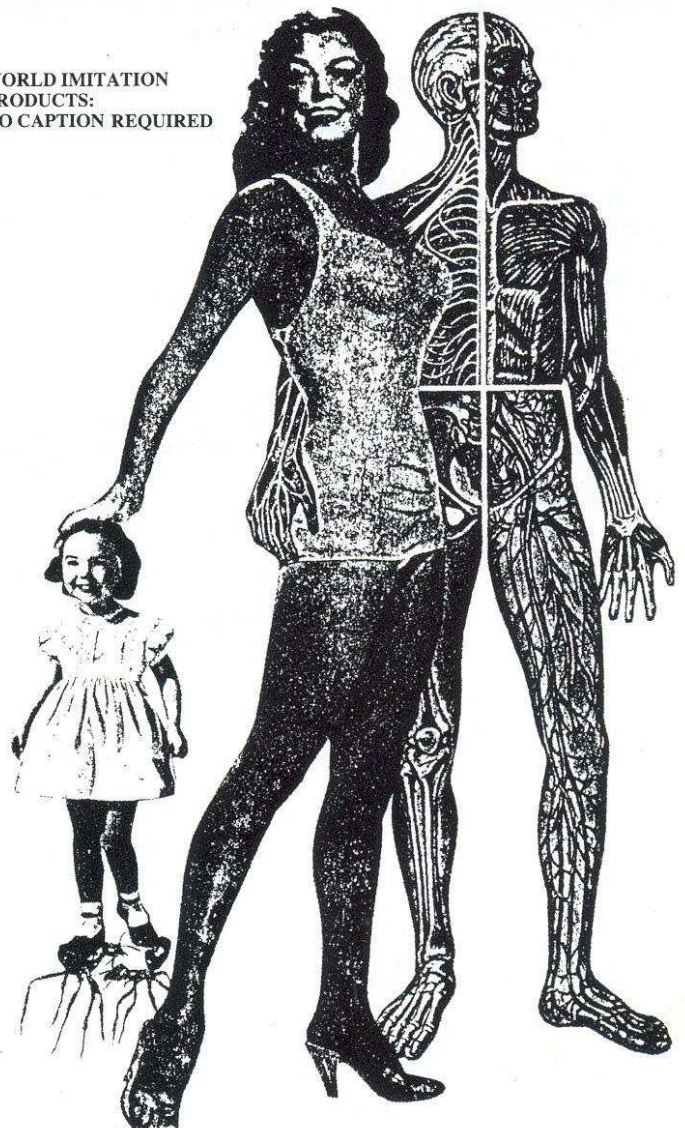
talk: lunch with Claude, Philly, and a young woman called Debbie Dub. She has badgered me transatlantic to write something for her fanzine, "Starting Fires": I have responded with some ill-tempered, mock-apocalyptic blast that has more to do with my own mental state than objective reality. She is very enthusiastic about the UK, raving about the latest hype, Tom Robinson: I feel as though I'm caught in some dreadful warp from the time that I've just temporarily escaped. Things go from bad to worse: over lunch, Debbie punctuates her polite-ical discussion with pauses, where, in between toying with a boiled potato, she loads her knife with sulphate and sniffs lustily. "Do you want some?" she asks brightly. I suddenly realise how tired I am.)

"Nothing lasts in my world; it's got to.....blow up!"

By the time the next band Negative Trend — more guyish, lumpish, key song: "Mercenaries" — have finished the club is much livelier and my headache has settled in nicely. Laurie is pointing people out to me; I reciprocate by introducing her to Mick who, settled in the rock star mode that he will never shake, is polite but non-committal. This total congruity of familiarity and deep strangeness becomes more acute as the evening continues: next band on, The Dils, are to all initial intents and purposes, Clash clones — Russian iconography, angry stance, barked slogan lyrics. I know and like their two singles — "I Hate The Rich" and "Class War", which I find as unsettling as I'm supposed to — but live their individuality is subject to that old breakneck thrash.

Two of the group are brothers: although both have the same white trash face — lean, bad skin — Chip, the singer is blond and as passionate as Tony is saturnine. They cover a lot of space, filling the stage as they do their sound with jackknife movements and souped up fury. They're less desperate

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JON SAVAGE & VALE (EDITOR:  
SEARCH AND DESTROY) 1978

than The Middle Class: more established, if such a thing is possible in this tiny enclave of about 150 people out of Los Angeles' millions. Their lyrics are exhortatory, communiques and instructions to the community that they have been elected to represent. The crowd start to pogo enthusiastically, just like they do in the UK — which doesn't surprise me after the initial shock of seeing a replicant King's Road Punk on Melrose the previous day with a *suntan* for god's sake. Mick and I glance at each other, blase: we have seen this before, haven't we?

*"I know a happy little girl  
Trapped in her happy little world  
Running from desire!"*

Except that we haven't. The wild card in this situation is the presence of two Rent-A-Cops, hired by the Azteca's owners to prevent nihilist damage to their glittering decor. They're big, beefy oxen — very much the standard American shape — and look askance at the skinny Punks, almost all to a person starved or drugged in an approximation

of that wasted English look. I'll bet they reckon we're all faggots. As the crowd hot up during The Dils set they start to look itchy: what to the Punks is pogoing and slamming is to them something approaching a riot. They wear helmets, truncheons and some dangerous looking object that looks suspiciously like a machine gun. In fact, as Laurie explains, it's a Mace gun, which doesn't make me feel a whole lot better.

The group that John Ingham manages, The Wierdos, come on last. I like them a lot, particularly their striking lead singer, John Denney, who walks a perfect tightrope between ludicrousness and mania. They're like a mixture of the Dolls and the Sex Pistols with some individuality of their own: I've seen Denney wandering around late at night in contrasting stripes, a monkish figure with his notebooks amid Sepulveda's vulgarity. The crowd go berserk at their local heroes and, three numbers in, the Rent-A-Cops can take no more. They take the stage and start blustering — "OK that's it: no more" — which enrages the crowd, who begin to chant: "White Riot! White Riot! White Riot!" I look at the person who wrote this song who, like myself and the W.Im.P crowd, is beginning to melt

into the middle distance, having definitely decided that desecration is the better part of valour.

As so often happens, however, voyeurism beats fear: we remain in the middle distance, finely judging the exit possibilities. Within an instant, the tension escalates and things look very ugly: for a few minutes, the situation is out of control, with both sides locked into their respective postures: the Punks play acting for real, the Rent-A-Cops taking as reality the authority they have been paid to assume for the night. As they brandish their Mace guns, they dominate the stage, gross physical manifestations of the state fascism that the Punks think they wish to provoke: behind them, The Wierdos look very frail in their smartly collaged costume, like children forced to stop their games by bullying adults. When the moment passes and they're allowed to resume their set, it's hard for them to recapture the suspension of belief — or statement of faith — that this event is convened to achieve.

The Wierdos wind up quickly, and we're herded into the night with a minimum of grace by the Rent-A-Cops, disappointed at not being able to vent their adrenalin. The rumour that has been passed around inside is shown to be true, as the black and white cruisers of the Metro-Squad circle the Punks, by now spilling onto the pavement, like sharks circle a raft. The very appearance of more than five people on the sidewalk seems to constitute some sort of illegal gathering, if not in law, then in practice: as I stand with Laurie and Cliff Roman outside the club clutching a plastic glass, a cop brusquely tells me to pour it away. Drinking in public is forbidden, here and now. Despite its spacious appearance and the late sixties' rhetoric of freedom still pouring out of its radios, space in Los Angeles is more tightly parcelled up than on London's packed tube stations and, despite their manifest lack of power, the local Punks have succeeded in making this very clear.

*"I, The Emperor proclaim  
Us the master we rule the game  
Inclination — somethin' to dream on  
Deprivation — we are the sons"*

**3.9.78:** I've travelled up to San Francisco to stay with Vale, the editor of "Search & Destroy". I pick up some interviews with The Screamers (irritatingly smartass, by degrees charming) and The Dils. We sit in a White Castle, discussing tactics over cheeseburgers. Peter Urban and the group have a lot to say about politics — basically, orthodox Marxist with some boho workerism thrown in — and talk coherently and cogently. Until it comes to the music industry: when asked basic questions such as any British group would have brushed away like an errant fly, the three of them flounder. What will you do when you get a record deal? How far are you prepared to compromise? What will you do when you appear on TV? I'm bemused until I grasp a profound difference: what most Brit groups take for granted — ie: immediate media and music industry interest — is so far away from the experience and expectations of these guys that they haven't even considered the possibilities.

Here on the West Coast, the hippies won. The whole Los Angeles ethic — which dominates the national music industry — is still stuck in 1970: all you seem to hear on the FM dial is a locked groove of Cream, Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac, The Beatles. This stasis is comfortable, and suits the vast majority: it can be policed, like the events at the Azteca, by a numbingly simple display of pure power. The LA punks rail against this in a succession of more extreme postures — current records include The Deadbeats' "Kill The Hippies" and The Rotters' "Sit On My Face Stevie Nicks" — which if anything, reemphasises their powerlessness (later to spiral into desperation captured by Penelope Spheeris' film "The Decline And Fall Of Western Civilisation"). There is absolutely no chance that the American music and media industry will let them in.

*"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  
Some smooth chords  
On the car radio  
No hard chords  
We set the trash on fire  
And watch outside the door  
Men come up the pavement  
Under the Marquee  
There's laughing inside  
We're locked out of the public eye"*

Quotes from, in order:  
Middle Class: "Love Is Just A Tool"  
Middle Class: "Situations"  
The Dils: "Blow Up"  
The Wierdos: "Happy People"  
The Germs: "Forming"  
X: "Unheard Music"



Edited from: "England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock 1975-1979" by Jon Savage; to be published by Faber & Faber Autumn 1988. ■

## 10 GREAT WEST-COAST PUNK RECORDS 77-80

1. **THE GERMS:** "Forming" (What) — the first LA Punk record and that generation's "Louie Louie". Launches into a truly Brechtian mode at the close, as, over the endless, moronic riff, Bobby Pyn (a/k/a Darby Crash) addresses you, the listener: "Anyone, anytime, anyhow/Whoever'll buy this shit/The drums are too slow/The bass is too fast/The chords are all wrong/They're making the ending too long/Aaaaah I quit!" Backed with a horrible live experiment called "Sex Boy", not that you'd notice. (1977)

2. **MIDDLE CLASS:** "Out Of Vogue" EP (Joke) — four one and a half minute communiques from the suburban front line, including "Insurgency", "Situations" and "Out Of Vogue". Half later released on "Earcom 3" (Fast). (1978)

3. **THE WIERDOS:** "Who? What? Where? Why?" EP (Bomp) — their stab at the big time with a great hat, an early sighting of those soon-to-be-ubiquitous Raybans and two classic

songs, "Happy People" and their "Seventeen" readymade, "Idle Life" (1979)

4. **THE ZEROS:** "Beat Your Heart Out" (Bomp) — 2.12 of pure punk pop played by Mexicans, which translates into teen angst spiced up by the obligatory random aggression. (1978)

5. **THE DILS:** "I Hate The Rich" (What) — the first ever hardcore record, tripping over its own speed. Backed with the equally ferocious "You're Not Blank" (1977)

6. **THE AVENGERS:** "Car Crash" (Dangerhouse) — captures the prevailing "Too Fast To Live, Too Young To Die" ethos with an impeccable dynamic grasp (1977)

7. **THE SLEEPERS EP:** (Win) — as you might divine from the name, the group split up temporarily because the singer took downers and the guitarist took speed. Out of this drug clash comes two perfect sleepwalking songs: "No Time" and "Flying" (Look out for their 1980

"Sleepless Nights" LP on Adolescent). (1978)

8. **THE URINALS:** "Another EP" (Happy Squid) — includes the transcendent "I'm A Bug" (Look also for the wonderful "Sex" 45). (1978)

9. **VARIOUS:** Tooth and Nail LP (Upsetter) — includes such classics like Flesheaters' "Pony Dress"; Germs' "Manimal"; UXA's "U.X.A."; Negative Trend's "Mercenaries" and Middle Class' "Love Is Just A Tool" (1978/9)

10. **X:** "Los Angeles" (Slash) — this is the record with which LA punk went public. Still cogent, still biting with bitter songs like "Unheard Music", "Nausea" and the title track, a statement about their own underground position: "She had to leave Los Angeles/She found it hard to say goodbye/To her own best friend/She bought a clock on Hollywood Blvd/The day she left/It felt sad it felt sad it felt sad/She had to getout getout/getout getout getout getout." (1980)

