

THE HISTORY OF

ROCK

1969

★
FROM THE
ARCHIVES OF
NME &
MELODY
MAKER
★

A MONTHLY TRIP
THROUGH MUSIC'S
GOLDEN YEARS
THIS ISSUE: 1969

STARRING...

THE ROLLING STONES

"It's going to blow your mind!"

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

SIMON & GARFUNKEL

THE BEATLES

LED ZEPPELIN

FRANK ZAPPA

DAVID BOWIE

THE WHO

BOB DYLAN

PLUS! LEE PERRY | BLIND FAITH | CREEDENCE | BEEFHEART | NINA SIMONE

1969

MONTH BY MONTH



Welcome to 1969

A WORD MUCH in use this year is “heavy”. It might apply to the weight of your take on the blues, as with Fleetwood Mac or Led Zeppelin. It might mean the originality of Jethro Tull or King Crimson. It might equally apply to an individual – to Eric Clapton, for example, The Beatles are the saints of the 1960s, and George Harrison an especially “heavy person”.

This year, heavy people flock together. Clapton and Steve Winwood join up in Blind Faith. Steve Marriott and Pete Frampton meet in Humble Pie. Crosby, Stills and Nash admit a new member, Neil Young. Supergroups, or more informal supersessions, serve as musical summit meetings for those who are reluctant to have their work tied down by the now antiquated notion of the “group”.

Trouble of one kind or another this year awaits the leading examples of this classic formation. Our cover stars The Rolling Stones this year part company with founder member Brian Jones. The Beatles, too, are changing – how, John Lennon wonders, can the group hope to contain three contributing writers?

The Beatles diversification has become problematic. While 1968 began with their retreat with a spiritual advisor, the Maharishi, this year begins with their appointment of a heavyweight financial advisor, the American businessman Allen Klein. Their spiritual goals have been supplanted by the desire to resolve some intractable fiscal problems.

Making sense of it all, (even providing a sounding board for increasingly media-aware stars), were the writers of the *New Musical Express* and *Melody Maker*. This is the world of *The History Of Rock*, a monthly magazine that reaps the benefits of their extraordinary journalism for the reader decades later, one year at a time. In the pages of this fifth issue, dedicated to 1969, you will find verbatim articles from frontline staffers, compiled into long and illuminating reads. Missed one? You can find out how to rectify that on page 144.

What will still surprise the modern reader is the access to, and the sheer volume of, material supplied by the artists who are now the giants of popular culture. Now, a combination of wealth, fear and lifestyle would conspire to keep reporters at a rather greater length from the lives of musicians.

At this stage, though, representatives from *New Musical Express* and *Melody Maker* are where it matters. Mutilating plastic dolls with John Lennon. Meeting a rail-thin David Bowie, hearing his views about skinheads. Preparing for the Hyde Park concert with Mick Jagger.

Join them there. As Mick says: “It’ll blow your mind.”

1969

MONTH BY MONTH

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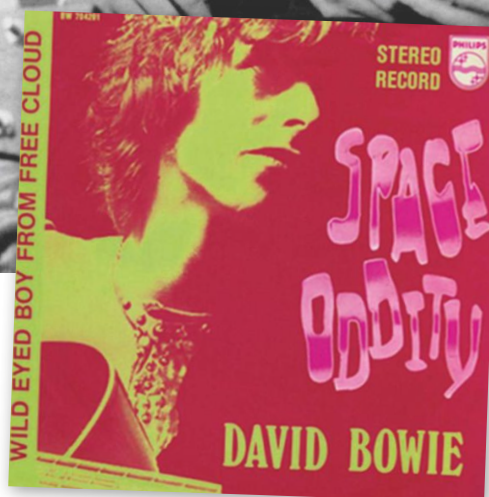
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THE HISTORY OF ROCK

Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, 8th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark St, London SE1 0SU | **EDITOR** John Mulvey, whose favourite song from 1969 is *A Sailor's Life* by Fairport Convention **DEPUTY EDITOR** John Robinson *Can't Find My Way Home* by Blind Faith **ART EDITOR** Lora Findlay *Time And Love* by Laura Nyro **PRODUCTION EDITOR** Mike Johnson *Wild Eyed Boy From Freecloud* by David Bowie **ART DIRECTOR** Marc Jones *Everybody's Talkin'* by Harry Nilsson **DESIGNER** Gary Payne *You Can't Always Get What You Want* by The Rolling Stones **PICTURE EDITOR** Kimberly Kriete *Girl From The North Country* by Bob Dylan **COVER PHOTO** Alan Messer at Rex Features www.badcocksgallery.com **THANKS TO** Helen Spivak **MARKETING** Charlotte Treadaway **SUBSCRIPTIONS** Sonja Zeven **PUBLISHING DIRECTOR** Ed Beale **MANAGING DIRECTOR** Paul Williams **COVERS PRINTED BY** Polestar Wheatons **TEXT PRINTED BY** Polestar Chantry | WWW.UNCUT.CO.UK

Time Inc.



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FLEETWOOD
 PHONE IN FROM L.A.

AMEN
ANDY'S
 MODEST
 AMBITION

•Jethro •'Hair'
 •Holly •Dusty

•Meet a
 Marmalade

ME
 Last September
 they came to one
 and were
 concerned!
 Last December Granada
 TV showed an
 hour long film of their
 occasional
 Roundhouse concert
 and the over-enthusiastic
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 They are coming back—
 this year—soon—but
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 (The Wild Child)
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1969

JANUARY — MARCH

**FLEETWOOD MAC,
 DUSTY SPRINGFIELD,
 BOB DYLAN AND MORE**



PHOTOGRAPH

“The Beatles asked... Mr Klein accepted”

MM FEB 8 Rolling Stones manager Allen Klein takes on a new client... The Beatles.

ROLLING STONES BUSINESS manager Allen Klein is to take over the business affairs of Apple, The Beatles' company. In a statement to *MM* on Monday, a spokesman said: "The Beatles have asked Mr Allen Klein of New York to look into their affairs and Mr Klein has accepted."

This means that Klein, the man who has steered The Rolling Stones to international success, is the secret businessman that The Beatles want to streamline their organisation and put it on an economic footing. Two weeks ago, John Lennon said that unless they stopped losing money, Apple would go out of business.

Apple press officer Derek Taylor told *MM* on Monday that The Beatles had recorded 160 hours of film and sound.

"This will be edited down to several items, which will include a documentary and their next album releases," he said. They still have more recording to do, he added, describing the music they have written as "very tight, together and fantastic – even better than their last double LP."

1969

JANUARY - MARCH

"I don't really have much ambition": Randy Newman, who has been writing songs professionally since the age of 16

"That thing about music being in the blood is rubbish"

NME Jan 21 Randy Newman, songwriter for Alan Price, Cilla and more, introduces himself in the UK.

PASSING MY TIME in the London traffic on my way to see American hit writer Randy Newman on Friday, I got to thinking that there is no popular image of what the songwriter should be like or look like as there is, say, of the poet, pop star, journalist, etc.

Songwriters, it reasons, must be a pretty faceless company of people - or else they need a better public relations service. If all songwriters are like the reluctant, retiring Mr Newman then I am not surprised. Randy agreed with my observation, and I got the feeling that if he had his way he would remain totally anonymous.

He is in fact a chubby 26-year-old native of Los Angeles who looks older, wears heavy spectacles and a neat moustache and is a reluctant traveller who has met only one of the many stars he has written hits for. Attention makes him feel uncomfortable and he reacts with disparaging frankness and modesty about his work and with statements like:

"I don't really have much ambition. I have never done anything on my own initiative. Someone has always had to hold a gun to my head. In a word, I'm boring."

