

STRANGE THINGS

HAPPENING

Volume 1. Number 2. May/June 1988



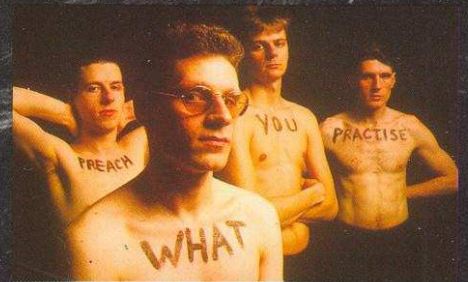
**IGGY POP
& THE STOOGES**



**COUNTRY ROCK
ALAN MOORE**



**GIANT SAND
THE SHAMEN
RICHARD BRAUTIGAN
SMOKE
SILVER SURFER
WIRE
AND MORE**



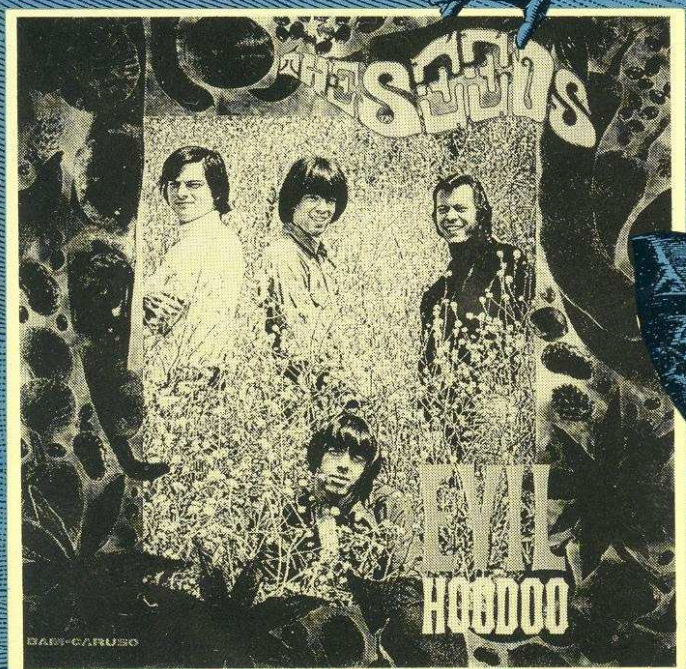
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NEW BOOKS &
RECORDS, CHARTS
CARTOONS &
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WHERE THE
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THE SKY
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"EVIL HOODOO"

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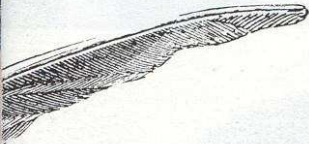
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CONTENTS

IGGY POP & THE STOOGES The full story of one of the world's most wanted men.	2
GIANT SAND Howe Gelb traces the outline of a beer stain with his finger.	7
RICHARD BRAUTIGAN An appraisal of the life & works of the gentle giant of prose.	9
ALAN MOORE From <i>Marvelman</i> to <i>Watchmen</i> and beyond – an absorbing and enlightening day with Mr. Moore.	14
WIRE Cutting comments from the pliers of pop.	18
MAN IN A SUITCASE The ultimate knuckle-sandwich.	21
THE CREATION LABEL In depth stuff on the bubble-fuzz pranksters.	22
KRAZY KAT The <i>Tale of Tiger Tea</i> continues . . .	24
AMERICAN COUNTRY ROCK Part One of the story: Those cosmic cowboys sit down to a breakfast of beans . . .	26
THE SHAMEN Scot-Rock or Skat Jocks.	30
SMOKE A hazy days read.	32
THE SILVER SURFER Now let the mightiest of all appear.	34
REVIEWS Books & sounds dissected.	38

TOP TENS/MARGINAL THINKING/CHARTS ARE SCATTERED
HERE & THERE IN A TOTALLY RANDOM FASHION



estoooges

"It's 1969 OK/War Across the USA/It's another year for me'n'you/Another year with nothin' to do"

So lurched the Jaggeresque sneer of Iggy Stoooge, its nihilism spewing over his group's gonzo attack of half-slapped Bo Diddley shuffles and crazed, sprawling wah-wah guitar. This was **The Stooges**; this was the antipathy of the meek singer/songwriter who's vision of gentle self-fulfillment lay swamped and splattered in their sonic attack. While many dreamed of bomber jet planes . . . turning into butterflies above our nation, and doused themselves with mud, love, beads and meditation, so The Stooges were the beat of the street; all leather, snarls and greasy simplicity.

James Jewel Osterberg grew up in a caravan lot somewhere around Ann Arbor, Michigan. By high school, his academic promise was swept aside by The Iguanas, a rag-assed rock'n'roll band for which Jimmy played drums. It was here that the name 'Iggy' was attached, the period's main legacy, as our hero was next found in The Prime Movers, a Detroit-based group marginally up the rungs from its predecessor. This was a temporary move, ended when Iggy travelled to Chicago, hoping to 'learn the Blues' from Sam Lay, ex-drummer in the Butterfield band. It too was merely temporary, and James returned to Michigan, arriving back the night another local group, The Chosen Few, decided to quit. The Few were one of Detroit's earliest garage bands, alongside, say, The Fugitives, with whom there would be a later link. As well as singer Scott Richardson, The Chosen Few also briefly featured Ron Asheton on bass, who'd joined in the summer of 1966. Previously a member of the self same Prime Movers, it was Iggy who suggested that he join. Indeed following the Few's final disintegration, it was rumoured that Richardson, Asheton and Ig would form a new group together. Scott however preferred to join The Fugitives, who in turn evolved into another of Detroit's essential groups, SRC.

The remaining duo were then joined by Ron's brother Scott on drums, and with Iggy playing Hawaiian guitar, the new group spent much of 1967 in wild rehearsals. They made their debut on October 31st, playing a Halloween party as an instrumental combo. Whether or not they'd taken a name this writer cannot say, but before long they were dubbed The Psychedelic Stooges.

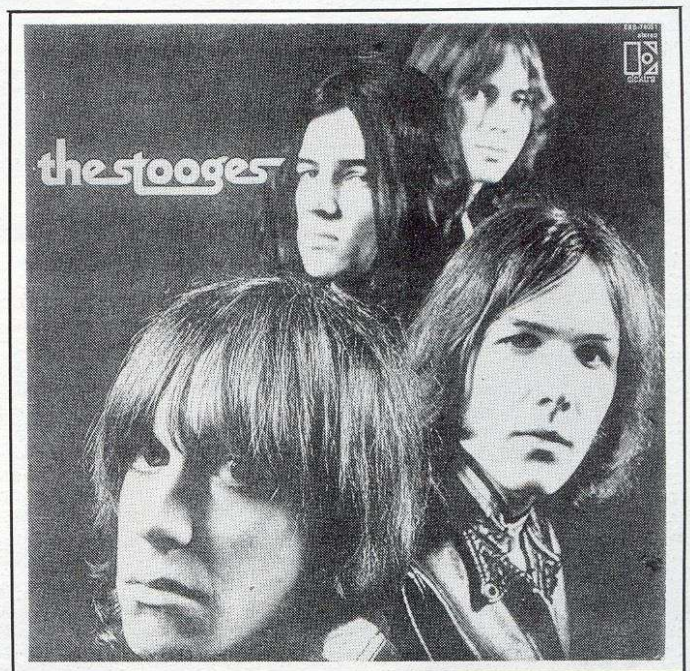
As such the new group joined the most exciting and co-ordinated counter culture outside of the West Coast. As early as 1966 the Grande Ballroom featured 'a dance concert in the San Francisco style', where the 'famous MC5 avante-rock' double headed with the aforementioned Chosen Few. Within a year the community was solid; its brash, non-nonsense music, Gary Grimshaw's wonderfully expressive poster art,

John Sinclair's fusion of radical politics and balling in the street; they all combined to give Detroit a rebellious individuality. The Psychedelic Stooges played all around the area; supporting the MC5, supporting Blue Cheer, raging, rampaging and cutting their own seering path. The line-up was completed with Dave Alexander arrived on bass, leaving Iggy upfront and Ron on stun guitar. By September 1967, the group was caught in minis-schizophrenia; during two dates at the First Unitarian Church, the 'Psychedelic' prefix was mysteriously dropped and the name read simply The Stooges.

The following year, the band was a recording act. Danny Fields, who'd signed their brothers the MC5 to Elektra records, caught a set which had Iggy wearing a maternity dress, white-faced and spitting on his audience. "You're a star" Fields reportedly gushed, and promptly signed them up. Such dreams, however, were almost abruptly ended when The Stooges demanded a release from their contract

when Elektra dropped the MC5 following the notorious 'Fuck Hudson's' campaign, when the group took out ads attacking a store who'd refused to handle their 'Kick Out The Jams'. The label in turn refused this plea for Michiganian fraternity, and The Stooges thus began recording.

The first somewhat curious candidate as producer was Jerry Ragavoy, who's work with Garnett Mimms and Lorraine Ellison was hardly compatible with The Stooges three chord anarchy. John Cale, newly fired from The Velvet Underground, was then drafted in and the resultant collection, released in August 1969, was allowed a more effective freedom. Written and recorded over two days (not necessarily the same pair), **The Stooges** mercilessly hammered its malevolent grind. Where the MC5 threw avante garde jazz into their loud, orgasmic maelstrom, Iggy and chums took the cheeseburger bad breath of a ? and the Mysterians, scratched a musical brawl on the top, and presented the con-





fusion so many of us felt at the time.

Having got past '1969', more mayhem would follow. There was the sexual sweatbox of 'I Wanna Be Your Dog', the pulverising 'No Fun' with its saturation guitar, the defiant 'Real Cool Time'. Those mourning the eclipse of The Sonics, The Kingsmen and other purveyors of teenage lust found The Stooges an adequate replacement. Only on 'We Will Fall', a 10-minute sub-Doors slab of neo-hypnotism, did the group falter, its grab at mantra meets punk faltering somewhere around halfway. That flawed ambition aside, **The Stooges** was superb.

Yet for all its grind and snarl, it little prepared us for **Funhouse**, perhaps the ultimate in splatter-rock dementia. For this the basic quartet had added a saxophonist, Steven Mackay, previously a cartoonist for Detroit's *Death Comic*, and although Bill Cheatham, an ex-Roadie, was drafted in on rhythm guitar before Mackay joined, he's not credited on the album. But then who knows with **Funhouse**.

Released in August 1970, this is pure white heat. Three other producers — Jim Peterman (Steve Miller



Band), Eddie Kramer (The Stones, Traffic) and John Madeira (Danny and the Juniors/Len Barry) — were all considered before Don Gallucci, ex-Kingsmen and Don of Don and the Goodtimes was given the dubious privilege. Parts of the band are considerably tighter, the sound is noticeably more dense, but the mayhem count is higher, and the whole piece teeters on the brink of self-destruction. There's a viciousness on cuts such as 'Down On the Street', 'Loose' and 'TV Eye' not there on **The Stooges**, but it's on the second side that matters really unwind. The title track does retain a semblance of order, with Mackay's saxophone splintering off from the crazed wah-wah guitar, while 'I Feel Alright' (aka 1970) gushes with a true and potent urgency. But it's the closer, 'L.A. Blues' which epitomises the disintegration and despair of the group. If the MC5 had sometimes emulated their jazz heroes (Pharaoh Sanders, Sun Ra or John Coltrane), The Stooges here relived the free-form freak-out of Marian Brown or Sonny Murray or John Tchai. The drums were everywhere, fighting with the feedback and squawking sax, which best resembles

cut-ups from Mackay's first lesson. Iggy screamed and occasionally punctured the noise, which crashed and echoed on the studio walls, only ending when everyone's energy was sapped. There was now no other way forward; The Stooges had reached a logical conclusion and everything else would lie somewhere in between this and whatever went before.

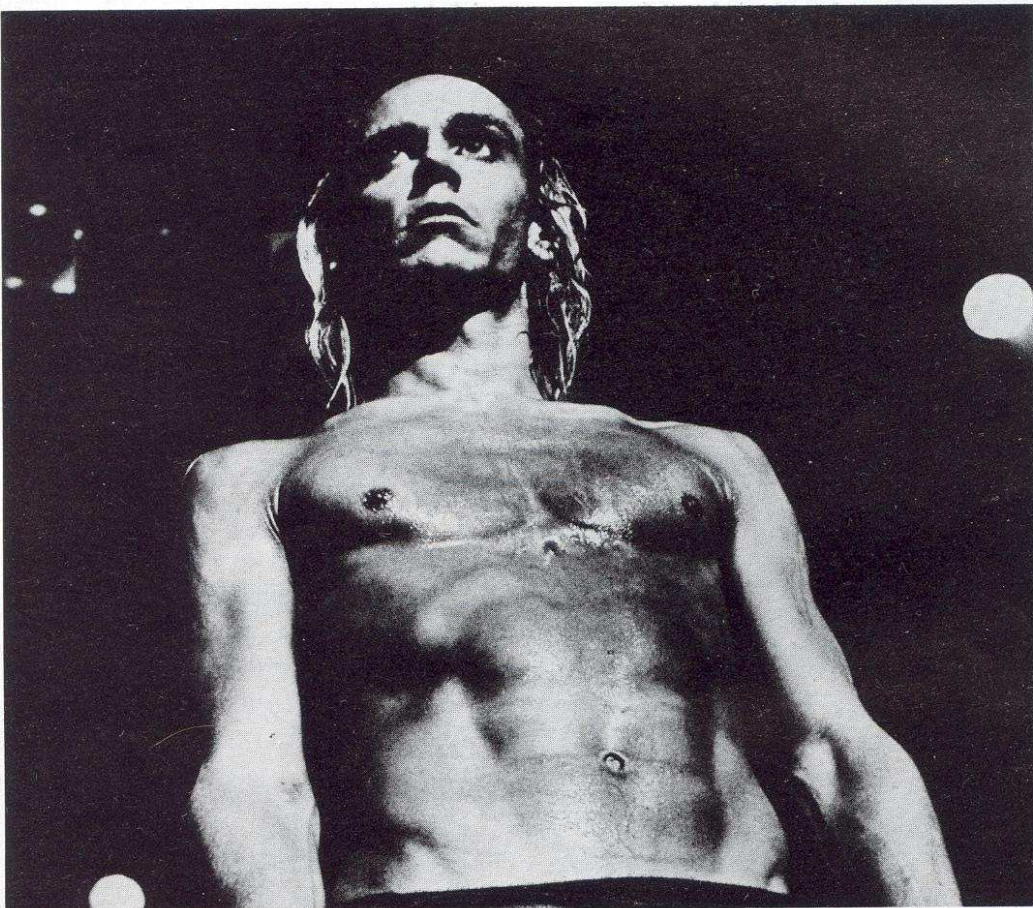
The immediate problem was disintegration. The month **Funhouse** was released, David Alexander went missing and was replaced by yet another roadie, Zeke Zettner. Then, in October, Cheatham was ousted in favour of James Williamson, a superb guitarist who'd later do much to hold Iggy's career together. This reconstituted line-up scuffled around awhile until August 1971 when, knocked out and loaded on a Detroit freeway, the group's van had its roof sliced off, spilling group and equipment all over the road. With that The Stooges called it quits.

Danger, which is everything The Doors 'L.A. Woman' tried to be, the Ig created two of his most lasting moments. Both the title songs and 'Shake Appeal' also cut loose, but the whole piece needed a depth and separation sadly missing from the final sound.

From there it was back to despair. Mainman dumped Williamson, then Pop, citing drug dependence, and Iggy moved to Los Angeles, where stories of self-abuse filtered through with appalling frequency. According to Danny Sugerman, the reported source of many of these tales, James ground broken glass and needles into his body, careered across ever smaller stages, and performed acts of outrage for a voyeuristic audience. Others, such as 'The Pop Patrol', or starstruck young female heiresses, helped in their own way to keep body and soul together, and by the time Punk came around and called The Stooges gods, so the Mighty Ig was in good enough shape to enjoy and benefit from this new-wave

the title track which borrowed The Yardbirds' riff to 'Happenings Ten Years Time Ago', and ripped it apart with new possibilities. Sheer strength, sheer exhilaration, it beat anything on **The Idiot**. Now obviously inspired, Bomp then released 'Jesus Loves The Stooges', another EP of closet recordings, which were, in general, inferior to what was already available. Not to be outdone, Skydog records finally released a record of a tape given to them by James Williamson, where **Metallic K.O.** bared some of Iggy's down period excesses, and bludgeoned rather than thrilled. It's one I prefer to sidestep. Since then the repackaging of this period has continued; different variations, such as Fan Club's **Rubber Legs**, have maintained the myth, but the definitive works have already been well released.

Iggy Pop's career, of course, has still ebbed and flowed. It was a pleasure to see a healthy performer ham his way through 'Real Wild Child', even if it




Enter David Bowie and Mainman Artists. Riding on the crest of '(Z)iggy Stardust', and a slavish fan of the mighty pop (as Iggy had called himself on **Funhouse**), the great chameleon stepped in to resurrect his career. Williamson and Pop were brought to London to be groomed and recorded, but having failed to find compatible British musicians, the brothers Asheton were flown in to provide the consummate rhythm section. The resulting album, **Raw Power**, was released in July 1973, but only hints at its potential. Co-mixed by Bowie, who was clearly bemused; his uncertainty paralyzes the album's naked aggression. That said, some tracks are successful anyway and in 'Search and Destroy' or the grinding 'Gimmie

adoration. He re-emerged with **The Idiot**, a paradoxical release which had Pop reunited with David Bowie. Yet here the master was aping the pupil, and the new music was merely another slice of those Brian Eno inspired works 'Low' and 'Heroes'.

Much better was **Kill City**, released in February 1978, but recorded immediately after **Raw Power**, with Pop and Williamson joined by Scott Thurman and Hunt and Tony Sales. Here was the excellent 'Sell You Love', the chilling title song and the exceptional 'Beyond The Law', perhaps his finest song since 'T.V. Eye', 'Gimme Danger' notwithstanding. To complete this archive raid, Bomp records issued 'I've Gotta Right', an EP of pre-**Raw Power** rehearsals, with

was a throwaway piece of junk. James Osterberg has survived, where Steve Mackay (drugs) and David Alexander (alcohol) have not. Of the remaining Stooges, Ron Asheton was the only other to maintain something of a profile, with the appalling New Order and the marginally better Destroy All Monsters. The former included ex-MCS drummer Dennis Thompson, the latter his one-time rhythm partner Mike Davis, but it was these tenuous links, and not the music, that made them worth mentioning. The Stooges legacy, however, remains undiminished; its power to excite, enthrall and flatten is needed ever more in these empty times.

 Robert Anderson

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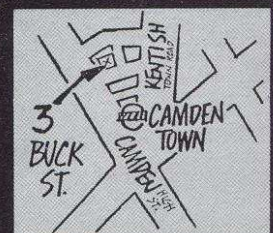
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GIANT SAND (LEFT TO RIGHT) PAULA JEAN BROWN, HOWE GELB, CHRIS CACAVAS & JOHN CONVERTINO. BORDNERS BAR & GRILL, HOLLYWOOD.

People often tell you about their favourite gigs – The Pistols at St. Albans Art College; Love at Dunstable Queensway Hall; Family at Portsmouth South Parade Pier; Butthole Surfers at the Clarendon.... well for me there hasn't been one yet to top Giant Sand at the Mean Fiddler one unassuming Sunday night. The audience was so small the band could almost introduce themselves to each punter *personally* – but the Giant Sand gang blew like a hurricane. Switching schizophrenically between their alter-ego The Band Of Blacky Ranchette and occasional collaborator Rainer's Das Combo, their rolling revue was of marathon length, breadth and intensity. They were still going strong as the lights

went up; I was choking into my beer. Some months elapsed (I needed them to get over the excitement) when out of the blue Demon Records press wizard Spike Hyde casually called to ask whether I'd like to interview Howe Gelb, main Giant Sandperson and all-round lyrical statesman. You bet, I think, whilst stalling for time. So there I was, sitting quietly in a Hampstead Mexican pick-up joint with Harvey S. Williams and the aforementioned Mr. Hyde, surrounded by phoney accents, dangerous tacos and bad taste, shooting the breeze with the six foot six bestetsoned Howe, muttering darkly about voodoo, the weather and the fine new country.

Howe had just finished recording tracks for the Andy Kershaw show at Demon HQ in Brentford. Sitting in a tiny makeshift studio, strumming a solitary guitar on loan from Elvis Costello, Howe poured out three new tales

with a fervour and clarity that easily matched the greatest folk gurus. Maybe some of Elvis' influence was rubbing off? How was the guitar, Howe? 'It was like playing a stone!' he confides. 'You're privileged', murmurs Spike,

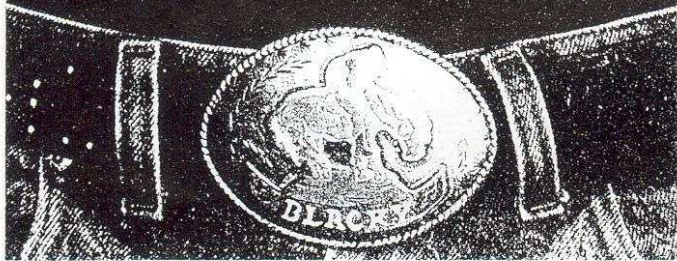
'people would pay thousands of pounds to play that guitar.' 'Yeah?' counters Howe, 'well I'd like to give them some change back...' Still, he does have some faith in that ol' guitar hoodoo: 'I believe in sweating on the guitar.'



PHOTO BY SCOTT PETILL



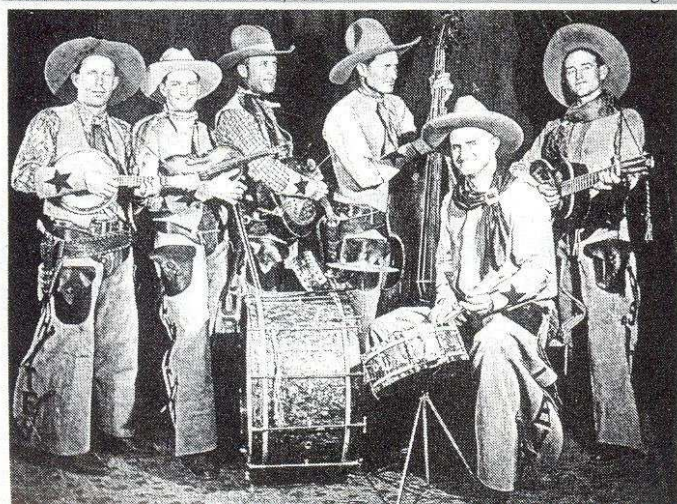
The Band Of...
BLACKY RANCHETTE **HEARTLAND**



When you pick up an old guitar, it's creepy but you immediately write a song or play chords that you haven't been playing on your guitar back home. It's like a voodoo — from years of somebody sweating into their guitar, and the oils of their body going into that wood and staying there. I cut my fingers all the time and bleed on my guitar; all that going into this piece of wood, that absorbs it and hangs onto it for years... there's something about the spirit. The guitar's the antenna, you are the ground and your pickin' up some signal from it.

Howe sure has a way of telling a story. Like the best Country songs, Giant Sand fables mix timeless tales with a strongly visual, near cinematic focus. 'I like the idea of tracks being like they're small clips of film', he muses; and there's certainly a Country tinge to all of Howe's projects. He cites early David Allen Coe and Jimmy Rodgers alongside Merle Haggard and Hank Williams as influential; 'I liked the production — how sparse it was — some of that stuff was rock'n'roll, real

minimal production'. And with The Band Of Blacky Ranchette's 'Heartland' album, Howe's country songs come into their own. It's a collection without a duff track, and stands alongside the cream of the current Country crop. 'The songs were written a long time before we recorded them', he explains. 'Back then there wasn't a lot of new Country music — we ended up making music that we couldn't buy'. Howe maintains an interest in current Country contemporaries, even sitting in on the early Dwight Yoakam sessions for an hour or two through a mutual contact. 'He was speling about Merle Haggard and smoking too much pot, just rambling on and on... it wasn't bugging me but then again I'm not in his band, I don't have to live with it. I know he came on a little too fast and people said 'wait a minute, this guy's a loudmouth', but he was just so pent up; he'd been doing it for so long and he couldn't stop himself. I like his records, I like the way he sings....' Hope the feeling's mutual Howe; you both release fine records. But while Dwight



NOT SURE WHAT IT IS.
BUT I DOUBT ITS A SONG.
MAYBE JUST A CURE
FOR A BAD DAY.
MAYBE NOT. — Howe

BIG AND DARK LIKE A CELLAR. A CELLAR IN THE ATTIC UPSTAIR CELLAR STUCK ON A NECK. BALANCED ON A BODY. BODY OF BLOOD. BUCKETFUL OF BLUNDER WITH A FEATHER FROM AN ANGEL'S WING. PICTURE YOURSELF WAY OUT ALONE ON A DISTANT TRACK. A SPANGLED BLACK SKY WITH SPECKLES OF CUT GLASS. A BAND OF STELLAR MILK SPILLS ACROSS THE UPWARD SPANSE AND THE THICK SMELL OF MOISTENED LONG BLADES OF RAILROAD WEED AND OILY WEATHERED WOOD CLOT YOUR HEAD. YOU'RE DIZZY. YOU SHUFFLE WHAT MUST BE YOUR FEET, AND PLAY LOST AND FOUND WITH THE FIRMAMENT. ITS NEVER SILENT. THERE'S ALWAYS A LOUDNESS IN THE QUIET VOID. ~~WHEN~~ WHEN YOU THINK OF LOOKING FOR THE SHOVEL ~~IT~~ IT TAKES AN IMPOSSIBLE MOMENT TO REALIZE YOU'VE BEEN GRIPPING ITS DAMP SPLINTERED STAFF ALL ALONG. YOU DIG. BETWEEN THE RAILS. AND IN A PLACE WHERE THE SOFT SURFACE GRAVEL GIVES WAY TO A HARDENED EARTH. WITH THE RYTHM OF THE SHOVEL YOUR HEART PLAYS THE BASS A SHALLOW GRAVE FINALLY. JUST ENOUGH TO CURL UP IN. NOT ENOUGH TO DIE IN. YOU STRIP. THE COOL DESERT AIR STINGS AND SOOTHES. TOSS SHOVEL AND CLOTHES ASIDE AND SLIP INTO THIS ~~HOLE~~ HOLE AND IT BECOMES A NEST. SOON THE HEAVY BURDEN OF A THOUSAND TONS OF TRAIN WILL PASS INCHES ABOVE YOU AND AFTER WARDS YOUR HEAD WILL BE CLEAR YOU'LL LEAR THE ~~CELLAR~~ ~~BEHIND~~

looks towards the traditionalism and purity of early Country for inspiration, Howe looks way out into the desert, with one eye on the cloud overhead that's gonna break into a storm.

'The desert is unthinkable; words don't to it... it helped me open up. Gave me something that wasn't there before. I started out in a dark, depressed, tiny little river town in Pennsylvania before I found the big sun. Started coming to Tuscon when I was 15. It's helped me more than I know'. Giant Sand's aptly titled new LP *Storm* deals with these elements with finesse; it talks of brooding clouds and holes in the sky, devils, six guns and the big rock. The elements that seep through its grooves flash with portent and menace. Let's talk about the weather, Howe... 'I'm a stickler for storms. I love it when it rains; I just seem to get a lot of energy from it. You're eighty per cent water to begin with; you simply feel the energy, especially when the wind is high. You should see the animals right before the earthquake — cats flip... they sense it.'

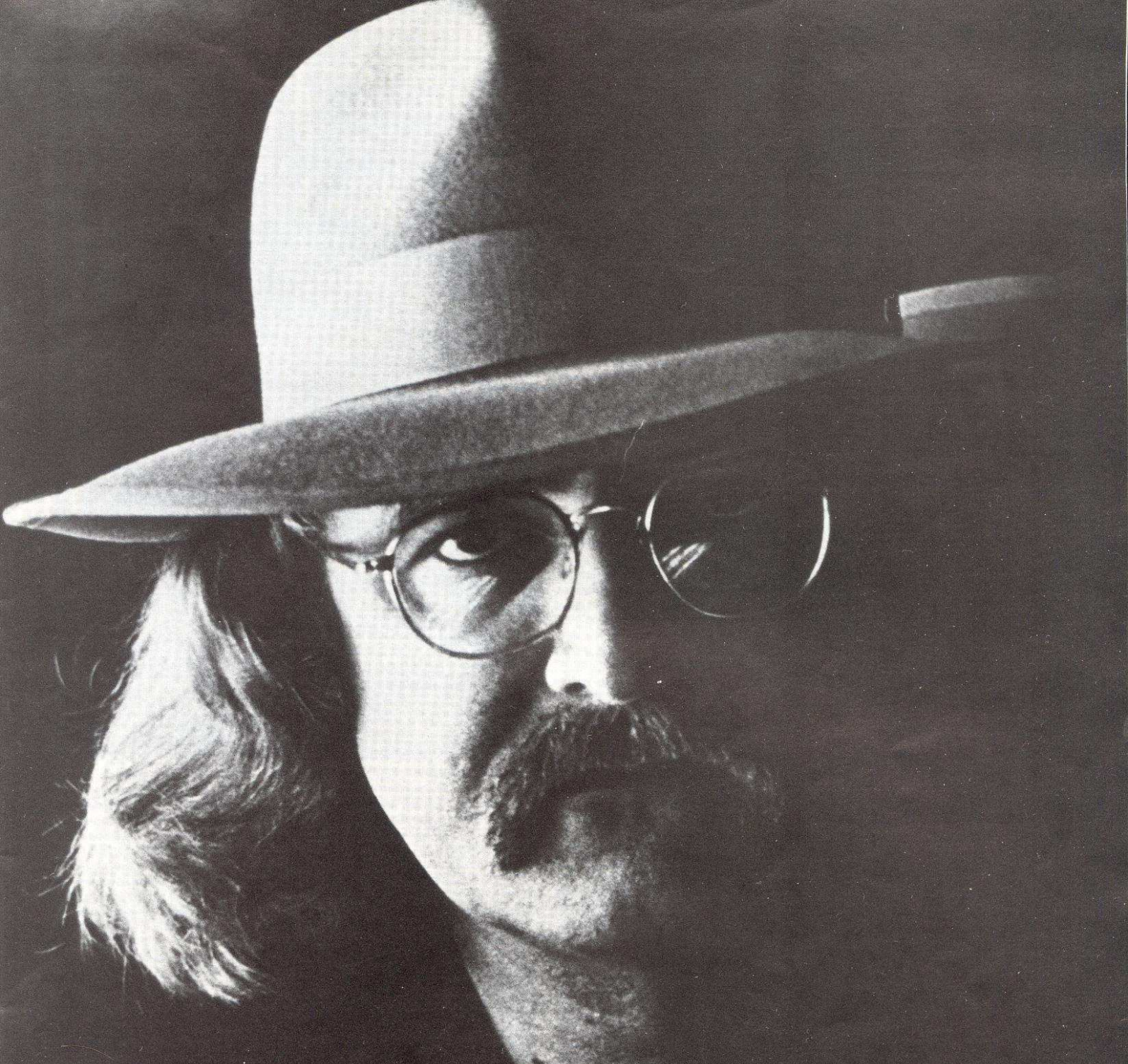
'Now Clint Eastwood and Neil Young Won't even make a statement on this one

Cause big guitars and big guns
Won't put a dent in this one
There's a hole in the sky
It's wide as this nation
It's as deep as a mountain
As big as your imagination'

Natural tension and elemental disturbance spark Howe's creative flow all right. In Hollywood, where he now lives with his wife Paula (Giant Sand's bassist and vocalist), there's monsoons that come up from Mexico every day in July. California looks like it's going to slide into the water... and that's where Howe and Paula choose to live. A bit dangerous, perhaps? 'We

live in the age of apocalypse. We're getting quakes in the California area every week or so. When it gets to you, if you're near the epicentre, there could be real damage... if you're a couple of miles away you feel the shockwave effect. People see an actual wave going through the ground — the ground buckles'. Howe certainly gets off on this kind of phenomena, but how does he translate this raw material into his songwriting? 'It depends on what your definition of songs is' he explains. 'Clusters of noise crammed with monetary lapses of cerebral spew, perhaps? It's a lot like when you happen to just be thinking of someone... right before the phone rings and it's them. Whose sending signals to whom ... and which one is the receiver? There's always blocking... daring you not to get up and write down this crazy urgent chunk of inspiration that's trying to seep through your brain and slide out of your fingers. Meanwhile you're knee deep in the overflow and you're closets are crammed with fragments — mostly because the process of weeding out (making records) is so slow. Unnaturally slow. I've seen money help — and hurt — the process. I figure though, there's about 1003 ways to make a record... and we've only used about five. So we got time to make up, and some work ahead of us! The main thing is that each record is accurate of the moment. And the record allows the moment to linger'.