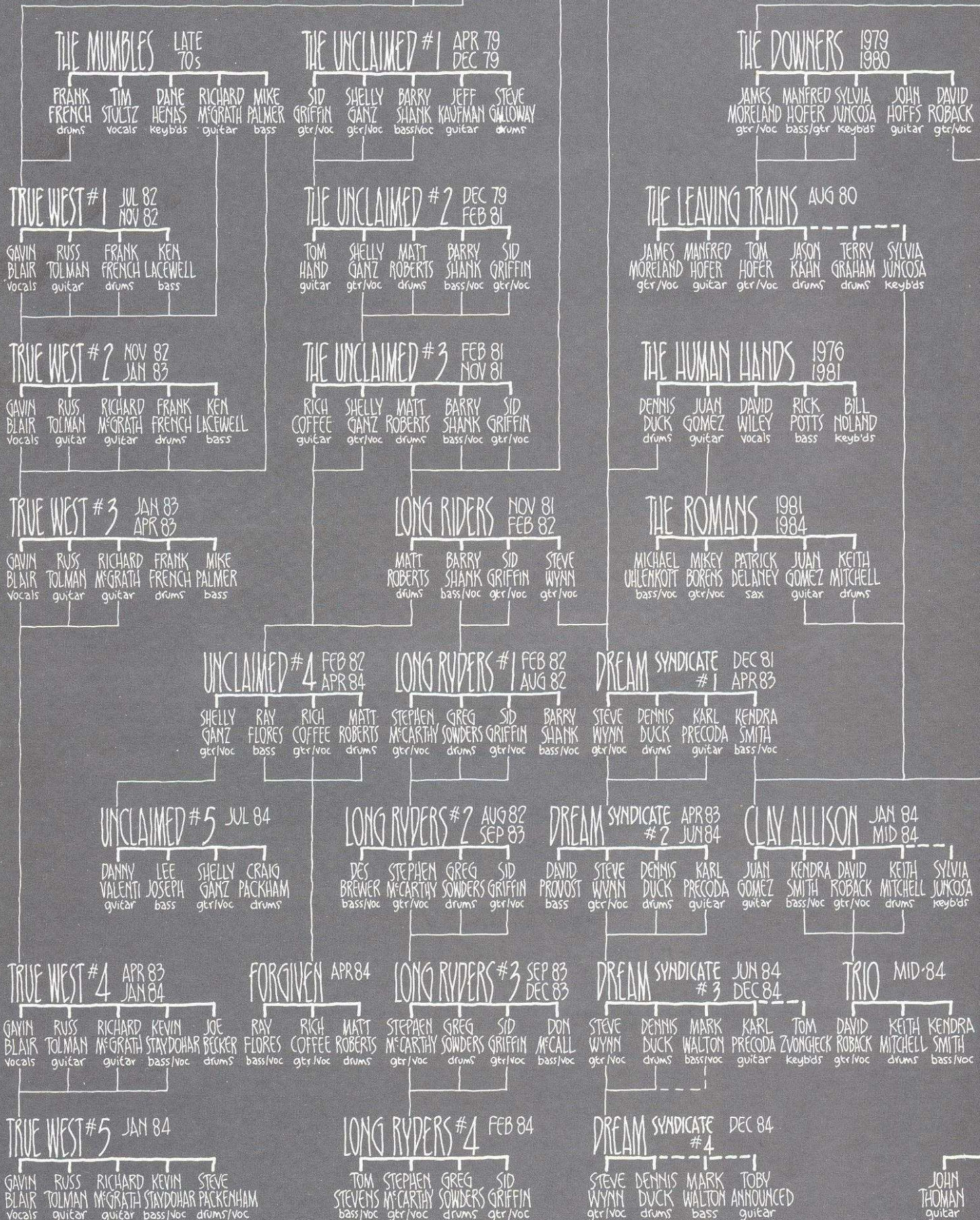
# L.A.85

## THE SUSPECTS

1978  
MAR 80

GAVIN BLAIR drums  
RUSS TOLMAN guitar  
STEVE SUCHILL bass  
STEVE WYNN guitar  
KENDRA SMITH vocals

Pete Frame's "LA 85" first appeared as an Island Records promo during the height of Paisley Underground/New Guitar combo mania. Here it receives its first national exposure and serves as an instant introduction to Sid Griffin's current round-up (over).



# THE UNCONSCIOUS 1978 1979

DAVID ROBACK gtr/voc  
 STEVEN ROBACK bass/voc  
 DAVID WEST drums  
 SUE HOFFS gtr/voc

Thanks to Betsy Alexander, Danny Benair, Fiona Buszard, Andy Childs, Nigel Cross, Dennis Duck, Shelly Ganz, Sid Griffin, John Guarnieri, Louis Gutierrez, Colin Hill, Ethan James, Andrew Lauder, Mickey Mariano, Stephen McCarthy, Nick Murray, Alan & Mary Nathans, Connie O'Donnell, Mark Pucci, Steve Pross, Michael Quercio, Jake Riviera, Steven Roback, John Silva, Greg Sowders, Spock, Tom Stevens, Danny Wilde, Steve Wyan, and Annette Zilinskas for information and assistance.

# THE COLOURS APR 81 AUG 81

SUE HOFFS gtr/voc  
 VICKI PETERSON gtr/voc  
 DEBBI PETERSON drums/voc  
 ANNETTE ZILINSKAS bass

# THE QUICK #1 NOV 74 OCT 75

BILLY BIZEAU keybds  
 DANNY BENAIR drums  
 IAN AINSWORTH bass  
 STEVE HUFSTETER gtr/voc  
 BOB DAVIS bass  
 LEONARD PHILLIPS keybds  
 PAGE PERRAZO keybds  
 HAL SINGER keybds  
 MARTY ZUCKER vocals

# THE DICKIES 1977

STAN LEE gtr/voc  
 BOB DAVIS gtr/voc  
 LEONARD PHILLIPS keybd/voc  
 BILLY CLUB bass  
 KARLOS KABALLERO drums  
 SEVERAL OTHERS various

# SIDEWALKS APR 81 OCT 81

DAVID ROBACK gtr/voc  
 STEVEN ROBACK bass/voc  
 MATT PIUCCI gtr/voc  
 STEVE HOLLAND drums

# THE SERPERS SEP 79 LATE 80

JACK WATERSON bass  
 DAN STUART gtr/voc  
 CHRIS CACAVAS keybds  
 VAN CHRISTIAN gtr/voc

# BANGS #1 AUG 81 FEB 82

SUE HOFFS gtr/voc  
 VICKI PETERSON gtr/voc  
 DEBBI PETERSON drums/voc

# THE QUICK #2 DEC 75 FEB 76

DANNY WILDE gtr/voc  
 IAN AINSWORTH bass/voc  
 STEVE HUFSTETER gtr/voc  
 DANNY BENAIR drums

# OZIHARES MAR 80 NOV 80

MARK ALBA vocals  
 EMILE TRAZANCE drums  
 LANE CHANGER bass  
 LOUIS GUTIERREZ guitar

# RAIN PARADE #1 OCT 81 JUN 82

DAVID ROBACK gtr/voc  
 STEVEN ROBACK bass/voc  
 MATT PIUCCI gtr/voc  
 WILL GLENN keybd/viol  
 MICHAEL MURPHY drums

# NAKED PREY 1981

DAVID SEGER gtr/voc  
 VAN CHRISTIAN gtr/voc  
 SAM BLAKE drums  
 RICHARD BADENIUS bass/voc

# THE QUICK #3 FEB 76 APR 78

BILLY BIZEAU keybds  
 DANNY WILDE gtr/voc  
 IAN AINSWORTH bass/voc  
 STEVE HUFSTETER gtr/voc  
 DANNY BENAIR drums

# SALVATION #1 FEB 81 OCT 81

JOHNNY BLAZING guitar  
 MICHAEL QUERCIO bass/voc  
 TROY HOWELL drums

# RAIN PARADE #2 JUN 82 SEP 82

DAVID ROBACK gtr/voc  
 STEVEN ROBACK bass/voc  
 MATT PIUCCI gtr/voc  
 WILL GLENN keybd/viol  
 BRIAN NORRIS drums

# GREEN ON #1 1981 1982

DAN STUART gtr/voc  
 CHRIS CACAVAS keybds  
 JACK WATERSON bass  
 ALEX M'NICOL drums

# THE BANGS #2 FEB 82 OCT 82

ANNETTE ZILINSKAS bass  
 DEBBI PETERSON drums/voc  
 VICKI PETERSON gtr/voc  
 SUE HOFFS gtr/voc

# THE FALCONS NOV 78 APR 81

STEVE HUFSTETER gtr/voc  
 MICKEY MARIANO keybds  
 DANNY BENAIR drums  
 BILLY FORT bass  
 MARTY MARTINO vocals  
 ALEX FURGUSSON gtr/voc

# RAIN PARADE #3 SEP 82 JAN 84

DAVID ROBACK gtr/voc  
 STEVEN ROBACK bass/voc  
 EDDIE KALWA drums  
 WILL GLENN keybd/viol  
 MATT PIUCCI gtr/voc

# GREEN ON #2 OCT 82 MAR 83

DAN STUART gtr/voc  
 CHRIS CACAVAS keybds  
 JACK WATERSON bass  
 ALEX M'NICOL drums

# THE BANGLES #1 OCT 82 JUN 83

ANNETTE ZILINSKAS bass  
 DEBBI PETERSON drums/voc  
 VICKI PETERSON gtr/voc  
 SUE HOFFS gtr/voc

# CHOIR INVISIBLE JUN 81 JUN 82

DANNY BENAIR drums  
 THAMES SINCLAIR gtr/voc  
 SCOTT LASKED bass/voc  
 JOHN COURIE guitar

# RAIN PARADE #4 JAN 84 AUG 84

STEVEN ROBACK bass/voc  
 MATT PIUCCI gtr/voc  
 WILL GLENN keybd/viol  
 EDDIE KALWA drums

# BLOOD ON THE SADDLE APR 83 JUL 83

GREG DAVIS gtr/voc  
 RON BOTELHO bass  
 HERMANN SENAC drums/voc

# GT BUILDINGS #1 MAY 78 JUN 81

RICHARD SANDFORD drums  
 PHIL SOLEM guitar  
 DANNY WILDE gtr/voc  
 IAN AINSWORTH bass/voc

# SALVATION #2 NOV 81 JUL 82

LOUIS GUTIERREZ gtr/voc  
 MICHAEL QUERCIO bass/voc  
 TROY HOWELL drums

Researched and drawn by PETE FRAME January 1985 ©

# BLOOD ON THE SADDLE #2 JUL 83

GREG DAVIS gtr/voc  
 RON BOTELHO bass  
 HERMANN SENAC drums/voc  
 ANNETTE ZILINSKAS vocals

# GT BUILDINGS #2 JUN 81 JUN 82

RICHARD SANDFORD drums  
 PHIL SOLEM guitar  
 DANNY WILDE gtr/voc  
 IAN AINSWORTH bass/voc  
 MICKEY MARIANO keybds

# SALVATION #3 JUL 82 AUG 82

DANNY BENAIR drums  
 LOUIS GUTIERREZ gtr/voc  
 MICHAEL QUERCIO bass/voc

# RAIN PARADE #5 AUG 84

MARK MARCUM drums  
 STEVEN ROBACK bass/voc  
 MATT PIUCCI gtr/voc  
 WILL GLENN keybd/viol

# GREEN ON #3 MAR 83

CHUCK PROPHET guitar  
 DAN STUART gtr/voc  
 CHRIS CACAVAS keybd/voc  
 JACK WATERSON bass

# BANGLES #2 JUN 83

MICHAEL STEELE bass  
 DEBBI PETERSON drums/voc  
 VICKI PETERSON gtr/voc  
 SUE HOFFS gtr/voc

# 3 O'CLOCK AUG 82

LOUIS GUTIERREZ gtr/voc  
 MICHAEL QUERCIO bass/voc  
 MICKEY MARIANO keybd/voc  
 DANNY BENAIR drums

# EYES OF MIND FEB 83

JAMIE PHELAN gtr/voc  
 RICK TIBBETT bass  
 TROY HOWELL drums  
 MARK KJHLMAN keybds

# I KNOW YOU RYDER

Class of 1985 Update, Los Angeles division by Sid Griffin

For those in the overcast February/March that is the United Kingdom, and for those who are wondering just what all those young Californians do out there in Los Angeles in the sun, here is the lowdown on our uptown hoedown (Yank slang for what the hips are doing currently). The Paisley underground . . . ah, yes . . . I remember it well. I was supposed to have been a founding member but let me tell you here that's wrong. As in WRONG, as in INCORRECT, as in FUCKIN' JIVE. Here is the word, the straight poop on what went down at first and what we all be up to today (ghetto Yank slang).

A major point is that the Paisley Underground was a term invented by Micheal Quercio of The Three O'Clock back when he was in high school, which is our secondary modern, to illustrate this fantasy he had of pop music bands influenced by the 60's taking over the then heavily-punk Los Angeles music scene. Micheal is a moptop from the word go and the punks were always pushing him into lockers and down toilet stalls and Jesus it musta been pretty rough to be in high school in the late 1970's and like The Beatles . . . but then how the fuck would I know I was drinking in bars all over LA by then 'cause I was OVER 21 (but not by much lest you think I'm an old fart) and a HUGE fan of bands like The Weirdos and The Dils who were hardcore and funny like The Damned kinda and they were my pals then and now and I fuchin' loved the NY Dolls too I saw 'em four times and none of you London punks were there so HA-HA-HA-HA-HA and I know the managers of the MCS so eat your Tony Hancock hearts out. Where was I?

Micheal got a band going called The Salvation Army and they evolved into The Three O'Clock and that's all in Pete Frame's fine tree and The Three O'Clock have nothing to do with either the 1960's now OR punk so there. I once spoke to Joe DiMaggio on the street (baseball hero, like a Bobby Charlton type guy) and he spoke back so who gives a fuck about knowing Micheal Quercio? Even if he is a nice guy, which he is, yeah he really is!