As depreciative as he is of his work, I was told - not by Mr Modesty himself - that the first thing the late Brian Epstein always did when in New York was to visit Randy's publishers and ask what new songs he had in. Brian raved over Randy's work - and so do The Beatles today.

That work includes hits for Cilla Black, Dusty, Pet Clarke, The Animals, Gene Pitney and Alan Price. He wrote Alan's No 2 hit "Simon Smith And His Amazing Dancing Bear" and Mr Price, whom he saw in a London restaurant on this visit, is the only one of the stars he has written for that he's met.

"I meet people who are jolly and love their work. But to me it is still unpleasant"

"I don't seek it out. I have never tried to meet anyone," he says. "I made a half-hearted attempt to meet Paul McCartney, but I didn't follow it through. I don't want to become a Beatle-maniac. Yes, I would have liked to meet him, but I don't want to push."

Paul, in fact, phoned Randy in Los Angeles to offer him his congratulations on his new LP, *Love Story*, released by Pye this month.

"I think I would have tried to see Alan Price, though, anyway," said Randy. "He has said some very nice things about me in the papers."

His visit here last week was mainly for pleasure, and Randy admitted that he was feeling a bit lonely since his wife Roswitha - they have one son - returned home a few days earlier. "I am lost without her," he said, "She looks after me. Make me sound jolly," he asked and smiled.

OK. The jolly Mr Newman's story makes a pleasant change from the usual uphill-struggle tales. In fact, everything about him is the opposite to what you'd expect. He started writing when he was at high school and got a job writing songs at 16. Since then, he has always been under contract to somebody or another. He regrets in a way that he didn't have the traditional showbiz struggle. He doesn't enjoy his work, and works only when he has "got so lazy he feels guilty about it".

"It is a suffering for me," he says. "It's getting to the point where I may think of getting into pool cleaning or something. I meet people who are jolly and love their work. But to me it is still unpleasant," he said - with jollity.

He feels he is missing some of his early enthusiasm and is patiently waiting for it to return. "I've always been moderately well off," he says. "I've never had the enjoyment of working in a bank

and making it. Which is possibly why I don't have the enthusiasm today. I haven't got that age-old compulsion to write or anything like that. All that thing about music being in the blood is rubbish."

He depreciates most popular music but admires The Beatles, Ray Charles and Bob Dylan. He sees Hendrix and Cream-type music as the trend of the future.

"I would have liked to see it happen with an orchestra - then I heard Hendrix, who could

make more noise than a hundred men. He could fill a room with one guitar. It had to be the hardest rock ever written, and I knew it would be enormous."

But he sees no part in the trend for him. "I have written a little like it, but it is synthetic to my ear because I am not a guitar player."

I rose to leave, expressed my hope that his enthusiasm returned and wished Mr Newman well - the jolly Mr Newman, that is.

Nick Logan

He works only when he has a gun held at his head, he's RANDY NEWMAN-RELUCTANT HIT WRITER

PASSING my time in the London traffic on my way to see American hit writer Randy Newman on Friday I got to thinking that there is no popular image of what the songwriter should be like or look like as there is, say, of a poet, a pop star, a journalist, etc. Songwriters, it reasons, must be a pretty faceless company of people - or else they need a better public relations service. If all songwriters are like the reluctant, retiring Mr Newman then I am not surprised. Randy agreed with my observation, and I got the feeling that if he had his way he would remain totally anonymous.

By NICK LOGAN

GETTY

Robin Gibb onstage with the Bee Gees at the London Palladium in 1969



"I feel very strongly about the whole thing"

MM Feb 15 Bee Gee Robin Gibb vs management.

A MAJOR ROW BLEW up this week between Bee Gee Robin Gibb and the group's manager, Robert Stigwood, over his decision to put out "First Of May" coupled with "Lamplight" as the group's new single, to be released tomorrow (Friday).

Robin told *MM*: "'Lamplight' is the strongest thing we've ever written and should have been the single. If 'First Of May' goes out it should have a different B-side.

"I feel very strongly about the whole thing. 'Lamplight' should come off the album and not be the B-side. I will go even further and take my songs off the album if Mr Stigwood doesn't want to see eye to eye.

"I think 'Lamplight' would be No 1 for weeks, 'First Of May' might make a No 10. I've never been wrong on singles. I felt dubious about 'Love Somebody' and 'Jumbo' [both chosen by Robert Stigwood]."

Robert Stigwood told the *MM* on Monday: "We've never had a Bee Gee single that every member of the group has been happy about. It's very difficult for a group for every member to share the same opinion; it's always left to me to make the final decision. We believe in putting out the strongest possible single."

"No steps can be taken until Brian Jones returns"

NME Feb 8 Will the Stones tour in 1969?

THE ROLLING STONES have still not decided whether or not to undertake a worldwide concert tour in the spring - despite constant reports of dates having been set for them in America and Europe. Latest developments include an announcement in the US magazine *Variety* that the Stones will open an American tour on March 21 - and a statement issued by A&M Records in Hollywood claiming that one of their attractions, the Flying Burrito Bros, will tour Europe with the Stones in mid-March. But a spokesman for the Stones told the *NME*: "At this stage, nothing is signed or even decided - and no steps can be taken until Brian Jones returns from Ceylon. The confusion regarding the Flying Burritos probably stems from the fact that one of them, ex-Byrd Graham Parsons, is a good friend of Keith Richard's and Keith may produce the groups' next LP."



GETTY

NME TOP 30			WEEK		(Week ending Wednesday, January 22nd, 1969)		WEEKS IN CHART		HIGHEST POSITION	
LAST	THIS									
2	1	ALBATROSS.....Fleetwood Mac (Blue Horizon)	7	1						
1	2	OB-LA-DI OB-LA-DA.....Marmalade (CBS)	7	1						
6	3	FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE.....Stevie Wonder (Tamla Motown)	4	3						
5	4	SOMETHING'S HAPPENING.....Herman's Hermits (Columbia)	6	4						
4	5	BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP.....Foundations (Pye)	9	2						
3	6	LILY THE PINK.....Scaffold (Parlophone)	11	1						
9	7	PRIVATE NUMBER.....William Bell & Judy Clay (Stax)	9	7						
20	8	BLACKBERRY WAY.....Move (Regal Zonophone)	3	8						
13	9	FOX ON THE RUN.....Manfred Mann (Fontana)	4	9						
8	10	SABRE DANCE.....Love Sculpture (Parlophone)	8	6						
7	11	URBAN SPACE MAN.....Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band (Liberty)	10	4						
16	12	YOU GOT SOUL.....Johnny Nash (Major Minor)	3	12						
10	13	SON-OF-A-PREACHER MAN.....Dusty Springfield (Philips)	7	10						
15	14	STOP HER ON SIGHT.....Edwin Starr (Polydar)	6	14						
12	15	AIN'T GOT NO — I GOT LIFE.....Nina Simone (RCA)	13	4						
11	16	LOVE CHILD.....Diana Ross & the Supremes (Tamla Motown)	9	11						
17	17	OB-LA-DI OB-LA-DA.....Bedrocks (Columbia)	6	17						
18	17	A MINUTE OF YOUR TIME.....Tom Jones (Decca)	9	12						
26	19	I GUESS I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU.....Isley Brothers (Tamla Motown)	2	19						
●	20	DANCING IN THE STREET.....Martha & the Vandellas (Tamla Motown)	1	20						
23	21	PLEASE DON'T GO.....Donald Peers (Columbia)	3	21						
14	22	ONE TWO THREE O'LEARY.....Des O'Connor (Columbia)	9	2						
29	23	SOUL LIMBO.....Booker T. & the M.G.s (Stax)	2	23						
29	24	HEY JUDE.....Wilson Pickett (Atlantic)	2	24						
27	25	QUICK JOEY SMALL.....Kasenetz-Katz Singing Orchestral Circus (Buddah)	7	23						
28	26	MOTHER KELLY'S DOORSTEP.....Danny La Rue (Page One)	4	26						
●	27	GOING UP THE COUNTRY.....Canned Heat (Liberty)	1	27						
●	28	TO LOVE SOMEBODY.....Nina Simone (RCA)	1	28						
●	29	LOVE STORY.....Jethro Tull (Island)	2	29						
		Lulu (Columbia)	11	7						