And Giant Sand's records certainly do that. Alongside a new disco(!) outfit Howe is piecing together (they've already recorded Rare Earth's 'Star Crackle', would you believe) and new Giant Sand projects, you can be sure that Howe Gelb's future work will continue on it's visionary path. I ain't gonna give him a 'new Dylan' tag, but what the hell — this guy's good. Investigate. 🐾



Boo, Forever

The Life and Times of Richard Brautigan

by Brian Hogg

A bitter irony still hangs over the death of Richard Brautigan. Beset by doubt and a stark loneliness, the once celebrated flower-power poet found the bitter twist of winter hard to reconcile. Never accepted by the New York literati, increasingly seen by the West Coast circle as a mere minor talent, several of Brautigan's obituaries unconsciously ran the cruellest cut — 'He was a favourite of the Beatles' — as if his fleeting fame came by association rather than through his writing gifts. Those who loved his work mourned his passing and recalled the simple warmth of his fragile style.

The Life and Times of Richard Brautigan

Richard Brautigan was born in Tacoma, Washington on January 30th 1935. Between then and the North Beach enclave days of San Francisco's 1950s, there's a gap the poet would usually refuse to fill. Obtuse about his childhood, only fragments can be pieced together, either through implicit glimpses seen in his writing or in the flippant biographical remarks reprinted on the dust jackets of his publications. A sister, Barbara, recalls Richard beginning to write in High School, but those early years of poverty and neglect were times Brautigan preferred to forget. When he was nine his mother abandoned both of her children in a hotel room in Great Falls, Montana, leaving them in the care of their stepfather, who worked there as a fry cook. Richard believed this man was his natural father until graduation, when his mother, who had since reclaimed her children, told him his surname was not 'Porterfield' but 'Brautigan'. His real father would meanwhile refuse to acknowledge that he had a son, even after the poet's death.

Not surprisingly, the adolescent Richard was given to bouts of depression. Having plucked up the courage to show a girl-friend an early, fumbling effort at literature, her criticism crushed his confidence. A pathetic crack at vandalism was his muddled response, culminating in a week in jail and a spell at Oregon State Hospital. Days after his discharge, around Christmas 1955, Brautigan left the Pacific Northwest and headed South.

Although at first he failed to match the notoriety of contemporaries such as

Allen Ginsberg or Gary Snyder, Richard was active around several of the North Beach haunts. He read regularly at the weekly Blabbermouth nights, held at The Place on Upper Grant, and he also hung around the Co-Existence Bagle Shop, a haven for itinerant radicals and poets. But as with his days in Tacoma and Eugene, Brautigan also avoided comment on the Beats, or, if pressed, would disclaim the period and argue he was never a part of it anyway. In a sense, he perhaps wasn't; Richard's work was somehow more tangible. Despite its eccentricity, his prose was warmer and seemed more a part of what would be rather than what was. Instead, he kept to the fringes, shy and uncertain, delivering telegrams around the San Franciscan City district, but mostly staying broke.

By the early 1960s Richard had married Ginny Alder, but despite the birth of a child, Ianthe, the relationship would flounder. He wrote proficably, some of his work was collected in limited mimeo editions and his early publications, *The Galilee Hitch-Hiker*, *The Octopus Frontier*, *Lay The Marble Tea* and *All Watched Over By Machines Of Loving Grace* remain impossibly rare. *The Confederate General From Big Sur* was more widely available but a commercial disaster, selling, it's said, a mere 743 copies. Grove Press would thus drop their option and by 1966, Richard had neither publisher nor agent.

He nonetheless held three completed manuscripts, one of which, *Trout Fishing In America*, brought the writer his momentary fame. Written while he and Ginny were still together, they'd packed a Plymouth and moved to Snake River in Idaho. Something of that rural upheaval comes through in this book's pastoral urgency and it



RICHARD BRAUTIGAN
Trout Fishing in America

remains the author's definitive work. Illusive, atmospheric, funny and sad, returning to it now brings new avenues and perspectives. It is a remarkable work.

Trout Fishing In America was initially published by Donald Allen, a Grove representative, who placed it with his non-profit house, the Four Seasons Foundation, after scores had turned it down. 'I gather it was not about trout fishing,' Viking Press had reported back in 1962, but Allen's faith was rewarded when, following his successful run, the rights were sold to Delacourt who would, in turn, sell two million copies. Richard was a star.

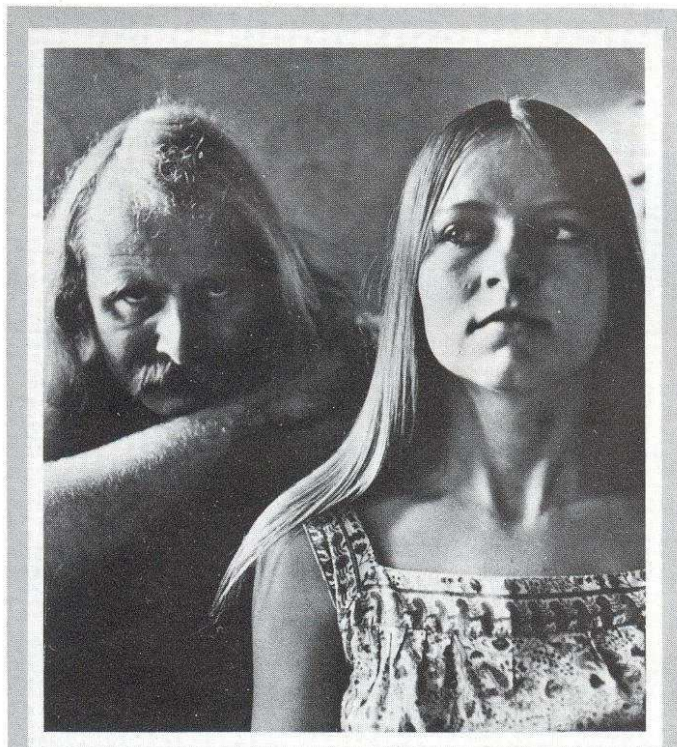
I missed most of these occurrences. The name 'Richard Brautigan' was one tacked to the small print of an album I'd discovered by Mad River. It had been dedicated to him and at a time when such remarks were scrupulously investigated, this was important. About the same time *Rolling Stone* was running Brautigan's short stories, and that characteristic stove-pipe hat was featured above a succession of wonderful, wistful glimpses into Richard's imagination. The third confirmation came on *Paradise Bar and Grill*, Mad River's second record, where Brautigan himself read one of his poems, 'Love's Not The Way To Treat A Friend' while guitarist David Robinson constructed the perfect counterpoint.

Such counter-culture exploits embellished his role of hippie sage, however awkward Richard felt in such company. If the prose of Kerouac recalled the hard-bop of Dexter Gordon, then the simple impressions of Brautigan's work had an empathy with San Franciscan rock. Yet Ianthe has suggested her father was tone deaf — this alternative society involvement came rather more through Richard's associations with the Diggers.

The Diggers were guerillas; street radicals and activists, individuals who were the conscience of the movement, if not by choice, then by circumstance. Instrumental in countless projects, they are best recalled for the Free Food programme, which became the lone sustenance to droves of waifs drawn by the Bay Area promise of love, peace and happiness. Richard gave both the Diggers and Mad River his assistance, and was warmly remembered by Emmett Grogan (from the former) and Laurence Hammond (of the latter) for his involvement.

Perhaps Richard's time alongside the Diggers inspired *Please Plant This Book*, his last independent publication. It was the ultimate in flower-power poesy; a seed packet containing eight individual holders, each containing real seeds for plants such as squash, daisies, parsley and lettuce. Instructions for growth were on one side, poems on the other, but statements such as this, alongside his new-found fame, only bemused and bewildered several longtime Beats. Lawrence Ferlinghetti was particularly snide, describing him as having '... a naive style ... a child-like voice ... the novelist the hippies needed, it was a non-literate age.' Brautigan remained sensitive to such criticism, but the eminent role he enjoyed at the time cushioned the more harrowing remarks.

This then was Richard Brautigan at the time of his first British publication. *Trout Fishing In America* and *In Watermelon Sugar*, completed in 1964, were simultaneously published by Jonathan Cape in the summer of 1970. *Sugar*, although charming, was somewhat lighter in tone to its two predecessors and dealt with a cascade of bizzare characters and locations; IDEATH, inBOIL, the Forgotten



RICHARD BRAUTIGAN
In Watermelon Sugar



RICHARD BRAUTIGAN The Hawline Monster

Works and Pauline. Of all of Richard's novels, this comes closest to the emotional brevity of his poems, and as such carries an individual atmosphere. In many ways it reflected Brautigan's new environment, he'd taken a house in Bolinas, Marin County, across the bridge from San Francisco, although he still kept a city apartment. One of these, in Geary Street, friends best remember as a slum, but it nonetheless served as a kind of shrine to the poet's life and times; posters and handbills advertising his readings were pasted along the wall, galleys for his publications were similarly displayed, while shelves held several first editions set beside fragile fragments of a lost childhood. The floor was scattered with spare change: once when an overdue payment finally came through, Richard, in celebration, had strewn the floor with coins and then left them there. Over the years he'd simply add to them.

The success of *Trout Fishing* opened several floodgates. *The Pill Versus The Springhill Mine Disaster*, a collection of poems written between '52 and '68 quickly followed it. Here's the place to find 'Death Is A Beautiful Car Parked Only', 'The Day They Busted The Grateful Dead' or the aching 'Boo, Forever' and to experience the essential Brautigan wit. Cape then gave us *The Confederate General*, but held back (until 1973) on Richard's latest American publication, *The Abortion - An Historical Romance*. A more orthodox work, but with its own gentle power, it was somewhat eclipsed by *Revenge Of The Lawn*, one of the writer's most satisfying works. It consisted of short stories, such as those already run in *Rolling Stone*, and it showed this literary genre the perfect foil for Brautigan's impulsive in-

genuity. Such was his current standing that parts of the collection were previewed in *Playboy*, while the title piece became the lynch pin to Richard's ultimate acclamation, the release of his own LP record.

Listening To Richard Brautigan had begun life as a Zapple project, the subsidiary label to the Beatles' Apple company. Ambitious plans were laid for a complete spoken-word catalogue, but as John Paul George and Ringo bickered and fragmented, so such dreams were abandoned. US Harvest, however, resurrected the tapes in 1971 and released the album which, with its combination of poems, anecdotes and telephones, gave an alternative insight into the author. Try 'Love Poem', which is read by eighteen other individuals, including filmmaker Bruce Conner and fellow-poet Michael McClure, to whom *In Watermelon Sugar* is dedicated.

A further collection of poetry, *Rommel Drives On Deep Into Egypt*, had already been published in America but there would not be a corresponding British version and in many ways, this unprecedented rush closed Brautigan's golden era. The critical gloss was now fading, to be replaced by a venom which Richard could neither understand nor cope with. 'Slight' and 'Inconsequential' were the usual comments, others were worse, but too often they ignored the impressionistic atmosphere of his work. Friends and supporters now gradually diminished.

Richard moved to Livingston, Montana around 1972/73, breaking away from his Geary St./Bolin circuit. He latterly bought a ranch at Pine Creek, having completed his next novel, *The Hawline Monster*, in a rented cabin. Subtitled 'A Gothic Western', it was a weightier tome than might have been

expected. Yet it seemed that Richard had sacrificed some of his own charm in order to placate more criticism, the plot is tight and rigid and although the moments of madness shine on, they are more defined and measured. It's been said that the novel was written with Hollywood in mind - a curious departure - and it thus sacrifices part of the writer's mischief in coming to terms with this different ambition.

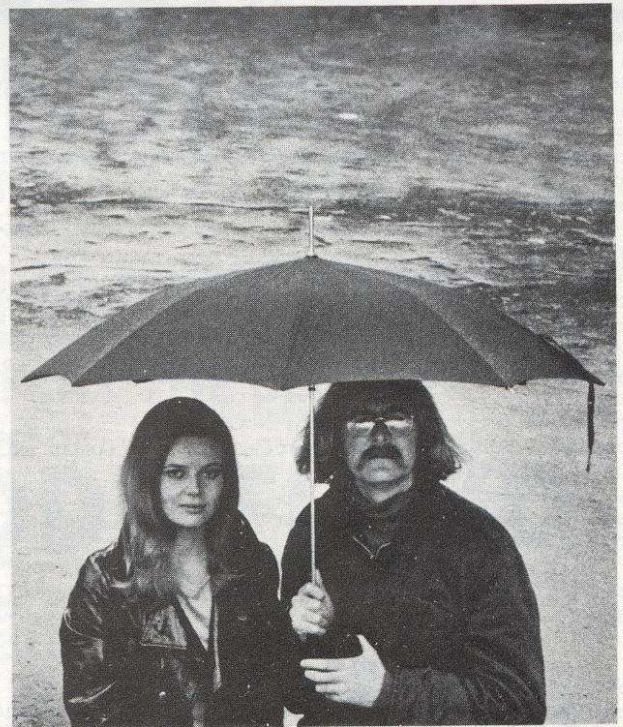
Fortunately, this was a temporary sidestep. Of the novels which followed, two have survived successfully, *Sombrero Fallout* and *Willard and his Bowling Trophies*. They still inhabit that special Brautigan world; the former where the torn-up opening to a novel 'escapes' and begins a life of its own, is wonderfully inventive, while *Willard* cascades with offbeat characters, intertwining plots and a shock at the end. Only *Dreaming of Babylon - A Private Eye Mystery* smacks of the selfsame compromise which bedevilled *The Hawline Monster*. Yet it too had a warmth of its own, and if greeted by a critical nadir, it still proved that Richard, despite the opposition, continued to define and hone his individual voice. One glance at a further collection of poetry, *Loading Mercury With A Pitchfork*, would undoubtedly confirm this; its title alone best explains the gentle surrealism defining Richard's work. Indeed had it not come from an earlier work, it could have been taken as a metaphor for his current situation.

Brautigan increasingly spent more time in Montana, while his personal life began its tragic collapse. He battled through the 1970s; alcoholism, insomnia and a wild paranoia tore at the heart of his character. Older acquaintances found it alarming: to equate the unpredictable now with the

less-tortured past proved almost impossible. Yet the slide was halted temporarily when Richard discovered Japan. He was a hero there; he'd regained an audience who loved and found affinity in his work. Brautigan met his second wife, Akiki, in Tokyo and their brief time together was a last light in Richard's madness. A prolific burst came with *The Tokyo/Montana Express* and *June 30th June 30th*; both of which were autobiographical. The first catches moods and diversions in his life, and in retrospect offers a telling insight into the writer's last condition. The latter is a set of poems, written on Richard's first trip to Japan, and if the specific subject matter denies the natural and accustomed Brautigan catch-all, it remains a revealing collection.

Richard and Akiki split late in the 1970s, and he slid into a last despair. Readings on university campuses, once a rewarding past-time, confirmed him as a forgotten man when halls were left almost empty. A final novel, *So The Wind Won't Blow It All Away*, was published in 1982, and is a strange, almost clumsy piece, obviously Richard, yet written as if its very creation was painful. In real life he loved to shoot, but always did so alone, claiming he'd once had an accident. The inference is thus obvious, it would never be confirmed or denied, but it did explain the hesitancy over his childhood memories. Was this autobiographical, and a final confession before the end?

Little was heard of Richard Brautigan following its publication; when news did come it was of his suicide. Sometime around September 14th 1984 he shot himself with a .44 Magnum. It was six weeks before his body was found, by which time it was unrecognisable. It now seemed light years from



RICHARD BRAUTIGAN A Confederate General from Big Sur

The Life and Times of Richard Brautigan

those heady days on Telegraph Avenue, when a poet could be mobbed rather like a lead guitarist. Lost forever was the man who loved basketball, chicken and Frank Lloyd Wright, and who wrote like a dream. Like Hemingway before him it withered into despair.

'I don't see him anymore.'
'I guess he's gone.'
'Maybe he went home.'

So ends that final novel, who's atmosphere of inevitable tragedy pastes it with a doom unlike any of Brautigan's other work. Perhaps, like Phil Ochs before him, the end of the 1960s left him with nowhere else to go. A wake was held at Enrico's, the writer's favourite San Franciscan tavern. Figures from the North Beach days assembled, just as they had done in 1970 when Margot Patterson Doss, a columnist at the San Francisco Chronicle, organised a surprise birthday party. 'It's the Age of Aquarius,' Richard reportedly said. How tragic that particular promise would become.



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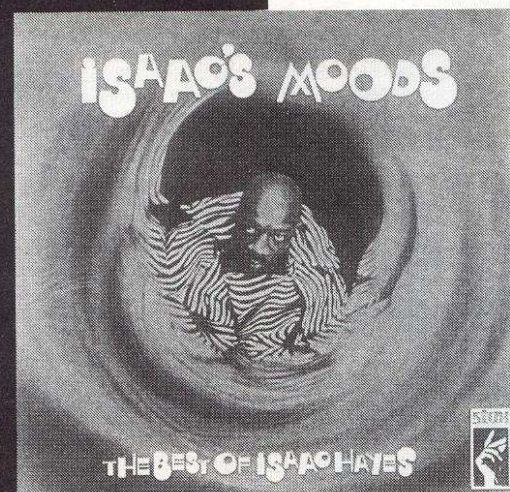
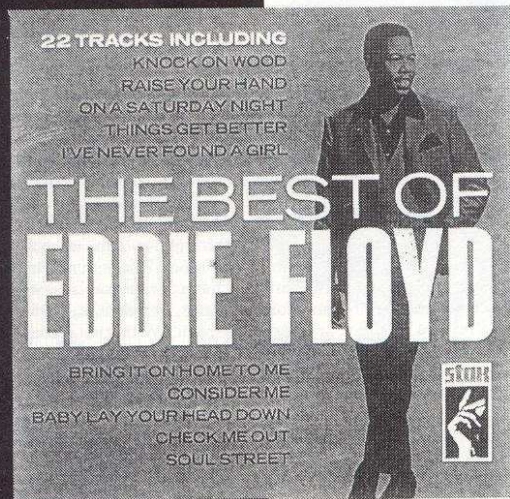
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ALAN MOORE

Vincent Eno and El Csawza meet comics megastar ALAN MOORE

Amidst smouldering heaps of superlatives flung in the direction of the comic genre of late, one name stands head and shoulders above the crowd: ALAN MOORE. But don't just trust the gushing blurbs on the back of Moore's works ('Alan Moore has reinvented the comic book genre' and so on), take it from your pals at *Strange Things* — Alan Moore is beezee! With *Watchmen* the comic book format legitimately became what the media manipulators were attempting to tell us all about — the graphic novel. *Watchmen* is a work to be read and re-read, loved and cherished. Poetry, Cinema, narrative, music . . . they're all here. The advent of such a work is as exciting in literary terms as the publication of the earliest novels, and you'd better believe it. Because within the next two years, the work of Alan Moore and his contemporaries is going to eclipse *Watchmen* and zoom into overdrive. As Alan says, 'the next two years are going to be good for comics.' Some understatement.

Turning into the first true comic megastar wasn't an easy ride for Alan. 'After school I did a variety of awful, horrifying jobs,' he recalls. 'They look great on the dust jacket of your first novel, but were shit to actually live through! I started off by working at the skin division of the local Co-operative society. We'd go to work at seven thirty in the morning, drag these blood sodden sheepskins out of vats of cold water and urine, chop off extraneous testicles or hooves and throw them at each other in this concentration camp gaiety we'd established to cope with the grimness of our surroundings. People there were splattered with this chemical for removing wool from hide, these blue marks all over them. Then I climbed up the social ladder and became a toilet cleaner for a hotel. After that I went through a number of grindingly tedious office jobs; finally I had to make the jump into writing because we'd got a kid on the way and if I'd waited until after the baby was born I'd never have had the nerve. I decided that life being as short as it is, and as far as I know us getting only one crack at it, it just seemed important that I shouldn't spend any of it doing something I didn't want to do.'

So from scribbling as a *Sounds* cartoonist under the pen name Curt Vile and penning *Maxwell the Magic Cat* for his local newspaper, Alan got his teeth into *Future Shocks* for 2000 AD and a series of contributions for *Dr. Who Weekly*. Then along came *Marvelman*, *V For Vendetta*, *Swamp Thing* (with Rick Veitch and Alfredo Alcalá) and *Halo Jones*. But it was with his collaboration with Dave Gibbons, the mighty *Watchmen*, that Alan's status reached stellar proportions. Here Moore aimed optimistically high, attempting to create 'a superhero *Moby Dick*'; something that had that sort of weight, that sort of density.' Quite some proposition you'd think, but Alan likes a good challenge: 'Obviously I'm taking big risks, like being a white heterosexual writer writing about gay people, black people and women. It would be really arrogant to claim that by writing about women I know what it's like to be one, but you have to at least think about them more — you have to try and think your way inside them and that can only be a good thing — it gives you an appreciation of the other person's opinion, even if you've only imagined it very clumsily.' But how do you get into the

frame of mind to write such portrayals? 'I try to approach character writing as an actor would. They're perhaps not very formed to start with but they slowly congeal . . . I didn't know Rorschach was going to die at the end of *Watchmen* until issue four — that was the only major detail that I hadn't sorted out right from the beginning. As I thought about it, I realised there was no way that he would compromise, and if he wasn't going to compromise then he was going to die! When I got into the Rorschach issue I knew a lot about the character's surface mannerisms, but I didn't know what was inside him until I started to dig.' And what about the characterisation of the more, um, extra-terrestrial beings present? How can you even begin to conjure up a being like Dr. Manhattan? 'With Dr. Manhattan we were thinking about the implications of a nuclear superhero,' explains Alan. 'All the nuclear superheroes that existed in comics previously have been ones who, by the great gift of radioactivity, suddenly find themselves not with leukaemia or some form of tumor, but with miraculous powers. Other than shooting bolts of energy out of their hands willy nilly, there were never any of the implications of nuclear science and particularly Quantum science — they're not considered. We're now forty years post-Einstein and it's time we tried to confront some of the things Einstein said. On a quantum level, as I understand it, reality does not work! Things can be in two places at once; they can move from point A to point B without passing through the distance that separates those points . . . and this is what Dr. Manhattan does. Time, in a post-Einsteinian universe, cannot be regarded in the same way: from what Einstein says, it is possible that the future and past must exist now, for what 'now' means. Someone existing in a quantum universe would not see time broken up in the linear way we see it. We tried to think what it would be like to somebody to whom the theory of relativity was what he had for breakfast, more or less . . . if you could see that different aspect of things then it would change you. You would not be able to feel the same way about the importance of human affairs. I didn't want to do a Mr. Spock, I didn't want to do somebody who was just emotionless — he has got emotions of a sort — he's growing away from them. He has girlfriends; I should imagine that's just

human habit. But at the end of *Watchmen* he decides he's just going to go into space, forever. Perhaps he'll make some people, but basically he doesn't want anything more to do with humans . . . in a lifespan that may span billenia he's only gone a couple of steps. He's growing away from humanity gradually. It's not a cold unemotional thing, it's just different; a different way of seeing the universe. Which is part of what *Watchmen* is about. We tried to set up four or five radically opposing ways of seeing the world and let the readers figure it out for themselves; let them make a moral decision for once in their miserable lives! Too many writers go for that 'baby bird' moralising, where your audience just sits there with their beaks open and you just cram regurgitated morals down their throat. Heroes don't work that way anymore . . . although I think Frank Miller would disagree with me on that. What we wanted to do was show all of these people, warts and all. Show that even the worst of them had something going for them, and even the best of them had their flaws.'

Influential in the formation of this approach to the moral nature of Alan's characters was the work of William Burroughs. 'I'd say Burroughs is one of my main influences', he says. 'Not the cut-up stuff, but his thinking about the way that the word and the image are used to control, and their possible more subversive effect. I'm surprised Burroughs didn't do more comic strips himself. To the best of my knowledge he's only done one, for a magazine called *Cyclops*, a British underground magazine that came out in 1969. It only lasted four issues; Burroughs and I believe an artist called Malcolm MacNeill did a strip called *The Unspeakable Mr. Hart*. I always thought that comics would be a perfect medium for Burroughs. With *Watchmen* I was trying to put some of his ideas into practice; the idea of repeated symbols that would become laden with meaning. You could almost play them like music. You'd have these things like musical themes that would occur throughout the work.' In a similar fashion, *Watchmen* is brimming with a cinematic vision which, in the right hands, could translate to the big screen. With the success of *Robocop* and the forthcoming release of *Judge Dredd*, 20th Century Fox have optioned *Watchmen* for a future film project. Alan's feelings about this are mixed: 'The screenplay is being written by Sam Ham . . . he's a good writer, but if they do make the film there's no way of guaranteeing it will be good. If it ever comes out there'll be a shit load of merchandise; watches, badges, Rorschach Action Men — wind them up and they'll break all the fingers on your Transformers! Dr. Manhattan dolls that give you cancer . . .'

Another film project on the cards is Alan's screenplay for Malcolm McLaren's *Fashion Beast*. What was McLaren like to work with? 'A good laugh . . . I found him a really interesting and amusing guy who's got a shit-load of incredibly wild ideas. I'm never sure whether they are brilliant ideas or whether his genius is in making everybody else believe them to be brilliant ideas. He gets results.' So what kind of tomfoolery is *Fashion Beast*? 'It's loosely based upon the life of Christian Dior, mixed with the fable of *Beauty And The Beast*. Dior was an unusual

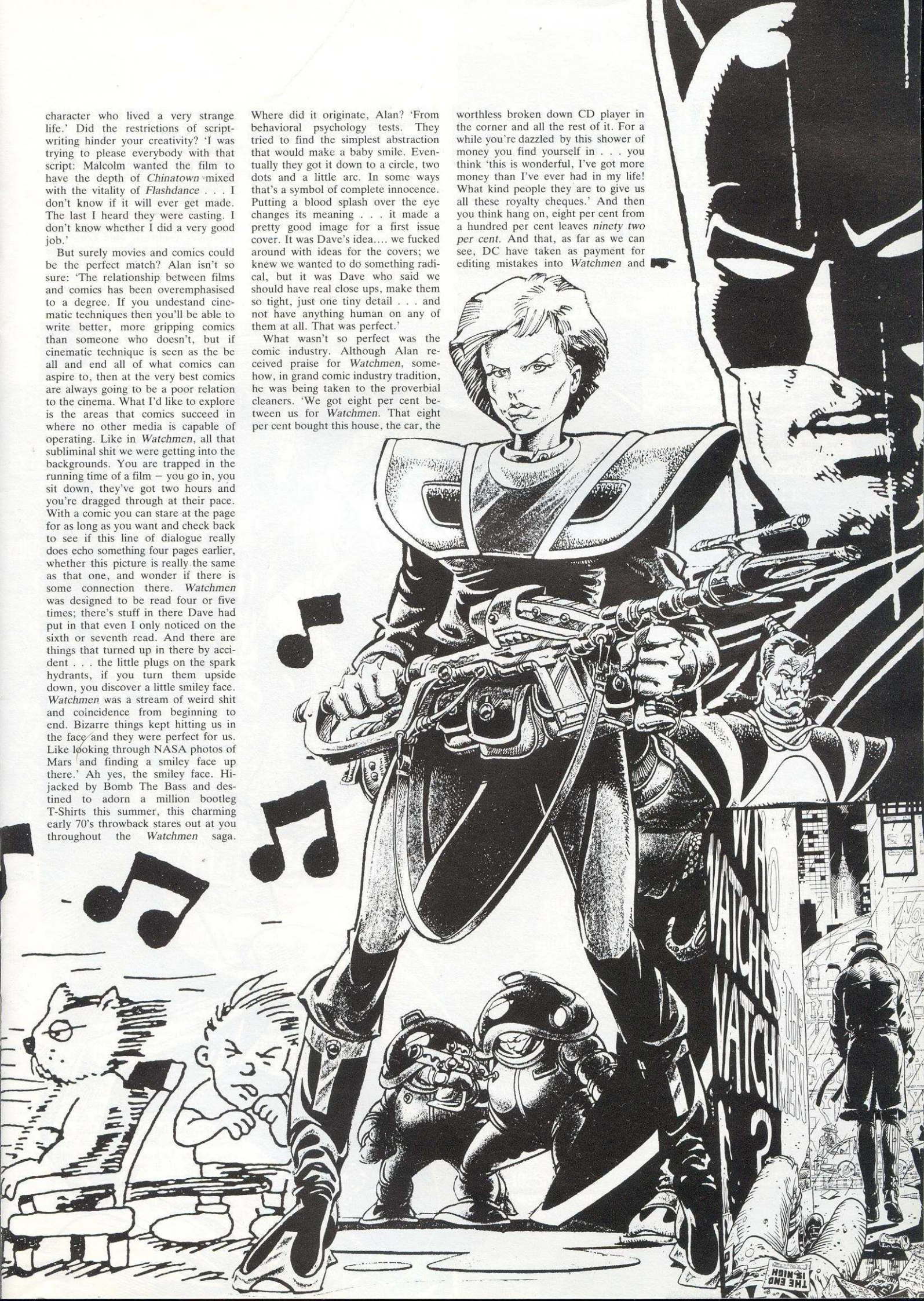
character who lived a very strange life.' Did the restrictions of script-writing hinder your creativity? 'I was trying to please everybody with that script: Malcolm wanted the film to have the depth of *Chinatown* mixed with the vitality of *Flashdance* . . . I don't know if it will ever get made. The last I heard they were casting. I don't know whether I did a very good job.'

But surely movies and comics could be the perfect match? Alan isn't so sure: 'The relationship between films and comics has been overemphasised to a degree. If you understand cinematic techniques then you'll be able to write better, more gripping comics than someone who doesn't, but if cinematic technique is seen as the be all and end all of what comics can aspire to, then at the very best comics are always going to be a poor relation to the cinema. What I'd like to explore is the areas that comics succeed in where no other media is capable of operating. Like in *Watchmen*, all that subliminal shit we were getting into the backgrounds. You are trapped in the running time of a film — you go in, you sit down, they've got two hours and you're dragged through at their pace. With a comic you can stare at the page for as long as you want and check back to see if this line of dialogue really does echo something four pages earlier, whether this picture is really the same as that one, and wonder if there is some connection there. *Watchmen* was designed to be read four or five times; there's stuff in there Dave had put in that even I only noticed on the sixth or seventh read. And there are things that turned up in there by accident . . . the little plugs on the spark hydrants, if you turn them upside down, you discover a little smiley face. *Watchmen* was a stream of weird shit and coincidence from beginning to end. Bizarre things kept hitting us in the face and they were perfect for us. Like looking through NASA photos of Mars and finding a smiley face up there.' Ah yes, the smiley face. Hijacked by Bomb The Bass and destined to adorn a million bootleg T-Shirts this summer, this charming early 70's throwback stares out at you throughout the *Watchmen* saga.

Where did it originate, Alan? 'From behavioral psychology tests. They tried to find the simplest abstraction that would make a baby smile. Eventually they got it down to a circle, two dots and a little arc. In some ways that's a symbol of complete innocence. Putting a blood splash over the eye changes its meaning . . . it made a pretty good image for a first issue cover. It was Dave's idea. . . . we fucked around with ideas for the covers; we knew we wanted to do something radical, but it was Dave who said we should have real close ups, make them so tight, just one tiny detail . . . and not have anything human on any of them at all. That was perfect.'

What wasn't so perfect was the comic industry. Although Alan received praise for *Watchmen*, somehow, in grand comic industry tradition, he was being taken to the proverbial cleaners. 'We got eight per cent between us for *Watchmen*. That eight per cent bought this house, the car, the

worthless broken down CD player in the corner and all the rest of it. For a while you're dazzled by this shower of money you find yourself in . . . you think 'this is wonderful, I've got more money than I've ever had in my life! What kind people they are to give us all these royalty cheques.' And then you think hang on, eight per cent from a hundred per cent leaves *ninety two per cent*. And that, as far as we can see, DC have taken as payment for editing mistakes into *Watchmen* and



ALAN MOORE

getting it to the printer on time. In one instance they cut up balloons, leaving a word out so it no longer makes any sense. I don't want to get into an embittered rant, but we're barely getting anything from the merchandising. What we do get is a fraction.' Not only that, but the comic giants attempted to introduce a rating system which would practically enforce censorship on the genre. Alan and Frank Miller told them where to go . . . and when DC's two biggest writers, responsible for half of the company's income, say 'No', the big white chiefs take notice. So you could say Alan wasn't too happy about his position . . . I've been content to work under those conditions for years - because those are the conditions that prevail and you have to go with them to get into the industry. I've now broken through to the real world of publishing and I can now see what it is I've been swimming through for the past five or six years. It certainly isn't lavender water'.