**HERE'S AN IMPORTANT POINT.** The Paisley Underground stopped being a funny high school phrase and became a reality when Quercio discovered The Bangs (now the world-famous Bangles), The Dream Syndicate and The Rain Parade playing music influenced by the same era, if not the same style, as his beloved Salvation Army. **THOSE FOUR BANDS WERE THE PAISLEY UNDERGROUND, NO ONE ELSE, EVER!**



And so it was in the Los Angeles rock n'roll media.

What happened next was The Long Ryders and Green On Red, because of their proximity to the scene in general (and The Dream Syndicate and The Bangs specifically) were suddenly lumped into the Paisley Underground even though we had nothing to do with the Underground scene. The Dream Syndicate, The Bangs and The Three

O'Clock were all much more popular than The Long Ryders in those early days. Rain Parade were more on our (and Green On Red's) level in crowd appeal. So now there were six. And before I forget check out **Rainy Day**, an LP put together by David Roback of Rain Parade because he wanted to sit at the grown-up's table, and see who is on it. Not me, not Danny Stuart, oh no . . . we weren't hip and in the

Paisley Underground! Get it? Only the first four bands were invited to participate but I got to see where my antecedents came from 200 years ago in Scotland so who gives a fuck? Not me.

At least the six bands now in the Paisley Underground were all from the same place. Next thing you know, True West (whom I adore both personally and professionally) were lumped in along with The Eyes Of Mind, who were a Three O'Clock offshoot and not my cup of tea (but I do like you Troy so don't get too pissed off at me). Remember True West are from Davis, California, some 400 miles north of LA (this is a big state). So placing them in the scene is really silly even if they are our friends because they also, let's point out, didn't even play 60's influenced rock! Jeez, what a world we live in. So by the fall of 1983 the term Paisley Underground was extremely misused and by the time the hypocritical UK rock press like the NME got ahold of it things were even more absurd. By now about a dozen bands are "Paisley Underground" bands and the whole thing's a headache.

**SWITCH NOW TO 1988.** So with that background in mind let's rap about where the big cheese bands from this whole mess are today.

**THE BANGLES** need no introduction. They've had four USA hits and probably as many if not more in Europe. They fired loyal pal Joey Stella (my roommate) and they don't call me anymore but I saw Micki Steele backstage somewhere liggig (great word) like I was and she was so sweet. I bumped into Debbi Peterson on the street; we shared a house for years with the aforementioned Joey Stella and she was happy and said gimme a call which I did and no one called back but I'll bet if I see her soon we'll be laughing like we did in 1982-86. The problem is that they are VERY busy being stars and I can only get backstage every once in a while at gigs where I know somebody so I miss 'em a lot even though they are in town when I am. Nonetheless, I am happy for them and wish them all the best in 1988. Hey Debbi, gimme a call soon (please)!

**THE DREAM SYNDICATE** have my pal (Prince Charles told me never to name-drop) Steve Wynn in the band and the nicest guy in drumming in Dennis Duck. They've had their ups and downs, like when Karl Percoda left, but things are fine now with Mark Wilton on bass who dates a girl in Sweden for chrissakes and wildman Paul B. Cutler, producer of the only

Danny and Dusty LP on lead axe. I love this band and I hope you do too. By the way, early 1988 will see a new two-record set by these guys so save your money starting now, goddamit!

**THREE O'CLOCK** got dropped by IRS but so what because Prince, of all people, loves them and signed them to his Paisley Park label. The boys are working on a new LP as we speak! Oh boy!

**THE RAIN PARADE** broke up in June 1986 after brutal treatment by Island Records, the same cowboys who mistreated those sweet Long Ryders but don't fret, they reformed late in 1987 with Steven Roback, Matthew Pucci, Will Glenn, John Thoman and a new guy on drums! Hooray! Guess they missed each other, huh? Pucci is a wonderful cat so let's all go see 'em when they play.

And now for three sad stories.

**GREEN ON RED** are in limbo; no one outside the band really knows what's going on. They are off their UK label and Danny Stuart split for Mexico so nobody knows what is up. Jack Waterson (bass guitar) is a neighbour of mine and a talkative chap like me (Sid Griffin of the now-defunct . . . oops, we'll get to that . . . Long Ryders), but he ain't talkin' so I guess I had better rethink what I said about him. If he comes back Steve Wynn and I are gonna try and talk him into a new Danny and Dusty album for 1988. You heard it here first.

**TRUE WEST** are the saddest story of all. Russ Tolman splits for a solo career and the others reform, pick up the pieces and put out a fine album, **Hand Of Fate**, which was largely ignored, and then Kevin Staydohar dies from a brain tumour after he is released from hospital. Kevin was a funny, talented musician and he is already deeply missed by all of us who new him. I think the band will carry on but I haven't seen Gavin since Kevin passed away so I don't know for certain what they are doing.

**THE LONG RYDERS** broke up when Steven McCarthy informed drummer Greg Sowders and myself he was leaving the group. We talked and decided it wasn't correct to use the name without Stephen in the group so look out for a new band with Greg and myself in 1988. Anybody out there play keyboards or bass? The new band will be less country and more **Exile On Main Street** and I won't tell you anymore 'cept we might even have a permanent singer/front man but other than that get your own ideas for a group! But being a Long Ryder for almost six years was fun so I ain't complainin', at least not publicly.

That's it for the class of 1985/Paisley Underground scene which is no more if it ever was. Yet I want to say thanks to everyone in Europe who came to shows and/or bought records; you made life worth living and that's no lie. As for the future, I can be contacted by any eager readers at the old Long Ryders post office box. Remember what the late Dennis Wilson said: "I don't know exactly what's gonna happen but I know there is going to be a lotta music." And some of it is going to be made by me. See ya. ■

# ZIPPOMUSIC

Would you buy a used record from these guys!

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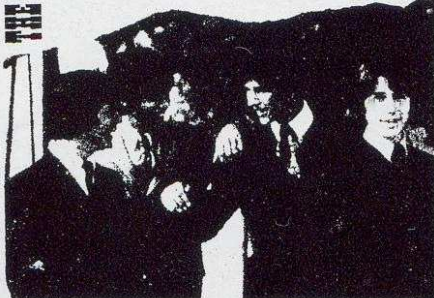
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THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

## SID GRIFFIN TOP TWENTY

Twenty Byrds' influenced 45's  
compiled by Sid Griffin  
of The Long Ryders  
(in no particular order)



- THE DOVERS What Am I Going To Do
- THE GRASSROOTS Where Were You When I Needed You
- LOVE Hey Joe
- THE LEAVES Girl From The East
- CRYIN' SHAMES July
- IMPROPER BOSTONIANS I Still Love You
- CHER All I Really Want To Do
- ROCKIN' RAMRODS Mr. Wind
- DINO, DESI & BILLY I'm A Fool
- MERRY-GO-ROUND Had To Run Around
- THE TURTLES It Ain't Me Babe
- THE MISUNDERSTOOD Children Of The Sun
- THE ROOSTERS You Gotta Run
- MOBY GRAPE 8:05
- MOUSE AND THE TRAPS Sometimes You Just Can't Win
- THE BEES Leave Me Be
- THE BLACKSHEEP It's My Mind
- THE KNAVES The Girl I Threw Away
- THE SQUIRES Going All The Way
- THE YOUNGBLOODS Tears Are Falling

*Big Beat*



# LOVE

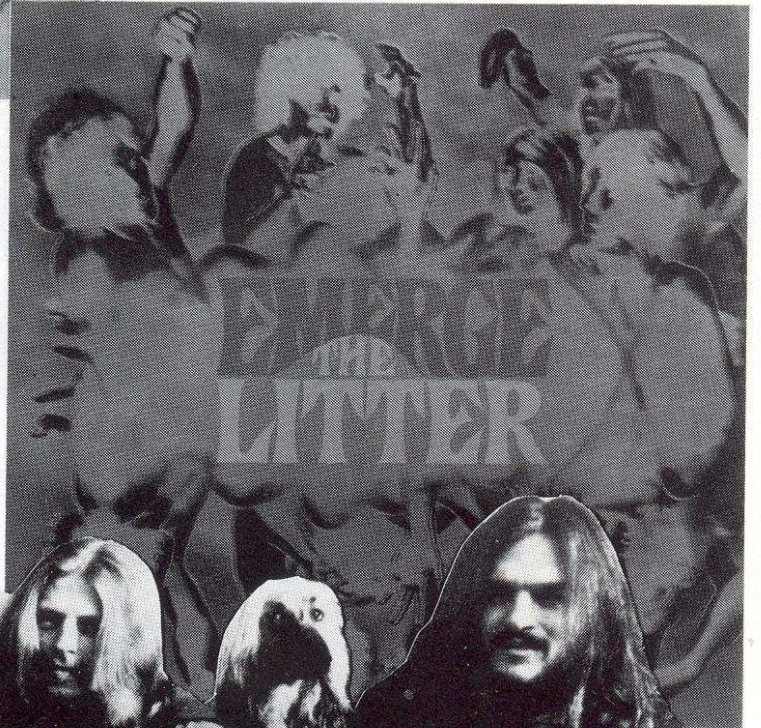
**OUT THERE**

WIK 69

(GATEFOLD SLEEVE)

# THE LITTER EMERGE

WIK 68

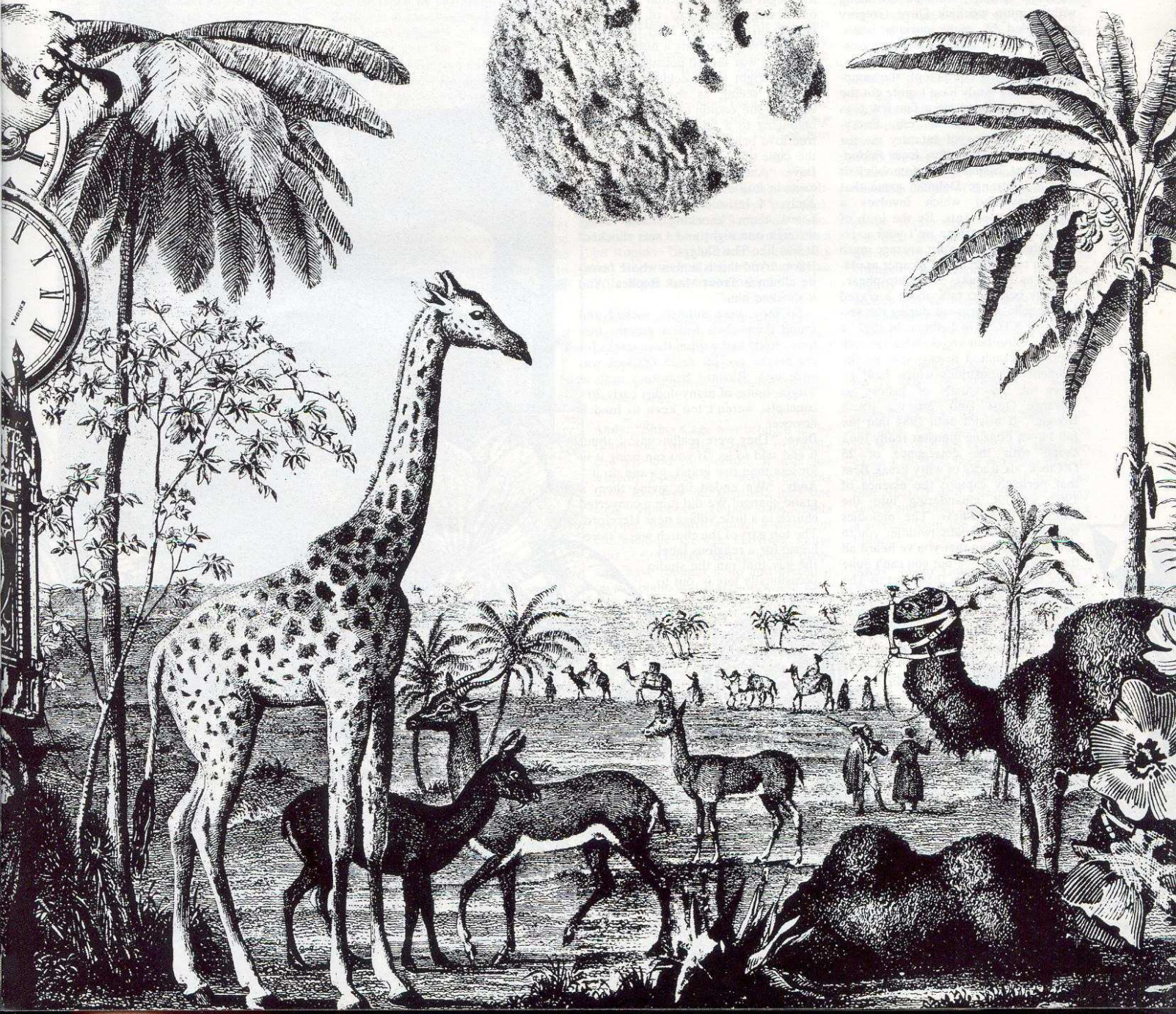


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VIC BRIGGS  
AND THE  
25 HOUR  
CLOCKS...  
THE STORY

OF...