LILY THE PINK



THE SCAFFOLD

1969

JANUARY - MARCH

Yes in 1969: (l-r) Peter Banks, Tony Kaye, Jon Anderson, Bill Bruford and Chris Squire



“A lot relies on being in the right place at the right time”

MM January 4 **Introducing...** Yes, offering “good vocals, well backed”.

THIS IS THE time of the year when pop journalists start surveying the scene for groups or singles likely to make an impression in the coming year. One such group who are shaping up to do just this are Yes, a fairly new five-piece group. Although the group itself is new, the members are experienced group musicians.

Jon Anderson, lead singer, was with the Gun and a group called the Sleep-In, Chris Squire was formerly bassist with The Syn. Drummer Bill Broomfield [sic] worked with Savoy Brown.

Guitarist Peter Banks is also an ex-Syn-ner and Tony Kaye, organ, a former Winston's Fumbs sideman.

Yes are already getting good exposure, including appearances at the Royal Albert Hall, a charity concert and the recent Cream farewell show - and dates at major London venues such as the Marquee and Blaises. One of their first breaks was at Blaises, the London discotheque. They were dragged out

of their beds just round the corner from the club in South Kensington to deputise for Sly & The Family Stone.

“We did an hour's spot at Blaises,” recalls Jon Anderson. “There were a lot of people waiting to hear Sly. We played and got a good reception.”

Among the people they impressed was the club's major-domo, Roy Flynn, who has since become their manager. The group first got together in July and began by playing mainly pop numbers in out-of-London gigs to see the reaction to the group. “Chris and I decided that we would be poppy but not doing Top 10 stuff. Although we were playing pop-type numbers, we tried to do them differently,” says Jon.

“We started off on a 5th Dimension kick,” adds Chris. Although they were pop-oriented the group became involved in arrangements, with particular reference to vocal work. “Now we are writing our own material and playing it rather than other people's,” explains Jon. “We'll do other people's numbers but using our approach. We've been watching people like The Nice. They do that kind of thing well. Now the group is together again after the



“We'll do other people's numbers but using our approach. The Nice do that well”

changes, we've started doing new things.”

Says Chris, about the group's harmony-style vocals, “This was the original conception of the group. You get groups with powerful backing and bad vocals or good vocals and faulty backing. We wanted something between the two - good vocals well backed.”

As yet Yes have no recording plans and are more interested in establishing themselves as a good performing group. “We don't want any aggravation with that kind of thing yet. Roy Flynn is doing a good job looking after that side of things,” says Jon. “It's nice to know people are

thinking about you. John Gee and Jack Barrie [host at pop-scene drinking club La Chasse] have also helped us a lot. John has been kind enough to give us residency at the Marquee.

“But a hell of a lot relies on being in the right place at the right time. And having the right people in the group. We are all friends and we are concerned with creating on a friendly basis. You can have a group of good musicians, but if they don't get on you can't create anything. But the main thing is to think on the lines of entertaining the public.”

REX FEATURES

YES TO YES

THIS is the time of year when pop journalists start surveying the scene for groups or singles likely to make an impression in the coming year. One such group who are shaping up to do just this are Yes, a fairly new five-piece group. Although the group itself is new the members are experienced group musicians. John Anderson, lead singer, was with the Gun and a group called the Sleep-In. Chris Squire was formerly bassist with The Syn. Drummer Bill Broomfield [sic] worked with Savoy Brown. Guitarist Peter Banks is also an ex-Syn-ner and Tony Kaye, organ, a former Winston's Fumbs sideman. Yes are already getting good exposure, including appearances at the Royal Albert Hall, a charity concert and the recent Cream farewell show - and dates at major London venues such as the Marquee and Blaises. One of their first breaks was at Blaises, the London discotheque. They were dragged out

Close-cropped hair is obligatory

MM Feb 8 A look at the next generation of mods, steel-toecapped boots and all.

WHAT IS A mod? A mod has no roots, tradition or culture, unlike the other major tribesmen loose in the jungle of British teenage society – the rockers. The mods are not interested in preserving rock'n'roll, worshipping idols or riding, doctoring, feeding and loving motorcycles.

Mods are apathetic, to the point of total ignorance, of rock'n'roll. They idolise nobody, and if they want to travel anywhere they go by bus, scooter or early models of the Ford Zephyr. They have no burning idealism like the hippies, rockers or fribblers. The hippies yearn for the future, rockers for the past and the fribblers merely seek a jolly time in the present.

Mods are divided into two camps – the aggressive and the non-aggressive. The former take the lead in committing acts of unwarranted violence, while the latter are merely those youths who approve of their dress fashion and taste in music and drugs.

It is a curious thing that whenever a judge, newspaper leader writer, headmaster or other pillars of our Bewildered Society wants to cast stones in an attempt to keep seething, frightening and mysterious youth at bay, they instantly start burling about LONG-HAIRED louts/yobs/delinquents/hippies/students, etc.

Yet anybody who has to venture on the streets outside the safety of a Rolls-Royce will instinctively know they have nothing to fear from the long-haired youth, who merely wants to turn on in peace to his favourite band and chick. The sight of cropped heads and the sound of heavy boots entering the midnight Wimpy bar or dancehall is the real cause for sinking feelings in the pit of the stomach.

The harsh clamour of clipped, oath-ridden speech, the maniacal, humourless laughter, the black, staring eyes seeking a victim, should be worrying our Lord Protector more than the harmless hippy or earthy rocker. But the Lord Protector, with the strength of Fleet Street, the House Of Commons and law courts around them are aware only of the activities of the literate and eloquent members of teenage society.

The sullen grey hordes of mods are outside their consciousness, despite the war clouds that loom over the mods' *lebensraum* in south and east London. Not all mods are necessarily violent in word and deed, but the uniform gives many youngsters an opportunity to channel their aggressions and frustrations and obtain the ever elusive personal identity. You have to be a Grammar school chuck-out and have the ability to read heavy paperbacks to be a hippy. You have to like cider, trad, Marty Feldman and candy-striped

jackets to be a fribbler. You only need a pair of big boots to be a mod.

"How else does one recognise these mods?" wail seriously worried judges and leader writers. The instantly recognisable uniform of the mod is bleached jeans with red braces, and heavy red boots with steel toecaps. Other mods prefer blue mohair suits, and are often referred to as "suits". They are usually the more dangerous breed. Particularly frightening are suits who sport horn-rimmed spectacles, because these give a curiously false impression of intelligence.