And now Alan's obligations to the major comics barons are complete, with the forthcoming *V For Vendetta* and *Marvelman* publications, he's set up his own publishing company with his closest allies. Here he can tackle those subjects closest to his heart. Such as clause 28, the frighteningly repressive bill concerning the supposed 'promotion' of homosexuality by local councils. 'The big chill is coming down for sure,' says Alan. 'All that bad science fiction and all those paranoid hippy prophesies about the way the country was going . . . as it turns out they were true! Outside my door the other day was one of those 'Dark Riders Of Mordor' policemen - those with the visor and the cloak . . . the horse wears a visor too. One of these horses was shouldering a couple of kids up against the garage door. Just football fans on the way down to the match. We ran outside to get a photo of it and one of those vans with the rotating video cameras came by. The police stated in the paper 'We are looking forward to this match so we can try out our new crowd control methods.' It was obvious looking at it that it wasn't designed just to handle football fans. You don't put that much money into stopping trouble erupting at games between Northampton and Sunderland! Sure enough, two weeks later at the Clause 28 rally the police had them out again. They turned up and arrested girls for kissing and for holding placards, saying they were offensive weapons.' Not a big fan of the police then? 'The police in this country are out of control. In my untrained opinion James Anderton is psychotic . . . he is *talking* to God! Of course God talks to me quite often . . . he goes for people with beards - me, James Anderton, Peter Sutcliffe, Charles Manson, Ayatollah Khomei . . . It's like one of those chat lines where people can talk together. We often get into conversations, me and Jim, the Ayatollah, Charlie and Peter . . . The guy is tolerated! This is the guy who in '79 was meeting in secret with the leader of the National Front. He's also the guy who in 1980 said that he thought the role of the police in the

eighties was less to do with the prevention of crime and more to do with the prevention of political offences. The police force are a law unto themselves. At the moment, it seems to me that the gays are the first group to get it in a big way - clause 28. Ostensibly it is to stop books that treat homosexuality as acceptable from being available in schools - but gay pubs, gay clubs, gay switchboards are all

licensed by the council. They will not be allowed to fund any of those. That's what it's *really* about: everything will be wiped out overnight. And protest marches, they're granted by local authorities . . . it's frightening. It's all based upon prejudice and gibberish. They still think of AIDS as 'the gay plague' - they are going to find out about that soon enough. Anderton has said homosexuality should be a crime and that 'they are swimming around in a cesspit of their own filth' and Margaret Thatcher has sanctioned him. The Labour party have voted with the Conservatives on this bill because they're scared of appearing in

The Sun as a 'poofers' party. It's the 'queers' today, the 'niggers' tomorrow; she's had one or two good goes at the Trade Unions and then of course there's the poor. Always the poor. It worries the shit out of me.'

But Alan doesn't just worry about these outrageous affronts - here's an artist who's taking positive steps to do something about it. His newly-formed publishing company, Mad Love Publishing, is taking it's first steps towards confronting the issue. Mad Love will publish AARGH! which stands for Artists Against Rampant Government Homophobia and will bring together a stunning list of comic talent to com-



ment on the deplorable clause. Anyone who is anyone in the comic world is involved – Alan, Dave Sim, Rick Veitch, Frank Miller, Robert Crumb, Art Spiegelman, Hunt Emerson, Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez . . . the list goes on. Titan are distributing the work for nothing, and all money will go to OLGA, the anti-clause group. Positive!

Another Mad Love project is set to be Alan's true follow up to *Watchmen*. Forget all the hype about *The Killing Joke*, just wait until *The Mandelbrot Set* is unleashed. A forthcoming twelve-issue series dealing with 'shopping malls, mathematics, history and skateboards', *The Mandelbrot Set* starts from the premise that nothing is more fantastic than real life. Jumping from the 11th century to the 1940's, this work will astound us all. Alan's

– but the shopping mall is such a powerful symbol of the shit that is coming down.'

Also on the cards is possibly the most important work, in political and global terms, that Alan's undertaken yet. *Brought To Light*, a joint project between Alan and Bill alongside Joyce Brabner (*Real War Stories*) and Tom Yeats, is going to blow the roof off American political culture for years to come. No joke. It's a work that has been commissioned by the voluntary American pressure group The Christic Institute, a forceful body of people based in Washington who are sussed enough to realise the power of the comic medium. The Institute has initiated many triumphant political investigations in the past – from bringing damages against the Ku Klux Klan after the Greensburg shootings to ex-



already written a 21 page synopsis that doesn't even mention the characters or plot! The work is a collaboration with Wild Bill Sienkiewicz and is fairly shopping-orientated. Let's go shopping! 'Roughly, the situation is this; you've got a small English community, somewhere like Corby, somewhere where there used to be industry and has now been gutted. There's a small patch of land that has been earmarked for nursing homes or a child care centre, but some American business people step in and say 'We would like to build the first American-style shopping mall in the British Isles.' It'll be great for the locals because they'll all have lots of work and so, in the spirit of free enterprise, it is done. The whole book is going to be about nothing more exciting than the building and accomplishment of the shopping mall

posing the Contra link six months before the rest of the world got hold of it. But this undertaking is bigger than all that – Oliver North and chums are just the tip of the iceberg. *Brought To Light* (subtitled 'Flashpoint and Shadowplay') is to be published by 'Eclipse and Warner Books; Joyce and Tom handle the 'Flashpoint' section, whilst Alan and Bill sink their teeth into 'Shadowplay': the true history of the CIA and a Palestinian/CIA linked group called 'The Secret Team'. From Cuba to Miami, through fixed Australian elections, CIA funding in Central America and New York cocaine rackets, this work will cause ripples so big they'd be a surfers paradise. I'm not saying anything more, neither's Alan, but, as he says, the next couple of years are looking good for comics.....

TEN MODERN POP SMASHES AND OBSCURITIES INSPIRED BY CLASSICAL COMPOSERS.

(i.e: 10 tunes nicked from some long gone genius)



- 1. Colliding Minds: THE SUGAR BATTLE**
Honegger's Symphony No. 3, 'Liturgique', 2nd Movement. gets the psychedelic treatment.
- 2. Smokey Blues Away: THE NEW GENERATION**
From Dvorak's Symphony No. 5: 'New World', 2nd Movement. With new words of course.
- 3. Jane B: SERGE GAINSBURG & JANE BIRKIN**
Chopin's Prelude No. 4 in E Minor plus heavy breathing.
- 4. Morning Mood: SRC**
Detroit's finest acid-guitar maniacs destroy Grieg's 'Peer Gynt' suite and hope no-one notices.



FREDDY CHOPIN



BAZZA MANILOW

- 5. Could It Be Magic: BARRY MANILOW**
Chopin again – Bazza lifts Prelude No. 20 in C Minor.
- 6. Saturday Night At The Duck Pond: THE COUGARS**
Cranked-up Stratocasters churn the waters of Tchaikovsky's 'Swan Lake'.
- 7. Spanish Caravan: THE DOORS**
Robbie Kreiger gets his thumbs in a knot splicing Albinoni's 'Adagio' onto his own creation.
- 8. The Bomber: JAMES GANG**
Strangely Ravel's 'Bolero' interlude was edited out of the UK version of this track – I wonder why?
- 9. All By Myself: ERIC CARMEN**
Eric's biggest hit, and his finest moment, was really Rachmaninov's finest moment, since he stole the theme and centre section from Rack's 2nd Piano Concerto.
- 10. She Don't Care About Time: THE BYRDS**
How did a country hick like Gene Clark ever get to hear Bach anyway?



Interviewing Graham Lewis and Bruce Gilbert of WIRE in a crowded Soho boozerie is my idea of a good night's debate. The mere hint of the strains of 'Map Reference', 'Mannequin' or the sublime 'Kidney Bingos' and I'm off in a trance; my endless collection of Gilbert/Lewis productions and Colin Newman solo fancies never fails to delight. However my proximity to such artefacts leaves me feeling there are no questions left to ask . . . Wire have stated so much on vinyl, I would probably prefer a reverent silence. However I was totally wrong — there's still much we can learn from these monoliths of the Art School mafia. Would you believe they now employ a support band to run through their old numbers? That they collaborated with a toothless Irishman with a fetish for turbans and high heels, last seen running through Covent Garden with Rick Wakeman in hot pursuit? Neither would I, but that's because I'm stretching the truth. Whatever, between an endless flow of Lowenbrau and Castlemaine, we found many a topic to argue, disagree or enthuse about before staggering off into the London night.

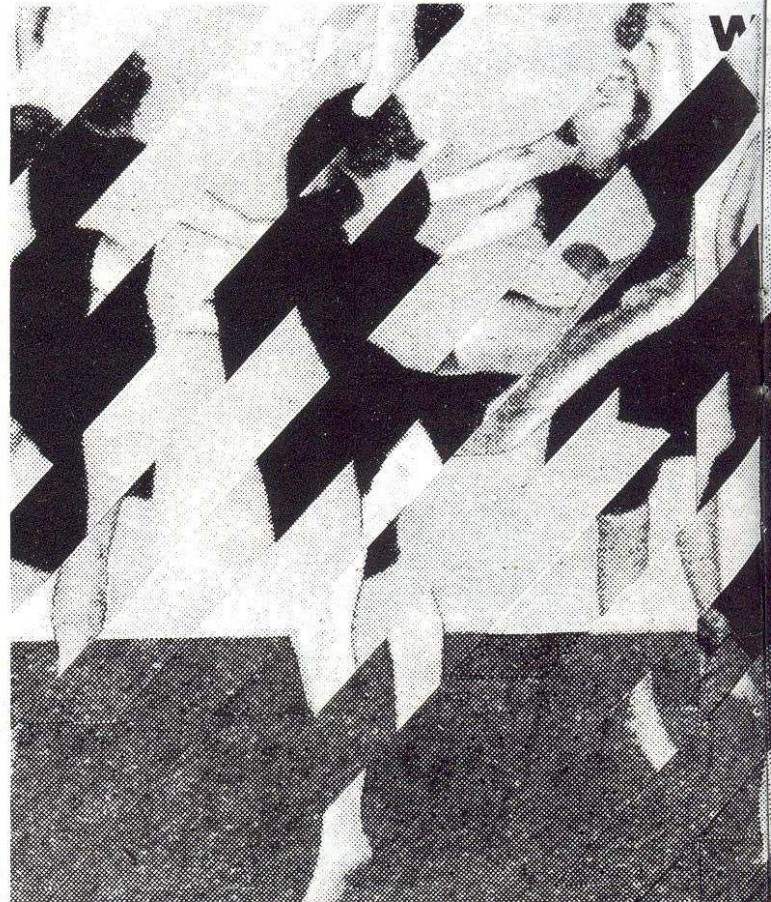
Such as The Ex Lion Tamers, an American band recently spotted supporting Wire on their Stateside jaunts, covering entire slabs of the Wire back catalogue. Where *did* you find them, Graham? 'About April last year Colin and I went over to New York to do four days of promotion. One of the people who came to interview us was Jim Deregardis, a political journalist from New Jersey who runs a very good fanzine. As the interview went along, and we were getting on with him very well, he plucked up the courage to admit that he and some friends had this project called The Ex Lion Tamers. He said 'we play 'Pink Flag...'', so my first question to him was 'and the gaps?' And he said yes! They were playing an original piece of music — side one . . . and side two.' So The Ex Lion Tamers were roped in for the ensuing Wire tour. Weren't people confused which group was which? 'On a few occasions very confused! It was a very accurate rendition but it was American — it *swung* slightly, it was more rock'n'roll. Also they changed some of the lyrics, because some of them don't translate. For example if you say (in 'Mannequin') 'You're so bloody thin', 'bloody' doesn't mean a swear word to them — they'd change it to 'damn thin'. Apart to such minor translations into Americanese, this arrangement also let the band out of

any commitment to playing old material. It's been a standing joke for them since 1978 that they'd refuse to air their past glories in public, preferring to stick to more recent developments. 'What we were always interested in was doing new stuff' continues Graham, 'there have been occasions when we have played old songs — few and far between — but we've done them because they had a purpose. The obvious example is doing '12XU' on 'Document And Eyewitness'; as we'd made the rule that we never played old stuff and it had been accepted as a rule that we didn't, we thought we'd change it.' And this idea isn't merely restricted to such minor questions of set lists, but traverses through the Wire scheme of things like a statement of belief. Time and time again Graham and Bruce would highlight 'process', 'flexibility' and 'continuous change'. Nothing ever stays static in the Wire camp. Which is probably why they've either bemused or enchanted us for so long. I mean can you credit a band who disappear from the spotlight for years and then re-emerge, with the same line up and a strong batch of songs, when everyone thought they'd split for good? Here's what happened inbetween: having left EMI, and the brilliant trio of 'Chairs Missing', '154' and 'Pink Flag' in their wake, the group decided that they didn't want to

sign to another major label. 'We felt we'd done three years of that, with all the frustrations which come with it' explains Graham. 'But we never split up. We came to a point in 1980 that we'd rehearsed and worked on material, but once we were free from EMI, Colin already had a solo LP planned, and people started ringing us (Gilbert/Lewis) up, giving us invitations . . . so we started the Dome project. We simply said to Geoff Travis (Rough Trade person) that we wanted 46 hours of 8-track time. We wanted to make an LP that was very cheap. We made the record and he liked 75% of it; he said it would be a good idea if we formed our own label. This turned out very well — it gave us the position to be able to do other projects *and* continue on our own work, almost free from any involvement with the industry.' So Wire were put on

hold for some five years? 'We were all very busy' replies Graham, 'but there was a point, I think it was about 1983, when we got about two weeks of rehearsing done for a recording project we were doing with Mike Thorne, but Colin went to India for 18 months so it wasn't possible to do anything then. Time naturally elapsed.'

Not that things were slack in the Gilbert/Lewis field. A variety of Dome projects, the MZUI exhibition with Russell Mills, a Cupol 12" for 4AD and numerous other sidelines kept Graham and Bruce inspired. One such experiment was a stint with Micheal O'Shea, an Irish busker the pair spotted in Covent Garden. 'He had an instrument that he'd made himself with 17 strings and two bridges, a portable amplifier and a few guitar effects. He made this extraordinary noise, this beautiful noise. The first time we saw



On the occasion of the release of their new album *A Bell Is A Cup Until It Is Struck*, RICHARD NOISE salivates at the feet of his heroes



him he had a turban on, a blazer, a white pleated skirt, stockings and high heels on.' 'And no teeth' offers Bruce. 'We just got to know him . . . we suggested to him that what he was doing should be recorded - he liked *living*, and his lifestyle was very precarious. We thought that he might get knocked down by a bus and it would be terrible if it wasn't documented. Or he might fall out of a window, which he eventually did. He's quite a wind-up merchant; dresses in a very peculiar fashion. It took about a year before he actually turned up at the studio. He played places like the Queen Elizabeth Hall (!); Rick Wakeman had tried to do something with him . . . he'd had a residency at Ronnie Scott's. He didn't like structured activity too much - he recorded and mixed in about three days.'

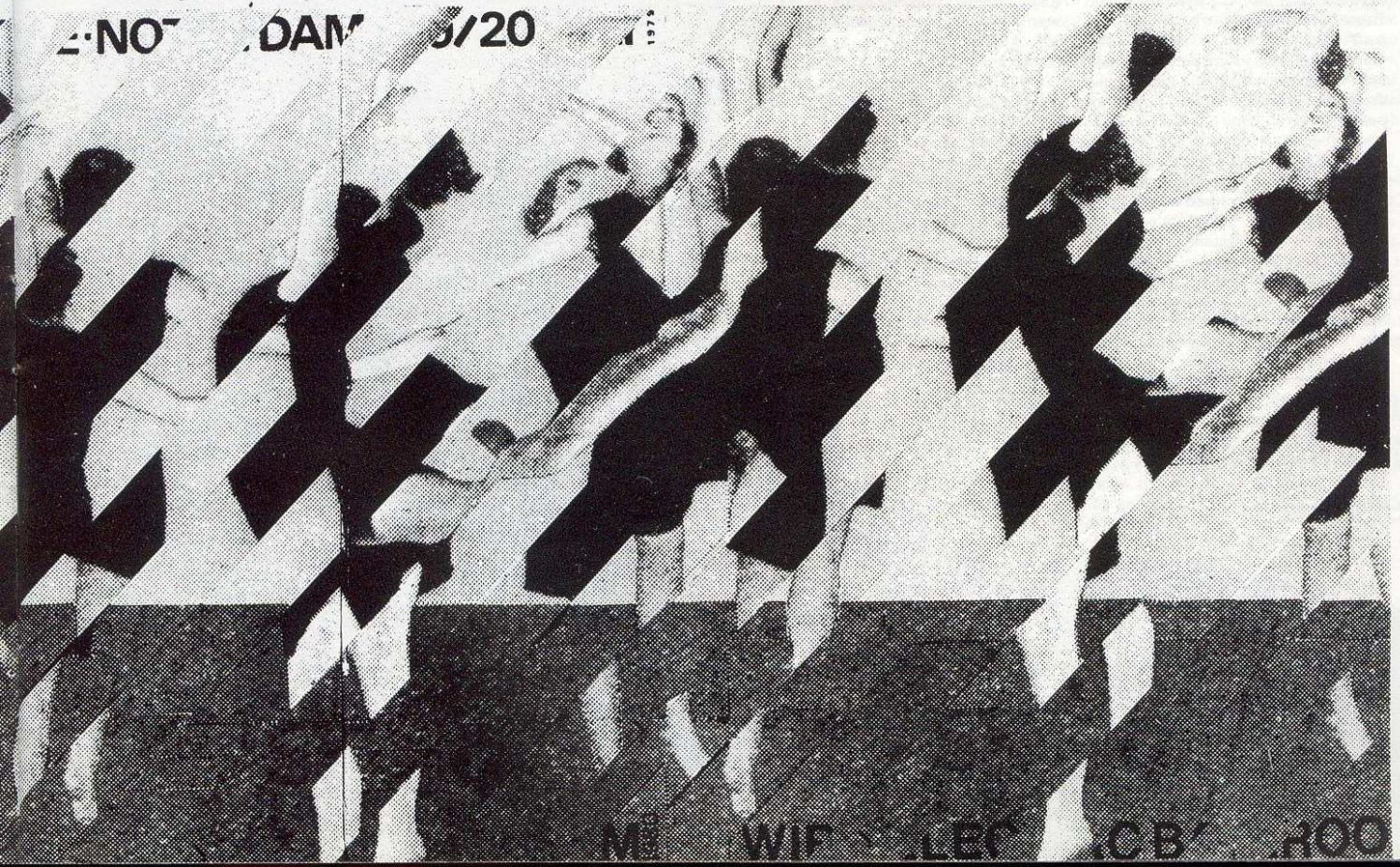
On completion of such projects and

Colin's return from India, Wire became a working unit once more. Offered the opportunity to present a performance piece at the Museum Of Modern Art in Oxford, where Russell Mills and the pair had worked two years previously, Bruce and Graham decided to present a Wire project in the upstairs gallery. Using all available light sources they performed a stark rendition of their new material. The brightness of their lightshow has since been integrated into more recent events, and is startlingly effective. 'There was as much light on the audience as there was on us' explains Graham; 'we continued with same policy after that show - we'd use all of the white light that was available, we'd take all the gels out and so on. The light comes on at the beginning and goes off at the end. We thought it was the most honest way of representing

what we were doing. There's no theatre in it; there's nowhere to hide. It's just a noise - we present two guitars, bass and drums - it makes people concentrate on the noise.'

Ah yes, the noise. Having been ticked off by Graham for having a 'conservative European Romantic' attitude to noise, I dared ask whether Colin's pop'n'mysticism ever clashes with the Gilbert/Lewis variation of this thing called Wire. 'Colin is perhaps the melodic person', offers Bruce, 'but he is capable of the most extraordinary feats of noise making, so there's no real rules. We've got the ability to work in both areas.' 'It's become very much a joke between us of 'who is producing what?'' continues Graham. 'You get to the point where the material has a life of it's own and you've got to service it - you can't make it something that it isn't. If it's something

that is ongoing you may apply what skills you have to make it the best piece it can be.' So there's no tension? 'In terms of the group, there are harmonics and discords that I find perfectly acceptable . . . and that is an area of discussion.' Which is a polite way of saying disagreements can occur. What happens then? 'When the idea for a piece comes up, if somebody can't find something to do with it, they don't compromise, or very rarely', Bruce elaborates. 'It's a terrible word to use, but it's a very *organic* process. We always give everything a go and try it - even if someone at first sight can't stand the idea, we'll always try it.' Graham pinpoints the mood of each song as an important factor in Wire creativity: 'What we're doing all the time is working with ideas, with atmospheres of what was going on with the piece, what the piece was about,



WIRED




building an atmosphere.' And the Wire process certainly contains a layered structure; possibly more rhythmic and atonal for Graham and Bruce than for Colin or Rob. 'Heart-beat', a particular Wire favorite, emphasises this; its minimal structure and Robert's highly sympathetic drumming building potent layers of pulsing beats. 'One thing we have always been interested in is repetition' admits Bruce. And with the technological advent of sampling, this aspect of Wire can be explored to a higher degree. Graham? 'I think it's like all technologies - as interesting as it is useful. It's a good tool - it depends how you use it. I find it very exciting; not merely being a musician, apart from when we play onstage, my interests are very much with noise, with structuring noise - in that way I find sampling extremely interesting.' However the recent developments in this area haven't given Wire a new process to work with: they've merely continued along the lines that they were already exploring. 'We started using what we thought was sampling in about 1980 when the first digital echo machines came out' says Bruce. 'Their method of actually repeating sounds was to copy them digitally, but it was very hard to manipulate it.' 'What Eno said about it was he's not interested in sampling because he thinks that samplers are the same as tape recorders' continues Graham; 'it's the same way that you manipulate sound. In that

way we've been 'sampling' - using found sound and constructing loops and rhythms from sound - for a long time. When sampling came along it was a tool that you had been looking for, waiting for; it meant that you could manipulate things more accurately.' But Wire don't merely use the most expensive techno-toys; 'There's a variety of sampling on the Wire records, from very expensive machinery to the cheapest - from the SK-1 (Casio's bargain bin number) which I've used a lot, to examples like 'Snakedrill': there's a lot of synclavier work on that, although it sounds very natural. Different qualities of informations can be used, whether you are recording on a simple cassette player or whether you are recording in a very sophisticated fashion. Things keep shifting all the time; most people are sampling very expensive drum sounds . . . yet I did some work with Keith Leblanc, where I came in with a cassette, and Keith loved the snare sound on it I had out of the SK5 - and that cost £120. It depends what's useful, what's appropriate.' And sampling, ing Eno's interpretation, is nothing radically new - Pierre Boulez and the *musique concrete* crowd have been experimenting in this field since the middle of the century. So what makes the new developments special? 'You have control over the timbre and the pitch' explains Graham. 'That's the most interesting thing about it', thinks Bruce, 'when sampling got very soph-

isticated and the way of manipulating it got very sophisticated, there was only one question - what to sample? That's the main question. The implication is that sounds which cost thousands of pounds to create in the first place, perhaps, are now available to anyone who has got a sampler. It's very political and in a way it's very subversive, and that's good, but it still depends on the person. It's democratic. It's electronic skiffle. It's very, very healthy.'

Still, the group aren't simply embracing the new technology; like Graham says, it's whatever is appropriate. And Bruce recognises the limitations that sampling presents; 'We were faced these last two years with a decision to keep things very flexible or get heavily involved in technology that can easily break down. It's not perfect, it's still not that flexible . . . none of us in the group have the time nor inclination to get so skillful with the technology in order to make it flexible, and even if we did, it can still break down. If the computer or drum machine fails, you're left with nothing. We have an idea that we can mix the two elements, but it needs to be worked out and personalised.' Graham agrees - 'What we're interested in is that interface between physical activity and being able to have that control.' That being the case, it's interesting that the group have never really expanded their forte into the field of video. Only two tracks have accompanying videos - 'Kidney Bingsos' and 'A Head' - although

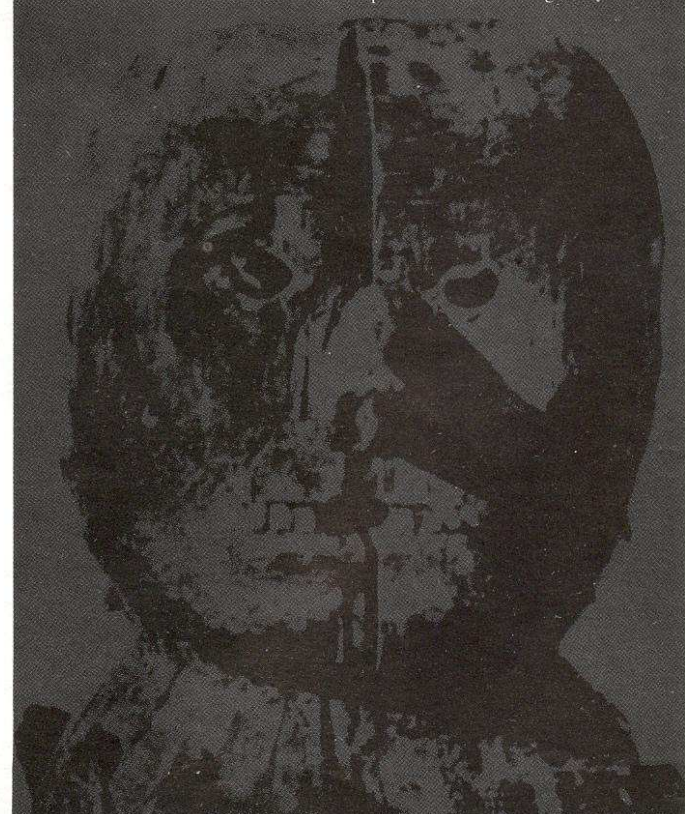
Graham has completed video work with He Said. With their artistic/visual skills surely Wire would be the perfect video band. Sure enough, they were on the case very early on, only EMI didn't buy it. 'We suggested to EMI in 1978 that video was a really good medium, TV is a very good medium for selling records' recalls Graham, 'and they didn't think it was. So in a way there's been an odd relationship between video and Wire.' 'At that point,' says Bruce, 'what video was for, or what EMI thought it was for, was that they got you into a studio, you mimed to the album, got all dressed up . . . and the only people who saw it were foreign labels, foreign licensees. Promotionally for '154' we said 'what is your promotional budget? Forget the posters, forget the stuff in the newspapers, and throughout a week have a 15 second advert on TV.' It seemed to us that you could slip in a totally inexplicable 15 second advert in with a noise - and they said you couldn't.'

Typical Wire. Demanding, uncompromising, staunchly defensive of the role they play . . . and also *right*. Well A Head of their time. With the fine new album *A Bell Is A Cup Until It Is Struck* gracing our vinyl emporiums and more live work to follow, Wire will continue to meander along their teetering path between experimentation and inspiration, with resolution and purpose. Keep an eye on their progress. 

COOKING VINYL FOLK TOP TEN

The all-time folk albums compiled by Pete Lawrence and the chefs at Cooking Vinyl

1. FAIRPORT CONVENTION *Leige And Leif* (Island)
2. DICK GAUGHAN *Hands Full Of Earth* (Topic)
3. THE ALBION BAND *Rise Up Like The Sun* (Harvest)
4. THE POGUES *Red Roses For Me* (Stiff)
5. THE WATERSONS *For Peace And Spicy Ale* (Topic)
6. BILLY BRAGG *Talking To The Taxman About Poetry* (Go!Discs)
7. RICHARD AND LINDA THOMPSON *I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight* (Island)
8. KATHRYN TICKELL *Borderland* (Black Crow)
9. THE HOME SERVICE *Alright Jack* (Hobson's Choice)
10. THE OYSTER BAND *Step Outside* (Cooking Vinyl)



MAN in a SUITCASE

...only in it for the money



1967: the opposition – Roger Moore as The Saint; Steve Forrest as The Baron; Patrick MacNee as Steed. Dogooders all, no money problems, and with the ability to emerge from fist-fights pristine and unruffled. Not, however, McGill. McGill regularly got the shit kicked out of him. Bent noses, puffy eyes, serious concussion – for the hero of a thriller series, McGill took some hard knocks.

And then there was money – none of this knight-in-shining-armor-it's-a-noble-cause-so-I'll-do-it-all-for-free stuff. McGill worked for good old fashioned cash money, lots of it. Even the opening credits featured currency of various denominations as a backdrop. The world owed McGill a living.

Thirty episodes of *Man In A Suitcase* were made, featuring Texan Richard Bradford as McGill. The show still airs – Thames last year, South West at the moment, usually in afternoon or morning slots. And each time it does, the TV company gets a significant number of letters and calls – where is Richard Bradford?

Richard Bradford is in Los Angeles, curious that anyone should ring him up to speak about a twenty one year old TV series. Has he ever seen one recently? 'No, my son was asking me about it. How do they look?' I clear my throat and try honesty – I tell him there are dodgy sets, phoney accents, struggling unknowns (take a bow Donald Sutherland et al) and a general feeling of haste. He laughs. 'What about the character?' Well the character is different – the one thing that makes it watchable is that McGill is not the usual slick Napoleon Solo type. He's a slob who apparently has no first name, mumbles a lot and has a tendency to get thrashed every five minutes. Could he explain that?

'It was all James Bond stuff at the time. They picked me because they'd seen me in *The Chase* (where he got to kick his hero Marlon Brando into a bloody pulp) and flew me over to London. I saw the character was a disgraced CIA man who'd been framed, so I decided to make him very bitter. I think it was a little ahead of its time.'

A graduate of Lee Strasberg's Actors

School in New York, Bradford's acting style was in marked contrast to the Patrick Cargills and Colin Blakeys who surrounded him. 'Yeah, deliberately so... I wanted to give the show an edge. I was new then, I suppose; I thought at the time I was the only one who cared.'

This got him a reputation for being distant and difficult. In fact he was concerned about the production values. 'We had to do each one hour show in eight days. If we'd just taken ten, it could've been sharper... it got better after episode seventeen when we had a stable crew.'

Favorite episodes? '*Brainwash* with Colin Blakey, I admired him a lot (he died last year), *Variation On A Million Bucks* and the opener *Man From The Dead*.'

After thirty episodes Bradford disappeared, left England (he has never been back) and the show folded. It could have gone on – *The Saint* ran to over a hundred. So what happened? 'I was just frustrated with the production line... mind you, if I'd known how successful it was going to be, I might have stuck around.'

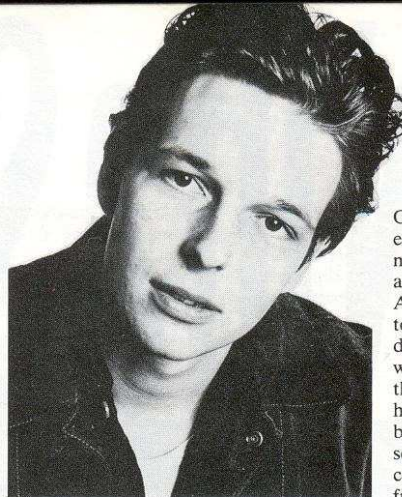
Back in the States things went wrong, his long term relationship broke up, parts were hard to come by, and he drifted out of the profession. 'For quite a while – I love acting, but hate all the bullshit around it. Its only now that I'm beginning to put it all back together.'

He played that rare screen animal – a sympathetic Southern sheriff in *Trip To Bountiful* a few years back, and the roles started again: it is Bradford who fights Connery in *The Untouchables*, he is paired with River Phoenix in the upcoming *Little Nichita*, and with James Garner and Bruce Willis in *Sunset*.

But he still has a soft spot for McGill, even though it was responsible for arresting his career. 'I like the character, although I bet he'd be dead by now.' So if, like *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, somebody decided to give McGill a comeback, he wouldn't be interested? 'Well I'd certainly consider it.... I'd have to lose a few pounds to do it, but it would be interesting to pick up the story.....' 🐾

**Rob Ryan tracks down
Richard Bradford
The Man In A Suitcase**

McGee's CREATION



From a jaundiced outsiders point of view, it would look like CREATION RECORDS has had it. From its roots at Alan McGee's Living Room club, a thriving hole of talent and noise in WC1 to The Jesus & Mary Chain's escalating rise and the Elevation link with WEA, Creation was Britain's best loved independent and a firm press favorite. But that was last year — what of Creation in 1988? McGee no longer manages The Mary Chain, The Weather Prophets and Primal Scream still haven't found that evasive hit single . . . is all lost in the Creation camp?