*Big Band*

# THE DUKES OF STRATOSPHEAR

"When I was a kid I wanted to be in a group, and that group are The Dukes." Andy Partridge, Swindon, December 1987.

It could be any terraced house in any row in any town, Great Britain, but this particular abode happens to be Andy Partridge's home in Swindon, Wilts. Mr. Partridge summons me to the attic, resplendent in his "Buster Gonad And His Unfeasibly Large Testicles" T-Shirt. Here he sits, along with moptop sidekick Dave Gregory surrounded by many curious items. Along with the usual middling-successful-rock-star trappings (keyboards, home recording equipment, the sampling machine Andy hasn't quite got the hang of yet) there are a fair few toys and games. Stacks of 'em. Everywhere. Battalions of Infantry vie for attention with characters from *Forbidden Planet*, castles and automobiles sit next to a strange Dalinian game that Andy invented which involves a superior race of ants. By the look of things Andy Partridge isn't your average muso. But then your average muso wouldn't even dream of a caper as elaborate as The Dukes Of Stratosphear.

Andy began to talk about a crazed psychedelic experiment during the sessions for XTC's *Go 2* album. In 1982 "a tentative drunken knockabout" at such a project resulted in two spur of the moment compositions which shall go down in the annals of history as "Orange Dust" and "Shaving Brush Boogie". It wasn't until 1984 that the full blown phazing monster really took shape with the emergence of *25 O'Clock*, six tracks of witty Freak Beat that perfectly capture the essence of 1967 without meandering into the realms of seriousness. The melodies sparkle, the musicians twiddle; you're left with a feeling that you've heard all the songs before . . . but you can't quite place them. Which is the secret of The Dukes' success. Without wit or great songs The Dukes Of Stratosphear would dive into the depths of joky

With the mega-wig-lifting *25 O'Clock* and *Psonic Psunspot* behind them, what now for the Dukes?

A concept LP? Triple albums? Live shows at Pompeii?

HARVEY S. WILLIAMS jumps the train to Swindon . . .

self-indulgence and never come up for air; luckily they have both.

The story goes that in 1984 Andy and producer John Leckie were summoned to work on an LP by Canadian singer Mary Margret O'Hara. "She's a nutter!" recalls Andy, "she's so weird she ought to be in a mental home, not on a stage!" the pair of them got thrown off the project after three days without even recording a note.

Andy: "I was sacked because my vibes weren't right and Leckie was sacked because seeing as she was a strict catholic she couldn't condone anyone belonging to a religion that promotes free love being in the control room at the same time as her..."

Dave: "Andy's vibes weren't right because he insisted that the band tune up!"

Andy: "I insisted they rehearse! I'd heard them knocking these songs through one night and I was shocked! It was like The Shaggs!"

Dave: "And this is a man whose favorite album is *Trout Mask Replica!* And it shocked him!"

So they were dutifully sacked and found themselves with a months free time. Andy had written three tracks for the psyche project so *25 O'Clock* was underway. Richard Branson's mob at Virgin, home of many dodgy early 70's concepts, weren't too keen to fund it however . . .

Dave: "They were really cynical about it and said to us "If you can bring it in for less than five grand, go and do it."

Andy: "We ended up giving them a grand change! We did it in a converted church in a little village near Hereford. The top part of the church was a storehouse for a religious label . . . the guy that ran the studio occasionally lets it out to pagans like us..."

The finished product took just two weeks to complete, thanks to a lot of hard work by John Leckie.

Andy: "He's got very good psychedelic credentials, which is why he was picked. He mixed Floyd's "Vegetable

Man" on his own - they all went home one evening and said "You mix this!" And he was only a seventeen year old tea boy working at Abbey Road at the time . . ."

Plans were even afoot for a Dukes Of Stratosphear film, which apparently may still be made for Channel 4.

Andy: "It was a secret project Godley and Creme's Media Lab were going to do - they were making a lot of money out of videos, and decided that they





# THE DUKES OF STRATOSPHEAR

## SONEBOOK

A step-by-step guide to the psonic sounds of The Dukes Of Stratosphear by Andy Partridge and Dave Gregson.

were going to make a video which included a load of clues to where treasure of some kind was hidden in England, like *Masquerade* or the Cadbury's Great Gold Egg Mystery. Steve Blood, who worked for them, was a big fan of the band - we'd just brought out **25 O'Clock** and he thought it would be great if we did a thing involving all the music from **25 O'Clock** and a story. Not with us in it, but with a younger set of lads who looked seventeen or eighteen. They were going to make it period piece 1967, with clues to where a 25 hour clock (which was going to be made out of silver and gold) was hidden in the video. Media Lab sacked Steve before it came to light, but he had a very elaborate storyboard drawn up. They even made us sign a letter promising not to tell anyone where it was hidden, but it never came to light."

The story line involves Uncle Alfred, who appears in *Bike Ride To The Moon*, inventing a 25 hour clock as a promotional device for The Dukes. Little known to Alfred, The Moles From The Ministry Of Time, who live underground in an enormous palace shaped like a grandfather clock, are keen to get their mits on his invention. They burrow up to surface level in machines that look like Big Ben (*Are you sure about this? - Ed*) and steal the 25 hour clock, since it would cause all kinds of havoc. The Dukes attempt to reclaim the clock, leaving clues to its whereabouts along the way. "It's really tacky - it would have made a great *Catch Us If You Can* type movie" ponders Andy. Still, **25 O'Clock** fared better than Virgin had reckoned for - it sold 30 000 copies in Britain, which is twice as many as the last XTC album had! Initially the plan was to keep The Dukes' identity secret, but by now the XTC/Dukes connection was coming to light. It had been going on for quite a while before **25 O'Clock** - Andy recalls that "in 1975 when we were changing our name from The Helium Kids, the two names that were in the air were either The Dukes Of Stratosphear or XTC. I thought that The Dukes Of Stratosphear was *too* 1967. There's a bit of strange parallel history going on..." Even to the extent that when XTC were recording *Skylarking* they made a deliberate attempt not to sound like The Dukes!

The second album was a harder task. "We'd created this Frankenstein! Initially I didn't want to do another album because it was a one-off thing, but despite feeble protestations I was here writing stuff like *Collideascope*." The second LP sees The Dukes gradually progressing, to about Spring 1968. The production is cleaner, the influences less immediate, but it is an altogether more rewarding album. By this time Virgin were fairly happy with The Dukes progress; the album sold 60 000 copies in America and 30 000 in Britain. Having been with the label for ten years, surely the band(s) must have a good relationship with them by now? Dave: "We're just part of the furniture. As Andy has said, we are to Virgin as the ravens are to the Tower of London. If we go, the whole empire will collapse!"

Andy: "They quite like us as pets..." Dave: "We're the Virgin mascot!" Andy: "The Virgin goat! We've got a lot of fans there, which is why we're still on the label, but also because now we've had quite a chunk of success in America. We sold a quarter of a million copies of *Skylarking*, plus the back catalogue is going. We've had some terrible labels in The States - we're on Geffen at the moment - I'm not sure I trust them either!"

So what next for The Dukes? Progressive Rock? Heavy Metal? Will The Dukes even exist for another LP?

Andy: "If we do anything more they'll either become The Stratosphear Gang and do a glitter album, or they'll be The Dukes, before they get stratosphied... they should sound like The Merseybeats or The Easybeats, before they started getting a bit bendy. The Equals, Dave Clark Five... I'd love to write a song for The Troggs!" We at *Strange Things* sincerely hope The Dukes choose the latter path. In the meantime we have two fine albums to listen to - roll on the next XTC LP! ■

Andy: "**Brainiacs Daughter** was a conscious attempt to write as if McCartney had tried to come up with a track around the time of *Sgt. Pepper* or *Yellow Submarine* - 1967/68 - so all the ingredients were picked to sound like McCartney. Banana fingers piano, descending chord changes, falsetto vocals, nonsensical lyrics... it's got the lot! We tried to make a McCartney psychedelic soup. People thought it was the Bonzos by the time we'd finished it."

Dave: "Or Thunderclap Newman!"

Andy: "**Have You Seen Jackie** was written for *25 O'Clock*; it was called "Have You Seen Sydney", a direct reference to our Syd. It's got smatterings of everything - the character and story are part Keith West/Teenage Opera/Mark Wirtz... the kids, the "is he a boy is he a girl", the "if you see him leave him alone" bits..."

Andy: "**Pale And Precious** is pretty obvious (A fine Beach Boys pastiche); that was the most difficult one to do. It's the best melody - the surf bit was a bit stupid - but the chords are churchy and Bach and all the stuff that Brian Wilson was into at the time."

Andy: "**Vanishing Girl** was steered towards The Hollies a lot. They had two lead singers at the same time, so both Colin and I sang the same so that the voices got smashed into this amorphous Hollies mess."

Andy: "**Shiny Cage** was brought up by Colin for *The Big Express* originally but we said no because it was too stupidly Beatley - it was everything from *Revolver* all smashed into one song! Epiphone guitar stabs, tabla playing, backward guitar, a dissonant but melodic George Harrison guitar solo... George Martin would probably have thought it up and played it on the piano and Harrison would have had to learn it. It was again an attempt to forge an era and an area but smash it and condense it all into one track."

Andy: "**Little Lighthouse** was a track that we started to record for *Skylarking*. Todd (Rungren, producer) got bored with it, so I thought The Dukes could do it. The Dukes made it sound like a lot of bands that imitated The Stones."

Andy: "**You're My Drug** is meant to be a mixture of Monterey by The Animals and *So You Want To Be A Rock & Roll Star*. Monterey is a favorite joke - I dunno what Californians thought of Eric Burdon. He was a Newcastle dwarf, a garbled Geordie mystic! It was an XTC song, but it was too much like The Byrds; the chord change is so West Coast. So we thought let The Dukes do it like The Byrds!"

Andy: "**You're A Good Man Albert Brown** is pub psychedelia; an attempt to be anyone who did a pub single... it's the sound of the pub on the corner of Carnaby Street."

Dave: "The Wah Wah & Sceptre!"

Andy: "There'd be a Chelsea Pensioner sitting outside - Steve Marriot's granddad! Jimi Hendrix would be popping in between sets at The Marquee for half pints... it's like Oscar's *Over The Wall We Go*, Whistling Jack Smith's *I Knew Kaiser Bill's Batman*, *The Universal*, a couple of Bonzos things."

Andy: "Colin wrote *The Affiliated* for our next album but wanted to do it quick before we got bored with it, so changed the character of it to be slightly more Ray Davies. The middle section was an attempt to be like Unit 4+2's *Concrete And Clay*; percussion, acoustic guitars, a slightly latin feel."

Andy: "*Collideascope* is Lennon - except that the chords were picked because they sound like The Move's *Blackberry Way* - it's The Move stealing from The Beatles. I had the lyrics for it in 1978 but didn't use them because I thought they were too psychedelic. The sound effects are from the film *Nearest And Dearest* with Jimmy Jewell and Hilda Baker... and there's a scream from the BBC sound effects library."

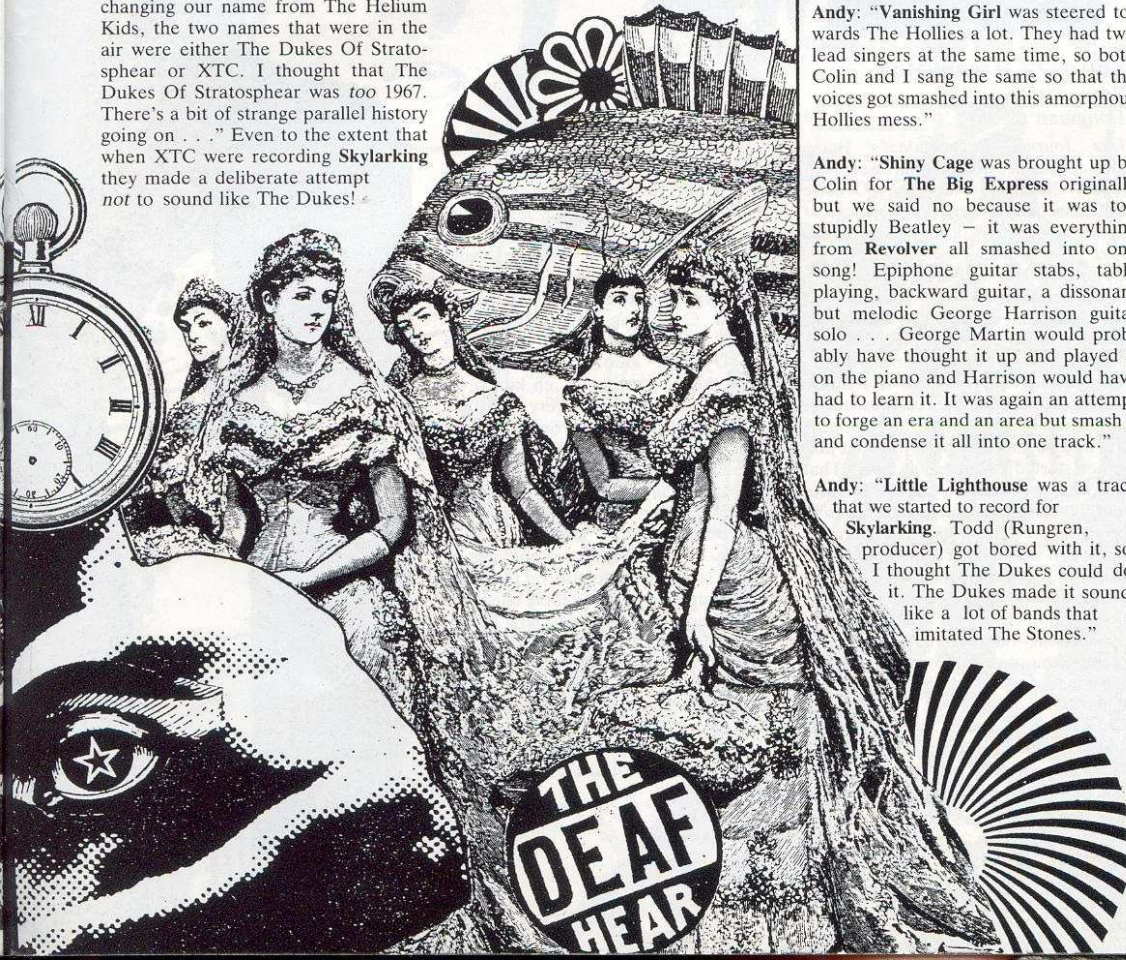
Andy: "**Your Gold Dress** was the first thing written for *25 O'Clock*. I came up with the stupidest riff in the history of riffs and thought it was spot on."