Close-cropped hair is obligatory. This gives the wearer clearer vision for "nutting" people – the art of hitting others with one's cranium. Language is highly restricted. Although cartoon beatniks are supposed to utter "man" and little else, real life mods utter "f—k" and little else. Favourite drugs are pills and brown ale. Suits drink excessive quantities of vodka

or whisky. Cannabis is notorious for its pacific effects – how can one go around being violent feeling groovy? Musical tastes are strictly ska and soul. Even soul is regarded as a little passé now, and bluebeat, reggae, rocksteady and ska are the kind of beats best to

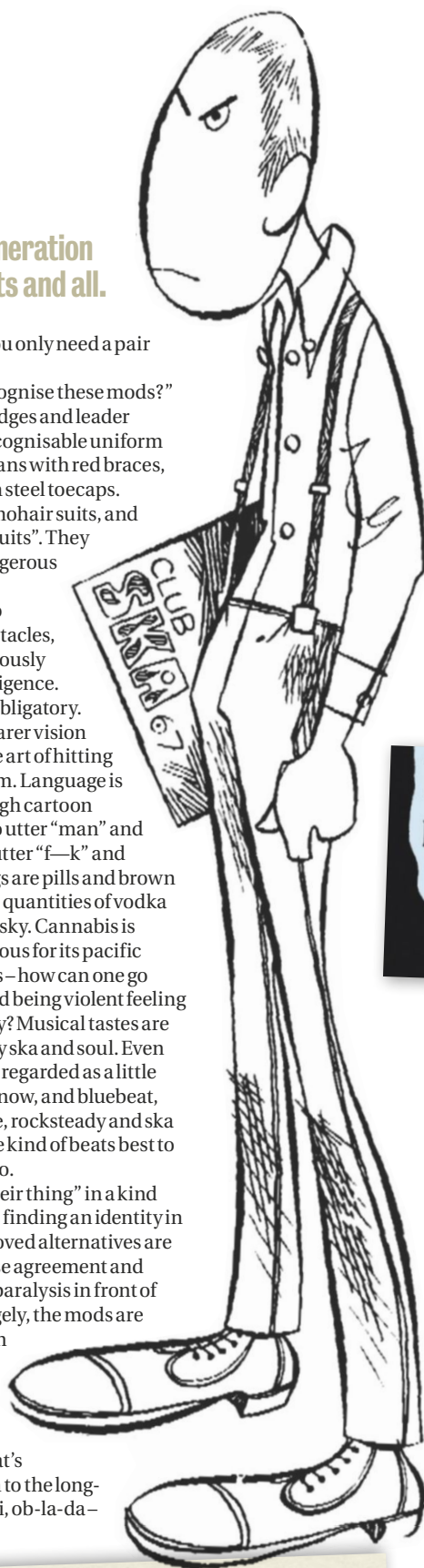
be seen clomping boots to.

The mods are "doing their thing" in a kind of helpless lurch towards finding an identity in a society where the approved alternatives are marrying a Hire Purchase agreement and settling down to a life of paralysis in front of television sets. Yet strangely, the mods are more likely to settle down than any other tribes, because they don't really believe in anything, including being a mod. Perhaps that's why society prefers them to the long-haired thinkers. Ob-la-di, ob-la-da – life goes on! *Chris Welch*

Reggae and ska are the kind of beats to be seen clomping boots to

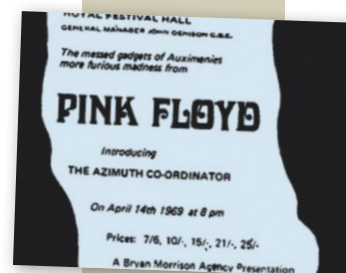
NOW IT'S A MOD, MOD, MOD MOD WORLD

CHRIS WELCH discerns a new threat to our Society



➤ Rolling Stones guitarist Brian Jones' appeal against a conviction on a drugs charge was dismissed on Monday. The three judges in the Appeal Court said there were no grounds for interfering with the verdict. Jones had been fined £50 for possessing cannabis resin at this flat in the King's Road, Chelsea last May. Counsel for Brian Jones said the jury might have been prejudiced by Jones' "bizarre appearance."

MM JAN 18



➤ The Pink Floyd play a solo concert at the Royal Festival Hall on April 14 and will be introducing their Azimuth Co-ordinator, a piece of apparatus that projects sound from any and every part of the venue. On February 21 they fly to Bordeaux, France to take part in a concert with Roland Kirk.

MM FEB 15

➤ Guitarist Johnny McLaughlin flew to America on Saturday to record an LP with Miles Davis' drummer Tony Williams. Drummer Jon Hiseman – with whom McLaughlin is featured on a new album with Jack Bruce and Dick Heckstall-Smith – says Williams asked McLaughlin to go to the States after receiving rave reports from American musicians who heard him in Germany recently.

MM FEB 8

“He asks about the weather... then he’ll fix the session”

In London, producer **BOB JOHNSTON** lifts the lid on his work with **BOB DYLAN** and **JOHNNY CASH**, and uncovers the professionalism at the heart of the Nashville sound. “On the West Coast, everything is planned. In Nashville, it’s improvising.”