Of course not. This year sees Creation enter the arena once again with renewed strength, a handful of fine artists and a major cult scam or two up Alan's sleeves. The label no longer has to prove its credibility quota nor pander to the press — 1988 sees Creation well and truly *established*, never mind the palaver. In a noisy London coffee house Alan is assessing the year ahead; brimming with the enthusiasm and schemes of many an independent record company exec. 'Creation starts from a strong base this year,' he opines over the din of the gurgling cappuccino machine, 'I think we've got past the point of ever being hip again. We've always been kind of hip, but it never did sit comfortably being *dead* hip. My idea of a good night out is; going to see a band, getting a curry and going home . . . it's not really hanging out in Delirium, going into the toilets and doing a line of coke!' Inbetween gigs'n'curries, however, Alan has also found some prime new talent to promote. Take The House Of Love for example, whose ripping new single 'Christine' hooks its way into a guitar frenzy of sizeable proportions; 'I think The House Of Love are really going to do well. They've recorded a great new LP — if there's any justice in music they'll do brilliantly . . . but then again I know there's no justice and they'll probably do rotten! We've also signed a new band from Brighton last week — I don't know what they're going to be called yet; it's quite a good idea though — drum computers with cellos . . . good pop songs.' But hold on a second, is this *Creation Records* we're discussing here? What about your average gaunt looking mop tops with tambourines and 12-String fixations? A common misconception amongst most of us is that Creation bands feature a handful of Byrds lookalikes singing jingly-jangly melodies with studied boredom. Not so, counters Alan: 'We've got Momus and Heidi Berry . . . I deliberately got away from that about a year and a half ago because I know there was no future in it; now I think people are into the groups because they are into them (as opposed to their status as 'a Creation band') and I think that's better. To be fair Creation is quite guitar orientated, but then again why can't we sign a hip-hop band if we wanted to do it. I think you've just got to be honest to yourself — I don't think I could put out a group I don't like. As I don't really like hip-hop music it would be dishonest of me to do it.' And with the massed skill of the likes of Momus or Felt, McGee doesn't really need to; Momus' *The Poison Boyfriend* LP and all of Felt's work (particularly the anthemic 'Ballad Of The Band') have a firm place in this writers steely heart. Felt are Alan's favorite band on the label: 'I think Lawrence (Felt's vocalist/songwriter) is one day going to make an undeniably great record. I think he's done it a couple of times with 'Ballad Of The Band' and 'Primitive Painters'. With American support and an imminent new LP in the pipeline, here's at least one Creation band with a future. But what of Primal Scream, The Weather Prophets and that ill-fated alliance with WEA? 'That was just a basic disaster. The Weather Prophets had been building — 'Almost Prayed' got to 70 or 80 in the charts; 'Naked As A Day' got to 80 or something; the third single, 'She Comes In

(ABOVE) PETER ASTOR

(LEFT) ALAN MCGEE — FOR IT IS HE

The Rain' got to 62... that to me was basically okay, it was still building. I think they just thought that The Weather Prophets were just going to be a Lloyd Cole. They *could* be a big band, but it's just going to take ages and ages to build them. Warners want it overnight. It was a really bad management decision on my part and Pete Astor's part.' So if WEA were impatient and Creation had the time and patience that the band need to build, why sign to a major label? 'The problem was that they offered us tons of money and we didn't have any! I had money, 'cause I was managing the Mary Chain at that point, but Pete had no money. He'd been on the dole for five years and they were offering about £150,000... what would you do in that situation?' Same as you did Alan, no doubt about that. But now a 'wasted year' is over, Creation are learning from their mistakes, Primal Scream are working on new material and The Weather Prophets are set to go again with a fine new single, 'Hollow Heart'. Prodigal sons or what?

Another new release close to Alan's heart is the new Biff Bang Pow album, 'Love Is Forever'. Biff Bang Pow is McGee's own combo, 'an ongoing project between Dick (Green, BBP guitarist and partner in the Creation business) and myself; we're writing all the time.' In the current crop of songs there are pure, soaring vocal escapades strongly reminiscent of the dB's, a rush of melodic guitar, some fine harmonica and keyboard work and the spirit of Neil Young stalking the grooves. 'Ice Cream Machine', one of the album's stand-out tracks, is, according to Alan, 'out and out Neil Young. It's got the excesses of 'Zuma'. The next work will have an even stronger Neil Young reference; 'It's all I listen to at the moment. 'Zuma' is my favorite album... a few years ago I would have killed myself if I thought I'd be listening to Neil Young, but I got into him about two and a half years ago. I went to see him two nights at Wembley - it was the best concert I saw last year. Brilliant. Even 'Live' last year was a brilliant album. I'd like to think that one day, looking back at Creation, I'd been responsible for discovering someone with the stature and talent of Neil Young and was responsible for bringing their records out. I don't think as yet we've actually found that person...' But with Biff Bang Pow Alan can indulge in his personal favorites and still make some fine music. And Creation is very much a personal vision, although not one to shove down peoples throats: 'I think the bands I'm into are brilliant, but I'm not big-headed enough to say I know better than other people... but The Jasmine Minks album and The Razorcuts and The Jasmine Minks are hated bands by the papers; they're pretty unpretentious - just bands that do songs. But just because basically they're not very fashionable bands there's no reason to not be into their records - and Biff Bang Pow's 'Oblivion' sold fourteen thousand copies - it's no Prince, but fourteen thousand people like our group, so why the fuck can't I make records?' Quite so. And running Creation not only gives Alan the ability to release records he likes, but also a distinct advantage in the confrontation game. 'You have a platform to really wind people up' he admits.

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'At the New Music Seminar last year they had me on the managers panel; I was obviously on the panel to be the brat, to wind everyone up. Everybody knew - it was advertised along those lines. I was on with The Cult's management, Simply Red's and Everything But The Girl's management... it was fantastic, I was completely slagging them off. When somebody with my political persuasions is sitting on this panel slagging off these horrible bastard people, total bullshitters... I think it's brilliant to be able to get *inside* and say those things.' Ah yes, that sounds like the Alan McGee we all know - kick out the scams! What about your reputation for hype then, Alan? 'I'm fed up with it. We put out all these brilliant records in 1986/1987, but when ever we've done scams people would want the scams more than they would want the record. It pisses me off - eventually you just get fed up'. But don't

worry, fickle hype fans, there's a glint in McGee's eye as he reveals all this. The scams aren't *totally* behind Creation, that's for sure. Beware!

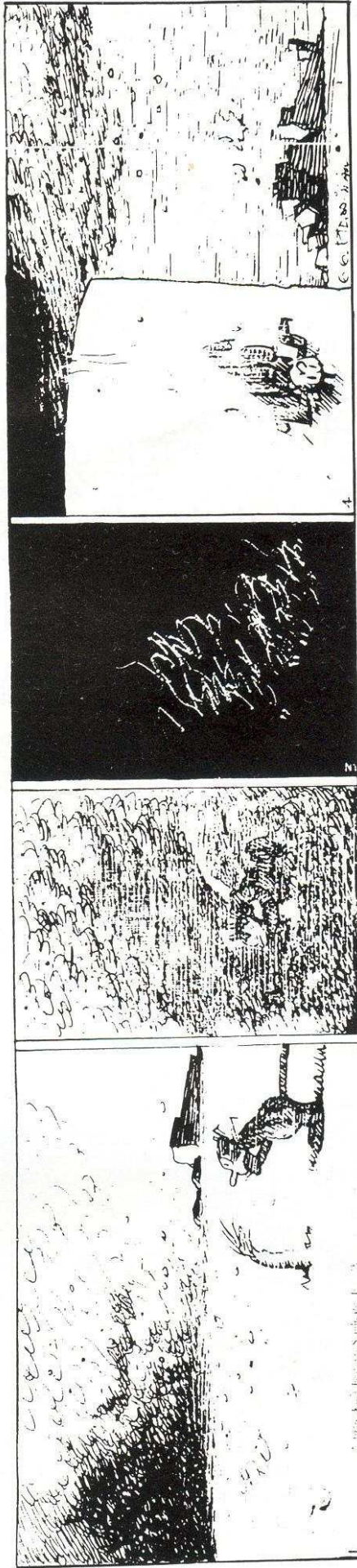
Alan isn't your average money-grabbin' hype merchant however. He's a rare breed in the music business, one you normally find lurking in an independent record company or behind the counter of your favorite record shop - someone who's in the record industry for the music, not the business. For someone who's seen the industry from both a position of independence and of big business muscle, Alan is in a strong position to comment on the 'Indies vs. majors' debate. 'Independents invest in human beings, majors invest in the system' is his comment. 'You walk into Warner's, and it's *prepunk*. It never happened. The minute Boy George and Kajagoogoo came along the majors were probably dancing on the tables - it was

back to business, back to 1974 again as far as they were concerned. They must have been worried sick when Punk happened - now they're worried sick again. All these guys like Martin Heath at Rhythm King (Bomb The Bass, S-Express, Three Wise Men etc) have got it completely sussed; none of the majors know what the hell is happening.' However Alan isn't jumping on some ideological 'indie' soapbox: 'Everybody talks about ghettoisation and 'indie music'. I don't think our groups make 'indie music', its *independent* music; Bam Caruso is independent, Rhythm King is independent. I think if you're in the independent section you are in it 'cause you like music... I want to make tons of money, I'm not denying that, but ultimately I'm in it for the music.' And Creation Records, purveyors of quality records for the nation, will continue to make fine music for a few more summers yet.

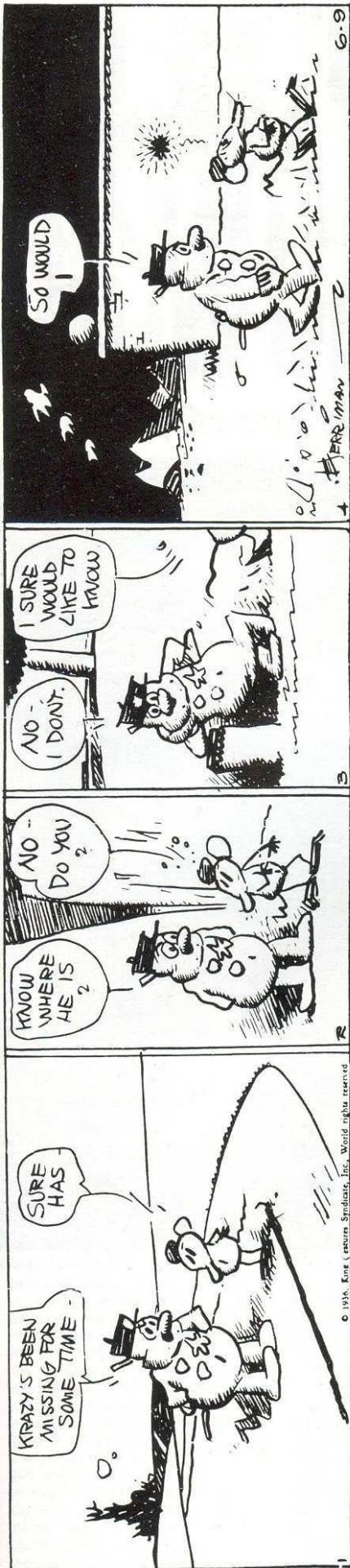
WOPPY CATS IN A TALE OF ANTINGER WYMA

Herriman Facts
 1. DANIEL COYOTE was the first Coconino County Character ever to appear in a cartoon strip (in 1909) — together with CINSHO FANSY. Herriman would use them, and other pre-KRAZY KAT creations, including GOOSEBERRY SPRIG and JOE STALK, in the Coconino cast a few years later.
 2. Herriman would only drive a Ford automobile. He admired Henry Ford's pacific stance.

By Herriman



Herriman 68



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DO YOU KNOW HOW IT IS

A Story For You • Country Rock

Let's get one thing clear. Much as they might now love *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*, I know of no Byrds' aficionado who was not, at best, uneasy when they first finished playing it. The Byrds were once a joyful noise, wherein folk, Beatle pop and those intricate harmonies soared to create one of music's truest sounds. Here that mesh had been discarded, the group was now specific, renaging, seemingly, on what had made them special.

Through the years, of course, we've grown with the album, although few will call it a favourite. The disquiet was caused as much by context as by content, this was, after all, 1968, the year of the barricades and revolutionary rhetoric. Dylan, The Band, The Beach Boys and The Beatles may all have stepped back from the edge of mayhem and got back to a simpler, pastoral music, but they'd done so by redefining their roots in tandem with their individual styles.

The Byrds had only moved partway, and this Country collection brought the image of redneck intolerance too close to the culture such attitudes opposed. Hell, Country was the enemy, or so we thought, but by only recognising what was superficial, we had made the same mistakes as those good old boys.

We were young then, we had a lot to learn, not least about the past of the musicians we admired. The West Coast was dim and misty all those years ago; groups seemed to emerge whenever the time was right and most were so strong playing now, little was thought of their origins. It was only when a *Zigzag* or a *Rolling Stone* prised information from grilled musicians that we learned about their roots and branches.

Sweetheart, nonetheless, was not exactly a surprise; as early as *Turn Turn Turn* The Byrds had toyed with the Country genre. 'A Satisfied Mind' was the unlikely tangent, and from there the twang of mid-America could be heard somewhere in the mix. *Younger Than Yesterday* boasted such licks on 'Time Between', while the undoubted Country form of 'Old John Robertson' (from *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*) was only partially obscured by Michael Clarke's lopsided drumming. That The Byrds were synonymous with folk-rock did much to obscure this other vital influence.

Of the five original members, it was their bassist, Chris Hillman, who

brought much of this to bear. The starting point was the Blue Guitar, a club in San Diego, and a late 1950's stomping ground for several bluegrass groups including the Golden State Boys and the Scottsville Squirrel Barkers. The Barkers (also known as the Kentucky Mountain Boys) included Chris on mandolin, guitarists Larry Murray and Gary Carr, Kenny Wertz on banjo and Ed Douglas on bass. They were together some four years, during which time Wertz was replaced by Bernie Leadon, and it was this later line-up which recorded 'Bluegrass Favorites', a short but vibrant album for the Crown label. Their immortality now assured, the Barkers broke up, although Murray and Leadon would later reunite in *Hearts and Flowers*, a wonderfully inventive group who's two Capitol albums are essential listening.

Hillman meanwhile joined a splinter group from the Golden State Boys, sitting alongside the Gosdin brothers, Rex and Vern, and banjoist Don Parnley. Although Chris was very much the junior, the new group was dubbed The Hillmen and over the next two years they held sway on the West Coast bluegrass circuit. Beatlebeat forced them to retire, along with many contemporaries, as the possibilities for traditional fare shrank. They did record an album, ostensibly for release, but it languished in the vaults until its resurrection on Together Records. Group originals nestled beside established favorites from Bill Monroe, Maybelle Carter and Woody Guthrie, but the inclusion of two Bob Dylan songs ('Fare Thee Well' and 'When The Ship Comes In') showed how the tide was turning.

Hillman then joined the Green Grass Group (alongside Larry Murray) but its New Christy Minstrel-ish stance proved too restrictive and Hillman left after a mere two months. His next move brought him into the Jet Set/Beefeaters/Byrds axis when a mutual producer, Jim Dickson, became the necessary catalyst between the musician and his new colleagues.

Hillman had never played bass before, but learned fast. He watched The Beau Brummels perform and, I'm sure, studied Beatles records, as Chris quickly assumed Paul McCartney's technique which threw out the instrument as a pulsebeat and treated it as a lead guitar. This concept, in tandem with those chiming 12-strings, gave The Byrds their perfect musical cushion and allowed them that special



THE BYRDS (1965) FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GENE CLARK, MICHAEL CLARKE

individuality.

When Gene Clark left the group in 1966, they lost their most gifted and natural songwriter. His departure allowed space for Hillman to come through and his four contributions to *Younger Than Yesterday* were a marvelous synthesis of his past influences. 'Time Between' was joined in the Country Rock genre by 'Girl With No Name'; then, of course, such labels had yet to evolve — this was simply Byrds music. 'Time Between's other importance was that it introduced Clarence White to the group he'd later be a vital member of. For the meantime he was a friend, adding some of

his telecaster magic, alongside Chris's ex-colleague Vern Gosdin on guitar.

The arrival of White into The Byrds circle did much to re-ignite Hillman's traditional loves. The two musicians had been young contemporaries during the Bluegrass years; as early as the mid-1950's Clarence had been playing with his brothers, Roland and Eric, in the Three Little Country Boys. When Roland travelled to Nashville in 1958, the remaining two were joined by Billy Ray Latham, who stayed in the group when the migratory White returned. Shortly afterwards a dobro player, Leroy Mack, was also added, and the Country Boys, as they were now

BY BRIAN HOGG

FEELS TO BE LONESOME

before Sweetheart Of The Rodeo



CLARKE, JIM McGUINN (standing), DAVID CROSBY, CHRIS HILLMAN.

known, began building a reputation which would culminate at a residency at the prestigious Ash Grove. Roger Bush joined in 1961, when Eric White left to get married, and the group was further unsettled by Roland's two-year army induction. However it was in his absence that the Country Boys not only recorded, cutting *New Sounds Of Bluegrass America* for the old Briar label, but changed their name to The Kentucky Colonels.

Upon Roland's return, the Colonels began an Eastern tour, playing The Unicorn and Club 47 in Boston or at The Retort in Detroit. There was a brief 1963 European tour, an appear-

ance at the 1964 Newport Festival, and an added fiddler in Bobby Stone, which balanced the departure of Leroy Mack. The group were then signed to World Pacific; their *Appalachian Swing* collection remains a classic Bluegrass text, but they began to feel the same erosion affecting The Hillmen. Clarence White was especially uneasy — he hoped to expand in alternative directions, but found it hard to find kindred souls. Jim Dickson, the same producer who brought The Jet Set together, tried to interest Clarence in a similar electric group, and indeed it was White who was given first option on the ragged, drunken tape of a Bob Dylan/Ramblin'

Jack Elliott demo — 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. Surrounded by purists, he was obliged to refuse, and Dickson then took it to Jim McGuinn.

Meanwhile, the Colonels had taken a new fiddler, Scotty Stoneman. With Clarence now being drawn into session work, playing electric guitar, so the group's final months saw a shift in their perspective. An electric bass supported Billy Ray's electric rhythm, and they punctuated a safe, acoustic set, with something more radically contemporary. It was, however, a forlorn balance, and by April 1966, The Kentucky Colonels had all but collapsed. Eric and Roland White did regroup awhile with Dennis Morris and Bob Warford, but it only lasted a matter of months. Clarence and Bush stayed together in Trio, adding Bart Haney on drums, but it too was shortlived. While his brothers moved through one path, so Clarence began his alternative concerns. As a studio guitarist for Bakersfield International he worked alongside two other musicians, Gib Gilbeau (fiddle) and Gene Parsons (guitar/drums). Both had played in The Castaways, a casino country band while later as Cajun Gib and Gene, they cut a series of singles for the company. As such they also held a residency, on which Clarence would help out, and for a while the situation held some promise. A single by ex-Hillmen Vern and Rex Gosdin ('Just Enough To Keep Me Hanging On') was a local hit, with the studio band adding just the right amount of muscle, but Bakersfield later collapsed, forcing White, Parsons and Guilbeau, along with another ex-Castaway, Wayne Moore, to concentrate more fully on live work. A new group, Nashville West, was formed, and although they lasted a mere eight months, a glimpse of their prowess is caught on an eponymous rough and ready album, posthumously issued in 1978. It's span was quite remarkable, from 'Sweet Mental Revenge' to 'Sing Me Back Home' via 'Ode To Billy Joe', but it's a valuable glimpse of an important transition. Nashville West, however, fell apart when Clarence finally became a full-time Byrd.

White had spent eighteen months as an auxiliary before his position was made more permanent. During that time he helped chip away at the group's otherwise technological swirl; on 'Change Is Now' for example his C&W lick is the complete counterpoint to McGuinn's eerie sustain. Yet even as

the cracks worsened in the post-'Notorious' framework, Clarence remained on session rates. Hillman's cousin, Kevin Kelly, came in on drums, while a new vocalist/pianist/composer, Gram Parsons, arrived to change forever the interaction of Country and Pop.

He was born in Winter Haven, Florida, in November 1946. His early years, through parental strife, divorce, alcoholism and death, are bound up in myth and half-truths mischievously propagated by Gram himself. Fact and fiction often blur; how his father, Cecil Ingram 'Coon Dog' Conner, blew his head off with a shotgun; how his mother, Avis, drank herself to death, a fate she shared with her second husband, Robert Parsons. Images worthy of Carson McCullers or Tennessee Williams abound, out of which emerge both mythology and a doomed hero.

Gram's introduction to performing came with The Pacers, a high school band which would, in turn, evolve into The Legends. Here he was joined by Jim Stafford and Kent (Lobo) LaVoie, as well as a succession of drummers, including Gerald Chambers and Jim Carlton, in a group which interpreted comfortable rock 'n' roll and somewhere along the line cut a version of 'What I'd Say'. By 1960, however, Parsons also ran a second feature, The Village Vanguard, based on Peter, Paul and Mary, which featured Patty Johnson and Dick McNear beside him. Paradoxically, it was this somewhat temporary folk group which determined Gram's next move, and following a brief era as a solo singer, he joined Paul Surratt, Joe Kelly and George Wrigley in The Shilos, a suit and tie aggregation, specialising in the campus harmony of groups like The Kingston Trio, Journeymen or Halifax Three. The Shilos sang in coffee houses, in colleges, on radio and TV, and stayed together until June 1965. A lone LP, *Gram Parsons — The Early Years*, recorded at a Bob Jones University three months before the split, captured the group's heritage, and while Gram's clear tenor shows an already strong confidence, The Shilos were obviously and rapidly being eclipsed. The naked surge of electricity, the Dylan of *Bring It All Back Home*, showed Parsons a whole new direction. He quit the group and enrolled at Harvard University.

Within weeks he'd dropped out, and began planning a new group to bring his disparate ideas together. By Octo-

Do You Know How It Feels To Be Lonesome?

ber 1965 he'd been joined by Ian Dunlop (bass), John Nuese (guitar) and drummer Mickey Gauvin, and his new fusion began. Nuese had been a member of The Trolls, the Cambridge group which featured Banana Levinger, later of The Youngbloods. He'd also been in Happy Pantaloon and the Buckles, a less celebrated combo, but one which also included Dunlop. Gauvin, meanwhile, came from a Baltimore Soul band, Roger Paice, and into a group who dubbed themselves the International Submarine Band.

Having played awhile around the Boston area, the group moved its base to New York, jettisoning a temporary pianist, Tom Snow, on the way. Gram had several management contacts there, based on The Shilos circuit of The Bitter End, The Cafe Wha? and other Village haunts. The earliest ISB gigs there were backing actor Brandon de Wilde, the boy star of *Shane*, who was being groomed for a possible rock-'n'-roll outburst. It didn't happen, but the Submarine Band had nonetheless

two actors knew each other. However, the group's brand of country soul was deemed unpsychedelic and their soundtrack was replaced by the embryonic Electric Flag. Celluloid apart, this period is best recalled by 'November Night', a GP original which became a solo Fonda 45. For this he was coached and guided by the song's composer and we must therefore assume that it sounds somewhat close to how the ISB performed it.

Sadly, the original line-up soon began to flounder. Both Dunlop and Gauvin decided to split; their preference for solid R&B was contrary to Parsons and Nuese, who's love for a Percy Sledge or James Carr was offset by their increasing immersion in a world of George Jones and Merle Haggard.

The two styles were obviously not incompatible, as Gram himself would later prove and as generations of Southern Soul practitioners had already shown. Nonetheless, at that point a gap was opened and while Gauvin would return to Baltimore,

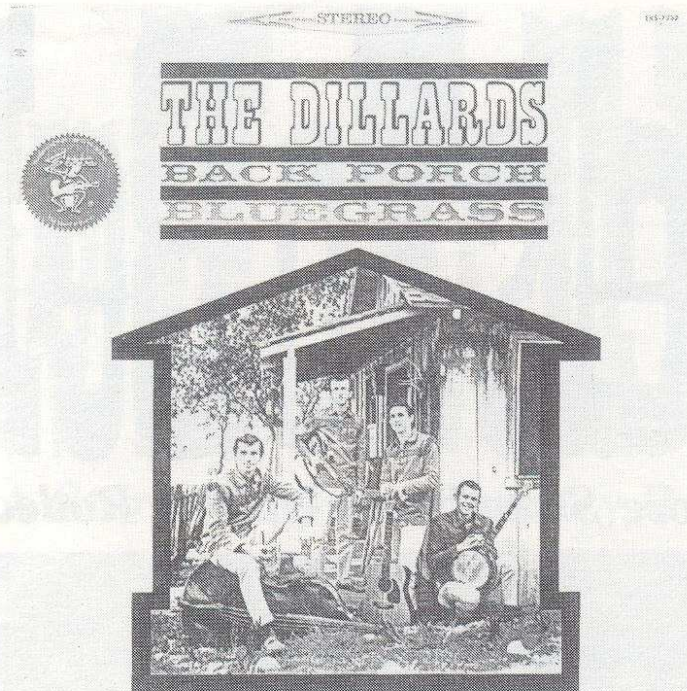


made some inroads and found themselves recording a version of the theme to the mildly paranoid flick *The Russians Are Coming The Russians Are Coming*. Duly backed by Buck Owens' 'Truck Driving Man', the two tracks formed the ISB's debut single for Ascot in 1966. It was followed later that year by 'Sum Up Broke'/'One Day Week', a strong effort for Columbia where the 'A' side in particular was a fabulous synthesis of Brill Building group pop and Byrdian overtones.

The Submarine Band stayed in New York until March 1967, playing The Night Owl, Trude Hellers and any club or discotheque ready to accept them. By then Brandon de Wilde had moved back to California; Parsons visited him there and then persuaded the rest of the group to join him. It was through de Wilde that the ISB performed in Peter Fonda's film *The Trip*, as the

Dunlop joined Barry Tashain and Bobby Briggs, two refugees from another Boston, The Remains, who had also moved West. This group, who'd also include Junior Markham, Jesse Davis and Bobby Keyes, was dubbed The Flying Burrito Brothers, in homage to the Burrito mansion, the ISB's Laurel Canyon home.

Meanwhile Nuese and Parsons were joined by drummer Jon Corneal, who'd worked with Gram in Florida and this was the basis for the ISB who cut the *Safe At Home* collection. The group had already been signed to Lee Hazelwood's LHI concern via a chain of Hollywood agencies but work proceeded slowly. Two Gram originals, 'Blue Eyes' and 'Luxury Liner' were recorded sometime in July '67, with Chris Etheridge on bass, who'd joined on Mike Bloomfield's suggestion. (Curiously Chris received no credit on the



final artwork, although more peripheral characters, J.D. Maness and Earl Ball, would.)

The rest of the album was cut in November, by which time a second guitarist, Bob Buchanan, had appeared. Although featured on the Frank Morton cover drawing, his role as a full-time member seems open to question. Yet, for all its piecemeal approach, *Safe At Home* survives relatively intact, due mainly to Gram's singular vision. Although painfully short, this is wholeheartedly Country Rock; Bluegrass and Folk are totally absent, it's an album where Haggard and Cash and Cowboy Clement drop down a generation and are seen as some kind of Pop. This is not, however, the go-go riffing heard on 'Sum Up Broke'; *Safe At Home* is clearly something else, and as uncompromising as its obviously limited budget allowed.

Apart from the fine GP originals, it's 'A Satisfied Mind' which provides the immediate interest. Where The Byrds wrapped theirs in careful harmonies, sounding protective towards the song, Gram's solo voice is plaintive and heartfelt, wearing his sadness clearly on his sleeve. Where The Byrds im-

ply emotion, so Parsons is explicit, and such two alternative readings help indicate the difference which emerged between The Byrds before and after his arrival.

This particular International Submarine Band did not gig; Gram seemed unhappy with Corneal's style and his meeting with Chris Hillman was thus particularly fortuitous. Their paths had crossed before, while The Shilos grafted in small Greenwich Village clubs, The Byrds had swept the Cafe A Go Go, inadvertently closing the former's possibilities. Parsons, Hillman and McGuinn now shared a mutual business manager and with the 'Notorious' line-up now fractured, Gram seemed a most likely replacement. The ISB continued awhile; Nuese, Corneal and Etheridge searched for another singer but by the summer of 1968 the individuals left Hazelwood with the name and went their separate ways.

Although *Safe At Home* is often seen as Country Rock's definitive debut, other undercurrents were being enacted. On one side were The Lovin' Spoonful or even The Beau Brummels, who would slip some sweet Country twangs and nuances into several of their superior pop moments. A 'Nashville Cats'

THE LEGENDS (LEFT TO RIGHT) JIM STAFFORD, KENT LAVOIE, GERALD CHAMBERS & GRAM, 1960



or an 'Oh Lonesome Me' were acknowledgement of the approaching genre. Another perspective was found in The Everly Brothers, who's 1963 **Sing Great Country Hits** was a warm tribute to the music which had given shape to their own particular directions. A part of a slightly older era, they'd too concluded that something was in the air, and later proceeded to find an affinity in it. Rick Nelson, meanwhile, forsook his acne-pop and turned in two intermittently interesting albums, **Bright Lights And Country Music** and **Country Fever**. Clearly he too felt the changes.

So too would The Dillards, originally another superb Bluegrass unit. They, like The Kentucky Colonels, boasted a family root, and were based around two brothers, Rodney and Douglas Dillard. Their spiritual home was Salem, Missouri, close to the Ozark Plateau, and this traditionally ethnic region laid the basis to their music. As early as 1958, the Dillard brothers cut a local single, 'Banjo In The Hollow', which featured another embryonic talent, John Hartford, on fiddle. A local disc jockey, Mitch Jayne, heard and played the record, before deciding to join the duo on bass. Dean Webb was then added on mandolin and, duly constituted, The Dillards began building their fine reputation. Around 1962, the quartet worked their way through Oklahoma and Texas, heading eventually for Los Angeles. There they wound up at World Pacific Records, and met the ubiquitous Jim Dickson, who helped swing an Elektra recording contract. **Back Porch Bluegrass** appeared in 1963, blending traditional favourites with stylistic originals, and was followed the next year by **Live! Almost!**, an in-concert treat wherein The Dillards' irreverent attitude is allowed space to grow. Although deeply serious when actually playing, the group was unhappy at the constraints purists placed upon their development. It has even been suggested that their somewhat dour third album, **Pickin' And Fiddlin'**, was done in answer to such criticism, that its straight, no-nonsense playing was to prove it could be done, should they wish to.

Whatever those reservations, these are three important albums, from a group aware of change and progress. The Dillards then left Elektra, perhaps hoping to catch some of folk-rock's glow. Their role here was somewhat shrouded in anonymity; it was Dean Webb who taught McGuinn The Dillards' blend of voices by putting some harmonies on (another) demo of 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. Yet The Dillards were left behind, their reputation for Bluegrass work hampered an acceptance as pop. **Early L.A.**, the 1971 collection which unveiled The Jet Set/Byrds first demos, boasts two wonderful Dillards' tracks ('Each Season Changes You' and 'Don't You Cry'), both of which have that special singing, that brilliant picking, some Beatlesque moves and a full drumkit. There's no recording date; they could have come from 1966 when Dewey Martin, later of Bullalo Springfield, played percussion for them.

Tensions over direction, and this limbo, obviously took an effect. Doug Dillard in particular looked elsewhere, and was next found supporting Gene Clark on his eponymous post-Byrds debut album. This collection was one predating **Safe At Home**, and its full title, **Gene Clark With The Goddin**

Brothers, amply proved its Country pedigree. Rex and Vern added guitars and voices, so too did Chris Hillman and Clarence White, while Doug threw in that unmistakable banjo on 'Keep On Pushin'. It was a truly excellent album, blending the craft of Clark's compositions with the new enlightenment, and songs such as 'Tried So Hard', 'Is Yours Is Mine' and the aforementioned 'Keep On Pushin' build on the promise of 'A Satisfied Mind' to generate the feel of rural ease. Clark's talent, however, is too maverick, too wide, and several other influences prevent this collection from being pure Country.

Meanwhile The Dillards grabbed a new deal with Capitol, for whom they cut six tracks in 1967. 'The Last Thing On My Mind', the Tom Paxton heart-breaker, was a first 45, while 'Nobody Knows' and 'Ebo Walker', two tracks

the group would later re-record, made up a second release. The group was then dropped by the label, and to compound their problems Doug Dillard left, leaving them in an undeserved limbo, with their pioneering work in tatters. A return to Elektra would re-establish their career, but it came post-'Sweetheart', and left The Dillards as seeming followers rather than the innovators they truly were.

These are some of those early pioneers; indeed only those most close to The Byrds. There are other stories; the complex family tree which links The Grateful Dead with Boss-Town Sound takes in a slew of Bluegrass and Jug-band musicians, as does the interwoven story of Kaleidoscope and The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. Such tales will be re-told another time.