Dave: "We borrowed Nicky Hopkins sound from *She's A Rainbow*."

Andy: "He *made Satantic Majesties* - The Stones would have fallen apart at that time without Nicky Hopkins. He is *We Love You*. One of my favorite ever albums."

Andy: "**What In The World** is bits of Manfred Mann, bits of *Only A Northern Song* and *It's All Too Much*; there's also half a dozen ECM records spun in by hand."

Andy: "**My Love Explodes** is The Yardbirds' *Over Under Sideways Down* mixed with The Pretty Things, or anyone who had an armful of marracas and a basin haircut."





### THE TOMMYKNOCKERS

Stephen King  
Hodder £11.95

When I spoke to The Rainmakers' Bob Walkenhurst about a year ago, catching them between gigs in Albany, Upstate New York, one of the things I mentioned was the band's lyrics. The song I singled out for particular mention was 'Long Gone Long', a moving testimony to adolescence from The Rainmakers' first album, which seemed to me then to bemoan the end of childhood, the loss of naivety. Like a Stephen King story, perhaps?

"Uh? Stephen King?" Walkenhurst was clearly surprised. "I don't know about that," he continued, in his native Kansas City drawl, "but I guess you're right about it being about the end of childhood."

Well, Stephen King's new book, *The Tommyknockers*, is also about a kind of farewell to childhood in that the key players – with two essentially supporting part exceptions – are all adult: a break with the tradition of most of his other work, both short and long. And coincidentally, he's also chosen to kick the whole thing off with a quote from The Rainmakers.

The song is 'Downstream', also from that same first album, and features the band coming across former US President Harry Truman and asking him if he was sorry that he'd used the 'A' bomb to shorten the war. "Pass me the bottle, and mind your own business," Truman answers.

It's a pertinent start for what is possibly King's most completely satisfying book since 1978's *The Dead Zone*, which had a comatose Johnny Smith waking up on a world which is far from perfect and then having to do something about it. *The Tommyknockers* features a similarly hapless and immensely flawed protagonist in Jim Gardener – Gard – a Kerouac-like poet whose love of the bottle and hatred of anything nuclear makes him ideal King fodder.

While Gard is wandering the speaking circuit, getting smashed and upsetting the supposedly literate bourgeoisie, his ladyfriend western writer, Bobbi, is back home in the small New England town of Haven, walking her dog and tripping over the tailfin of a buried flying saucer.

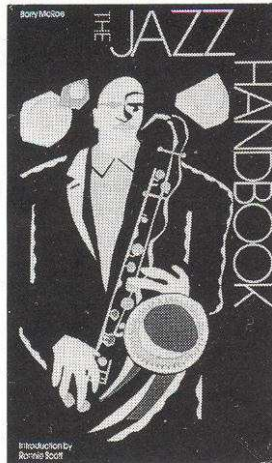
Some kind of energy, held by the ship these hundreds of thousands of years, exerts changes on Bobbi, subtle changes at first, but later... Meanwhile Gard returns, clapped out and hung over, answering some kind of mental call that 'Something's wrong!', to find Bobbi not quite herself. Initially immune – because of an earlier head injury – to the changes (and also the fact that the air and atmosphere

around Haven is considerably polluted), Gard sets about helping Bobbi in her mission: digging up the spaceship!

*The Tommyknockers* is vintage King. His surely undeniable ability to chronicle lives and events down to the trivial and even the minutiae has never been more finely displayed. But in addition to this, it is King's seemingly boundless knowledge of his country's trivia and popular cultures which continues to amaze. Americana flows through the pages of a Stephen King story as freely as it did through the brush-and-ink-strokes of Norman Rockwell's covers for the old Saturday Evening Post.

But King's is the dark side of America, the wart on the underbelly. His books could never be called pleasant reading but they are compulsive, and more than most of his other work, *The Tommyknockers* has a soft centre which makes the whole thing a truly satisfying experience. Unreservedly recommended for King fans everywhere – and an ideal starting point for the five or six people who have never read him.

Peter Crowther.



### THE JAZZ HANDBOOK

Barry McRae  
Longman £9.95

*Jazz Journal International's* Barry McRae has previously impressed with recent Miles Davies and Ornette Coleman biographies, but for those of us without a solid jazz grounding *The Jazz Handbook* is an ideal buy. Opinionated to a point that will have bohos foaming at the mouth, the Handbook is nevertheless easily digested with its clear and precise index, biographical information and critique. That's not to say that this is a flimsy work – as Ronnie Scott points out in his introduction, "for the tidy minded, it is best balanced by believing that jazz either started or ended in 1949. That way you only have to cut the book in half..." Most useful for the passing browser are the critical discography (although many great albums included can't be found in your local jazz emporium for love nor money) and the lineage, which charts influences and connections between each musician, group or movement. From The Original Dixieland Jass Band to Eric Dolphy, King Oliver to The Art Ensemble Of Chicago, this is a solid introduction for casual jazzers and a pocket-sized crib book for aspiring jazz bores. Highly recommended, which ever you are.

Bud Johnson.



### THE OFFICIAL BATMAN HANDBOOK

Joel Eisner  
Titan £6.95

*The Official Batman Book* is an obsessive's treat. For those of you whose superhero perspective was changed at 7.30 pm on Wednesday, January 12, 1966 when Batman made his prime-time debut, this encyclopaedic volume of Batfacts and trivia is a must. The Batbook details Batman's three TV seasons episode by episode, augmented by some mighty fine batpix. Interviews with the likes of The Joker, Alfred, Catwoman and others are included (although sadly no word from the Dynamic Duo... we all know what they're up to now, eh kids?), as are lists of each and every batword. Holy Impregnability! Pride of place goes to possibly Batman's tackiest moment, *Batman The Movie*. Did you know that the rubber shark in the film was Peter Lorre's pet in *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*?

*The Official Batman Book* maybe places too much emphasis on the camp TV escapades of the caped crusaders (purchase Frank Miller's *Dark Knight* for a fine recent scenario), and too little space to Batman's recording career (remember Frank Gorshin's "The Riddler"? Jan and Dean's recently re-issued "Jan And Dean Meet Batman"? ) but is generally a well researched, finely designed package. To the Batscam!

Richard Noise.





**LOVE & ROCKETS**  
Jaime Hernandez  
Titan £5.95

**HEARTBREAK SOUP**  
Gilbert Hernandez  
Titan £5.95

**LOVE & ROCKETS BOOKS  
TWO AND THREE**  
Los Bros Hernandez  
Fantagraphics £7.95 each

"Love & Rockets is one of my favorite comics . . . they're much better writers than I am." Alan Moore, January 1988

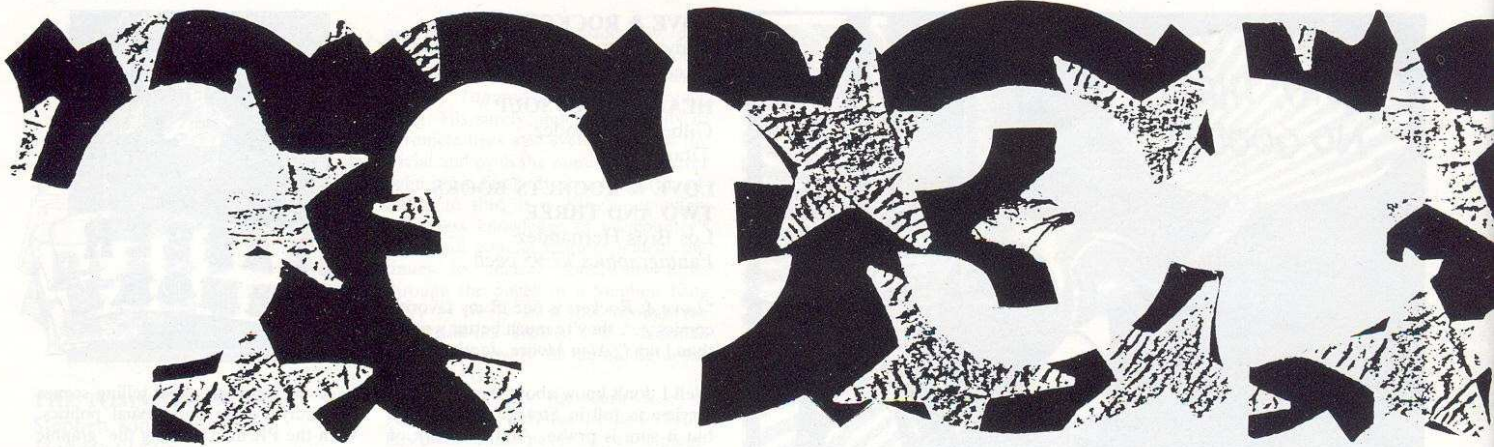
Well I don't know about that Alan (interview in full in *Strange Things #2*), but it sure is praise. And the work of Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez certainly merits adulation – their tales of North Mexico and Spanish California are witty, stylish, sensitive and lifelike, with a dash of surrealism thrown in. Jaime's *Locas* tales mix social realism, occasional hallucinogenic flashes (like Costigan's devilish horns) and some excellent artwork that recalls many fifties and sixties *Young Romance* strip . . . only these cats are in gangs called The Widows and dig hardcore outfits like The Middle Class. And you can't help falling in love with Hopey – anyone who wants to call their band "Greg Brady Image" is okay with me. Gilbert's Palomar tales are starker than Jaime's breezy fantasy clashes; this small village somewhere near George Herriman's desert acts as a microscopic



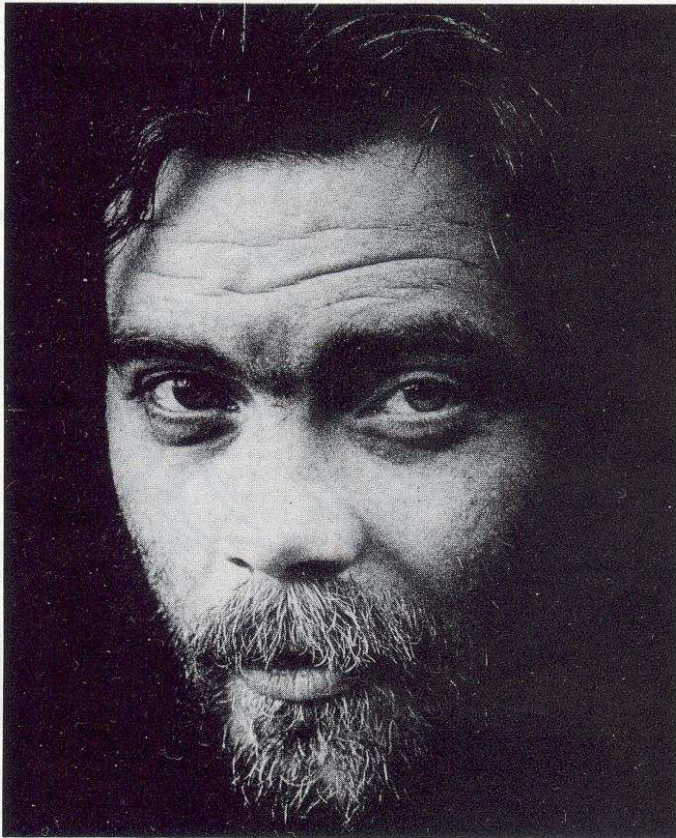
stage on which to enact telling scenes of family debate and sexual politics. With the PR men pushing the 'graphic novel' image, comics are reaching a wider audience – but this ain't coffee-table yuppiedom by any means. The strips are as compelling as an Iain Banks or Martin Amis novel . . . buy them because they are excellent, not because they are fashionable. And buy them all. If Alan Moore rates them higher than himself, you know Los Bros are onto something.

Richard Noise.