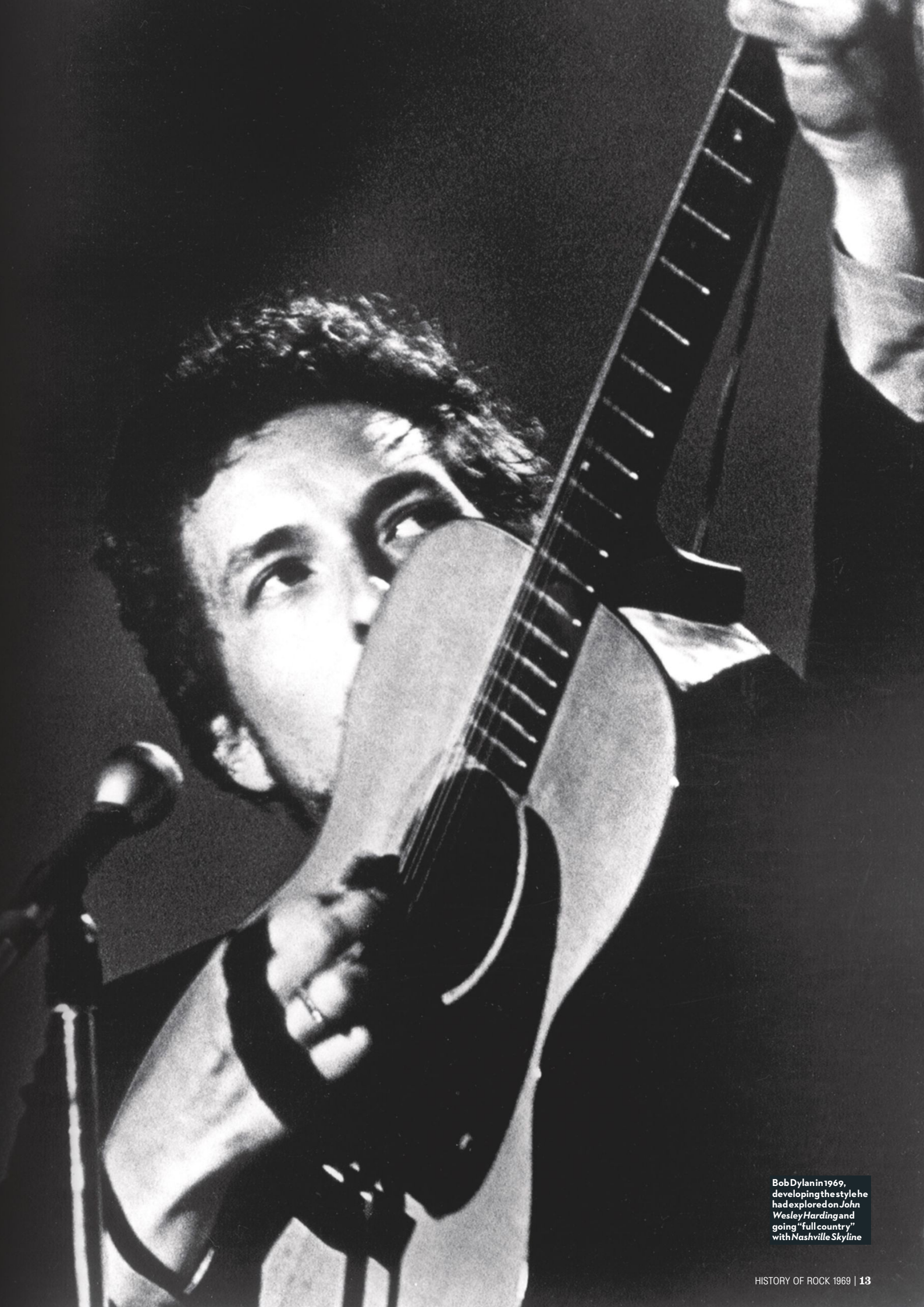
— MELODY MAKER MARCH 15 —

“**I** T IS GOING to wipe the whole world out, it’s incredible,” said Bob Johnston, producer of the latest Bob Dylan album, which was completed in Nashville recently. Describing Johnston as the producer is not, as far as he is concerned, correct. He sums up his job quite simply. “I turn the damn machine on – he makes the music,” he said in London last week.

About the session he says, “I don’t know whether it was a week or a year. I went to Nashville, cut an album. It’s finished and it will be released. I can’t tell if it’s different from the last. They’re all new songs. I can’t say what they’re like. They’re just Dylan.”

Bob wouldn’t be drawn about the backings used on the album. “I’d rather not say,” was all he would allow. As regards the LP title he said, “I don’t know if he has a title yet or not. He has full charge of it, complete control. I’m just there. Really all you should say is Dylan went in, did an album and it’s going to be released. It’s a gas being there. I don’t think about the voice – the songs are so great. The only thing is, I get to see »

GETTY



Bob Dylan in 1969, developing the style he had explored on John Wesley Harding and going "full country" with Nashville Skyline

a live performance which a lot of people would pay millions of dollars to see.”

Texas-born Johnston may sound a bit aggressive. In fact, he's friendly, enjoys his work very much, and is happy to be working with not only Bob Dylan but Leonard Cohen, Johnny Cash and Marty Robbins as well. “Dylan, Cohen and Cash have got the freedom to go in and do their thing. They've got their music and their musicians. I don't think I really put things together. I have put records together in the past, but these people have to be allowed to go in and do what they want to do.”

An indirect connection with Bob Dylan has brought Bob Johnston over to London. He is to record Georgie Fame, and two Dylan songs are on the cards. “They're a couple of old Dylan songs. I'd rather not say what the titles are as the record will be released quite soon and somebody may jump on them. They are already on albums, but I've other material besides Dylan. But I think all we're going to do are the Dylan songs.”

Bob came over at the instigation of Ches Millican, Epic Records' newly arrived London representative. “He asked me to come across and produce the record. It'll be for British and American markets. We release it as soon as we get it. I don't like to wait on records because the market changes so much – unless it's certain people with a certain style.”

The second Leonard Cohen album is due out soon. Said Bob, “It's great. It's all songs, but his songs are poetry. It's a little simpler than the last one.”

Bob recorded the Johnny Cash *Folsom Prison* album, reckoned one of the best “live” albums ever made. He decided that Cash's idea was a good one and just went ahead and arranged the details for taking a recording unit into Folsom Prison. Cash has since followed this best-selling album with his *Holy Land* LP, but there is another prison album on the stocks.

“I cut Johnny at San Quentin Prison. All the songs are different from the Folsom album. San Quentin is a maximum-security prison. It's where they have the gas chamber.”

Unlike a lot of producers, Bob Johnston isn't a finger-clicking wowee-we-must-get-it-together-man type. He is modest about his recording achievements. His main concern is that the artist gets what he wants and how he wants it when it comes to cutting an album.

It's refreshing to meet someone who takes this attitude in a studio. And obviously, as his growing list of album credits prove, his methods get results. Good ones, too. *Tony Wilson*

— NME MARCH 29 —

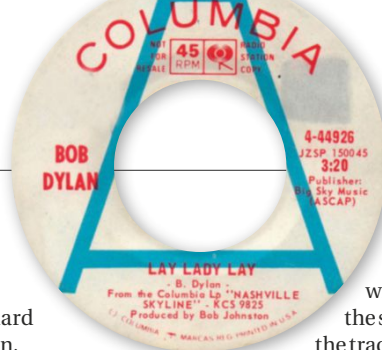
PREPARE TO HAVE your minds blown and your senses tickled by the coming together on one album of two of the world's greatest musical talents – Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash. It's an open secret that they have recorded together, but it's not so well known just how it came to pass.

In pursuit of knowledge I went to the London Hilton to meet my good friend Ches Millican, the head of Epic Records over here, and, more importantly, Dylan's recording manager, Bob Johnston. Johnston is not very tall, well built, bearded and obviously Texan. His manner is easy, his language colourful and his attitudes confirmed. He showed a marked reluctance to discuss Dylan, saying by way of explanation, “He has been misquoted so often, and so have I, that I'd rather people talk to him. If he has anything to say, he'll say it. He's not only a good friend, but I have three sons to feed.” Which seemed reasonable enough.

He relaxed a little, however, in due course and told me, “The record company calls me up and says, ‘When can we have a Dylan record?’ And I just tell them that when he's ready, he'll go into the studio and do one. He rings me and asks me about the weather, and I tell him about the boat and all that garbage, and he says ‘so long’ and that's it. Then he calls me and tells me he wants to record and fix the session.”

It just so happened that when Dylan decided to cut an album, Bob had fixed to do a Johnny Cash session. So he slyly arranged for Dylan's to run from two-five and Cash's from six-nine. Cash arrived early, walked into Dylan's studio and joined in the proceedings. The end result, I have it on the highest authority, is something that has to be heard to be believed.

The Dylan album took three days to complete and word of Cash's involvement began spreading almost immediately. Johnston is playing it cool, though, and denying all,



preferring to wait until the DJs put the needle on the first groove. Then will come the explosion.

Dylan, Johnston says, is easy to work with. He knows what he wants, when he wants it and how he wants it. In the studio, he is all set to go and there's no messin'. One of the tracks on the new album was written in the car between the motel and the studio. I was played Burl Ives' new album, which Johnston has produced. It contains a moving version of “The Times They Are A-Changin'”. Again, the Dylan connection.

Dylan crops up again in Johnston's purpose in visiting London, which is to record Georgie Fame. He came over at the invitation of Ches. As we walked through the Mayfair backstreets for lunch, Bob explained, not without a touch of laughter, “Ches called me and said would I like to record Georgie Fame and I said ‘sure’. I told CBS I'd give him a Top 10 record, and then give him one in the States. They said would I like to put that on paper, and I said I would. I've got a couple of Dylan's songs for him and we'll make the final choice from three I have in mind.”

Jack Bruce has been on some sessions with Georgie and it is to be hoped that young Fame will get his hit with something better than the awfully contrived “...Bonnie & Clyde” gimmick.