TO BE CONTINUED



SELECTED COUNTRY ROCK CLASSICS

Scottsville Squirrel Barkers

Bluegrass Favorites[#]Crown CLP 5346
(reissued as by The Kentucky Mountain Boys 'Best Of The Bluegrass Favorites', Dutch Ariola 87 598 ET)

The Hillmen

The Hillmen Together ST T 1012
(Reissued on Sugar Hill SH 3719 with four extra tracks)

Kentucky Colonels

New Sounds Of Bluegrass America Briar 109
Appalachian Swing World Pacific
(UK Reissue as 'Kentucky Colonels', United Artists UAS 29514 with two extra tracks previously only on a single)
Livin' In The Past Briar SBR 4202
The Kentucky Colonels with Scotty Stoneman Briar SBR 4206
Kentucky Colonels 1965-1966 Rounder 0070
Kentucky Colonels 1966 Shiloh SLP 4084

Nashville West

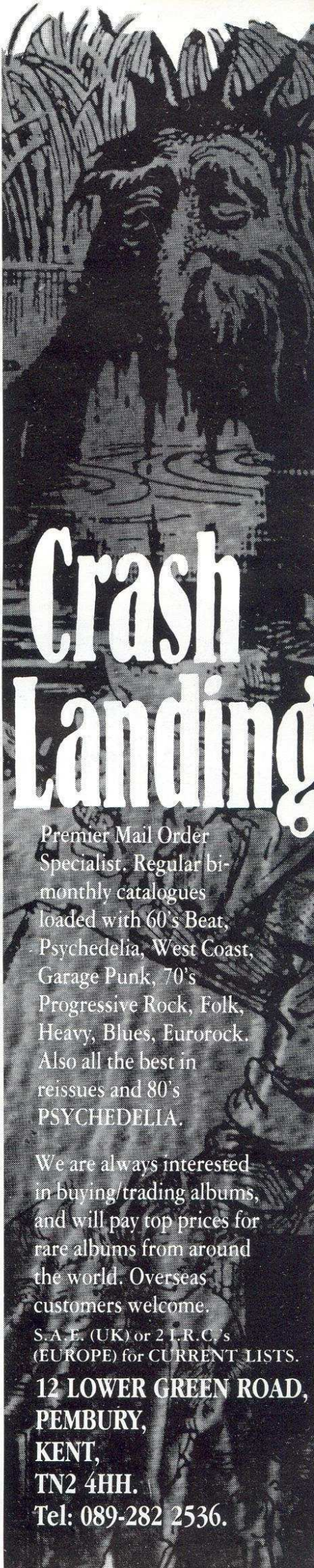
Nashville West Sierra SR5 8701 (UK Sundown SDLP 1011)

Cajun Gib and Gene

Cajun Country Ariola 87 143 HT (Dutch)

Gram Parsons

The Early Years 1963-1965 Sierra SRS 8702



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In this age of borrowed sounds, sampled voices and cross-cultural music, it's a treat to see groups like THE SHAMEN utilising available techniques to create a sound more inspirational than mere studio self-indulgence. Combining psychedelia and technology, The Shamen are undertaking a stimulating experiment – to use current tools to illustrate their personal, political beliefs. VINCENT ENO reports on the fundamentalists, media cover-ups and Members of Parliament on LSD....

In a boisterous London hostelry, chief Shaman Colin Angus is discussing the band's new single, entitled 'Jesus Loves Amerika'. Sampling liberally from TV documentaries and newsclips, intertwined with a ripping melodic hook, 'Jesus Loves Amerika' focusses on the worrying rise of the ultra right-wing religious organisations springing up in the United States. You know, those cable TV evangelists you may have been vaguely alarmed or amused by in the past, who mix overtly literal biblical translations with 'God Means Cash' fundraising pleas; well these characters have long since ceased to be a fringe network or a cranky joke. Some, like high profile media-messenger 'Reverend' Pat Robertson, are stepping into the political arena with power, money and an assumed 'morality' on their side. Which brings us on to the song in question.... just what are we sampling here Colin? The samples are from programmes about the rise of the fundamentalist movement in America which examined how they'd come to be a political force. The

fundamentalists have a belief in the literal truth of the bible – *in every word*. Although theoretically they claim that every word of the bible is true, they do tend to ignore most of the teachings of the new testament – they're a bit too humanist for them! The fundamentalists tend to ignore any possible qualms concerning Bible morality and materialism: 'For 'Jesus Loves Amerika' we've sampled one passage where they are talking about money; the quotation is 'I believe that the diamonds were made for God's people'. They talk about being 'in league' with the Lord, which they feel automatically leads you to financial success and prosperity – because you've got God on your side automatically you are entitled to wealth.' And our Pat, founding member of the Christian Broadcasting Network (and a man for whom the phrase 'fingers in pies' could have been invented), is certainly using such wealth to get his message across. The Reverend, who has stated that God wants him for President, has links with political organisations ex-

tending across the world from Nicaragua to Guatemala, through Angola, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Israel, the Lebanon.... the list goes on. His support of minority rule in South Africa is well documented – this guy dismisses the ANC as a Soviet front. That Pat Robertson – he's a peach! And a typical late-80's type, too: 'They're very organised', says Colin, 'they've adapted extremely well to the electronic age. They've got their own TV stations together; their computer mail-out system has every single name and address of anyone who has ever been in contact with them; they can mail out to people stating which candidates they should vote for at elections, what action they should take. It's the political side of it that's frightening; they've taken political issues and presented them as religious/moral issues, and won people over that way'.

Apart from highlighting disturbing

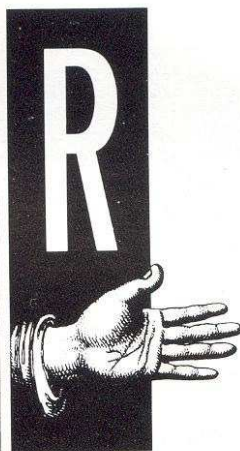
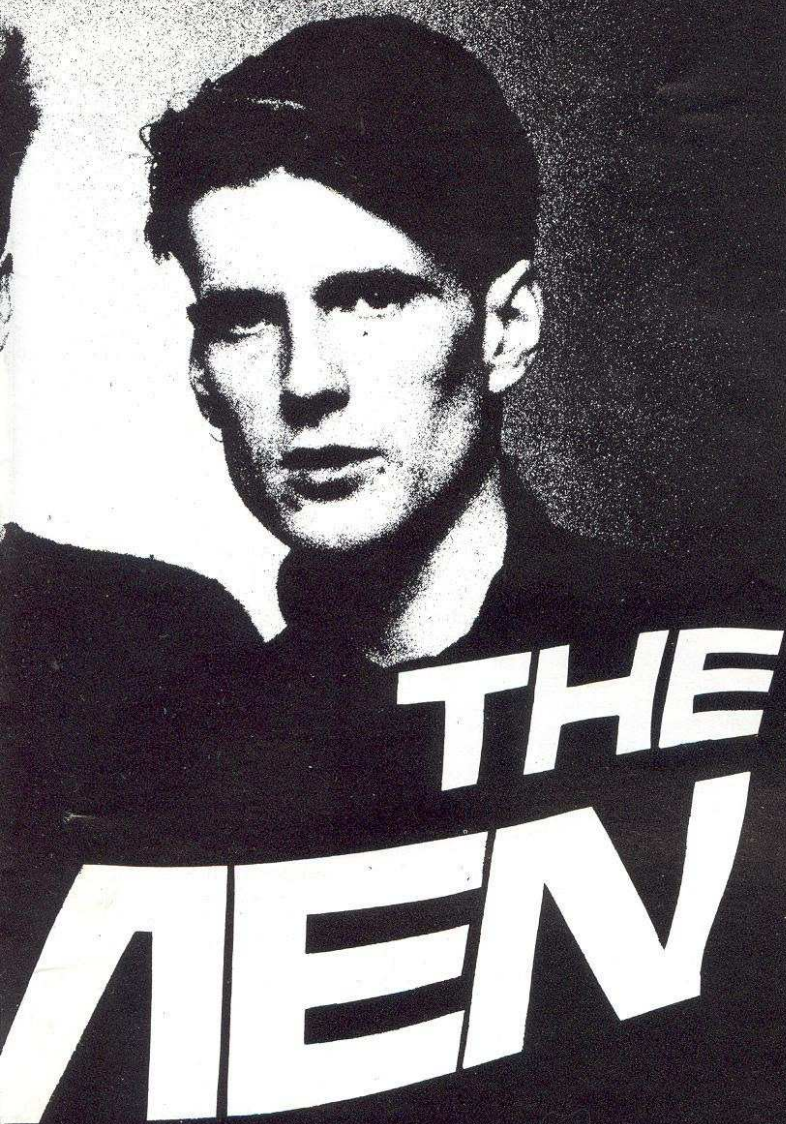


manipulations of biblical doctrine. 'Jesus Loves Amerika' also examines the political beliefs of the religious Right through specific samples. We hear the fundamentalist view on subjects ranging from nuclear arms to Star Wars, homosexuality to Contra aid – and ultra-militaristic stuff it is too. And certainly not spiritually stimulating, eh Colin? 'I think spirituality is very important. It's quite appalling to see something like this masquerading as theology. I don't believe that this type of philosophy, this type of organisation, can offer you a path to any true personal spirituality.' And the track make's The Shamen's sentiment abundantly clear. But can one statement in the fickle world of pop actually make any difference? 'I don't think you can change anything', admits Colin, 'but keeping a contrary view in people's minds, keeping it alive, keeping bombarding them with ideas all the time is important. It's something I do want to express and I hope it'll filter out into people's minds.'

'Jesus Loves Amerika' uses the raw material of sampled phrases and statements to great effect, just as 'Christopher Mayhew Says', a cracking recent Shamen single, tackles the tricky subject of the controlled use of psychedelic drugs. The Shamen's position on this matter has got them up a few people's noses lately... having recorded the soundtrack to a new McEwan's lager ad, the company bosses started hearing rumours about their alleged personal preferences and dumped the

"GOD MEANS CASH"

REV. PAT ROBERTSON



band, wasting time and money on the way. The press had a field day — "Lager bosses in a froth over sex and drugs band" ranted *The Sun*, whilst the Scottish *Daily Record* described our chaps as a "Porn Rock band". Even the Scottish *Evening Times* called it a "One million pound rock shame". Good publicity, huh?

Almost as good as the 'Christopher Mayhew Says' seam — Mayhew, now resident in the House of Lords, took hallucinogenics as part of a BBC investigation into such chemicals; the programme was banned at the time but recently screened on the *Arena* show. Hearing Mayhew utter 'I'll take the drug now' in plummy English over a crunchy neo-hip hop acid backbeat is one of the finest examples of late '80s techno-psychedelic beat. The Shamen are inspired to use articulate models to promote such radical ideas; similarly, Colin is attracted to Aldous Huxley's work, particularly the novel *Islands*. Here Huxley creates a society that incorporates the use of psychedelic drugs into its culture. 'It is all done in a socially responsible way, incorporated matter-of-factly' states Colin. 'Huxley was saying that there is a place in a certain kind of society for the kind of use of psychedelics that he envisaged, but no place for it in a modern, industrial, technological or militaristic society at all. I like the essence of the philosophy behind it'.

Colin's influences are an interesting mix of the rhythmic (he cites Adrian

Sherwood, Keith LeBlanc and the Tackhead crew as his sampling faves) and the melodic. Ennio Morricone rates highly ('his stuff certainly could be described as psychedelic'), as do The Cure. It's this fusion which makes The Shamen inspirational: 'We're just beginning to combine melodic song structures with samples'. Colin enthuses, 'As soon as people hear samples they imagine it's going to be a collage of other peoples rhythm tracks, disembodied voices and scratching over the top, with no tune and no lyrics. What we're doing is very different from that — it's much more a combination of the two techniques with a strong rhythmic base'.

Apart from 'Jesus Loves Amerika', various new tracks for the forthcoming Shamen LP continue this exploratory path. 'Adam Strange' is an ecstasy ballad — the trippiest thing on the album, but again with sampled drums and backward cymbals. It's a ballad with a technological base'. Another number, 'Disinformation', includes samples concerning the *Spycatcher* saga, cover-ups, the withholding of information and passages from the Contragate hearings alongside 60's favorites from *The Prisoner* to Gerry Anderson. Even Jimmy Cagney pops up to utter 'This is the captain speaking.... I have important news on the subject of liberty'. And The Shamen are mixing music and technology to get their interpretations of liberty across. Let's hope they are not alone.

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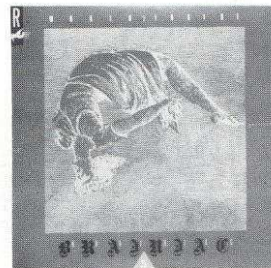
(ARTHUR BROWN)



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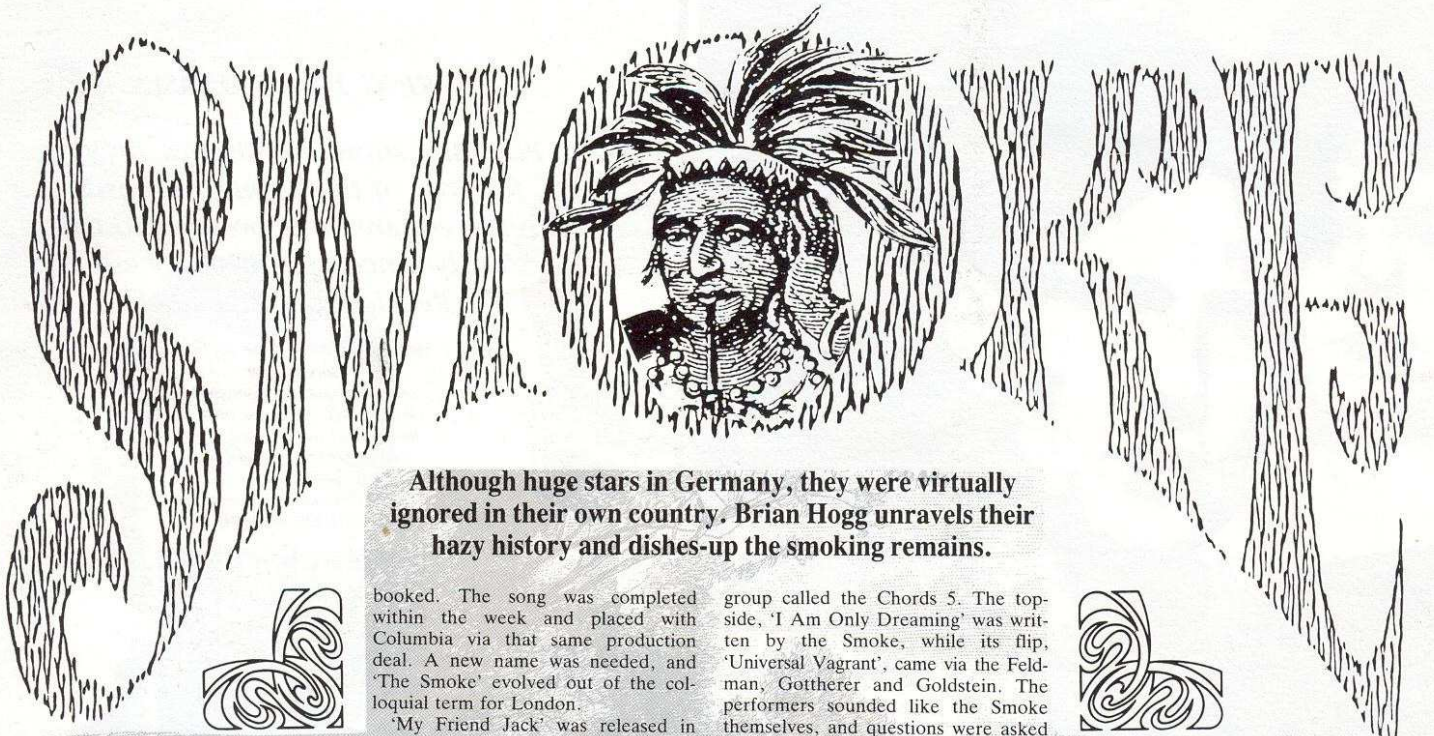
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Although huge stars in Germany, they were virtually ignored in their own country. Brian Hogg unravels their hazy history and dishes-up the smoking remains.

Their somewhat confusing history first began to surface in 1965 when the saga of the Shots ran through the publicity machine. Originally based in Yorkshire, the Shots – Mick Rowley (v.), Mal Luker (g.), Phil Peacock (r.g.), John 'Zeke' Lund (b.) and Geoff Gill (d.), had secured several dates on the then-current P.J. Proby tour, and had been seen by one Alan Brush. Brush not only owned car showrooms and several gravel pits, he was also a self-made millionaire and now harboured a yearning for a place in pop management. He approached the Shots with an offer impossible to refuse; his Georgian house was put at their disposal, beside it he erected a marquee and p.a. system, exclusively for their rehearsals.

A chain of events followed. Jack Segal, their booking agent, made contact with Monty Babson, producer at Lansdowne Studios, who in turn had an independent licencing deal with EMI. Two songs from the Shots' set, 'Keep A Hold Of What You Got' and 'She's A Liar', were then cut as their debut single, which duly appeared on Columbia in October 1965. Tough and spikey, both songs showed how confident the group already were; the writer, 'A. Maldon' is, in fact, a pseudonym for all five members.

By November, however, all dreams had been dashed. Despite a tour and some startling trousers (see also 'Koobas, the'), the single had stiffed with Brush's promise of clearing 50,000 copies faltering when he failed to muster that number of people to actually buy them. Disillusioned, the Shots left the mansion and Essex, and returned to Yorkshire, leaving two songs, 'There She Goes' and 'Walk Right Out The Door', unreleased.

They journeyed back to London about a year later, and turned up at Lansdowne to play some new songs. Since the Shots, Phil Peacock had dropped out, opting for a life at home, while the remaining four had continued to write and release a whole series of originals. Monty Babson was impressed and set an appointment to work on demos, but when the group pulled out 'My Friend Jack', almost as an afterthought, a proper session was

booked. The song was completed within the week and placed with Columbia via that same production deal. A new name was needed, and 'The Smoke' evolved out of the colloquial term for London.

'My Friend Jack' was released in February 1967 and its effortless commerciality, coupled with that riveting, arresting, opening burst, assured its instant appeal. Pirate Radio loved it, heavy airplay followed and the single cracked the Top 50 within a fortnight of release. Problems, however, loomed large when the line "My Friend Jack eats sugar lumps" was contrived into a celebration of drug abuse. The national climate, hysterical over the Rolling Stones' bust, LSD and moral decline, was such that the Bishop of Southwark contacted Sir Joseph Lockwood, the head of EMI, to complain about the Smoke's innocuous charms. Word came from high to pull the single and it was dropped by the label like a hot brick. A counter-culture legend may well have been created, but it scuppered the Smoke's British career.

On the continent, and in particular Germany, there was no such difficulty. 'My Friend Jack' smashed its way to No. 1 and stayed there for seven weeks. The Smoke were stars, touring to packed-house mayhem in much the same way as the Creation and John's Children would. Their German outlet, Metronome, demanded an album and the stupidly rare *It's Smoke Time* was duly cut in London, made up mostly of the songs which had been played to Babson at that early meeting.

Many of these tracks were pulled off as singles in various different countries (see discography, the); meanwhile the Smoke's British output was limited to 'If The Weather's Sunny/I Would If I Could', which appeared in August 1967. It wasn't wildly successful, and indeed relations between Babson and the group were quickly souring. Unhappy at their miserly home success and doubtlessly blaming the EMI deal, the two sides began to break apart with Babson finally selling the Smoke's contract to Chris Blackwell, who had been acting as the group's manager. Blackwell was, of course, simultaneously running Island Records and was in the process of expanding its catalogue away from Bluebeat and Ska and into white acts, firstly with the VIPs and the Circles, and latterly with Traffic and Nirvana.

Now comes the confusion. In October 1967, Island released a single by a

group called the Chords 5. The top-side, 'I Am Only Dreaming' was written by the Smoke, while its flip, 'Universal Vagrant', came via the Feldman, Gottherer and Goldstein. The performers sounded like the Smoke themselves, and questions were asked over this subterfuge. There are several theories:- that these were two old cuts recorded between the Shots and the Smoke which Blackwell, as their manager, owned. This is somewhat reinforced by the fact that the single appeared on the 'old style' Island label, white and red as opposed to pink. Conversely, it could have arisen over some wrangle with Monty, where pseudonyms were the better part of an injunction. Lastly, perhaps the Smoke viewed their old name as a liability, and sensing British hostility since 'My Friend Jack', aimed at a new career as the Chords 5. Answers, opinions and theories on a postcard please – of course, it might not have been the Smoke at all.....

Whatever the reason for the Chords 5 confusion, by November 1967, 'the Smoke' was back again when Island released 'It Could Be Wonderful'/'Have Some More Tea' under that name. Sadly, the single did very little, although it would be the subject of a curious American cover version by the Epic Splendour on the equally strange Hot Biscuit Company. A second Island 45, coupling 'Utterly Simple' with 'Sidney Gill', was readied for release and given a catalogue number, but it was never officially issued.

With that, the group's career at Island drew to a close. Blackwell had been using Babson's new Morgan studios for several of his acts and on one occasion he brought the Smoke down there. Having run off a few cuts, Blackwell then drew Babson aside and asked him to take "the lads" into the bar, and keep them there awhile, during which time he drove off with the van, taking all the equipment the roadies had stealthily removed from the studio while the Smoke had been gulping back the booze. This was Blackwell's way of ditching a group he didn't want anymore and repossessing the gear their royalties would never cover. Of course, without the means of making music, the Smoke's career seemed, effectively, to be over.

Naturally, this wasn't all of the story. The mysterious Chords 5 then made at least two appearances and two singles, 'Same Old Fat Man' and 'Some People', were released on Polydor and

Jay Boy respectively. Neither would make any impression, and it was during this time that the original Smoke really began to disintegrate. Mike Ridley settled in Germany, while Mal, Zeke and Geoff returned to both Morgan and Monty Babson, where they worked as maintenance engineers and tape operators.

By being in the studios, the trio found themselves able to work in between bookings or when no-one else was scheduled. They also began to bring in friends and acquaintances who also had something to offer, but such tales are best told elsewhere, and will be. In the meantime a succession of releases followed, all credited to 'The Smoke', some of which were released, but many of which were left in the can. Those which did appear were licensed to any label showing interest, most of which were, not un-naturally, on the continent. By this time Lund, Luker and Gill had been joined by Will Malone from the Orange Bicycle, yet another group that Babson had produced, and yet another essential part of the Morgan backroom. Such arrangements were, at best, shifting and Cliff Wade, Danny Beckerman (of Pussy and Fortes Mentum) and Steve Howden (of Jude) all gave out a helping hand when required.

The Smoke, under whatever aggregation but usually with Gill and Malone to the fore, continued into the 1970s, with 'Ride Ride Ride (Dick Turpin)' on Pageant Records and 'Shagalagalalu' and 'Sugar Man' both of which appeared on German BASF. Geoff and Will also worked as Fickle Pickle, (on Fontana and B&C), but their output gradually decreased as Morgan's own workload broadened. Geoff Gill still managed a retreat of 'My Friend Jack' for a French 're-issue', but the opportunities for such studio fun was now ebbing. If Stax failed to maintain its houseband, what chance had Morgan? Thus the story of the Smoke trickled to a close, but few could match their tortuous path. They took with them a final stab at the old-style lapa-lease independent companies, overtaken by the events and changes happening on the outside of them.

THE SMOKE

IT'S JUST YOUR WAY OF LOVIN'
IF THE WEATHER'S SUNNY
I WOULD IF I COULD BUT I CAN'T
WAKE UP CHERYLINA



impact
IMP 200.012 M

U.K. Discography:-

- By the Shots:-
10/65: Keep A Hold Of What You Got/
She's A Liar: Columbia DB 7713
- By the Smoke:-
02/67: My Friend Jack/We Can Take It: Columbia DB 8115
08/67: If The Weather's Sunny/
I Would If I Could But I Can't: DB 8252
11/67: It Could Be Wonderful/
Have Some More Tea: Island WIP 6023
07/68: Utterly Simple/Sydney Gill: WIP 6031
00/73: Sugar Man/That's What I Want: Regal Zonophone RZ 3071.
- By Chords 5:-
10/67: I Am Only Dreaming/Universal Vagrant: Island WIP 3044
00/68: Same Old Fat Man/Hold On To Everything
You've Got: Polydor 56261
00/68: Some People/Battersea Fair: Jay Boy 6

Selected foreign releases:-

- France:-
00/67: My Friend Jack/Don't Lead Me On/
We Can Take It/Waterfall: Impact IMP 200.010 M
00/67: It's Just Your Way Of Lovin'/
If The Weather's Sunny/
I Would If I Could But I Can't/
Wake Up Cherylina: IMP 200.012 M
00/68: Have Some More Tea/
Victor Henry's Cool Book: IPX 20.503
00/70: Jack Is Back/That's All I Want: Soul Record S.R. 13
- Germany:-
00/67: My Friend Jack/We Can Take It: Metromone B 1662
00/67: High In A Room/If The Weather's Sunny: B 1675
00/67: Have Some More Tea/
Victor Henry's Cool Book: B 1679
00/68: Sydney Gill/It Could Be Wonderful: B 1697
00/73: Sugar Man/That's What I Want: BASF 05 19151-0
00/74: Shagalagalu/Gimmie Good Loving: 06 11906-2
00/67: **It's Smoke Time:** Metronome MLP 15.279
My Friend Jack/Waterfall/You Can't Catch Me/
High In A Room/Wake Up Cherylina/Don't Lead Me On/
We Can Take It/If The Weather's Sunny/I Wanna Make
It With You/It's Getting Closer/It's Just Your Way
Of Lovin'/I Would If I Could But I Can't

Record by the Smoke bearing no relation to the group in question here:-
00/70: Dreams Of Dreams/My Birth: Revolution REVP 1002

(But still a great progressive-sike single and worth hunting down!)



TEN CLASSIC BOND SINGLES

1. THE JAMES BOND THEME John Barry Columbia DB4898
2. GOLDFINGER John Barry United Artists UP 1068
3. 007 John Barry Ember EMB 5181
4. FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE Matt Monro Parlophone R 5068
5. YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE John Barry CBS 2825
6. THUNDERBALL Tom Jones Decca F 12292
7. O.H.M.S.S. John Barry CBS 4680
8. GOLDFINGER Shirley Bassey Columbia DB 7360
9. YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE Nancy Sinatra Reprise RS 20595
10. MOONRAKER Shirley Bassey United Artists UP 602

"SILVER SURF



'IN ALL THE
THERE IS NO PL
EXILED HERE UP
EARTH I AM A **STRA**
STRANGERS, AN **ALIE**
RACE OF **MEN.**' THE SILVE
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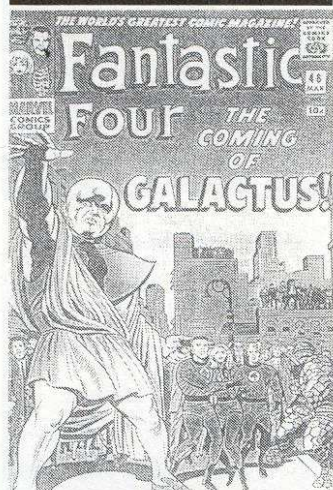
SURFER

"Sorcerer Of Spray"
Tyrannosaurus Rex
— 'Wind Quartets'

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K NATION.

BY JACK MORTON



This ideosyncratic character first appeared in March 1966, soaring out of the pages of *Fantastic Four* 48. He was the herald of Galactus, an all-powerful entity who fed from the energy of planets and thus roamed the infinite galaxies in search of likely scan. Having led his master to Earth, 'Whitey', as Ben Grimm preferred to call him, fell into blind Alicia's apartment, was moved by her plea for Man's survival and subsequently joined Reed and Co. in battling his ex-employer. In spite, the all-powerful one stripped the Surfer of his cosmic freedom, exiling him on Earth. Doctor Doom then did the dirty on him, mankind would never trust him after bringing Galactus in the first place, whilst The Thing was jealous of Alicia's attentions. Clearly Whitey wasn't glad to be here.



The Surfer reappeared in issue 53, complete with his newfound silver treads. He and Ben fought it out over several pages before both 'said uncle' and retired. Whitey then set about the Hulk in *Tales To Astonish* 93, but his most dramatic return followed in 1968. *Fantastic Four* 72 has Reed and Sue preparing for a baby, an ad for the Mothers' album *We're Only In It For The Money* and the Silver One destroying chunks of the world in an effort to unite us in a common purpose, at least until the F.F.'s sonic shark slows him down. Two issues later, Galactus was back, looking for his former herald whom the Fantastic Four then hid for three issues (74, 75 and 76). It was these stories in particular which did much to

prepare the way for Marvel's next move — 'The Sentinel Of The Space-way' — the Silver Surfer's own book.

Issue 1 — Published August 1968.

The bulk of this story deals with Whitey's origins and his life as Norrin Radd on the planet Zenn La, a high-tec place without real soul or substance. A restless soul, even then, only the charms of Shalla Bal saved him from terminal melancholia. 'In every star, in every sun I see her face,' says Norrin, but would sacrifice it all to serve Galactus in a pact which stopped the great one destroying his world. The mag closed with a precis of the big fights from *Fantastic Four* and set the scene for the Surfer's own destiny.

Issue 2 — Published October 1968.

The first chunk has the usual Whitey fare — Man does the dirty on him, he recalls days with Shalla Bal and gets miffed at Earth's poverty, crime and dictatorships. The trouble really begins when aliens appear — the Brotherhood of Badoon — bad guys here to do the usual stuff (world domination, death and the like) but who are invisible to everyone except our hero. So when he grapples with 'the ultimate weapon — the Monster', it looks like a case of wanton delinquency and the Army's big guns are called in. The Brotherhood are nonetheless forced to retreat; Whitey still manages to fight them off despite the Army's intervention, but a final twist is kept for the end. The Surfer could have escaped the force-field confining him to Earth by tailgating the alien's spacecraft, but instead withdraws to save a young woman, who he's then accused of attacking. It never rains but it pours.

Issue 3 — December 1968.

Having been driven away from the hospital tending to the girl injured in issue 2, the Surfer loses his cool and almost destroys the Earth. Fortunately, he decides that it isn't a good thing to do. The meat of the book is a struggle between Whitey and Mephisto, God of evil, who nastily brings Shalla Bal to Earth to serve as a pawn in the fight. Good naturally wins, but at the close Shalla is zonked back to Zenn La forever (or so it seems.)

Issue 4 — February 1969.

The Surfer does battle with Loki, Thor and Balder. A Lot of huff and puff, but a rather ordinary issue. Sadly too, the standard of artwork set in issue 3 wasn't continued, although the cover shot is pretty striking.

Issue 5 — April 1969.

Much better. Whitey falls from the sky in a vain attempt at breaking through the barrier. He's befriended by Al Harper, a black physicist, who tries to build a machine to counteract the effect of the force field. There's some nice touches when the Surfer dons clothes in an effort to earn the money required for funding, but his personal hopes are sidetracked as he battles with the Stranger, yet another out-of-space cadet wishing harm on dear old Earth. While they fight, Al Harper searches for the null-life bomb, which he deactivates only to die from its booby-trapped charge. The sub-plots and twists in this issue are superb, the grappling is merely a hinge to make other, more important, statements work.

Issue 6 — June 1969.

The Surfer has a brainwave. He decides to use his cosmic speed to propel himself into the future where, he hopes, the force-field will have disappeared. Surprise surprise, it has, but so too has most of the Universe, destroyed by a mutant despot, the Overlord. Whitey and he lock antlers and there's a bit of killing before our hero flips back in time to stop the atomic accident which brought about the Overlord's mutation. He was thus not born, leaving the future Universe free from his havoc. Of course this gives the Surfer deep thoughts — 'Is the Cosmos itself but a flickering ember only to be snuffed out at will?' Well, it's better than a dog's dream. Not a very good issue.

Issue 7 — August 1969.

Befriended by a descendant of Baron Frankenstein, the Surfer is duped into believing he's a misunderstood dogooder-nice bloke. (Lon Chaney reruns obviously hadn't reached Zenn La.) Always looking for the greater good, the Silver One swallows his line about finding a cure for crime and war. Instead, it's really some hocus pocus ray, Experiment X, which will transform a blob of clay into a Surfer replica while the real one dies. Sensing mischief at the final moment, Whitey breaks free to do battle with his alter ego. Our hero wins, his dopelganger is extinguished, but not before mankind blames the 'real' one for all his foe's destruction. In the meantime Borgo, Frankie's servant, kills his master and himself in a turn around worthy of Grima Wormtongue.

Issue 8 — September 1969.

The first bi-monthly Silver Surfer, cut down from a Giant 25c to the standard 15c issue. Indeed this issue and the next were set as a 40 pager, and the switch was thus somewhat sudden. The piece (not surprisingly) is a mite inconclusive; an introduction rather than a self-contained work, but Mephisto is back, conjuring up the Flying Dutchman to fight our hero.

Issue 9 — October 1969.