## ROKY ERICKSON DARES YOU TO READ THIS ARTICLE



It's a curious paradox, but while cruel barbs are habitually fired at the San Francisco of 1967, individual praise is heaped on Texas music from around the same time. Selective memory is indeed a strange thing (no pun), but the truly honest will see the same greasy-blues-meets-acid-punk in the first Grateful Dead album as in "You're Gonna Miss Me". Texans may have preferred The Kinks to beatnik coffee houses; the final outcome had many similar traits.

That announcement made, the Lone Star State is central to a batch of recent releases under examination here. We open with the 13th Floor Elevators and the appearance of a second volume of "lost" tracks unearthed by the Texas Archives label, *Elevator Tracks*. The first collection, *Fire In My Bones* was magnificent, merging out-takes, alternate versions, and a searing live show. This time round the mixture is much the same; "I Don't Ever Want To Come Down" is the new-found master which sits comfortably alongside six out-takes, including hitherto shelved versions of, amongst others, "Splash

One", "Tried To Hide" and "You're Gonna Miss Me".

The live side comes from a Houston gig in the summer of 1966; sloppy and somewhat ragged, but a mess of fun nonetheless. It's not the incisive performance found for *Fire In My Bones*, but the Elevators successfully sprawl their way across "Satisfaction", "Everybody Needs Somebody To Love", "Rollercoaster" and James Brown's "I Feel Good". The whole piece lacks something of the purpose generally present in the group's live shots (legal or otherwise), but it's always good to be presented with yet

more pieces of their enigmatic puzzle.

Of all the musicians who passed through the 13th Floor Elevators, only Roky Erickson, their guitarist/vocalist, has maintained something of their brief brilliance. His career has alternatively stumbled and ascended, while at the moment a series of albums, studio and live, all dating from different eras, have appeared to add a measure of confusion to the proceedings. One such release is *Casting The Runes*, one of the three Texas-related items issued by the One Big Guitar/Five Hours Back Stable. The ten tracks come from two 1979 gigs, at the Soap Creek Saloon in Austin and at Houston's Rock Island. All the favorites are included; "I Walked With A Zombie", "Stand For The Fire Demon" and "Night Of The Vampire", but, more importantly, the performances are also superb; raw, tough, and on the brink of mayhem and collapse. Roky, who remains perpetually rivetting, sounds positively possessed; raving, wailing and insanely hypnotic. The backing band (Fred KRC, Walter Collie and Cam King) kick out loud and hard, driving each song in such a way that they work both as pure rock and as pieces of Erickson's sci-fi/horror passion. Should you require a Roky album, make this one a priority.

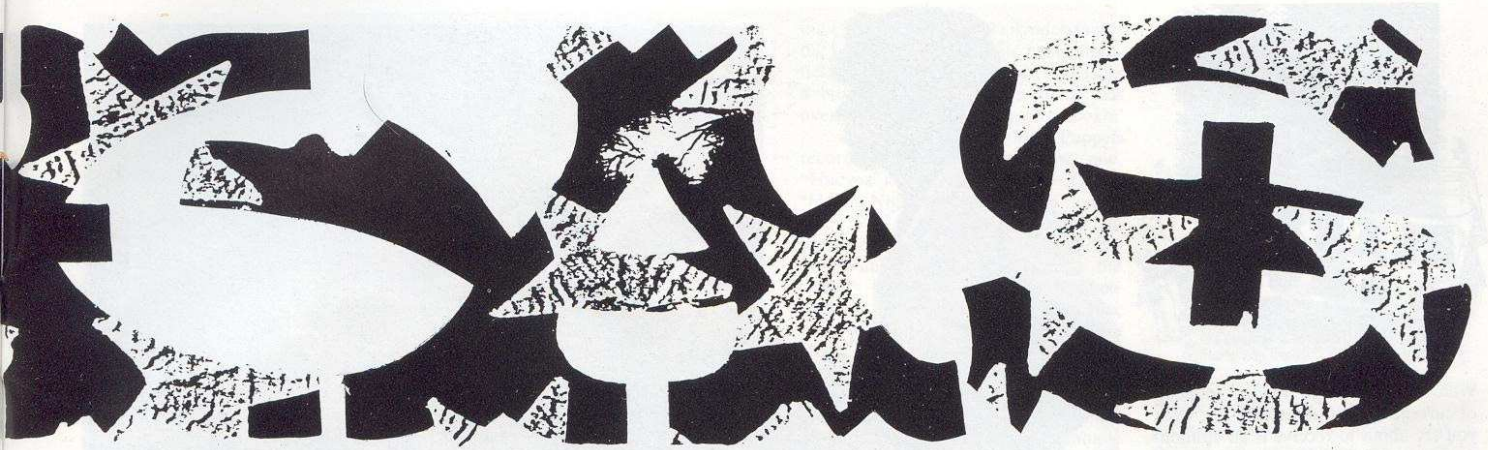
The second Texas release from the labels sees the reformation of another legend. Bubble Puppy, like the 13th Floor Elevators, originally recorded for the International Artists label, although they were one of the company's later signings. They also provided IA with their biggest hit when "Hot Smoke And Sassafras" reached No.14 early in 1969. Bubble Puppy cut one album, *A Gathering Of Promises*, as well as three further singles, before they quit the ailing label and moved to ABC. Legal complications prevented them from using their old name, and thus the group became Demian for their lone



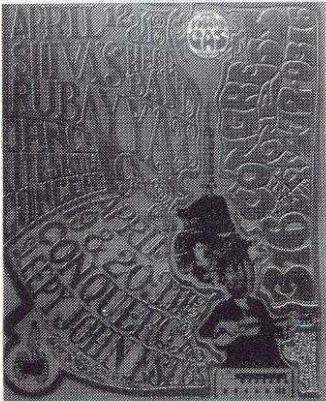
1971 album. Sadly, they fared little better here and seemed to split up soon afterwards. However, news broke around 1976 that Bubble Puppy had reformed, were gigging again, and had begun work on a new LP, *Rising*. It was released in 1979 on the local Electric Flow label, but it only featured two original members, and the band had chosen a different name, Sirius.

However Bubble Puppy have at last managed a second album under their original name. Recorded in Austin in 1986, *Wheels Go Round* is a natural progression from what they (or Demian or Sirius) have been cutting over the years. Bubble Puppy were honestly never the psychedelic practitioners several of their wackier contemporaries were; the collection sits comfortably as confident FM rock. Cooler than ZZ Top, but tough when required (check the lightning guitar runs that pepper the album), Bubble Puppy mix several new songs with four older retreats. "No More Tenderness" and "Only A Loner" were originally cut on the Demian album, whilst "Hurry Sundown" and the inevitable "Hot Smoke And Sassafras" date from the IA period. *Wheels Go Round* deserves success just for the group's longevity and perseverance, but it's more than just a charity case. They're strong and hard enough to find stadium stardom on the merits of their music and as such I wish them luck.

It's the third Five Hours Back/One Big Guitar release which is for me the most essential. The Conqueror are simply Texas legends, house band at Austin's dance halls before a misguided spell in San Francisco broke the heart of the group. Their whole story is retold in the inner bag of *From The Vulcan Gas Co.*, and I see little need to



repeat it here, other than to remark that The Conqueroo were only ever granted a lone single during their lifetime. Both songs ("I've Got Time" and "1 to 3") are included here along with seven more cuts taken from three different sessions. Two come from a similar time to the 45 and were likewise recorded live at the Vulcan, while those remaining are from a later session undertaken at San Francisco's Pacific High Recorders.



The Conqueroo skirted the same territory as The Grateful Dead and Quicksilver Messenger Service, and similarly used a gutsy R&B base as a launch pad for stirring guitar work. Indeed these groups even used some of the same material; "Walkin' Blues" was an early Quicksilver stalwart while "Midnight Hour" punctuated Grateful Dead sets for several years. Another common factor was the Butterfield Blues Band – both the former track and "Get Out Of My Life Woman" are common to both – the Butter versions appearing on "East West", an album which also celebrated rock improvisation.

These reference points are not made lightly: The Conqueroo clearly had a similar potential. Although circumstances obscured their possibilities, **From The Vulcan Gas Co** goes partly towards their vision. As most were only demos, any final binding judgement is necessarily mixed – yet even if the bulk was never intended for open consumption, the legend remains intact, secured by some truly fine performances. The vocals are occasionally ragged and ill-focused, but most are just convenient introductions to Charlie Pritchard's fluid and incisive guitar work. When the instrumental breaks slip into gear (which they do, often), The Conqueroo fire with both purpose and invention. They truly were a special group – this

is a vital slice of Texas music history – assuring **From The Vulcan Gas Co** its place as essential listening.

Meanwhile Antar Records have quietly been completing six volumes of their **Texas Flashbacks** series. Scattered throughout the set are any number of excellent cuts, culled from the sometimes baffling plethora of independent labels working throughout the region. Despite impressions to the contrary, this set is not merely a lumpen exercise in garage-based grunge. Of course the majority of cuts do rumble through songs closely tied to others by The Kinks or The Yardbirds, but several more span years and styles, catching the close of the Buddy Holly era as well as the final flush of psychedelia. And if centres such as Houston or San Antonio have their mini-scenes well represented, so too are further flung outposts such as New Braunfels and Temple.

Almost every cut is worthwhile; none of the volumes are passengers, even if much of the material is somewhat obscure. Recognised classics do litter the set – The Iguanas "I Can Only Give You Everything" (Vol.2), The Mind's Eye's "Help I'm Lost" (Vol.3), Leo and the Prophets' "Tilt A Whirl" (Vol.4), The Cynic's "Train Kept A Rollin'" all duly appear – but the emphasis is on compatibility and sympathetic programming, rather than

reputation. Of course stars do turn up in their infancy; early ZZ Top can be heard in The Moving Sidewalks rumbustuous "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" (Vol.5) and in The Warlocks "If You Really Want Me To Stay" (Vol.1). But that isn't really the point of these records, which exist for the moments the tracks were recorded, rather than later coincidental fame. Having said that, the albums do throw out some classics. "Don't Be That Way" by The Reasons Why (Vol.1) boasts a totally manic guitar break as well as an on-the-edge vocal on a par with Roky at his most intense. Equally wild is "Nothing Can Bring Me Down" by The Twilighters (Vol.2), a demented rocker which seems to have been the group's lone offering. Released as late as 1968, an uncontrolled guitar sprawls across the song, as if they knew this would be their one and only shot and were determined to jam everything into it.

Volume 3 boasts the magnificent Shiva's Headband, and the rare, single-only take of "Kaleidoscopic" complete with Spencer Perskin's searing violin. Houston's Circus blast their way through the brilliant "Bad Seed (You're A Bad Seed)", while The Vision's take of "Humpty Dumpty" is pure frat band and would not be out of place on a Kingsmen/Pacific Northwest compilation. On that topic, Bear Fox crack at The Wailers' "Out Of Our

Tree" (Vol.4), while the same album has The Heard's fine grab at the Elevators' "You're Gonna Miss Me". I could continue, but I'm sure the point is now apparent – these records are vital for anyone with even a passing interest in Texas (or Sixties) punk. Don't worry if you've grown baffled by and hardened to such collections in the wake of **Pebbles** type releases which sound like sandpaper and last as long. These albums are tough, clear and loud, and deserve wholehearted support.

#### TEXAS FLASHBACKS:

Volumes 1 – 6 – Antar Records (OBTEX 1-6)

#### 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS:

Elevator Tracks – Texas Archives (TAR 7)

#### ROKY ERICKSON:

Casting The Runes – 5 Hours Back (TOK 007)

#### BUBBLE PUPPY:

Wheels Go Round – One Big Guitar (OBGLP 9004)

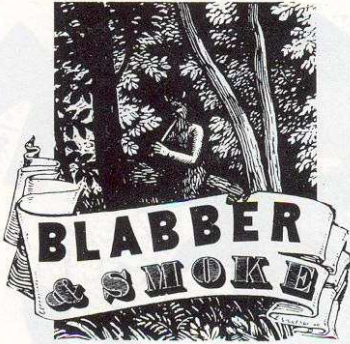
#### THE CONQUEROO:

From The Vulcan Gas Co – 5 Hours Back (TOK 008)

(Coming up over the next few issues – in depth articles on individual bands, beginning with the 13th Floor Elevators. Others to be covered include Shiva's Headband, Mouse & The Traps, Kenny and The Kasuals and more...)



THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR ELEVATORS TAKE IT FROM THE TOP

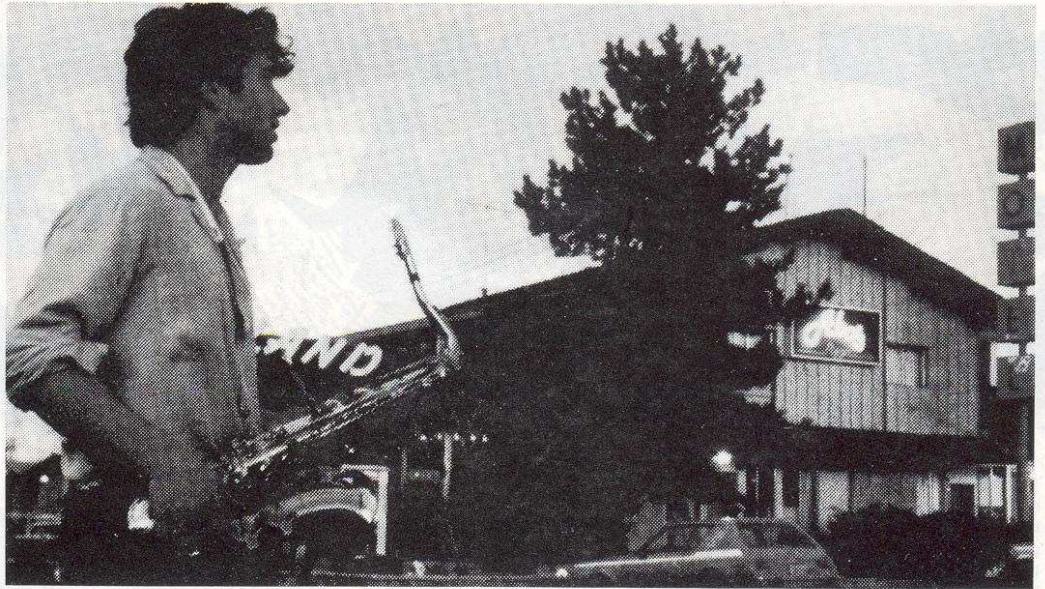


Welcome to *Strange Things'* roundup of current musical directions . . . what you are about to receive is an opinionated, tenuously linked collection of musings upon the better vinyl releases of the moment. Some you will recognize, some you may own already, all you ought to lend at least half an ear to. Criticism, abuse, money etc welcome at the *Strange Things* address.

Let's kick off with what has to be the most instantly satisfying album of the year so far — **Jonathan Richman And The Modern Lovers** fine return to form "Modern Lovers 88" (Demon). Okay so the new **Woodentops** LP might be the future of Rough Trade Rock N' Roll but Jonathan knows a good tune or three when he sees one . . . he's been using all three of 'em throughout his career! In the timeless twilight zone somewhere between doo-wop harmony quartets, plastic teen heartthrobs like Dion and some primitive Buddy Holly beat, this character paints sprawling, heartfelt landscapes of American Urban romance. The Marx brothers stroll past the falafel stand on hot mid-summer nights, heading for a new kind of neighbourhood where all your friends dance on the lawn . . . the neon lights shine, Jonathan grins and everything's okay. "Modern Lovers 88" (alongside the excellent recent live shows) showcases Jonathan's honest entertainment; the kind that makes even the most cynical of us loosen up. If it doesn't, you're no fun, pal.

Similarly refreshing is ex-Buzzcock **Steve Diggle's** new LP "Northwest Skyline" (MCM). Not content with simply restating his past (he can leave that to the **Soup Dragons**), Steve's band **Flag Of Convenience** head for uncharted areas of guitar-heavy pop. Reminiscent of Australia's **Moffs** (particularly on "Pictures In My Mind"), Ireland's **Steppes** and the whole Weller school of post-Mod rant, **FOC** are an unexpected surprise. Recommended.

With no new **Richard Thompson** album on the horizon (the man is between record companies, so we believe), *Strange Things* Thompson fanatic has to look to look to the three recently-available projects for comfort. **Fairport Convention's** "Heyday" sessions are mentioned elsewhere; more recent recordings surface on "The Marksman" (BBC), a collaboration with Peter Filleu which features the wonderful Christine Collister (check out her partnerships with Clive Gregson on **Cooking Vinyl** and **Special Delivery**), and "French, Frith, Kaiser, Thompson" (Demon/Rhino). "The Marksman" is an atmospheric set of mood pieces which were written to accompany the Liverpoolian thriller series — some fine Thompson twang washes all over the place. The real



JONATHAN RICHMAN: "SPRAWLING HEARTFELT LANDSCAPES OF AMERICAN URBAN ROMANCE" . . . (IT SAYS HERE).

treat, however, is the collaboration with John 'Drumbo' French, Fred Frith (of **Henry Cow**, etc) and experimental guitar supremo Henry Kaiser. In turns perverse ("Surfin' USA", anyone?) or brilliantly bleak ("Drowned Dog Black Night"), "French, Frith, Kaiser, Thompson" is that rare thing, a diverse coupling that really works. Alongside **The Golden Palominos'** recent discs on Celluloid (featuring a passing Thompson), this is an enjoyable and viable experiment.



RICHARD THOMPSON

Other experimental areas worth delving into include those of Belgium's **Play It Again Sam** and Scotland's **Cathexis Recordings**. Cathexis grew out of the Pleasantly Surprised cassette label, who during the mid-1980's released compilations of rare material from, among others, **Living In Texas**, **Cocteau Twins**, **1919** and **David J**. Since switching to vinyl there have been two Cathexis compilations — "You Bet" (featuring **Sonic Youth**, **Mark Stewart**, **The Anti Group**) and "Fight" (with tracks from **Hula**, **The Young Gods** and **Pink Industry**). Their latest offering is "Perburabo" (meaning "permanent and durable", they reckon), which embraces the dada pop of **Attrition**, the gushing swirl of **Primary Industry** and some Tijuana torment from **The Wolfgang Press**.

Also included is the chilling tale of "Orton St." from the much acclaimed **Band Of Holy Joy** complete with barking dogs, the forever young **Legendary Pink Dots** (of whom more in a moment), **Heads On Sticks** (whose brilliant "Coil" brings to mind **A Certain Ratio** circa "Flight" with its tremelo guitar and offbeat drums) and the etherial **Heavenly Bodies**, who feature ex-**Dead Can Dance** types amongst the ranks. An interesting and varied album, proving that there is a great mass of vibrant music about that is virtually unheard of. Which brings us to **The Legendary Pink Dots** new LP for **Play It Again Sam**, "Any Day Now". It's the Dots ninth album in six years; sadly they remain almost unknown in their native England (having moved to Amsterdam two years ago), but this beautifully packaged work may set the record straight. Their sound is extremely difficult to categorise — try imagining the better elements of **Faust**, solo **Syd** and early **Pink Floyd**, **Cockney Rebel**, classical music and Gregorian chants if you will! This is a stimulating, diverse masterpiece.

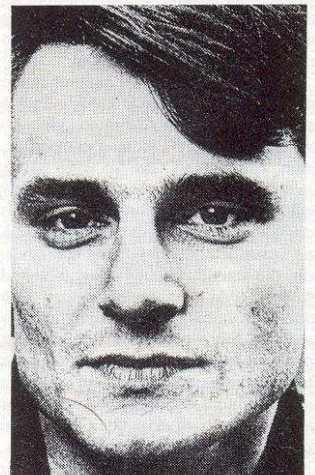
The trip to enchantment begins with "Casting The Runes": whimsical, magical, through the mist it stalks you. **Ed Ka Spell's** narration of times past, restless ghosts and a cursed maiden named **Madelline** flow gently onward. But you haven't heard nothin' yet . . . on "Gallery" the Dots go Strauss! We're treated to a masked ball where **Ka Spell** warbles a la **Ron Moody**. The taste of sea air meanders through "Neon Mariners", whilst side two's opener "True Love" is the most lyrically outstanding piece. Devastatingly good . . . look also towards **Play It Again Sam's** recent reissues of other Dots material.

Still in Holland, we turn to **Eton Crop's** "And The Underwater Music Goes On" (Ediesta), in which **Tom Verlaine** joins **That Petrol Emotion** and reinvents himself as a surrogate **Mark Smith**. From the cheeky irony of "Sexy Politicians" to the irreverent "Me And Catherine Deneuve Split Up" (which mixes grunge and tamborine to great effect), the Crop shape some fine spikey pop. Their agitpop occasionally veers dangerously towards dogma in places, but the tunes are fine, bud. As

is the first **Jazz Butcher** record for nearly a year and a half; "Fishcoteque" (Creation). Here the Butch adopts a new band and a new label, leaving **Glass** after six years and over a dozen vinyl outings. "Fishcoteque's" range is staggering . . . from the garage fuzz of "Lot 49", all Pynchon paranoia and Rockabilly back beat, to the sub Roxy/Bowie "Next Move Sideways" or the perfect pop of "Get It Wrong". We even leap through dislocated hip-hop soundscapes ("The Best Way"), **VU** balladry n'feedback ("Susie") and the latin/salsa of "Living In A Village" (JB's answer to "Stranded In The Jungle"). Lyrical dexterity is something any **Jazz Butcher** product is never short of; "Fishcoteque" brims with wit and potency in this area. From town planning to **Lionel Ritchie**, vegetarianism to suburbia, healthy injections of humour and satire flow through what must be the most adventurous **Jazz Butcher** set to date. A mighty enjoyable sex engine thing.

Over in the Whatever-Happened-To-Yank-Guitar-Combos department, **Zippo** offer two suggestions — **Naked Prey's** "40 Miles From Nowhere" mini-album and **The Windbreakers** "A Different Sort . . ." **Naked Prey** indulge in bar room barking that somehow never reaches the heights of prime

BILL PRITCHARD





LOOP

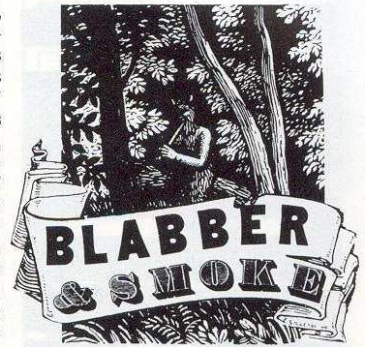
period **Giant Sand** or **Green On Red**. "40 Miles From Nowhere" is annoyingly MOR in places, and sadly inferior

to the fine "Under The Blue Marlin" release — a real shame. The Windbreakers effort includes charmingly melodic charmers ("You Closed Your Eyes", "So Far Away") plus the odd outstanding **Shoes/dB's** powerpop out-

ing ("Fit In", "We Never Understand", the title track), but despite being a proficient, enjoyable record it still lacks a biting edge. But never mind, 'cos over at SST things are really cookin' . . . if you don't own any **Meat Puppets** records (particularly the new one, "Huevos"), the debut **Firehose**, **Opal's** "Happy Nightmare Baby" or a host of other SST gems then you better do something about it. And quick. Alongside **Fundamental**, **Homestead**, the crazed brilliance of the **Butthole Surfers**, **Sonic Youth** and the late, great **Big Black**, SST are making some pretty sharp incisions into the American musical heart. Buy on sight.

Britain's sonic counterparts are adopting a more dancable and mesmerizing approach — the perfect example being the **Can-Meets-Electric Prunes-Whilst-Nicking Spacemen 3** riffs approach of the debut **Loop** album, "Heaven's End" (Head). Repetitive, hypnotic vibrato/fuzz guitars collide with harsh, brutally sparse drum patterns in an ongoing psych/dance crossover which stretches from **The Shamen** to **AR Kane** or **Psychic TV's** "Love War Riot" acid dance anthem. An ongoing psychedelia/dance/noise downpour appears imminent.

On a quieter note, **Bill Pritchard's** "Half A Million" (Third Mind) is gaining attention for its French language press releases and lilting bedsitter scenarios. Anyone for a male Françoise Hardy? Our William seems to have overdosed on "Wildflower" era **Blow Monkeys** (particularly on "Wednesday") and one cross-channel trip too many,



but there's a familiarity and effortless breeze blowing throughout in an all-acoustic rush. Along with **Momus**, a perfect accompaniment for romance and relaxation. Until next time...

RECOMMENDED:

- Bongwater:** Double Bummer (Shimmy Disc)
- Trisomie 21:** Million Lights (Play It Again Sam)
- Big Dipper:** Heavens (Homestead)
- Dembo Konte & Kausu Kuyateh:** Simbomba (Rogue)
- Turn To Flowers:** Listen To The Dead Man (Imaginary)
- Killdozer:** Little Baby Buntin' (Touch & Go)
- The Woodentops:** Wooden Foot Cops On The Highway (Rough Trade)
- Tackhead & Gary Clail:** Reality 12" (On-U Sound)
- Eugene Chadbourne:** Kill Eugene Chadbourne (Placebo)
- Firehose:** If'n (SST)

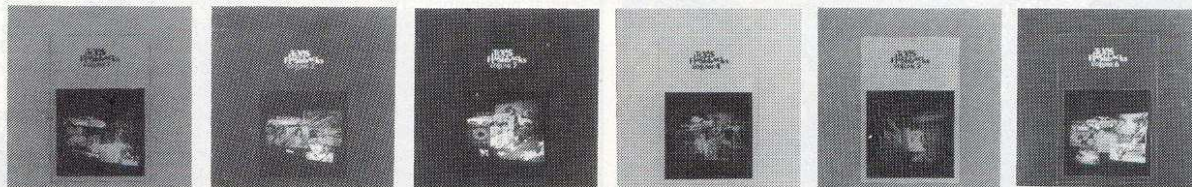
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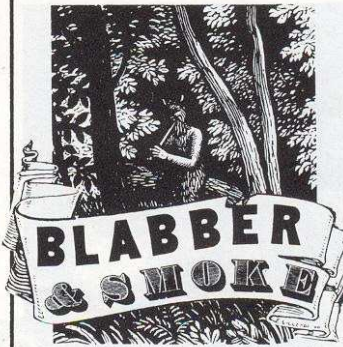
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**S.F. Sorrow** - Pretty Things (Edsel XED 236)  
**Music In A Doll's House** - Family (See For Miles SEE 100)  
**Family Entertainment** - Family (See For Miles SEE 200)  
**Heyday** - Fairport Convention (Hannibal HNBL 1329)  
**The Great Lost Album** - the Vagrants (Arista AL 8459)  
**Point Reyes Station** - the Youngbloods (Edsel ED 244)  
**The Fabulous Knickerbockers** - the Knickerbockers (See For Miles SEE 208)  
**Pink Purple Yellow and Red** - the Sorrows (Bam Caruso KIRI 089)  
**A Midsummer Night's Scene** - John's Children (Bam Caruso KIRI 095)

When the Pretty Things first unveiled **S.F. Sorrow**, it wasn't quite the radical shock their switch from raving R&B might suggest it would be. By 1968 the group had abandoned the primitive blast underpinning those early releases and, the somewhat awkward, transitional switch to introspection over, they'd emerged anew into an alternative, exciting direction.