Ches, who resembles a pop gypsy, who likes clubbing, who is as easy-going as the German railway system and who claims Irish ancestry, though he is as American as the west side of Grosvenor Square, replied, “Because he's the best record producer,” when I asked why he selected Bob for the Fame job. Perhaps this is borne out by a look at the people he has recorded. Apart from Dylan and Cash – and surely that is recommendation in itself – he handles Marty Robbins, Flatt & Scruggs, Canada's poet laureate, Leonard Cohen, and, until recently, Simon & Garfunkel.

He dropped the latter duo because “they can take 300 hours on a single, and although I'm not denying their talent, I have neither the time nor the inclination to spend that long on one record”.

We talked of chain gangs and the terrible justice eked out by Southern authorities (something that both Bob and Ches have painful, if funny, memories of) and got round to Cash's prison recordings. The *Folsom Prison* album has been certified as a gold disc and sales are in excess of 900,000, which is going some. Cash and Johnston had it in mind at the time to do a similar thing in San Quentin and Bob told me about it.

“They are both maximum-security prisons and San Quentin has the gas chamber,” he pointed out without neglecting his turkey. “Johnny wrote a song about San Quentin and he told me he'd sing it last because of the effect it'd have. I said that was OK, then we could highlight it out of there. When it came to the show, he sang it second and I thought there was going to be a riot. Some of those guys are really tough and they were yellin' and hollerin' so that the guards had a real tough job quieting them down. I was ready to run.”

Johnny had been sent a song by a prisoner there three years before and he asked the warden if he was still in. He looked at the records, but the guy had been released on parole. That same afternoon that Johnny arrived, not that morning or that evening, the prisoner was readmitted for parole violation and he was sitting in the front row at the concert. How about that?

Which is what a lot of people are going to be saying, though in far stronger terms, in a few weeks' time when the Dylan-Cash album is released upon an unsuspecting public. *Richard Green*

— MELODY MAKER APRIL 5 —

NASHVILLE HAS FOR many years been the centre for recording the many artists of the big country music industry in America. The recording side of the business is such that it commands its own album and singles charts and often a number of these singles and

albums make the national pop charts. But more recently the Nashville studios have been invaded by artists from outside the country field – Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen among them. Dylan finished an album there recently and laid down tracks with Johnny Cash.

CBS producer Bob Johnston came to London some weeks ago to record Georgie Fame. He produced the Dylan album and records Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins and Flatt & Scruggs.

“The basic thing about the Nashville studios being so great,” says Johnston, “lies in two factors – the studios themselves, and the

“We went in
and did most
things in one
or two takes”

Producer Bob Johnston (right), juggling daily recording sessions with both Bob Dylan (*Nashville Skyline*) and Johnny Cash (*Hello, I'm Johnny Cash*) in Nashville, February 1969



engineers and musicians. Not only are the musicians good but they take a pride in their work. There is no such thing as watching the clock down there. In other cities, when it's time to stop, they do. The Nashville musicians have got so much pride in their work, that's what makes it.

"I think it's so easy recording there. Sometimes you can do sessions in three hours. Another of the reasons is that the groups, like Flatt & Scruggs, have been playing together for years. Nashville has become the second-largest recording centre in the world – that speaks for itself."

That's the producer's side. Joe Butler, bass guitarist and singer with The Hillsideers, the Liverpool country band which has the distinction of being the first British country music to record in Nashville – in August, 1967 – puts the musicians' side. "One big difference we noticed was that when we record in England, the backing tracks are put down first, then the vocal tracks are added. Then the final reduction is done a few days later. In Nashville, they do it all at once and the reduction is done at the same time so you can hear how it's going and then the best 'take' is chosen."

In Nashville, The Hillsideers recorded for RCA Victor under the supervision of Chet Atkins, guitarist extraordinary and one of the company's chief producers. "Over there the engineers work much closer with the producer. We had Chet Atkins produce us and the engineer Jim Malloy. He and Atkins worked as a team. They talked about the arrangements and listened to them, but over here recording seems very mechanical. There it was like doing a performance. When you played, everyone was involved and there was a very relaxed atmosphere. Basically, they have the same equipment as British studios – but a lot more of it."

The engineers themselves reveal the Nashville secret. Selby Coffen, who has taken hundreds of sessions for Columbia, says, "It's a little like baking a cake. Not too much flour, not too much sugar – just the right ingredients to come out with a tasteful product."

Jim Malloy, who produced The Hillsideers' sessions, adds, "There is no difference in the Nashville balance, just in the sound. On the West Coast, everything is pre-planned. In Nashville, it's nearly all head arrangements or improvising on prearrangements."

The unique Nashville Sound is making itself heard in the American music industry – and not just in the country music world.

— MELODY MAKER AUGUST 2 —

EVER WONDERED WHAT it is like to work on a Bob Dylan recording session? Well, the answer is "a hell of a lot of fun", according to Charlie Daniels, who worked on the sessions that

produced Bob Dylan's latest album, *Nashville Skyline*. "I've never had so much fun, it was just a ball," he added.

Born in North Carolina some 30 years ago, Charlie was in London last week for a working holiday, playing on tracks being laid down by Epic recording artist Philmore Lincoln. As well as being a working musician, Charlie also produces sessions. He has cut albums with The Youngbloods, ex-Youngblood Jerry Corbett and a couple of groups nobody's heard of. Currently he is working for Sincere Productions, an organisation run by Dylan's producer, Bob Johnston, which is how he came to be involved on the *Nashville Skyline* recording dates.

"To be perfectly honest, Bob Johnston just thought I'd fit in with whatever Dylan was doing," said Charlie, when I asked him about the sessions. "Bob was very nice to me. He's one of the biggest talents in the world and it was an honour to work with him. I'd say it was the high spot of my musical career."

Was Charlie surprised to find that the sessions were on things that were basically love songs written in a country music style? "I couldn't say I was. I was so amazed just to be playing on a Dylan session that I didn't worry what it was going to be." Of the album Charlie said he was "tickled to death with it. I love it. I didn't play on the Johnny Cash track; I wasn't there when they did it. I played Dobro guitar on "Nashville Skyline Rag". This is the first ever instrumental on a Dylan album, a sort of country blowing session."

Charlie mentioned that everyone was knocked out with the acoustic guitar solo, flat-picked in the Doc Watson manner, played by Norman Blake. Charlie also paid tribute to regular Dylan session-man Charlie McCoy. "He's a fantastic talent for having around the studio. He just has to hear things and he can write them down, nothing's too fast for him. If you have any doubts, you can just walk across and have a look at his chart. And he plays just about every instrument."

The sessions took place in Columbia's Studio A, in a new section of their Nashville studios. "We recorded, I think, in three sessions," recalled Charlie. "They had a lot of sessions booked that they didn't use."

Was there a very strong security placed on the studio during the recordings? "Well, they had a rent-a-cop outside the door all the time, but there were no problems. People were aware that Bob was in town, of course. They put up a 'Closed Session' sign on the door. Nobody tried to gatecrash; people were real nice about it and respected the situation."

About the actual sessions, Charlie said, "Everything came together beautifully. We'd do so much each day and then do some more the next. But I think Bob could have been writing all the time. With most of the things, after they'd got the balance we just went straight in and did them in one or two takes." •

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JANUARY—MARCH



April 11, 1969:
Dusty Springfield,
photographed by the
Evening Standard

“America seems to fit me”

DUSTY SPRINGFIELD spends much of 1969 in the USA. First, recording the magnificent *Dusty In Memphis* with Jerry Wexler. Then later in Philadelphia, working with Gamble & Huff. The pace of her schedule never threatens to rattle her, though. “I just sat around drinking tea,” she says.