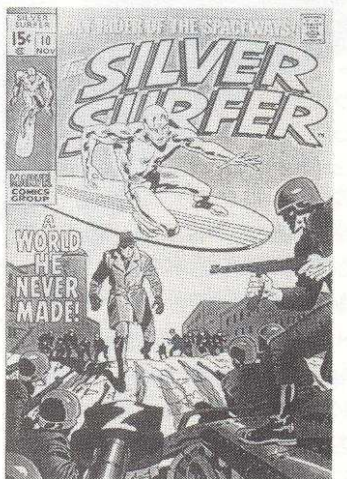
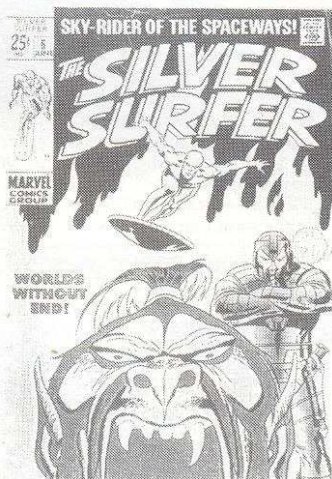
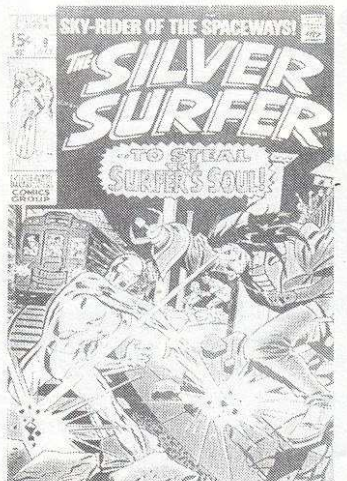
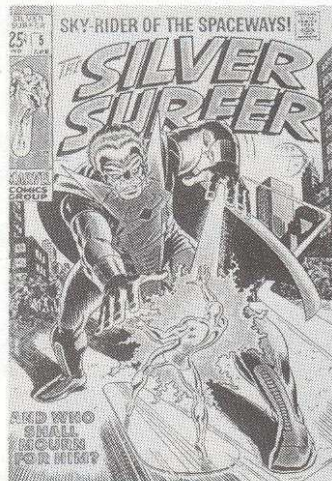
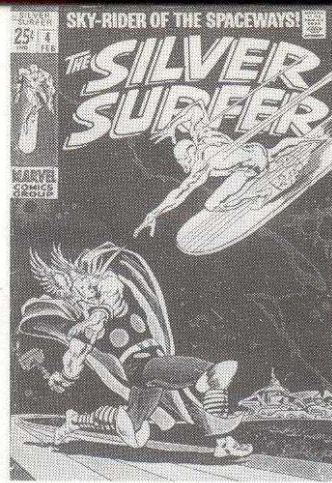
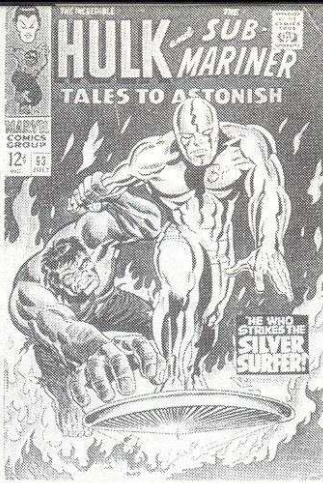
The rarest 'S.S.', due, I guess, to the problems over the new schedule. Anyhow, the Dutchman (aka the Ghost) scaps with the Surfer until Mephisto's new henchman can't go on. In the end he refuses to serve his master further, the Silver One sheds a tear for him and, the legend satisfied, evil is thus cheated of two victims. O.K. I guess, but a bit of a filler.

Issue 10 — November 1969.

This begins back on Zenn La with Shalla Bal in turmoil. Only Yarro Gort, a rotter, can build a spaceship capable of travelling to Earth. He agrees to take her there, hoping to prove that Whitey has been unfaithful, and Shalla agrees that if the Surfer has, then she'll marry the nasty Gort. Meanwhile, our Silver chum has donned a hat and overcoat and moved to South America, where he becomes embroiled in local politics. He saves Donna Marie, a freedom fighter he meets there, who pluckers up in gratitude. Of course, it happens just as Shalla Bal is checking the videoscreen.

Issue 11 — December 1969.

This story concludes that in issue 10.



Yarro's ship is hit by crossfire during a skirmish and crashlands, and while the Surfer continues to aid the rebels, Gort sides with the repressive government forces. At the climax of the inevitable stramash, Shalla Bal is shot in the back and, in order to save her, Whitey has to send her back to Zenn La.

Issue 12 - January 1970.
The Surfer does battle with the Abomination, a big green thing called up by satanists. That'll teach 'em. Next.

Issue 13 - February 1970.
Whitey fights the Doomsday Man, a giant robot who takes to America carrying a cobalt bomb. His creator, Dr. Krotton, isn't all he seems and meets a suitable death while the Surfer hurls the deadly bomb into hyper space. Earthlings moan that he did little to save the Doc - if only they knew the truth.

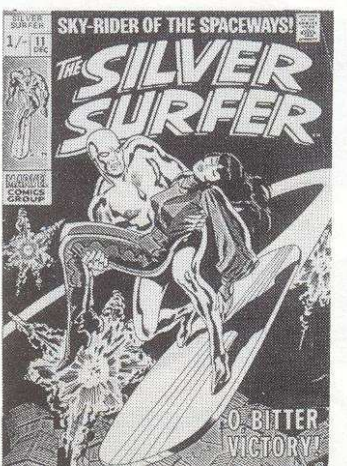
Issue 14 - March 1970.
The Surfer tangles with Spiderman: the

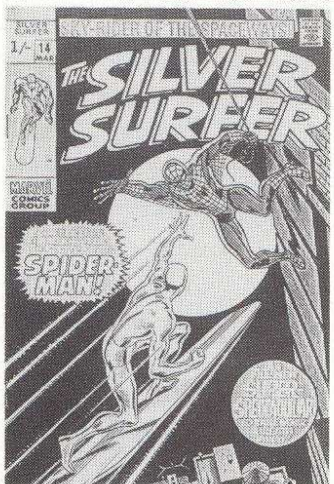
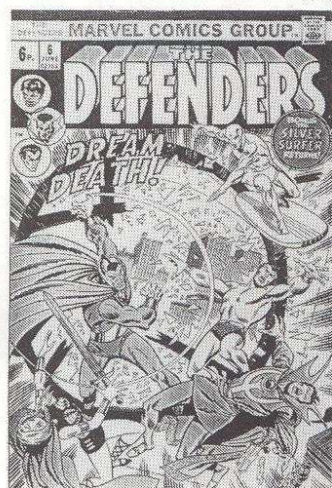
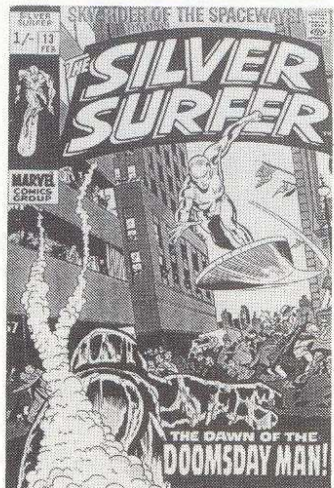
Army, ever eager for a blast at the Boardman, join in and there's a nice sideplot involving an idolitary boy. Whitey saves his life at great risk to himself (of course) and for once mankind sees his heroism. Cue cheers.

Issue 15 - April 1970.
After Spidey, the Human Torch. However, there's a twist in the tale; the pursuit is not in anger, but to ask for help. Whitey, now so suspicious, fights, expecting the worst, and feels such a fool at the end.

Issue 16 - May 1970.
Mephisto's back, mean and evil. He shows Whitey Shalla Bal, who he's just kidnapped, shivering and struggling for life. Our man, for once, gives in to temptation and agrees to do his adversary's bidding. 'Destroy S.H.I.E.L.D.,' he says, and so . . .

Issue 17 - June 1970.
Whitey biffs S.H.I.E.L.D. and Mephisto, briefly seeing Shalla Bal before the old devil whisks her off again. What a sore loser.



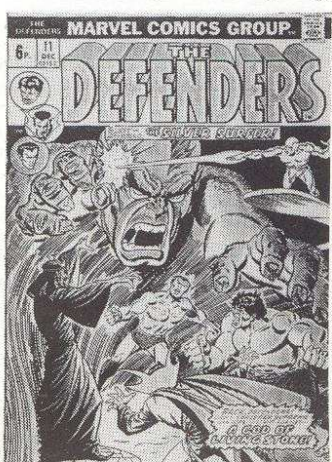
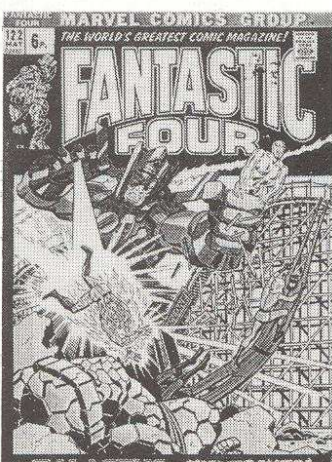


Issue 18 – September 1970.
 The only issue not drawn by John Buscema. Jack Kirby, the man who first created the Surfer, returns to the board and does a generally lousy job. 16 and 17 were bad enough, Buscema obviously did them in his sleep, but this was plain awful. Of course, Kirby was then heading off to Marvel's rival concern, D.C. . . . but that's another story. However, at a time when Neal Adams X-Men or Steranko's Nick Fury genuinely broke new ground, this

seemed unforgivable. The real reason, however, would soon become apparent. Whitey fights the Inhumans and really blows his cool at the end. 'Let mankind beware, the Surfer will be the deadliest one of all.' The next-month box promised us a 'Savagely new Silver Surfer' but it wouldn't come under his own masthead. The falling standard in artwork, the patchy texts and the unwelcome guest stars, all conspired to show a lack of direction. The title was wound up with this issue, dooming our hero to the kind of comic book wander-

ing his exile forced him to undertake on Earth. Over the years the Silver Surfer has made several reappearances. In 1971 he helped Thor fight in Asgard and then teamed with the Hulk and the Sub Mariner to battle it out with the Avengers. But the best cameo came in Fantastic Four 121/123 when Galactus returned. The scenes included one with Richard Nixon, there's some fine interplay between the Four and the Surfer and the whole piece easily bettered the bulk of Whitey's own later issues.

From then the roles have been intermittent, maligned, misunderstood but generally magnificent. The Surfer may have been a true hero, but it was hard to sustain any position. There was no alter-ego to extend the stories and interest – Spidey, Daredevil, they each had problems in civvies as well as in uniform all of which added to the interest of the title. Thumping into an unseemly barrier became tedious after a while and new dramatic developments were needed. They never came, and the Silver Surfer passed into legend.





AND A VOICE TO SING WITH
Joan Baez
Century £12.95

No-one will ever accuse Joan Baez of modesty. "I was born gifted", is not the most encouraging of introductions, especially to a book I approached with an air of trepidation. While enjoying her early work, I found her late 60's "bless you my child" attitude rather hard to stomach, and within a few pages a familiar feeling returned. Perhaps the ultimate frustration is that somewhere amongst it all a story worth telling. This, however, isn't it.

And A Voice To Sing With, an epi-

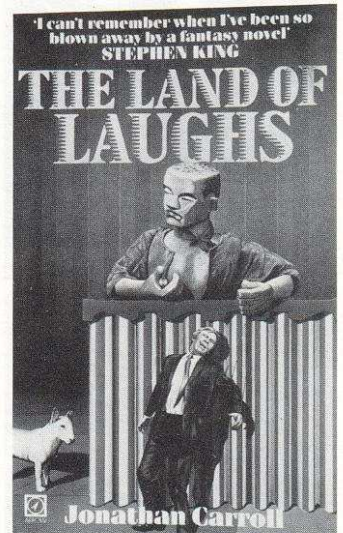
sodic 'memoir', covers Ms. Baez's evolution from virginal soprano folknik to global humanitarian. Yet while those aims are laudable, the account is couched in the smug conceit of the privileged liberal. We hear, oh how we hear, of pacifism and non-violence, and of Joan's roles in a succession of projects – the Disappeared in Argentina, the Irish Peace Movement and Poland's Solidarity. Yet the impression we get is of a flirt, an individual drifting in and out of other's problems, singing a song at an appropriately dramatic moment. Then, having dealt a matronly reprimand to anyone suggesting they fight against oppression, she returns to Carmel to record what she wore at the time. Her self-centredness knows no bounds; her piece on Spain, where we are led to believe that the Baez performance of 'La Pasionaria', a song previously banned, suddenly lifted Spanish people from the lingering yoke which followed Franco's death, would frankly be laughable had Ms. Baez not told it with such reverence.

This inflated view is seen everywhere. She carps over not being included on USA For Africa's 'We Are The World', and indeed it's this particular chapter which is perhaps most galling. Precious little is actually said on the tragedy of world hunger and,

having salivated over the appearance of Don Johnson, Ms. Baez then states "Hello gorgeous. Could we discuss the possibility of rape?" A singularly disgusting remark, and from such an 'enlightened' individual. But this is only one of the several seeming contradictions which at first puzzle then ultimately irritate and render this memoir deeply disappointing.

Read this book alongside *Is That It*, Bob Geldof's autobiography. I have little time for his music, and once had less for his public persona, but here is a work which is genuinely moving. *Is That It* has compassion, warmth and humanity, qualities which are sadly lacking in *And A Voice To Sing With*. At the end of the former is a man who's lived, at the end of the latter is someone who dabbles. Who has been more effective cannot be questioned. Ms. Baez's life is ultimately interesting only for those she know, be it Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Richard Farina or Martin Luther King. I wanted to touch and feel the atmosphere of those early days, to hear about these young performers, to savour the selflessness of the committed activist. None of that is here; this is merely a hollow shell and detracts from any respect Ms. Baez deserves for her beliefs.

Dimnes Cruickshank



Saxony Gardner, also a France devotee, set out for Galen, Missouri, France's final resting place, there to face the novelist's daughter, Anna, who is reputed to have little time for her father's fans – particularly those who would commit the great man's memory and talents to paper in the guise of a biography.

But when they get to Galen, Thomas and Anna find Anna much less formidable than her reputation suggests. In fact, they are warmly welcomed. Even expected! And from the first dreamy summer's day which marks their arrival in the little town, the young biographers learn that France's imagination was not limited to the pages of his books.

As we grow to know the character of Thomas Abbey, we learn of the profound influence exerted by the memory of his father. In fact, in all three Carroll books it is easy to detect death – or, more specifically, the death of someone close to the protagonist – as a central theme. Moreso, it is essential to the plot and structure of the stories, which are woven carefully and meticulously around the anxieties of the key players.

Voice Of Our Shadow, Carroll's second book, was written in 1983 and published in the following year. It, too, concerns death – this time it is the death of the leather-jacketed Ross Lennox. In its early stages, 'Voice' begins with some standard sibling rivalry, setting the scene for future events when a careless push from young Joe sends his bullying big brother sprawling across an electrified rail on a train track.

Unable to confess to his parents what he has done, Joe lives with the knowledge, translating his feelings of guilt into the basis of what becomes a hugely successful play, 'Voice Of The Shadow'. Becoming more and more introspective, Joe moves to Vienna where he meets India and Paul Tate, an itinerant American couple who represent the confidence and worldliness which he has never possessed.

Inevitably, Joe and India become more than just good friends and, before too long, the situation is further complicated by Paul's sudden death. But his departure from the world doesn't prevent Paul from continuing an involvement in Joe's life, and the book culminates in the most distressing scenes of rampant paranoia.

Not since John Irving has an



JOAN BAEZ
AND A VOICE
TO SING WITH



JOAN BAEZ
AND A VOICE TO SING WITH
A MEMOIR

BONES OF THE MOON
Arrow £2.50
THE LAND OF LAUGHS
Arrow £1.95
VOICE OF OUR SHADOW
Arrow £1.75
Jonathan Carroll

To the unsuspecting – and sceptical! – bookstore browser, Jonathan Carroll could have been simply the latest in a seemingly endless line of authors given the 'Bangor, Maine' seal of approval by the prolific Stephen King. That same browser may, of course, be forgiven for thinking that King may be more prolific in his reading than in his writing.

Sure enough, on the cover of Carroll's latest book, *Bones Of The Moon*, King trills 'This grand book is a triumph.' And, lets be fair; it is. But it

is also something much more.

'Masterpiece' and 'tour de force' are commonly used phrases these days, particularly by book reviewers – indeed the latter is not only used by Robert Wilson on the back of 'Bones', but also by Stanislaw Lem on the back of Carroll's first book, *The Land Of Laughs*. And neither of these men has overstated the case.

Of *The Land Of Laughs*, King says 'I can't remember when I've been so blown away by a fantasy novel.' Well, his sentiments are better than his memory assuming he's read as much as we think he has. For example, it's reasonable to class Robert Holdstock's wonderful *Mythago Wood*, from 1984, as a forerunner to 'Laughs'. In fact, it is possibly the most recent: before that, it was probably William Hope Hodgson's *The House On The Border-*

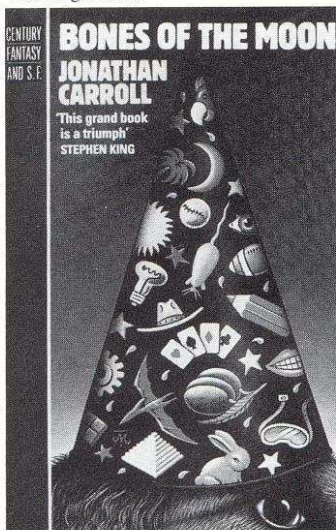
land (1908), and many of the numerous short works by the great Lord Dunsany.

Of course, the intervening years have seen many other notable attempts at straddling the fence betwixt the world we know and some other, more mysterious environs – *The Talisman*, King's own joint work with Peter Straub, is a fine example – but most are glorious failures. Sadly, such stories seem to be tall orders.

Written in 1980, and first published in the UK by Hamlyn Paperbacks in 1982, *The Land Of Luaghs* tells the story of Thomas Abbey, the lonely and introspective son of a Douglas Fairbanks-type of movie star, and his decision to write the biography of Marshall France, a famous author of children's books who died of a heart attack aged 44. Thomas and his lover,

American author so captured the feel and pace of a major European city. Carroll has that rare ability to make the alien commonplace, and the commonplace very strange indeed. But it is **Bones Of The Moon** which is surely Carroll's undisputed masterpiece. In it we meet Cullen James, plain but pretty, unlucky in love, and with one bad affair behind her which resulted in the termination of an unwanted pregnancy. However, things improve: Cullen meets Danny . . . they have a child . . . and then the dreams begin.

The dreams take place in Rondua, a strange Dali-esque land, through which Cullen is lead by a boy called Pepsi on a quest for the fabled bones of the moon. The fate of the world – possibly Earth as well as Rondua – lies in the hands of Cullen, Pepsi . . . and Mr. Tracy, a large dog who acts as a guide on their mission. With almost dizzying frequency, Cullen alternates between her worlds, continuing her quest in Rondua – over seas filled with oddly-named fish, across the Plain of Forgotten Machines and into the City of the Dead – and maintaining some semblance of normal family life for Danny and baby Mac. But, before long, bits of Rondua start creeping into Cullen's slice of twentieth century America – with alarming results.



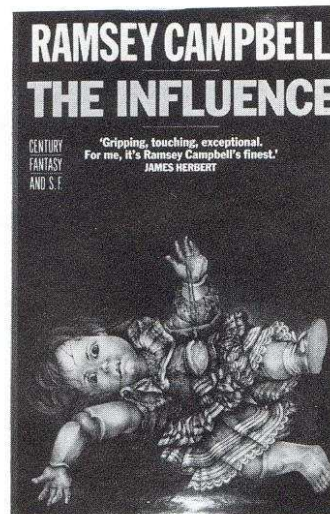
In **Bones Of The Moon**, Carroll has created one of the most beautiful pieces of pure allegory within the genre of the fantastic since David Lindsay's epic **A Voyage To Arcturus**. Indeed, the names are pure Lindsay (with a hearty doff of the cap to Mervin Peake, too!), while the landscape is a cross between Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear. Piling revelation upon revelation, Carroll regales the reader with a fascinating story of true devotion.

It would seem – at least according to the people at Century-Hutchinson/Arrow – that Carroll is, himself, something of a recluse, much in keeping with the character of Marshall France from **The Land Of Laughs**. Apparently, he keeps his private life private – and why not!

But, private or not, Carroll's work to date must place him securely among the front runners of contemporary fantasy/macabre fiction – despite the fact that, as yet, few people even know that he exists. I await his forthcoming **Sleeping In Flame** (Century hardback

– released 4th August) with considerably high expectations.

Peter Crowther.



THE INFLUENCE
Ramsey Campbell
Century £11.95

Have you ever looked across the table at someone you thought you knew real well – a friend, maybe – and suddenly realised that it wasn't them at all but somebody totally different? They look the same and they sound the same... but they're different? And you daren't say anything 'cos everyone'll think your brain's on the blink? Difficult situation.

And what if you actually *know* this new person who's inhabiting your friend's body? What about if this new person is someone who died recently? Starts getting even *more* complicated. But Ramsey Campbell's new shocker **The Influence**, his follow to last year's excellent **The Hungry Moon** (available in softback from Arrow £3.50), explores just such a premise.

Here, in Campbell's eighth novel, we meet Queenie, a matriarchal old crone, confined to bed and fighting death, making everyone else's life absolute misery. 'Everyone else' is Queenie's two daughters, Alison and Hermione, plus Alison's husband Derek and their eight year-old daughter, Rowan. It's through Rowan that Queenie decides to reincarnate – "You needn't die unless you choose to", she confines to her hapless family.

In essence, Queenie is a double for Stephen King's 'Gramma', from his 1985 collection **Skeleton Crew**. And, in fact, the entire situation is almost a direct continuation of themes started in Campbell's own **Incarinate**, from 1983, where a strange child, Eve, mysteriously appears and begins exerting influences on young Susan and her mother.

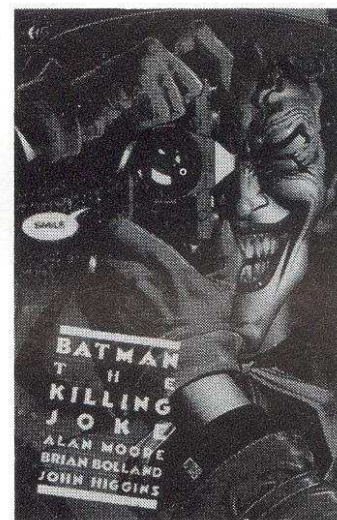
Campbell's almost Dickensian dedications to descriptions and prose are well to the forefront here, with dialogue kept to its usual absolute minimum. In the tradition of the great British ghost story writers – again, Dicken's own **The Signalman** comes quickly to mind – Campbell writes of the everyday, suffusing that which we find so similar with the darkest of overtones. Take his predilection for train carriages, for example: early in **Incarinate** Susan has a fairly nasty turn on a train, while in **The Influence** Rowan

finds herself hurtling through the blackness of the night aboard what she believes to be the night train to Chester. In Rowan's case, the train has the annoying habit of picking up unpleasant characters without even stopping at stations.

The rain-washed streets and beaches of Liverpool and North Wales are perfect settings for the sombre chain of events, giving an almost Lowry-like depiction of seemingly faceless people striving to make their way through life. And Campbell's total avoidance of humour only accentuates the hopelessness of the situation in which poor Alison finds herself, when she must tackle Queenie – now occupying Rowan's body – and restore her daughter without further increasing her husband's concern for her sanity.

The Influence may not be vintage Ramsey Campbell, though it does have more than its fair share of moments – certainly, I wouldn't go as far as James Herbert who, on the book's jacket, warbles 'For me, it's his finest.' Admittedly, one is left somewhat breathless – complete with all the usual palpitations – and feeling pretty well satiated. But there is something of a soap opera feel to the book's last third – almost like one of those lurid Gothic romances from the early 70's – and the ending is maybe a little too easy for total comfort.

Peter Crowther.



BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE
Alan Moore and Brian Bolland
Titan £1.95

BATMAN YEAR ONE
Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli
Warner US

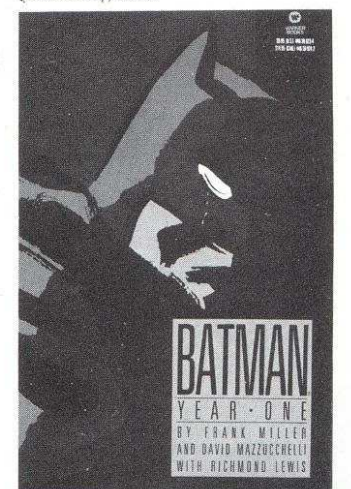
Alan Moore's highest profile release since **Watchmen** and Frank Miller's public follow-up to **The Dark Knight Returns** are two long and eagerly awaited batbooks, that's for sure. But can they live up to the weighty expectations heaped on their finely crafted pages?

Perhaps – depending on whose expectations you are looking at. **The Killing Joke** is masterfully etched by Brian Bolland – it took him a full two years to complete the artwork – and takes in all the Joker's in comic history from Bob Kane and Bill Finger's to Cesar Romero's. Carefully scripted by Moore, **The Killing Joke** is a brutal and immediate work, unravelling The Joker's obsessions and hatred with a



graphic clarity that can shock and provoke. However, we rarely delve beyond a mere character sketch of The Joker's psychological make-up – his insanity is attributed largely to 'one bad day', that particular day when things got so bad he flipped his wig. Henceforth we are presented with a black, sarcastic Joker, attempting to entice others over the brink. **The Killing Joke** is however a rewarding, if slim, volume – but **Watchmen 2** it ain't. But then again, it isn't supposed to be; written two years ago, Moore views it as merely an above average Batman tale that would fit well in an anthology. The fact that I'm searching for real depth of character is a sign of just how far comics, mainly through Miller and Moore's influence, have progressed; we'll have to wait for his next opus to clearly view **Watchmen's** successor.

Frank Miller's **Batman Year One** is a step back in time from **The Dark Knight Returns**; in **Dark Knight** Miller presented an ageing batperson giving it one more shot – here we backtrack towards the origins of the Batman. Certainly a more complex work, **Year One** reveals a corrupt police force attempting to nail Commissioner Gordon, a Catwoman with sleaze joint origins and a love of felines, as well as the caped ones reasons for beginning his crusade. **Batman Year One** ably introduces us to the yarn; plot and subplot are ingeniously interlaced, providing a highly readable, 'realistic' fantasy tale. Batman is brought well up to date with such scenes of vice and corruption: **Batman Year One** is a stimulating read.

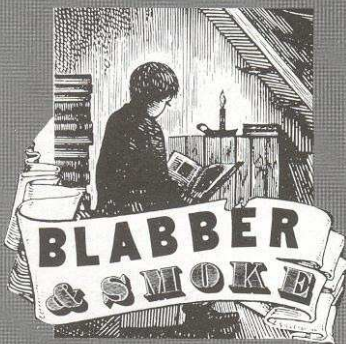


Both works are recommended; although Miller's is the more substantial, Bolland and Moore's fairground landscapes are similarly worth investigation.

Richard Noise.

The Return of H.P. Lovecraft

Peter Crowther
looks into the world of



"You're taking a slow walk up London's bookstore-littered Charing Cross Road. It's a gentle spring day and, with the wind blowing the way it is, you feel you can almost smell them. Millions of them. Musty old 'firsts' with chipped dust-jackets, slip-cased limited editions (numbered and signed!); gaudy coloured paperbacks; coverless old Hank Jansons in bargain bins galore; expensively produced remainders destined for a million uninterested coffee tables; lurid photographic collections of large bottomed girls, interested in flagellation and donkeys; original copies of Superman from the forties, and even crumbling issues of TV and Radio Times.

But there's something about the day that's just so special you can almost believe you could find something else. Something that you know doesn't exist. Not really. But what the hell. There's the sound of the traffic, the endless clatter of shoe heels on the pavements and the smell of hot chestnuts mingling with the fading musk of a thousand perfumes. And then you pass a store that you don't recall seeing before, way down a cobbled alley that maybe still has the original gaslamps from way back. You look in the window and see a shrew-faced little man staring myopically through the dirty glass into the alley. And hey! He's staring at you!

He beckons you to come in, waving nicotine-stained unmanicured hands encased in fingerless mittens. He mouths the words "Come in", and you hear them in your head. They have an inflection, don't they? Eastern bloc? Something Germanic... maybe Roumanian? Anyhow, you go in. The bell on the door jingles through the shop, and you wish it would stop: it sounds like it hasn't rung for years... maybe even centuries. And the old man croaks something to you and motions you to follow him as he shambles through a tattered curtain behind an old mahogany desk covered with cup-ringed and dust-smudged sheets of paper.

You go through the curtain and he's there, blowing dust off something that looks like a family bible but you know that it isn't. And he hands it to you.

You can almost feel the power: it's like holding a cardboard box containing a small animal. But there's an urgency here. You move the book to one hand and rub at the dust with the other, not caring about how dirty you're getting. And there it is. (N...) You rub a little bit more (E - C - R...) give a little blow, gently now. (O - N - O - M...)

Your heart's beating like it's going to blow, like some old Dallas gusher. And the old man is chuckling, wheezy-like, almost gasping, and you look back at the book. Is it your imagination, or is it actually moving, shuddering, in your hands? (I - C - O - N!)

And you look up again but the proprietor has gone, though you didn't see or hear him leave. You look down at the book, read the word embossed in a thick but spidery scrawl - *Necronomicon*.

You turn around and... isn't there something crouched over there? Along the middle aisle, away from the weak glow of the grimy shadeless bulb hanging in the centre of the shop. Something on all fours, snuffling, breathing heavy, like it isn't used to our air. You peer into the gloom but you just can't make it out.

Outside, the day is growing old, darkness is creeping down around the myriad store-fronts and, somehow, you don't seem to be able to hear the traffic any more. And the thing in the aisle has reared up to its full height... but the light is getting really bad now... was that an arm waving in front of it? You stare hard, screwing up your eyes, into the gloom. Was it... more than one arm? The shuffling noise gets closer, and you know you should go. You see the movement again, but this time don't they look like... tentacles?

You start to back out of the shop, banging into things that shouldn't be there - that aren't there, damn it! - and you turn around at about the same time as the chanting starts. The last thing you see is the teeth, glinting, coming nearer...

And then the bulb pops and everything goes dark. And very warm."

Hey, loosen up. We're only kiddin', okay? The cliché-ridden prose above is actually a not-very-serious attempt to convey some of the spirit and style of

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) who, in only two decades, set a literary yardstick against which horror fiction is still being measured more than half a century later. And the good news is that the legendary Arkham House publishers have made all of Lovecraft's work available again, so you don't have to buy any of those annoying duplication-filled compilations.

Three beautifully produced volumes - *The Dunwich Horror And Others*, *At The Mountains Of Madness and Dagon And Other Macabre Tales* - contain all of the short stories and novels which Lovecraft actually completed. Another two equally handsome volumes - *The Watchers Out Of Time and The Horror In The Museum And Other Revisions* represent unfinished manuscripts - completed by Lovecraft's dear friend and collaborator August Derleth (*Watchers*) and, in the case of the latter, a 'Best Of' type selection of those manuscripts sent to Lovecraft for revision. The *Museum* set includes some absolute gems otherwise very difficult to find, so don't be tempted to dismiss the book simply because HPL didn't write it!

With few exceptions, the fiction here falls into two distinct categories: the mundane and the cosmic. The former would include such works as *Herbert West - Reanimator* (1921-22; recently filmed as *Reanimator*), while the latter would unquestionably contain *The Call Of Cthulhu* (1926). It is perhaps this story's opening sentence which so perfectly sums up the attraction and durability of the man as an author: "The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all of its contents."

Lovecraft's stories involved ancient races, dead and gone for millennia yet pacing impatiently around various interdimensional gateways, thirsting for human sustenance. According to Lovecraft, there are 'way stations' on the Earth, weakened areas where the energies of 'the Old Ones' are stronger; his stories often relate the events invoked by hapless and doomed individuals with a fascination for (and dalliance in) timeless blasphemies. The most renowned of these is Abdul Alhazred's *Necronomicon*, a fabled (and fictitious!) book of spells and incantations reputed to give the user

power over the Old Ones. Needless to say, it never worked out quite the way the book's owner intended.

Over a period of less than twenty years - from 1917's *The Tomb* to 1935's collaboration with Kenneth Sterling, *In The Walls Of Eryx* - Lovecraft created a small but ultimately influential body of work, appreciated by only a handful of followers. In fact, at the time of his death only two of his books had been published, and even these were privately printed slim volumes with but a limited circulation. Hardly anything of his output was assembled between hard covers during his lifetime. And in the early years, Lovecraft's stories gave no real foretaste of the magic which was to come.

The subject matter of Lovecraft's seminal work was occasionally somewhat pedestrian - certainly by his own later standards - but the delivery of his narrative was incredibly powerful and extremely innovative. "The time is past," he once said, "when adults can accept marvelous conditions for granted."

Steeping his tales in thick blocks of description and long rambling words, Lovecraft carefully and lovingly constructed demon-ridden vistas and haunted forests and towns... the staple diet for the horror story as it was to become. Half a century before Stephen King brought Messrs. Straker and Barlow to the sleepy Southern Maine township of Jerusalem's Lot, Lovecraft transported his own malevolent and indescribably powerful demons to other New England locations.