Only two original members, vocalist Phil May and guitarist Dick Taylor had survived the changes. Two drummers, Skip Allan and Twink Alder had seemed interchangeable whereas the arrival of John Povey and Wally Allen from Beat contemporaries the Fenmen introduced the new consistency the new Pretty Things had achieved. The Fenmen had developed a fine line in harmony and the newcomers brought this in with them into the group. Never before had Phil May enjoyed such a vocal cushion, the blend of raw power and crafted singing was truly strong.

The final new recruit was psychedelia, and an open attitude towards several possibilities. Two singles, 'Defecting Grey' and 'Talking About The Good Times' introduced the Pretties full embrace of all its possibilities, where effects and twists upon the other side of 'Strawberry Fields Forever' vied with deceptively memorable tunes in creating a patchwork which somehow exemplified that intangible Englishness also found in the original Pink Floyd.

**S.F. Sorrow** cultivated and expanded on the style of those two singles. Its 'Rock Opera' framework was loose enough to constrict the imaginative music but provided a line to pull the disparate parts together. Everything gelled - Dick Taylor's incisive guitar, the soaring voices, Norman Smith's brilliant production, the sublime use of sound effects, but most of all it was those powerful songs; 'S.F. Sorrow Is Born', 'Old Man Going', 'Balloon Burning', where multi-tracked acoustics collide with electric mayhem but

always allow the melody to remain intact. Time hasn't diminished the scope of this album, it may even have enhanced it and **S.F. Sorrow** remains a special testament to the inventiveness of late '60s British pop.

That same remark holds true for **Music In A Doll's House**, Family's debut album which originally had preceded **S.F. Sorrow** by a few months. Family too had emerged from the Underground by way of several minor league R&B/Soul groups operating in the Midlands. They came to London in time to cut 'Scene Thru' The Eye Of A Lens', one of 1967's finest singles, before taking on Traffic's Dave Mason as producer and recording this particular collection.

Family also embraced the era's lust for change, but unsurprisingly preferred the jazzier, more organic sound of a Traffic or a Graham Bond to the electrifying space of a Pink Floyd. Jim King's saxophone and the Rick Gretch violin combined with some diffuse time signatures to give **Music In A Doll's House** a gypsy-esque atmosphere, and much of that aura has remained intact. Mellotrons and tinkering does provide a splash of psychedelia too and indeed the mix if sometimes overpowering with Roger Chapman's fiery voice adding yet another shade of claustrophobia. But the songs again are wonderful, 'Me My Friend', 'Hey Mr. Policeman', 'See Through Windows'; this is truly yet another special album.

**Family Entertainment**, the record which followed it in 1969 has also been repackaged. This was indeed quite a different proposition - good yes, but somehow lacking the purpose of its predecessor. The trappings had all been stripped away, the almost apologetic sitar on 'Face In The Cloud' was the only lingering homage to psychedelia. Family were now creating rock music and while several mainstays, including 'The Weaver's Answer', 'Hung Up Down' and 'Observations From A Hill', first made their appearances here, they lacked the fire the live show gave them and seemed so clear in comparison with the multi-layers of **Music In A Doll's House**. I still love the album, but in the same way that **The Rolling Stones No. 2** paled beside the first, the excellence of Family's debut made it near impossible to follow. That reservation aside, the re-release of both of these records is undeniably welcome.

It's now almost impossible to see Fairport Convention as a part of England's 1967; of the UFO Club and the Middle Earth. Their subsequent nose-dive into Traditional folk has all but obscured their early origins, and even their classic peak, **What We Did On Our Holidays**, **Unhalfbricking**, and (especially) **Leige and Leif** progressively distanced them from the days of their under-rated debut and times when Jefferson Airplane claimed a greater reference point than Cecil Sharpe. **Heyday** is a homage to that lost direction where sessions made for BBC radio provided the excuse to look back at other possibilities, principally American, and play around with songs which were (mostly) never recorded.

This is a wonderful record. I was always saddened by Fairport's sudden switch into Traditional avenues at the expense of their first inspirations, and this collection moves somewhat towards



suggesting how things might otherwise have been. Only two songs, Dylan's 'Percy's Song' and Joni Mitchell's 'I Don't Know Where I Stand' would receive an official release, and the latter was originally cut featuring Judy D'Yble while it's Sandy Denny who sings on **Heyday**. The rest blends two by the Everly Brothers ('Gone Gone Gone' and 'Some Sweet Day'), two by Leonard Cohen ('Suzanne' and 'Bird On A Wire'), one apiece by Richard Farina, Gene Clark, Eric Anderson and Johnny and Roy Cash and lastly, a brace of group originals, 'Shattering Live Experience' and 'If It Feels Good'. Fairport's deft touch and empathy for such material is apparent during the early notes of 'Close The Door Lightly When You Go', and **Heyday** merely confirms that at this particular time few groups could even touch them.

The Vagrants and the Youngbloods offered two contrasting sides to New York's thriving 1960's heritage. The former were a raucous quintet, contemporaries of the (Young) Rascals who similarly used a massive Hammond organ to underpin their sound. The Vagrants held sway at clubs such as Unganos and the Action House, building a reputation for a blistering, exciting set which saw them perennially tipped for success. It never happened; seeming hit singles simply disappeared and the promised LP sessions would never be completed. Thus **The Great Lost Album** can only approximate what might have been, but nonetheless copes well.

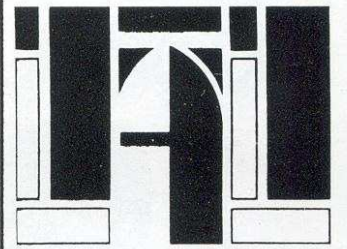
The Vagrants' recording career was somewhat haphazard, especially when compared with their live popularity. Their debut of 'Oh Those Eyes'/'You're Too Young' was issued on the local Southern Sound label, but sadly the rights to it were not secured for this collection. Its follow-up, 'I Can't Make A Friend'/'Young Blues' has been rescued from the vaults at Vanguard and although they are somewhat different to their raunch of their later sides, their appearance here is very welcome. Two more tracks from the same period, 'My Babe' and 'The Final Hour', have also

been unearthed, but at least one further out-take, 'Hasty Heart' has unfortunately proved elusive. However, all of the material released on Atco (six tracks), has been unearthed, and it makes a diverse, but fascinating selection.

Pride of place goes to 'Respect', the group's wholehearted grab at status. Atco clearly wished the Vagrants a place alongside Atlantic's Rascals; the two were friendly and indeed Eddie Brigati and Gene Cornish add backing voices to the chorus. Eddie's brother Dave produced the session, but just as the single began to break, Jerry Wexler cut the song with Aretha Franklin, who simply destroyed all-comers. 'A Sunny Summer Rain' and 'And When It's Over' took the Vagrants into 1968, but their opportunity had been missed. The band began to fracture; Jerry Storch had already quit, unhappy that guitarist Leslie West, having seen Cream perform, began to extend his already lengthy guitar breaks even further. With the Rascals sewing up Blue-eyed Soul and Vanilla Fudge cornering the freak-out market, the Vagrants finally broke when West began a solo album in tow with Felix Pappalardi, sometime producer of both the group and Cream. The album, entitled **Mountain** led to the two forming a

group of the same name, on which would find the success the Vagrants were denied. Although not quite definitive **The Great Lost Album** will do quite nicely.

Had history worked out differently, the same Felix Pappalardi might have become bassist in the Youngbloods, a group which had evolved out of the Boston and Greenwich Village folk circuits. He would decline the offer, leaving them to weave a way through three wonderful RCA albums, which blended jugband pop, folk and jazz, each of which was played with stunning individuality. **Point Reyes Station**, however, comes from their later period, following a move to California and the opportunity to set up their own independent label, Raccoon. It features material pulled from four albums, each of which were somewhat hampered by the schizophrenia which was pulling the Youngbloods apart. While Jesse Colin Young clearly wished to concentrate on his light but melodic compositions, Joe Bauer and Banana Levinger preferred a more avant-garde approach. Indeed by the time the last two of these albums were cut, it seemed easier for the group to work out on old favourites rather than explore new directions



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which they tended to reserve for their 'solo' projects.

**Point Reyes Station** collects the cream of these somewhat patchy albums and is the best indication of those times as could be wished for. The mature ease of the period shines through, it's relaxed, warm and affectionate, and carries in it a special, intimate atmosphere. Jesse's 'It's A Lovely Day' is the perfect opening, preparing the way for songs such as 'Will The Circle Be Unbroken', 'That's How Strong My Love Is' and 'Sugar Babe'. The late Youngbloods may lack the innovation of their early counterpart, but few groups can match their genuine and crafted care.

Another group crossing from East to West was the Knickerbockers, who trekked from New Jersey to Los Angeles sometime in 1965. Best remembered for 'Lies', a ferocious Beatle soundalike which surely kept John Lennon guessing, they were too quickly written off as mere copyists. **The Fabulous Knickerbockers** borrows the title of their third and best album, chips off the chaff it contained and adds a slew of non-l.p. gems to create the definitive Knicks overview.

Although often linked with **Nuggets** styled garage bands, the Knickerbockers were a part of a more traditional approach. There isn't too much of a story, they came together in the early '60s, evolved out of mixture of Four Seasons/Beatlesque material, and moved coasts to a Challenge Records contract. Having hits with 'Lies', they followed it with a succession of excellent pop/rock singles, helped on their way by using the cream of L.A.'s session players. Thus traces of the

Beach Boys, Phil Spector and the Dunhill gang chimed through in such wonderful songs as 'High On Love', 'Love Is A Bird', 'Rumour Gossip Words Untrue' as well as a slew of others. **The Fabulous Knickerbockers** is an essential addition to California's legacy of mature pop music, even if the proponents migrated there.

Tough pop was also something the Sorrows excelled at. Although their lifespan was relatively brief (1965-1967 give or take some months on either side), their series of singles and lone



THE SORROWS

album helped them acquire a near legendary status. Their best known cut, the pounding 'Take A Heart', is an exemplary one, everything which constituted Sorrows music was caught up in that song - deep vocals, echoed drumming, frantic guitar and a tough tension found only in the best of British mod-rock. **Pink Purple Yellow and Red** compiles all of their strongest performances, of which the driving 'You Got What I Want' and the later, neo-psychedelic title song are the most special standouts. If you've ever swooned to the Creation, or bopped to the harder edge of the early Small Faces, then don't miss this.

If the Sorrows music anticipated the beginnings of Freakbeat, then John's Children were one of their logical successors. Much, of course, is made of Marc Bolan's time in the band, an emphasis which tends to obscure their other achievements. An irreverent attitude coupled with manager Simon

Napier-Bell's sometimes derogatory remarks have led to a somewhat unfortunate feeling towards John's Children's records, writing them off as merely flippant, rather than appreciating what were their strengths. A **Midsummer Night's Scene** confirms that their knack of finding strong tunes was always prevalent and each successive single, from the wild-out weirdness of 'Smashed Blocked' to the garage thrash of 'Go Go Girl', had something to make it special, despite any remarks to the contrary. As a bonus, the album, not un-naturally, contains the title cut, recorded as a single only to be withdrawn, thus creating one of pop's true rarities as well as both sides of singer Andy Ellison's solo debut, the flip of which, 'Arthur Green', was in fact the last track John's Children ever recorded. By all means buy it for Bolan's brief encounter, but at the same time recognise that the band were much better than they were given credit for. ■

JOHN'S CHILDREN



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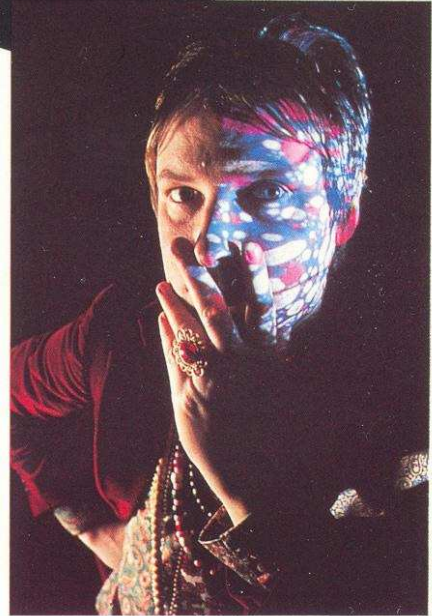


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