— NME JANUARY 11 —

DUSTY SPRINGFIELD HAS a tendency to bite your head off at the drop of an undesired question – true or false? I had heard it was true, but after two meetings with the *NME*-voted “World’s Top Singer”, both under far from ideal conditions, I say it is false.

Some degree of ill-humour could have been expected when I spoke with Miss Springfield on Friday. It was her first press interview for a month. As you may recall, the poor girl has been taking rather a battering from fate of late, with an injured nose gathered on Christmas Day to add to the black eye she acquired while falling from a hostile Tennessee tree a while back.

Add to that the facts that her superb “Son Of A Preacher Man” was then not doing all that was expected of it; her house in Kensington was still not ready to receive its eager owner; and her accident had put paid to a well-deserved holiday in the Bahamas. She would have had good reason to feel that life wasn’t giving her her fair share of breaks.

But, through all the unpleasantness fate has conspired to muster, Dusty is still able to manage a smile. She is more bewildered than angry that “Preacher Man”, which many consider her best recording to date, seems to have become bogged down in the middle regions of the *NME* Chart into the No 12 position. “This really chokes me,” she said then, “because I know sales are high, a lot more than other tunes which have got higher. Perhaps it is the Christmas boom. It went in quickly but seems to be making no progress.

“Usually I just make a record and hope. In fact, I am usually very sceptical about the chances, but everyone was so bowled »

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over by the sound of "Preacher Man". They kept telling me how good they thought it was and I think they convinced me."

Does Dusty think it is her best to date? "I am pleased with some aspects and in some respects it is; I'm not sure, though. I like the overall sound. But it is very difficult to say it's my best because it sounds different every time I hear it."

"Preacher Man" was one of the earliest sides Dusty cut during her week of recording with Atlantic in Memphis and she believes she was still inhibited when she made it. So what the last, least-inhibited tracks are like really stretches the imagination! "The sessions were all taken very easily," she recalled. "They used to take six hours to get a rhythm track right. Jerry Wexler, Tom Dowd and Arif Mardin record as a team and they work so well together. Jerry overseas everything and has an incredibly accurate ear for all that is happening and Tom Dowd is just a genius with the control knobs. I was very inhibited at first, but the thing is that they spend such a long time on the rhythm tracks that you get time to unwind."

"I went to some sessions and didn't have to sing a note! I just sat around drinking tea and talking and getting to know people. It gives you time to get into a session. At some places, you go in, take off your coat and they expect you to open out just like that."

Would she describe Jerry Wexler as a demanding producer? "He is not a temperamental producer in any way," she replied. "He doesn't appear to be demanding. But as everything he produces is of a pretty high standard he knows that he has that standard to keep up, and in that way I suppose he is demanding. But he is very patient and thoughtful; he doesn't mess around. He has been steeped in his own traditions of music for so long."

Recording with the Atlantic outfit was one of Dusty's life-long ambitions. What new horizons does that leave for her to conquer?

"There's a lot more ground to be covered in the States and everywhere. I have felt trapped in the States by my old label, but that is no reflection on my label here. I was choked by the old label there and I feel a lot safer now. Even if the records don't sell millions – and 'Preacher Man' is Top 20 in the States – if they just go on selling like that it will be fantastic. But Atlantic are not going to keep me within the confines of a soul singer. They want me to sing in different languages. They are not fools; they know their market. They are not going to push me into anything."

Dusty admits that she appear to be accident-prone at the moment. "There was that business in Memphis which nobody seems to believe," she said. "We had just finished what was a pretty arduous session and I did something I have never done since I was a child. I climbed this tree and just went up and up and the branches were slippery from a shower. I fell and ended up with black eyes and a cut head."

A case of losing too many of her inhibitions, I suggested. Her latest misadventure happened when she spent Christmas Day at her mother's home. They had just finished their big meal and Dusty was out in the paved garden fetching more wine. Two of the guests, singer John Rowles and Echoes bass player Dougie Reece, were "larking about"; they came rushing out and inadvertently knocked Dusty down a 3ft 6in drop onto concrete.

"I wouldn't have minded but I wasn't doing anything," she protested. Required to stay in Britain for doctor's treatment, Dusty has decided to devote the month to tidying up various jobs she would have had to rush through had she taken her Bahamas holiday. One is to move into the house she has bought in Kensington.

"It was ironic that I have waited so long for this so-and-so house and now I will only have a couple of weeks in it before I have to go away for three months!" she mused. As one who has long been recognised as a staunch propagandist for soul, does Dusty hold the popular view that the



Dusty on the smallscreen in 1969: "The best of American TV is much better than Britain's"



best of the soul output has gone and what is being produced now is mainly manufactured and samey?

"No, I don't think so," she replied. "It went through a battering during psychedelia, but now it is really strong. It is of interest to see Motown musicians, people like Arthur Conley, doing 'Ob-La-Di' and Wilson Pickett doing 'Hey Jude'. And some of the musicians are admiring the Cream. It's great to see this kind of integration of ideas; things are moving both ways now."

The Chambers Brothers were mentioned as an example of "psychedelia mixed with soul", and Dusty suggested Jimi Hendrix as another good example. "Motown is samey," she continued, "but it still produces some beautiful sounds. But they seem to be doing alright in the chart to me, and it really pleases me to see someone like Stevie Wonder with a hit, Marvin and Tammi's is another good one. I don't particularly like Wilson Pickett, but 'Hey Jude' is a good record."

Just before we finished, Dusty brought up the subject of the importance of hits to her. "A lot hangs on them," she said suddenly. "I'd hate to do that corny routine about people saying you don't need hits because you are established. I love having records in the charts. If it stopped, I would accept it and I could do without them from the point of view of work. But I want to go on having hits as long as I can." Nick Logan

— NME FEBRUARY 1 —

RIGHT OR WRONG, it still lingers – the image of most record company chiefs as Big Men in Big Offices with Big Cigars... businessmen who put the money first and the good sounds next. Recently, however, a new breed of record executive has been making itself known on the chart scene – involved, thinking and creative people like Paul McCartney, Herb Alpert and the man who

now records Dusty Springfield in the US as well as Aretha Franklin: Jerry Wexler.

Jerry is one of the top men at Atlantic, the man who brought Aretha out of the doldrums, and the man who personally produced

PHOTO: SHOT

IT'S DIFFERENT SO DUSTY'S EXTRA PLEASED ABOUT NEW HIT

By GORDON COXHILL

PUTTING you through to Miss Mary O'Brien now, London. I heard a mischievous giggle in the background, which for nine o'clock in the morning and thousands of miles away, sounded very full of life.

Hi, Dusty, how are you? I asked. "I hope I haven't got out of bed."

You did, she laughed. "But I'm not."

You did, I've got to leave. I'm going to New York, and I won't be back for a few hours. I've got a man about a dog. No, I've got some business with... with...

Dusty on the phone from

holiday to undertake before the return to Britain on November 3. "The holiday was meant to be three weeks, but it's been slowly whittled down to eleven days," Dusty said in mock annoyance, "and that's not long enough, folks." "I'll probably go to Puerto Rico to see some people I know, or perhaps go to California even if I have to go to New York. I know hundreds of people on the west coast now, and then the spark will really fly."

"I hate leaving about on the beach on holiday. It seems such a waste, and I suppose it's a fact that you can't be done. I get brown very slowly, and I have to take my tan about it or I freeze up."