Also available to complement this fine set - and also from Arkham - are five volumes of selected letters sent by Lovecraft to the likes of Clark Ashton Smith, Donald Wandrei, Frank Belknap Long and *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright. I must confess that I found the prospect of sifting through some two thousand pages of "Dear so and so, regards Howard" somewhat daunting, but in fact these looks behind the man are perhaps the most interesting, certainly to those who may already be familiar with his other work. For example, HPL's humble 1927 letter to Wright, thanking him for accepting *The Call Of Cthulhu*, is a classic: "I can most

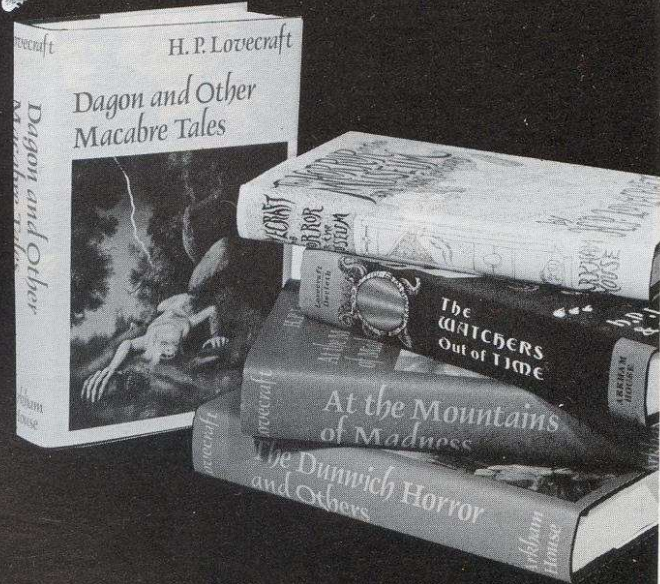
Hoodoo

emphatically and advantageously use any royalties, be they ever so humble," he tells Wright.

It's interesting to note, however, that Lovecraft himself can really only accept full credit for 12 tales in the Cthulhu Mythos, plus two brochures — *History and Chronology of the "Necronomicon"* (1936) and *Fungi from Yuggoth* (1941) — although it is conservatively estimated that other writers have expanded the canon to around the 150-200 mark. Recent notable examples — at least for style, if not, strictly speaking, for content — must include Ramsey Campbell's 1986 novel, *The Hungry Moon*, and it is almost certain that further works are in progress.

Lovecraft was a craftsman, not only of the horror story — for we have surely, to this day, seen none better — but also of our language. He has not, however, escaped totally without criticism. Indeed, it must be said, that his text is precise and correct, sometimes to the point of dryness; his pace is leisurely, sometimes to the point of being slow; his characters are humourless and two-dimensional; his dramatic devices become increasingly obvious from story to story — particularly his denouements; he cannot write dialogue; his prose is sometimes cumbersome and adjectively florid, almost to the point of being purple. But there is still that breathless anticipation of the next word, the next revelation. Certainly, the construction of his work is meticulous — particularly his shorter pieces — and, most of all, that dark and depressed, wildly evocative imagination is absolutely faultless.

Lovecraft's characters and protagonists were inevitably star-crossed and marked by fate, but they were always literate and charming. They went to their fate like the gentlemen they were, accepting their lot with good grace and boundless humility — and invariably they were taken through the most awesome chains of events ... paraded before the most foul abominations ... forced to endure the most agonising and humiliating tortures ... for the longest times. Indeed, if we are to believe the great man's words, then we must accept that many of his creations are, to this day, continuing to suffer his torments. If only he were still around to provide us with more.



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The Byrds – Notorious Byrd Brothers (Edsel ED 262) – Never Before (Murrayhill/Re-Flyte MH 70318 US)

The Dillards – I'll Fly Away (Edsel ED 246)

Spirit – Clear (Edsel ED 268)

Sons Of Chaplin – Marin County Sunshine (Decal LK 21)

Clear Light – Black Roses (Edsel ED 245)

Townes Van Zandt – Our Mother The Mountain (Decal LK 17)

Phil Ochs – All The News That's Fit To Sing (Edsel ED 247)

– A Toast To Those Who Are Gone (Edsel ED 242)

The Youngbloods – The Youngbloods (Edsel ED 271)

– Earth Music (Edsel ED 274)

– Elephant Mountain (Edsel ED 276)

Elsewhere in this issue are the routes by which The Byrds arrived at Country Rock. Coincidentally, a series of current re-issues form bookends to that tale. Edsel have newly licensed **The Notorious Byrd Brothers**, arguably the group's most inventive offering, where, cut down by desertions, rancour and bad blood, those remaining nonetheless salvaged a masterpiece. McGuinn and Hillman, the last original members left standing at the end, somehow rode the storm and finished a collection which has many peaks and few stumbles. The ghost of David Crosby, fired midway through the sessions, certainly hovers on 'Tribal Gathering', 'Dolphin's Smile' and 'Draft Morning', three undoubted highlights, but 'Natural Harmony', 'Change Is Now' and 'Wasn't Born To Follow' are equally exquisite. An essential collection, the blend of Country, technology and those ethereal voices was never quite so special; it remains, alongside **Younger Than Yesterday** (also available on Edsel) definitive Byrdsmusic.

The final straw precipitating Crosby's departure was 'Triad', a song McGuinn and Hillman had found wanting, and which is now a vital part of **Never Before**, the long awaited compilation of rare Byrd's masters. But while applauding its existence, a handful of reservations arise to detract from wholehearted ecstasy. I greet the inclusion of a 'previously unheard stereo mix' with the enthusiasm of a late Hibs equaliser, and three tracks here, 'Mr. Tambourine Man', 'I Knew I'd Want You' and 'Lady Friend' are thus, to me, barely interesting. Indeed, while acknowledging that the second of those is improved, 'Lady Friend' is dealt a crippling blow, with 80's upfront drumming and a separation which mars the thrill of the original. I'll stay with the muffled but magnificent mono.

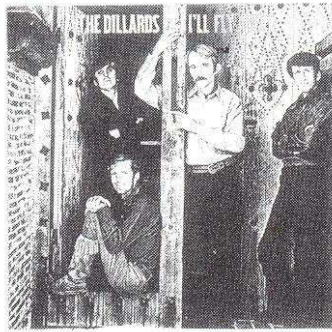
This leaves seven tracks, all of which are to varying degrees new. Alongside

'Triad', which had yet to complete the free grace Crosby would later give the song, but still sounds wonderful, are four which can be heard in other forms. 'She Has A Way', which first appeared on **Preflyte**, herein comes from the group's debut album sessions, while 'It's All Over Now Baby Blue', later recut for **The Ballad Of Easy Rider**, also dates from 1965 and was briefly considered as The Byrds third single. Both are superb and their original exclusion over such peripheral items as 'Oh Susanna' and 'We'll Meet Again' is truly a mystery. Yet they are somewhat overshadowed by 'Eight Miles High' and 'Why', the infamous RCA studio versions recorded a month prior to those officially released. 'Eight Miles High' in particular is more spikey and angular, as the group feels its way through what was such a cataclysmic song. Their edginess is apparent, making both uniquely exciting, and while neither matches the 'authorised' recordings (despite the legend), they do certainly come close.

The final pieces, 'Never Before' and 'It Happens Each Day', have languished unheard for over twenty years. The former is a Gene Clark powerhouse, the last track he cut before his departure, and carries in it the excellence his songs from that period always had. The latter is by Crosby, and was recorded at the same time as 'Everybody's Been Burned' from **Younger Than Yesterday**. It boasts a similar haunting quality, the kind of floating fragility which had made many of David's compositions so special and so lasting.

To complete the package, **Never Before** comes with a booklet crammed with photographs, memories and a complete Byrds session file for up to 1967. This shows almost a dozen more unissued tracks, some of which could have been used to bolster this album's short playing time. 'I Know My Rider', for example, is freely in circulation amongst tape collectors, and its exclusion from this set is disappointing. All that aside, **Never Before** is nonetheless welcome and worth the price of admission for 'It Happens Each Day' alone.

I'll Fly Away makes up the third part of this loose trilogy. It compiles the bulk of **Wheatstraw Suite** and **Copperfields**, albums which brought The Dillards back in from the cold and established their credentials as prime Country Rock exponents. Their blend is exceptional; the harmonies are inch tight, floating over a sea of mandolins, dobros electric guitars, bolstered by the once sacrilegious drumkit. Traditional songs sit beside folk and Beatlebeat, but interpreted in such a way that they are given The Dillards' unique stamp.



There are several highlights (Eric Anderson's 'Close The Door Lightly', Jesse Lee Kincaid's 'She Sang Hymns Out Of Tune'), which are matched by some exceptional originals in 'Copperfields' itself, 'Hey Boys' and 'Nobody Knows'. As always some omissions can be queried – the sublime 'Lemon Chimes' is unaccountably absent – but nothing really detracts from what is a joyous record. **I'll Fly Away** proves that The Dillards deserve to be placed with The Byrds, Burritos and Dillard and Clark. Too often their influence has been overlooked – this collection must redress that balance.

In several ways **Clear** was Spirit's most perplexing long player. Issued in the summer of 1969, it was their third album, following from an eponymous debut and **The Family That Plays Together**. A remarkable group, they somehow pulled together some wildly different styles – the harmony pop of Jay Ferguson, the somewhat more unorthodox perspective of guitarist

Randy California, the jazz lore of John Locke and Ed Cassidy – and came up with an engaging stew. But where as those elements were once fused together, here they became diffuse and separate, beginning the break-up which pulled this combination apart.

Perhaps it's the three instrumentals ('Clear', 'Ice' and 'Caught') which upset the album's balance. Undoubtedly worthwhile, they nonetheless alter its perspective, especially as they are all placed on one side. The first two are part of the film soundtrack from **The Model Shop** that Spirit performed for, much more of which sadly lies on the cutting room floor. On the other hand, **Clear** also boasts some of their finest songs – the pulsating 'Dark Eyed Woman', the mature 'So Little Time To Fly', the complex 'New Dope In Town' – yet these are undermined by the mawkish 'Give A Life Take A Life' and the frivolous 'I'm Truckin''. Disappointing upon release, it's now possible to appreciate **Clear's** context. The good bits still have class and style, while the poorer sections don't aggravate in the same way. While short of the standard of its predecessors, this is still a collection worth investigation.

The Sons Of Champlin were one of San Francisco's more ideosyncratic talents. Seemingly always confined to the fringes, their story is more often told as a footnote to others such as Moby Grape or Big Brother And The Holding Company. Decal's compilation, **Marin County Sunshine**, takes in performances from the group's three Capitol albums, **Loosen Up Naturally**, **The Sons . . .** (both from 1969) and **Follow Your Heart** (1971), and perfectly captures the group's vibe and vision. Wine, love and Panama Red sweep through their music, especially on the cuts pulled from their debut, which makes up more than half of this collection. Different to their contemporaries, the group hadn't spread from the North Beach Coffee scene, but had instead begun playing solid R&B; a ragged horn section was still in place for those first two collections. Perhaps the best comparison is with The Electric Flag – the Sons are what that group may have been had they been



THE BYRDS SHOW WHERE THEY'VE BEEN KEEPING THEIR OUT-TAKES ALL THESE YEARS.

hippies rather than arrogant purists. A soul edge is always evident, so too some loose-limbed jazz, but it's strained through *Zap* comics as opposed to the Memphis horns. Try 'Terry's Tune' to catch the Sons at their most perfect; laid back but both inventive and ambitious. The more I listen, the more I'm convinced that their alchemical Soul would have made a better foil for Janis Joplin than the frantic Full Tilt Boogie or Kosmic Blues Bands ever did.

Another less celebrated talent is Clear Light, a Los Angeles group who's lone LP has been repackaged along with a rare non-album flipside. Best known perhaps for providing Crosby Stills and Nash with their drummer Dallas Taylor, **Black Roses** remains a fabulous slice of mid-60's rock. Musically it lies somewhere mid-stream between Love's debut album and the early Doors, topped by Bob Seal's mesmerising lead guitar. They trash Tom Paxton's 'Mr. Blue', transforming it into an aural nightmare, turn pretty on 'A Child's Smile', and rock out on the title song, 'Night Sounds Loud' and 'With All In Mind'. Released the same day as **Strange Days**, I seem to recall returning here more often.

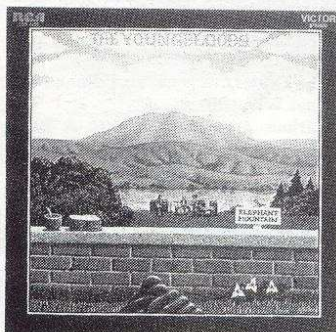
The career of Townes Van Zandt has been somewhat lifted lately via two new releases, **At My Window** and **Live And Obscure**, released last year on Heartland. Now Decal have resurrected **Our Mother The Mountain**, his second album first issued in 1969. It not unnaturally caught Townes before he'd assert the style which took him through the 70's and albums such as **High Low And Inbetween** and **The Late Great . . .**, which established his cult hero status. Where he then sat beside such unconventional characters as Terry Allen, Mickey Newbury and Guy Clark, here he seems more poetic, more singer-songwriterish introspective. It's mostly all good; the mesmeric title song or the poignant 'Kathleen' are perhaps the highlights, but the general aura of stark loneliness is well worked without falling into self-pity. Perhaps now more of his Poppy/Tomato recordings will follow.

Phil Ochs was another distinctive voice, but one firing uncompromising broadsides. Edsel have newly issued two Ochs collections; one, **All The News That's Fit To Sing** is a straight reissue of his debut album, while **A Toast To Those Who Are Gone** has fourteen previously unreleased masters first issued in 1986 by Phil's brother Micheal. **All The News** is textbook Ochs, lashing out at the state of early 60's America. The Labour movement, Vietnam and Black equality are all considered, but Phil's protests were never merely convenient. His songs were literate, drawn from a knowledge of international folk and fused with his journalistic studies. They give his work a lasting quality, and 'The Power And The Glory', 'The Bells' and 'Too Many Martyrs' still ring with the same truth and commitment. The same is true of **A Toast To Those Who Are Gone**, which consists of demos made early in Phil's career. A more exact date or dates would have been nice, but there's no denying the strength of these performances. Any of these songs could have slotted on his first three albums, and this collection forms a seminal companion to them. American folk music was never so per-



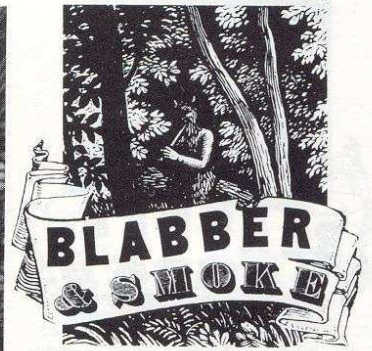
PHIL OCHS/GREENWICH VILLAGE/1965
 ceptive: the early Dylan may have garnered all the plaudits, but Phil Ochs was a more honest, more human writer.

In the last issue we welcomed **Point Reyes Station**, a Youngbloods collection pulled from their late-period Warners releases. Their definitive work, however, was done for RCA, and the three albums they cut there are now released again. Second only to 'The Lovin' Spoonful in the New York heirarchy, they pulled folk, rock'n'roll, jazz, pop and R&B into an unlikely mesh, and emerged with something remarkably strong. A more detailed article is planned on their story, but for the moment some notes on these three records. **The Youngbloods** was issued in 1967, and is best recalled for 'Get Together', a counter-culture anthem which hit two years later. It has tended to overshadow what remains a fabu-



lous collection, where a reading of Fred Neil's 'Other Side Of Life', the effervescent 'Grizzly Bear' and the reflective 'Foolin' Around' are only part of its several highlights. **Earth Music**, however, from the following year, was less special, although the highlights (the sweet country of 'Sugar Babe', the rocky 'Long And Tall') still shine through. **Earth Music** isn't a poor album by any means, it just lacks a spark or a purpose to fire it up.

Elephant Mountain was the final RCA release, and saw The Youngbloods stripped to a trio following the departure of Jerry Corbitt. This left only one recognised songwriter, Jesse Colin Young, and while he continued to pen such stylistic gems as 'Darkness Darkness', 'Ride The Wind' and 'Sunlight', the instrumental muscle - Banana Levinger and Joe Bauer - increasingly pushed their jazz based noodles into the picture. They work well on **Elephant Mountain**, providing a counterpoint to Jesse's lovesick musings, while a wholesale move to the Californian coast brought with it a cooled out sense which suited the new Youngbloods music. While I love every album, I wonder how the 1980's will view Edsel's undoubted ambition. Perhaps a 'Best Of' might have sufficed, and thus allowed room for 'Merry Go Round', a now lost non-album 'A' side. One (or even two) of these records may become lost, and there's too many good songs on each for that to deserve to happen.



The Association - The Association's Golden Heebee Jeebies (Edsel ED 239)

The Seeds - Evil Hoodoo (Bam Caruso KIRI 082)

Various - Fast'n'Bulbous (Imaginary Records)

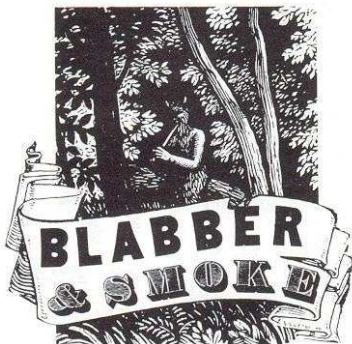
Graham Bond Organisation - Sound Of 65/There's A Bond Between Us (Edsel ED 254)

Love - Out There (Big Beat WIKA 69)

I'm thinking of another Edsel release, **The Association's Golden Heebee Jeebies**. Here the best of their first three albums has been creamed off to make up a strong collection. Intended to compliment Warners own **Greatest Hits** album, this LP omits several smashes to avoid much duplication. There's thus no 'Never My Love', no 'Cherish', no 'Time For Livin'', although 'Along Comes Mary' and 'Windy' do appear. Instead it concentrates on The Association's lesser known songs; the strident 'I'm The One', the reflective 'On A Quiet Night' or the wonderful 'title' track, 'Pandora's Golden Heebee Jeebies', oriental pop at its very finest, and the group's crowning achievement. A total flop, it undoubtedly halted their quest for the innovative, and they'd never take real chances again. The Association were always the exemplary sunshine group, beating out The Turtles or Grass Roots, but they could often be over sweet, veering dangerously towards MOR territory. **Heebee Jeebies** studiously avoids these moments, and emerges as a perfect slice of summer.



The legend of Love is one which, despite it all, is based on the overwhelming brilliance of their third album, **Forever Changes** - a complete musical triumph and rightfully hailed as a modern masterpiece. But the fans numbered few until 'Alone Again Or' permeated **The Perfumed Garden**. Their first album sold hardly at all - and the second was dismissed as a Herb Alpert re-run too many. Having said that I place **Da Capo** well above its successor - but it's how Arthur Lee chose to follow the fading strains of



'You Set The Scene' that is under examination here.

A quick foray into the studio produced a lone single, 'Laughing Stock'/'Your Mind & We Belong Together' (quite possibly one of the world's most perfectly formed singles), and then, after a while, another band emerged and an avalanche of music poured from the new outfit. Jac Holtzman had first pickings and chose an album's worth of choice Love for Elektra, after which Arthur Lee was free to sign with a new company. Blue Thumb leapt in and produced a double with the remainder of the sessions, together with, presumably, even fresher fare.

The result was **Out Here** — a vastly underrated double album weighed down by two overlong sluggish musical monstrosities. One contains a drum solo that begins as a doodle and ends in disaster. The other crumbles after three minutes into a guitar "solo" that really does go on a bit. In between these, scattered over the four sides, is classic Love, and this is where **Out There** comes in.

By taking all the good tracks, and adding some from the next Blue Thumb release **False Start** (and they are magnificent), Big Beat have rewritten history and given us the cream of the clots. This album now rivals **Four Sale** for excellence. Housed in real tasty style, with two wall-to-wall photos splashed over the sleeve, it reaffirms Arthur Lee as a true genius and magician.

It's worth keeping those two Blue Thumb albums (if only for the missing 'Run To The Top'), but I guarantee you'll play **Out There** more than either of the originals.



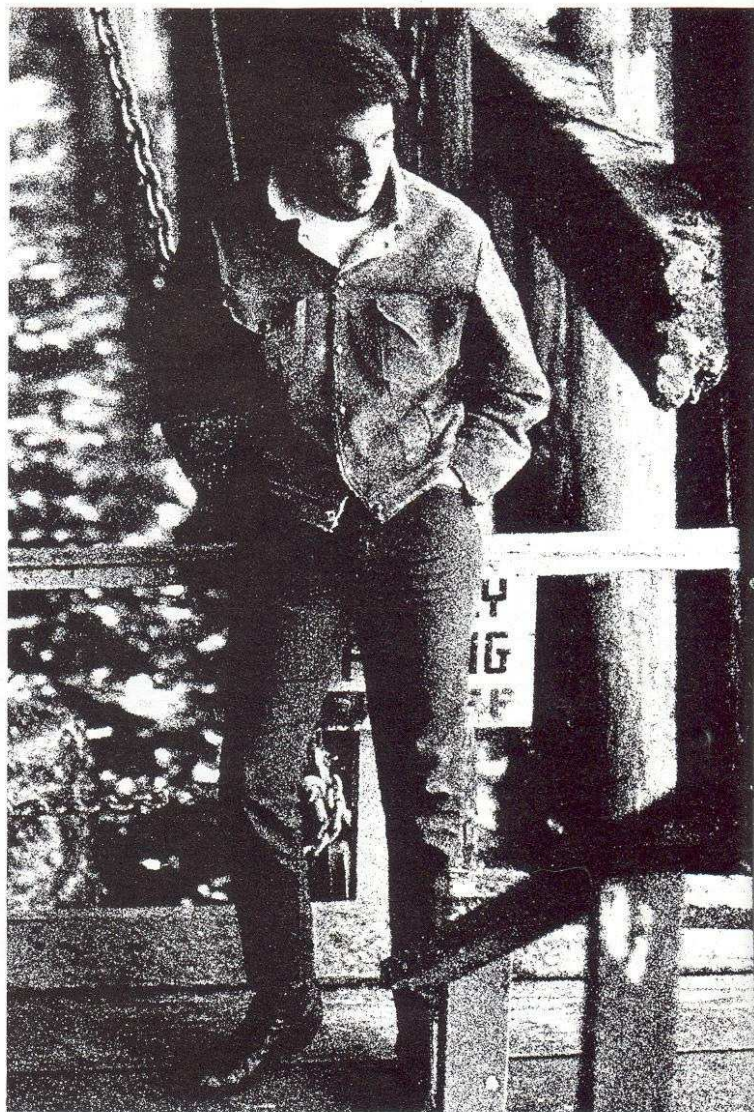
The Seeds are one group who's career is constantly overhauled. Their role as prime punk exponents is never questioned, and there's always a space for their unique grind. **Evil Hoodoo** collects their very best moments, and the whining assault of singer Sky Saxon, who's minimalistic compositions were the framework for the purest garage sleaze. Darryl Hooper's cheap organ work (why use two notes when one will do?) backs up Sky's

angst, allowing guitarist Jan Savage room for an occasional outburst. All The Seeds favorites are here — 'Pushin' Too Hard', 'Mr. Farmer', 'Can't Seem To Make You Mine' — alongside the edit of 'Up In Her Room', the rare 'Chocolate River' (released only on a posthumous compilation), and the beserk Country and Western epic 'Fallin' Off The Edge Of My Mind'. The Seeds were the prototype: it's no surprise that The Doors should have chosen the same line-up. But where they were self-consciously posey, Sky Saxon had no such pretensions. Morrison strove for literary illusions, Saxon wrote 'Pushin' Too Hard' standing in a supermarket parking lot. Instant, urging and definitely awesome, this collection reinforces their claim for true glory.

On last year's **Beyond The Wildwood**, several different groups paid homage to Syd Barrett by reinterpreting a succession of his songs. 'Fast'n'Bulbous' follows a similar pattern, although here the object of affection is the wonderful Captain Beefheart. Twelve groups gather to play tribute, and although Beefheart himself is such an individual voice, the scope of his music allows a freedom for different ideas. Few try to emulate his vocal delivery; perhaps only XTC would be so bold, but their take of 'Ella Guru' works well. However it's another track pulled from **Trout Mask Replica**, 'China Pig' which is strongest. A slab of surrealist Delta blues, it's perfect fodder for The Primevals, who cut to the bone of the song. Plaudits too for That Petrol Emotion, who rampage through the under-rated 'Hot Head', while The Beat Poets take 'Sun Zoom Spark', throw away the lyric, and reshape the piece into a moody instrumental.

Elsewhere The Scientists cope well with 'Clear Spot', The Membranes 'Ice Cream For Crow' and, at the other end of the Beefheart time scale, The Screaming Dizbusters (hello Blue Oyster Cult) burn up the very early 'Frying Pan'. Generally it's excellent; I can live without The King Of Luxembourg's pantomime 'Long Necked Bottles', and as I never cared for the Sinatra smooch of 'Harry Irene' or the **Shiny Beast**, Good and Gone are of little interest. But the overall impression, of love and respect, really comes through on what is a heartfelt collection. It's not the man himself, but these days it's as close as we'll get.

Hidden too long in the contractual abyss, the re-release of the first two Graham Bond albums is a long awaited treat. No-one in British R&B approached them; they could be raw and gutsy when circumstances demanded it, or could hit free-flowing jazz whenever a groove evolved. Held together by Bond's gravel-rasped voice and wild Hammond organ, the other pieces — Dick Heckstall-Smith's expressive horn work, Jack Bruce's solid bass and Ginger Baker's sprawling drumming — gelled to create one of rock's most exciting noises. This doublepack pulls in the first two albums, **The Sound Of 65** and **There's A Bond Between Us**, and shows clearly an ambition and inventiveness. The range is remarkable — gritty Blues ('Hoochie Coochie', 'Neighbour Neighbour', 'What'd I Say'), combo jazz ('Wade In The Water', 'Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf') and original material which spanned several styles. On here is the original 'Train Time', which Baker and



Bruce took with them into Cream, and 'Walking In The Park', Bond's theme tune, which Heckstall-Smith would perform often in Coliseum, a group he formed with Jon Hiseman, another, later, Organisation drummer. The tragedy is that Bong himself never won the public acclaim of his sidemen, and seemed to suffer most when arguments and bitterness pulled his group apart. These two records remain a testament to their brilliant individuality; within two tracks it's suddenly a sweaty Kloooks Kleek evening, and the mightiest sound in English R&B hits full swing.

Various Artists — Folk Rock Vol 1: Is It Any Wonder (Big Beat WIK 74)

Various Artists — Folk Rock Vol 2: Penny Arcade (Big Beat WIK 77)

P.F. Sloan/The Grassroots — Songs Of Other Times (Big Beat WIK 73)

The Gants — I Wonder (Bam Caruso KIRI 067)

The Critters — New York Bound (Big Beat WIK 070)

Various Artists — Blues In A Bottle (Big Beat WIK 071)

The jangled pumping of beefy acoustic guitars and the 'thwack' of a tambourine is music to the ears of folk-rock fans. Add to them the indistinct fuzz of a low slung Mosrite and you have the ingredients of musical manna.

Two doors down some kooks are

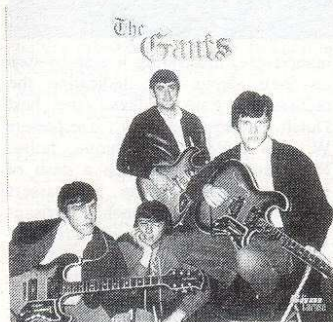
P.F. SLOAN — FOLK ROCK HERO pounding away mercilessly in a garage, reshaping a Yardbirds riff into something they can play. Up in the hills some bearded gents are picking up, prising and prodding traditional tunes into lengthy epics. Meanwhile our Folk-Rock heroes wrote songs with great tunes, singing them wherever four guys could squeeze in front of a dozen young ladies.

Dunhill (the record company, not the fags) had in their ranks the quintessential folk-rock outfit **The Mamas & The Papas** as well as dozens of other great bands. Big Beat's first two releases in their "Folk Rock" series picks the finest tracks and dishes them up in grand style. There are one or two fairly well-known items — but the majority of the music here will be new and fresh to most people. Highlights in a class bill are **Jerry Yester's** "Ashes Have Turned" and **P.F. Sloan's** "From A Distance" — the latter will leave you clamouring for more.

And more is at hand. Big Beat deliver more of P.F. Sloan's particular brand of poeticisms with a whole album of his music entitled "Songs Of Other Times". Here they gather the best of Sloan's solo work and some **Grass Roots** sides (his group, to cut a long story short). Although his "Eve Of Destruction" thundered up the charts with **Barry McGuire's** voice growling the lyrics, P.F. Sloan's own

singles did far less well. Now you can fit a sound with the name. This album is an essential purchase, but beware – you'll find yourself getting the P.F. Sloan bug!

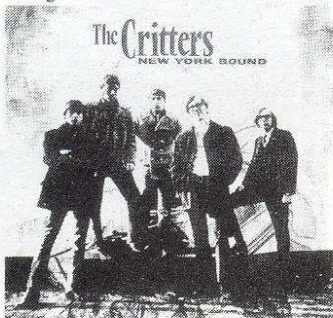
You want more thwack, jangle and fuzz? Look no further. Bam-Caruso have just served up the 'best of **The Gants**. From Mississippi (although you'd never know it), their classic Lennonesque "I Wonder" appeared on an early "Pebbles" volume – and leads off this collection too. From the folk-rock of "Six Days In May" classy David Gates arranged "Greener Days", The Gants sound just too good to be true. The singer and leader of the group, Sid Herring, was also a real



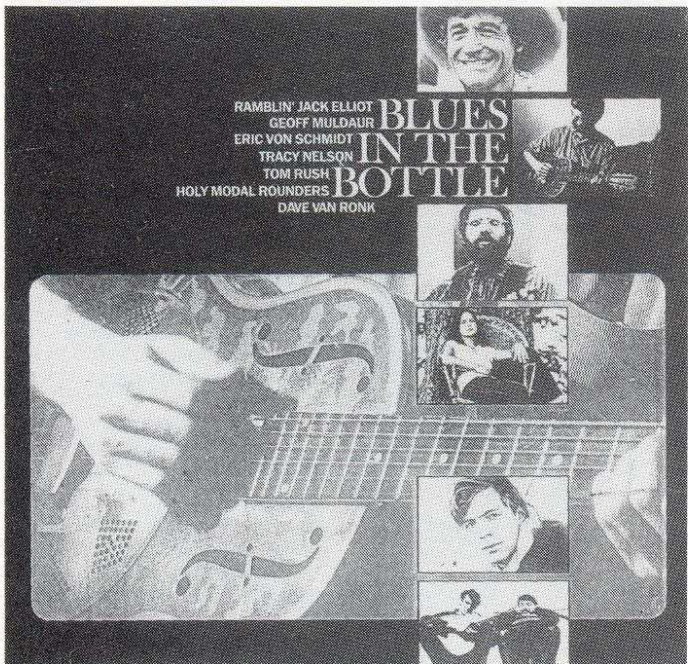
gifted composer. His originals shine out between some great Gants-ified cover versions like "Crackin' Up" and "Hungry". The feel, I suppose, is "Rubber Soul" – but the sound is pure Gants, with lots of variety in there too. There are Gants galore on the inner sleeve, with the usual story and discography that Bam Caruso ably provide.

The gentle power of folk-rock was also the driving force behind **The Critters**. "New York Bound", a new collection of album tracks and singles unleashed by Big Beat adds more weight to the argument "They don't write songs like they used to". They could really perform, and have been likened to New York's finest **The Left Banke** for their arrangements and melodies. These sixteen songs run in and out of the memory and although all adhere to The Critters sound, many have enough going for them to shine

individually too. Favorite tracks "Bad Misunderstanding" and "Children & Flowers" would certainly sound good wafting across the airwaves today – can't see it somehow though. Investigate.



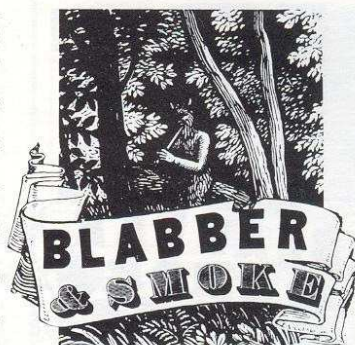
Even less likely is the possibility of hearing a track from "Blues In The Bottle" on wunnerful radio wun. Who cares. Although not really blues, and hardly a bottle in sight, this album takes some of the fire and fight from early 60's Greenwich Village broadsides and puts them together in an intelligent and totally absorbing package. **Tom Rush, Dave Van Ronk, The Holy Modal Rounders, Geoff Muldaur** et al are creators whose work stood as inspiration to those that followed. You'll hear riffs here that have reappeared in songs and tunes ever since. Their silver strings hum with that smokey coffee-house vibrancy. 'Urban Folk Music' it was called at the time – and I can't argue with that. It's a folk music that has lived and slept in the city; it doesn't remember the green world outside. The cowboy boots are getting scuffed from the sidewalks but the music is what kept them moving from one dive to the next. There's an almost sensuous mood that runs through the whole album – a feeling that these guys have played the songs so many times it's almost like breathing – they're so much a part of it all. There's even more tracks on the CD – twenty-two in all. A great experience and definitely one that'll leave you scouring the second hand racks for early Elektra, Vanguard and Prestige logos in the future!



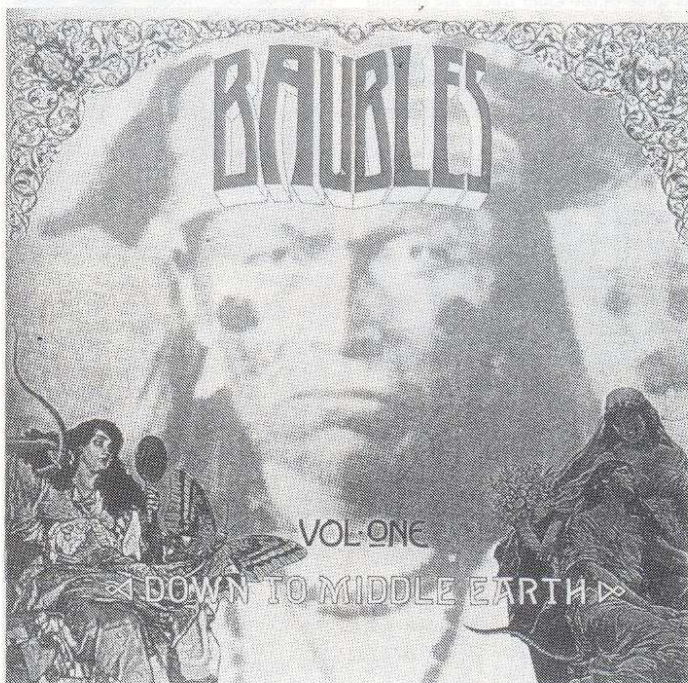
Various Artists: Pictures In The Sky – Rubble Seven (Bam-Caruso KIRI 083)
 Prof. Jordan's Magic Sound Show – Rubble 10 (Bam-Caruso KIRI 098)
 The Magic Rocking Horse – Rubble 14 (Bam-Caruso KIRI 106)
 Down To Middle Earth – Baubles Vol. 1 (Big Beat WIK 072)
 It's Only A Passing Phaze (Bam-Caruso MARX 100)
The Smoke – My Friend Jack (Morgan Blue Town MBT 5001)
July – Dandelion Seeds (Bam-Caruso Kiri 097)
The Riot Squad – Anytime (Bam-Caruso Kiri 080)

If you dug Nuggets, moved Boulders, grazed your wallet on Pebbles and invested in those precious stones of Rubble, prepare yourselves – it's time to run your fingers through Baubles.

We are promised about a dozen volumes, if all goes well, and the first has just hit the racks. Entitled "Down To Middle Earth", it brings together tracks originally released on the



Caruso unleash three more in the Rubble series. Volumes 7, 10 and 14 (no I can't explain the numbering sequence – they say it's something to do with the sun-rise on a mythological Sunday) all contain a mix of the totally awesome, the wilfully fuzzy and a generous helping of phazed beauty. Many of the tracks have been on the average psych fans heavy "wants list"

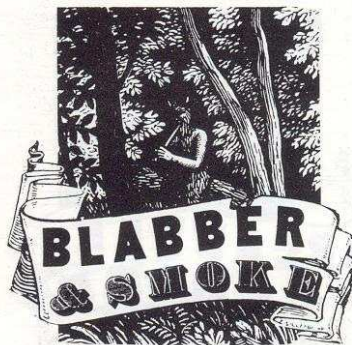


UNI/MCA labels. Much thought has gone into the sequence of tracks – probably the most overlooked aspect of compilations nowadays. Too many albums are issued lumping together tracks from a variety of sources in no particular order. Edsel get it right, as do Bam-Caruso, but others get it completely wrong. This collection has a variety of sounds meshed together, and the effect is shattering. **The Sonics** stinging "Anyway The Wind Blows" cuts through, as does **Fever Tree's** magnificent "The Man Who Paints The Pictures (Part One)" – a snowballing megalith of a track. There is a big difference too in the quality of tracks chosen. Baubles concentrates on the psychedelic underground rather than the grunchy garage, an area already well represented. If they can keep up the quality, this series will be one of the most sought after – if only to complete the huge poster jigsaw that the record sleeves make.

Fans of British psychedelia and freak-beat are going to be reeling with shock this summer, as a landslide of great releases carries them across their new-mown lawns. First off, Bam-

for some time: **Our Plastic Dream's** "Encapsulated Marigold", **The Sub's** "Ma-Mari-Huana", "Tamaris Khan" from **The Onyx** or "Pictures In The Sky" by **The Orange Seaweed** . . . the list goes on and on. In all, 48 more superb examples of deranged and inspired one-offs, and a bonus track! More terrifying sleeves to hang over the damp patches on the walls too – how do they do it?

Long overlooked and shrouded in a haze of mystery are **The Smoke** – one of the best named groups ever. They (nearly) hit in the UK with "My Friend Jack" in 1967 – but after EMI withdrew the record at the insistence of the Bishop of Southwick, they sulked off to Germany where they topped the charts and ran riot. This first legitimate collection of their work ever is great. There are one or two examples of their softer side (skip those tracks) – but to make up there's also an unreleased gem. Although it doesn't say so on the sleeve, the track "Playing With Magic" has never been issued – you'd think they'd make more of the fact at Morgan Blue Town. It's late (1969) Smoke, but superb; cascading back-



wards strings (score + 10 on the psycho-meter) and weird low fuzz prop up a tune that comes from the "That's What I Want" era. One or two tracks are dubbed from disc; I know it's sometimes necessary, but with a bit of investigation, I'm sure they could have found records in better condition than the ones they cut from. I would guess that they're saving tracks for Volume 2 as some of the killer tracks are missing — Devious!



Not so the chaps at Bam-Carusó — their July album adds the non-album single to produce a long-lost slice of UK pop-sike. I've heard Americans compare this album to vintage Floyd — and I've got to agree. A real trip and one which you should take soon. Scorching guitar runs in and out of the nursery-rhyme visions, solid pop music from another, more colourful but totally insane world. Tom Newman, writer and singer, is telling the July story to *Strange Things* scribes as we sleep — so expect the full saga soon betwixt these pages ("About time too!" — disgruntled July fans holding their plain inner sleeves).

Three years before July wandered across their flowery meadows, *The Riot Squad* were deafening kids up and down the country with their own particular brand of freak-beat. A Larry Page creation, *The Riot Squad* held together an uneasy blend of R&B and fizzy riffs. This compilation contains their entire output — and plays really well. Again, much thought has gone into the programming and packaging, complete with the story and photos on the inner bag. A third-division group at the time, but now regarded as an important and unusual "missing link" in the pop-meets-graunch category made famous by *The Troggs*.

Lastly, Bam-Carusó release the third in their series of budget samplers. For £2.99 you get 16 tracks from recent and forthcoming releases. Included are *The Answers* "Just A Fear" and an unreleased *John's Children* track not available on their great "Midsummer Night's Scene" album. "It's Only A Passing Phaze" sits comfortably amongst the Rubble series, and is made to be played in the shade.

Here we go again with yet more recent vinyl delights: in this month's selection, your *Strange Things* correspondent goes global before heading towards the homeland once more. And what better place to start this travelogue than the new *Talking Heads* LP, "Naked" (EMI); this loose-limbed giant crosses cultures and oceans in a cacophony of sound. Recorded in Paris and featuring musicians from a wide range of musical and national backgrounds — from guitarist Yves N'Djock to Wally Badarou, from Celia Cruz's brass arranger Angel Fernandez to ex-Smith Johnny Marr — "Naked" is a spirited beast. The album includes Academy Award winner David Byrne's usual trademarks: a sense of distance, best represented in Byrne's monosyllabic chunks of verse and awkward/naive questioning, is still a major concern. 'How did I get here?' becomes 'Now tell me what the Hell we have become' on the opener "Blind", whilst "Mr. Jones" echoes the concerns of "More Songs About Buildings And Food". Byrne's early spikeyness seems to have been replaced by a warmer outlook — this collection is driven by the sounds of zouk or highlife rather than the nervousness of "Psycho Killer". Although the natural vibe lilts and cruises, augmented by some fine brass work, Byrne's still a bit twitchy with all "Naked"'s greenery — 'I miss the honkytonks, Dairy Queens and 7-Elevens' he reminisces in neon technicolour; 'We used to microwave/Now we just eat nuts and berries.' But health food and junk culture, the shopping mall and the forest all crawl out of "Naked"'s structure in a spectacular fusion. Like zouk or zydeco, indipop or bangra beat, "Naked" celebrates this fusion music by creating its own particular world groove. Shimmy!

Which is pretty much what *Ofra Haza's* "Im Nin Alu" Globestyle twelve inch embraces — a wide range of styles in one glorious, multi-racial technological frying pan. A big star in Isreal, Ofra receives platinum discs there and represented the country in the Eurovision song contest in 1983 (but don't hold it against her, eh?). Her mixture of traditional Yemenite music, clattering petrol cans and thumping Western rhythms makes "Im Nin Alu" highly desirable. Her vocal range is enthralling, the middle eastern metres captivating, her presence full of calm and grace. Anyone who can combine three hundred year-old lyrics by Rabbi Dhalom Shabazzi and Rolex watches has to be worth your attention.



TALKING HEADS '88

Continuing our cultural shopping bag, Virgin's Venture label presents three albums that have much in common with the musical amalgamations discussed above. My favorite is *Material-boy Bill Laswell's* "Hear No Evil", an enchanting set of vocal-less melodies (or instrumentals to you) which incorporate Eastern traits (tabla, sitar) and Western harmonic phrasing and instrumentation (slide bass, snare drum). Meanwhile *Seigen Ono's* "The Green Chinese Table" layers delicate string sections with disturbing Parisian voices, harps, wine glasses and Arto Lindsay's swamp guitar. The effect is surprisingly coherent and atmospheric. *David Sylvian* and *Holger Czurrak's* "Plight And Premonition" is possibly the most disappointing of these releases — self-consciously precious without much of a sense of humour (one title is "The Spiralling Of Winter Ghosts" . . .), this set is of a colder, more clinical nature. Sparse piano meanderings do lighten it up a little, but the mood here is other-worldly and distant, spacey without captivating. However, all three work well on a functional basis — great background music to unwind to — but if New Age music is merely about yuppie relaxation then I'm shipping out. A worldwide 'New Age' is needed, but not necessarily this one.

Still, let's leap along the path of our worldwide trip. Holland is the next port, and here we find "Dummy", the new double album package from Den Haag's *Treppers W* and their *TW* label. Gaining maximum points for naming this collection after a football

OFRA HAZA



manouevre, illustrating it step-by-step on their sleeve and dedicating the records to Faas Wilkes, 'the best Dutch dummypasser ever', *Treppers W* also produce a unique noise. Reminiscent of *Wire* with a dash of *Frippertronics* thrown in, *Treppers W* are an intelligent bunch of artisans who mix a political slant with a refreshing honesty and humour. As one lyric states, 'An art shock, a culture shock again' . . . check 'em out. Also take note of Norway's *Voices Of Wonder* records; their new releases from *The Popcorn Explosion* and *Sister Rain* bode well for these Scandinavians. *Sister Rain's* self-titled LP mingles psychedelic excess, *Neil Young* (how come he's gettin' such a namecheck lately? Huh?) and some fine *Velvetisms* on 'I'm Just A Man' and 'Silence', intoned with a distinct Norwegian tinge. Odd hand-printed collage sleeve too . . . The *Popcorn Explosion's* "Who Of Us Is Me" is lived up by singer *Dick Bent's* confession 'I might not be cool — but I'm not an idiot'. Right on *Dick!* Similar goings on over in Berlin, with the birth of *The Rubbermind Revenge's* "My Zen" single on *Twang Tone*. This number comes complete with a 'lieb Rubbermind' tab and handy colouring pencil (for *Syd* fans everywhere . . .); as for the record, it's a cheerful slice of psyche-rock in the traditional mold, ably abetted by some useful sitar and tambourine. It encompasses all those start-stop classics from "Louie Louie" to "I Gotta Move" in one easy swoop . . . a champion effort. And so to France, well France via Australian label *Rubber* records to be precise, for the new *Surrenders* single "Loaded Dice". Produced by ex-*Barracuda/Fortunate Son* *Robin Wills*, it continues to explore the territory of those two acts — upfront 'Shake Some Action' drums and chiming *Byrds* riff-mania abound. The only problem with such exhibits is that we've heard such sentiments too often — they are rendered dull by familiarity alone. Time to move to fresher pastures, such as California, *House Of Freaks* and their spiffing "Monkey On A Chain Gang" LP (*Demon*). Utilising a sparse line up of *Brian Harvey's* guitar and vocals alongside *Johnny Hott's* percussion, the *Freaks* storm through a rousing selection of that rare phenomena — the GREAT TUNE!!! Conjuring up spectres from the desert and the sidewalk, *House Of Freaks* spin *Cuntry* tales of despair and long lost memories. The intimate spirit of "Give Me A Sign" or the shuffle delta rhythm of "Long Black Train" give a jaded hack

hope for the continuation of fine guitar sounds from the West Coast.

Their instrumentation can seem rather two dimensional in places, but the quality of Freak songwriting shines through. Whatever, if you were ever vaguely interested, then mildly disappointed by **Wall Of Voodoo** or such-like, take refuge here. Although this duo breeze through "40 Years" in a style pretty close to **The Proclaimers**, I'd rather have these characters on my deck any day.

And if, after reading the Howe Gelb feature earlier in this magazine you've already decided to investigate **Giant Sand**, let me add fuel to the fire. For a start, I can only suppose that Howe must be permanently composing music - he must write a couple of songs before breakfast every day to keep up the numbers. As all the songs are brilliant, there must still be dozens he isn't happy with that hit the pedal bin with the coffee grinds. "Storm", the new Demon collection of small town/big rock/dusty horizon/black rage musical alleys is the most complete testament to Howe's unique vision to date. Convolved arrangements and slightly uneasy lyrics twist and turn until the songs gel and set, leaving you breathless and convinced. What a guy. Commercial? Well yes; he doesn't sing about waiting at the bus-stop for that red-haired girl but those tunes won't let up for a second. Amazing. And still on the West Coast, here's a revelation: Jac Holtzman was right. It was on his insistence that brass was added to a lot of the records he was issuing on Elektra in 1969. Love got the treatment, **The Doors** too - **Leviathan** backed down and their album was shelved. I'm not talking about shrill trumpet fanfares or fat 'Dusty In Memphis' riffs, but pure Tijuana brilliance. Like a cherry on the top of a Mr. Kipling iced bun, or the jam in a plump donut, the brass on the new

Thin White Rope album came as a thrill and a surprise. Whilst **Giant Sand** have visited, played us their music and shook hands, **Thin White Rope** have remained a mystery. Their photos dark and hazy, their records so good they leave a lump in your throat... so now their latest offering "In The Spanish Cave" (Demon) arrives. It's even better, the guitars are even cooler, the singing even wilder. And with the album came the band, to London, and one lone gig. The few that heard about it packed into the Sir George Robey to hopefully witness something special. It was to be better than that. Breathing-taking. The new album took on form and substance as **Thin White Rope** displayed their brilliance by lengthening and embellishing each song until it surrendered. Howling controlled feedback, some deft **Prunes** slide guitar, and Guy Kyser's voice crackled and strained in the maelstrom of sound. Meanwhile, back at the album, **Thin White Rope** actually achieve the impossible - they capture their sound accurately and with all the excitement of their live spontaneity. A CD is on offer soon, which adds some more tracks to the album. It will be an awesome experience. And that brass on "Red Sun"... simply fantastic.

So from California to the Sir George Robey, we travel back home. And with the studied Englishness of the el label, we're heading home with a bump. The el philosophy is writ large on the back of their latest collection "London Pavillion Volume Two", the pick of 1987's eldiscs; if one of their records sells fifteen copies, the el camp consider it "an irresistible failure." And this is precisely what el records are... lavishly packaged little items of titillation. Taking the perfect pop ethic to its logical conclusion, el releases feature overbearing sleeve notes, fri-

THIN WHITE ROPE



volous tunes and little group information at all. All part of the plan, you see - if el are good at anything, it's well packaged, *disposeable* pop. The kind of outfit that spawned personality pop from **The Monkees** to, er, **Flintlock!** "London Pavillion Volume Two" features possibly my favorite el release to date, **The Raj Quartet's** "Oops! What A Palaver", now remixed with samples from Aleister Crowley and the late, great Kenneth Williams. A new batch of ten inch singles - who the el would put out five ten inch singles at once, prey? - include the work of **anthony adverse**, **marden hill** (very e.e.cummings, this lower case business, what?), **ambassador 277**, always

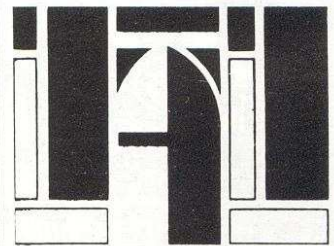


bad dream fancy dress

and the mondo-coy **bad dream fancy dress**. **Bad dream's** "Curry Crazy" rivals **The Cavaliers** cricket anthem, "It's A Beautiful Game" for the title of most superficial release. The kind of title all self-respecting el artistes should aspire to.

Over at Creation HQ, however, groups get a bit more freedom to express their personal stamp. Especially in the case of **Biff Bang Pow**, label boss Alan McGee's band; the new "Love Is Forever" LP is certainly their best yet. Look elsewhere in this issue for the Creation lowdown, but for the moment, pick this up alongside a smart "She Haunts" 12". Equally attractive is the new **Weather Prophets** single "Hollow Heart"; here Pete Astor's crew mix gigantic guitar stabs with megaphone vocals with stunningly powerful effect. Rocky! Sharp! Replay! Ought to be a hit you know... These outings illustrate the rockier side of Creation (and if someone mentions **Neil Young** I'm gonna... ah forget it), then **Apple Boutique's** "Love Resistance" and **The House Of Love's** "Christine" highlight the poppier, more introverted nature of the Creation masterplan. Both strains are laudable, but it certainly figures that the most successful 'Creation band' - **The Jesus And Mary Chain** - have scaled the heights due to their simplistic fusion of the two. I have more hope for **Biff Bang Pow** and **The Weather Prophets** than the others mentioned, but whatever, there's still life in the Creation carcass.

The Extremes' "Car Crash Music" (Destiny) has got to be one of my favorite discs this year. This four track EP cascades with wielding guitar and a pulsating drum rhythm - here's a noise that really shifts. Okay, okay, so **Television** were firm faves of mine and **Tom Verlaine** still delivers, but **The Extremes** debt to TV shouldn't put



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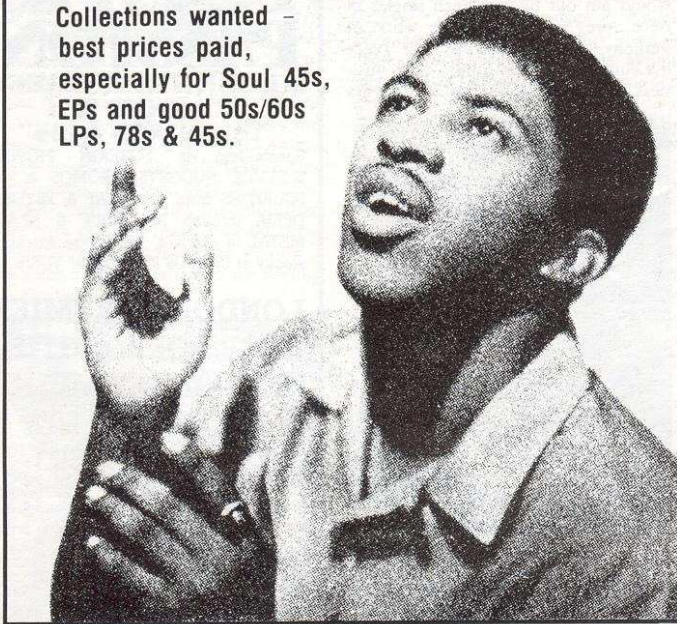
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their fine disc in the shade. The shattering "Violent Hour" or twisting "Salome" should have seen this band signed up decades ago . . . come on you A&R men! Out with the cheque-books! Still, as the EP cover notes, 'delay is the first principle of action', and if this is the case, The Extremes time will surely come. And I hope it comes sooner than **The Brainiac Five's**; they've had to wait nine years to get their debut LP "World Inside" (Reckless) released. A strong set of

melodic power rushes and infectuous hooks, it's a shame that this album didn't get an official release when it was recorded in 1979. It would have fared well against **The Soft Boys**, **XTC**, **Gang Of Four**, **The Cure** and their ilk; it's certainly a mystery why these boys have remained solely the property of enthusiasts and collectors for so long. Cuts like "Primal Screaming", "New Dark Ages" and "I Tried" display balanced, well seperated arrangements of polished power pop;

enjoyable and barely dated. Well, compared to **All About Eve** anyway . . . a welcome release.

As **The Stooges** feature heavily in this issue, it's fitting that a few rockin' numbers indebted to The Ig made their way to *Strange Things* mansion. The first missive was from **Food** records, that greasy emporium that brought us **Zodiac Mindwarp** and is about to spring the great **Diesel Park West** LP on an unsuspecting public (a superior UK **Hoodoo Gurus** anyone?). Yep, the new **Crazyhead** single is with us - "Time Has Taken It's Toll On You". Nimby lifting both "Jumping Jack Flash" and "World Shut Your Mouth", this single is a gurgling punker well worthy of it's place in the great Iggy tradition. Dead catchy riff too, guitar fans . . . if **Crazyhead** were on Citadel you'd be falling over yourselves to get this on import at three quid a throw . . . as it is they're from Leicester or somewhere. Boss disc, whatever. Also included is a neat version of "Have Love Will Travel" - now you know where **The Stems** got that "Slave Girl" riff! Similarly influenced by Iggy's raw power are **The Hypnotics** - a superb quartet who mash allcomers with their sonic buzzsaw attack. The first single, "Love In A Different Vein" (Transworld) should shake y'all up somewhat if there's any sense in the world. A touch derivative of the Detroit scene, but well above the competition anyway. See 'em live this month.

Probably Britain's most exciting sphere of current musical activity has got to be dance music. I know the war still rages on - Peel's had more complaints about hip-hop than he ever did about playing punk - but this correspondent, at least, embraces the new dance with optimism. It's no wonder that the most advanced independents are moving towards this territory - it's where the most innovative music can be found. **Psychic TV's** "10th Album" illustrates this - collecting sampled 'phone conversations, Mark Chapman, John Lennon and much more noise

THEE HYPNOTICS



and tomfoolery, here's an interesting experiment in this developing field. Passes my acid test, that's for sure. Plaudits too for **Three Wise Men**, whose "G.B. Boyz" LP is another cutting Rhythm King product. Old cuts like "Urban Hell" and "Refresh Yourself", rather underplayed on previous singles/Peel sessions, are now toughened up by Matthew Ashman's seering guitar, harder production and a more confident attack by da Boyz. The outfit's social conscience shines through, adequately representing their backyard rather than some fictional New York stereotype. Brash ain't the word.

Sidestepping to an equally valid sector of the British scene, we present "Tap Roots: A History Of The New Wave Of English Country Dance Music". I know what you're thinking . . . yeah I went through it too. In the winter at junior school it was sub-zero in the playground, so if you didn't want to freeze to death at lunchtime you had to suffer the proddings of some matronly school mistress, determined that you enjoy some ridiculous formation dance or other to the strains of this English Country Dance Music. Well this compilation, put together by the superb *Folk Roots* magazine, chronicles the traditional Country Dance music of the 1930's to the more electric versions presented by such outfits as **The Oyster Band** or **Edward 11 and the Red Hot Polkas**. And highly uplifting it is too . . . put this on in the morning and you'll turn polka crazy over your cornflakes. "Tap Roots" is a bright and joyous collection of a largely scoffed-at form of English music - give it a spin and you may be pleasantly surprised. It's better than shivering in the playground anyway.

From a similar source (i.e. both records came in the same parcel . . .) comes **Tiger Moth's** second album "Howling Moth" (Rogue). With tracks such as "Mustapha's Home Schottische" and production by Ben Mandelson, we're well into Globestyle territory here - this album stands proudly next to the Mustapha's discs or most other releases on that fine label. Influenced by 'race memory, communal osmosis, vinyl craziness and dining out', the Moth men (and woman) leap continents and traditions to blend a heady accordian, melodeon and bouzouki stew. Which, methinks, is where we came in . . . so until next time, Toodle Pip!

RECOMMENDED:

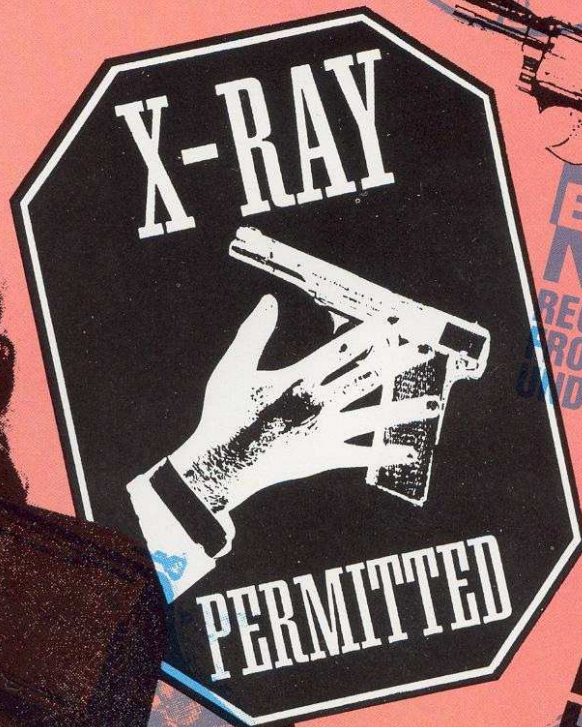
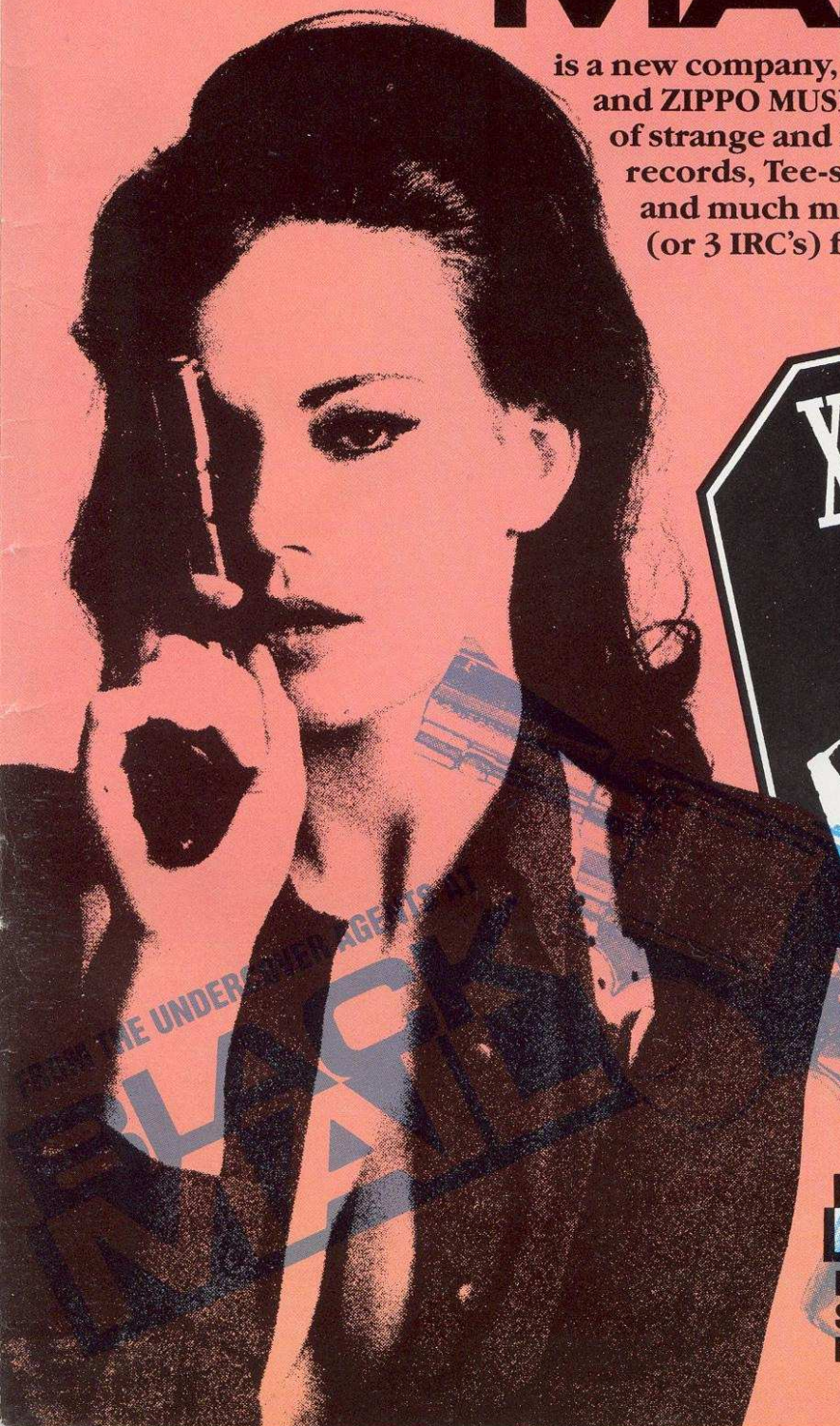
- Fred Frith:** The Technology Of Tears (Rec Rec)
- Tackhead:** Tackhead Tape Time (Tackhead/On U)
- World Domination Enterprises:** Let's Play Domination (Product Inc)
- Wire:** A Bell Is A Cup Until It Is Struck (Mute)
- Butthole Surfers:** Hairway To Steven (Blast First)
- MC Buzz B:** Slaphead (Play Hard)
- Loop:** Collision (Chapter 22)
- MacDonald Flak & The Ack Ack Pack:** Jack Me Some Crack (Soho Girl)
- Push:** Live (Anywhere)
- Comebuckley:** To Tim Buckley (Because Of You)
- Mark Stewart:** As The Veneer Of Democracy Starts To Fade CD (Mute)
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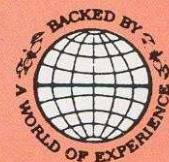


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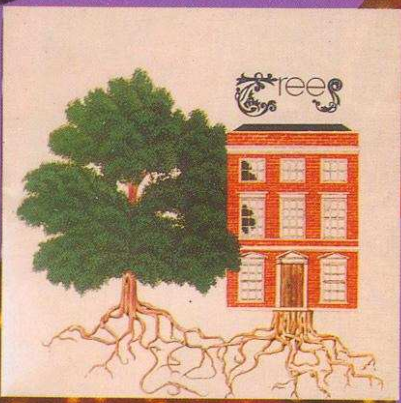
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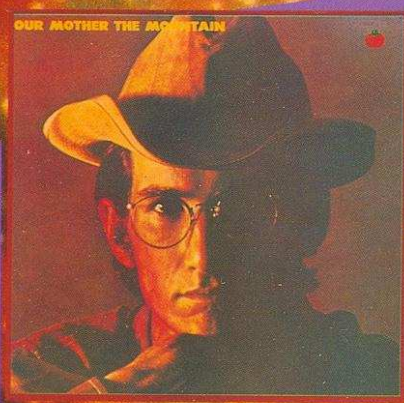
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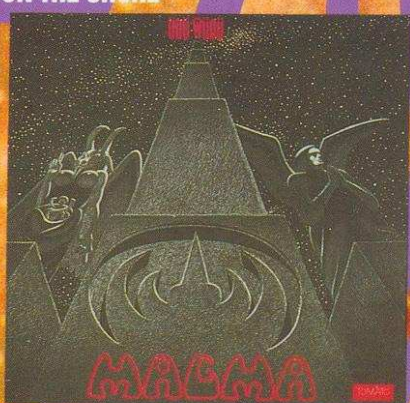
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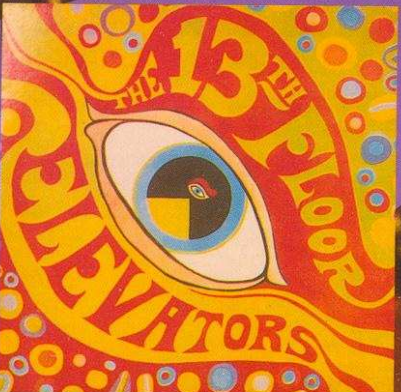
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