I asked Dusty if she

Dusty's soulfully stirring "Son Of A Preacher Man". He feels proud and he has every reason to do so. I spoke to him on a slightly erratic telephone line to Freeport in the Bahamas recently, and he told me that recording with Dusty was one of the greatest pleasures of his career.

"She knows so much of the technical side of recording," said Jerry, "but not at the expense of the soul. And Dusty really cares so much in recording 'Son Of A Preacher Man' and the other tracks on her forthcoming Atlantic LP. She put in a lot of hard work and made at least four trips between Memphis and New York and back."

According to Jerry, not all of the numbers he's waxed with Dusty are in the "Preacher Man" mould. He added: "There are a good many more characteristics of her repertoire, and for her next single we are also thinking of an uptempo, very hard-driving rock'n'roll thing. He added that one of the songs they'd recorded together was either "Breakfast In Bed" or "Beautiful In Bed" (I said the line was bad!), but whatever the title it still sounded interesting.

Jerry firmly believes that British pop has found a permanent place in the US charts. He speaks with great satisfaction of his label's association with Cream in the US and places great faith in Led Zeppelin (risen from the ashes of The Yardbirds) and in Scotland's Cartoon. "We are lucky in that so many of our artists are contributory," he adds, explaining, "However great their talent, some artists do not contribute to a session apart from the performance. But what Dusty and Aretha have in common is that both of them are full of ideas and interest in what's going on, and they really make the whole thing come alive. Remember, producers don't really make records great... it's the artist.

"Another big hit we had was Wilson Pickett's 'Hey Jude'. Wilson took a bit of convincing he should do it, but boy... once he got into it there was no holding him back. It was a particularly great kick to find it go into the British charts, but in some ways expected because Atlantic have always had a very welcome response from the British public. I think for a long time we were kind of a hip cult, but that the public is now generally coming to accept our artists."

To give you some idea of the good company in which Dusty finds herself since signing with Atlantic, it's worth a reminder that in 1968 the company enjoyed the greatest year in its history. Sales went up by 85 per cent over the previous year, and during 1968 it earned no less than 23 Gold Records – more than any other label before.

"Our secret weapon is my partner and recording associate Tom Dowd," says Jerry. "But then, with stars like Dusty and Aretha and Wilson, we've got some big guns to back him up!" *Alan Smith*

— NME OCTOBER 4 —

"PUTTING YOU THROUGH to Miss Mary O'Brien now, London." I heard a mischievous giggle in the background, which for nine o'clock in the morning and thousands of miles away, sounded very full of life.

"Hi, Dusty, how are you?" I greeted. "I hope I haven't got you out of bed."

"You did," she laughed, "but I'm glad you did."

I've got to leave for Philadelphia this afternoon for California or New York, and I won't know which for a few hours. I've got to meet a man about a dog. No, I've got some business talks with a man and he's never in one place for more than a day or two."

I then decided to so the honourable thing and tell Dusty her single "Am I The Same Girl" had entered the NME Chart this week. "What!" she yelled across the Atlantic. I told her again. "Oh, that's great," she squealed, "you've put me in a good mood for the rest of the day. And I'm extra thrilled because it's something different for me. Ooh, I'm so pleased."

I asked her if she had been at all apprehensive as two or three weeks have gone by without the record making much impression. "No, not really; in fact this is quite speedy for me. I always seem to take ages to climb up the charts, but I worry like mad anyway whenever I have a record out."

Dusty left London for Philadelphia two weeks ago to cut an album of songs by Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. How was the recording going? "Going?" she

replied. "It's gone, it was fantastic. I only spent two days putting on the vocals, but I've been very busy all the time since I arrived hearing the songs, learning the words – you know the trouble I have doing that – and listening to the musicians doing the tracking. The rhythm section is the best I've worked with, they really are something else. They work as a unit, very tight. And they play so loud, which I like. The thing is, there are so many musicians in America, only the best survive and the have to be very, very good. The fellows I've been working with were all ex-road musicians who have decided to settle down and stick to studio work.

"The drummer has toured with Marvin Gaye for two years, and somebody else has only just stopped working with Stevie Wonder. And the songs Kenny and Leon have come up with... too much. They write a sort of melodic R&B, but it's very much their own style. I hope the album will be released in Britain before Christmas, and everybody seems to think there are at least two potential singles on it."

"So you haven't had too much time for seeing the sights?" I asked.

"I haven't had any time at all," Dusty sighed. "I've walked the 50 yards from my hotel to the studios in the morning and the 50 yards back again in the evening. I badly wanted to catch 5th Dimension, who were in town last week, but I didn't make it. There are quite a lot of things I meant to do while I was here, but I came with the idea of working hard, and that's what I've done.

"I've been by myself a lot of the time, intentionally, so there would be nothing at all to distract me. Homesick? Well, I do get a bit morbid when I'm left to my own devices, but I've really been too busy to think about it." Apart from her business talks, Dusty has three TV shows and a holiday to undertake before she returns to Britain on November 8.

"The holiday was meant to be three weeks, but it's been slowly whittled down to 11 days," Dusty said in mock annoyance, "...and that's not long enough, folks. I'll probably go to Puerto Rico to see some people I know, or perhaps I'll go to California, even if I have to go to New York. I know hundreds of people on the West Coast now, and then the sparks will really fly.

"I hate lazing about on the beach on holiday, it seems such a waste, but I suppose it's a task that's got to be done. I get brown very slowly, and I have to take my time about it or I frizzle up."

I asked Dusty if she ever wearied of the pace at which Americans seem to do everything. "I haven't been pushed at all," she answered, "but if anybody tried, I'd tell them to slow down. They do work very fast, but everything is so well regulated and arranged that there are virtually no hassles. I couldn't spend a lifetime working live here – that would age me very quickly.

"The American television I find better than at home, on the whole, mainly because there is such a choice. A lot of it is bad – juvenile, and some stations do cater all day long for the lowest common denominator, but the best of American TV is better than Britain's. Their big variety shows are brilliant, and I don't think we have hope in catching them up, but they don't have Spike Milligan, so they can never quite hope to improve on our comedy. While *The Flying Nun* is on one channel, you can switch over and see *The World Of William Blake* on another, and their educational stations are very good."

"There's something about America which seems to fit me. Things like waking up in the middle of the night and knowing you can walk round the block and buy food in a supermarket. That's it, just being able to do things when you feel like it."

When Dusty comes back to Britain, the first thing she'll do is take off for Germany!

"Only for a few days," she added hastily, "then I'll be back to appear on a Tom Jones TV show, and then I'll be doing a two-week spot at the Golden Garter Club near Manchester. I'm

looking forward to that, because I don't get many chances to appear in that part of the country."

With that, I left Dusty to get dressed, find out which part of the country she would be in a few hours later, and jump about with glee over yet another chart entry.

"Take care," I said.

"Thanks for waking me up," she replied
Gordon Coxhill •

"The rhythm section is the best I've worked with... very tight"



1969

JANUARY - MARCH

Peter Sarstedt: Peter Cook is "very good" and Marianne Faithfull sounds "feeble"

WORLD OF OZ
willows' harp like a tear



SINGLES
REVIEW
1969

"Oh what? It's Max Bygraves!"

MM Feb 22 "Where Do You Go To (My Lovely)" singer Peter Sarstedt reviews the singles sight unseen.

SINGLES

Cliff Richard
Good Times (Better Times)
COLUMBIA

(Laughter) Fantastic lyrics. Cliff Richard, is it? I never thought it was at first. I just managed to get a clue from his voice. I don't like his voice. It seems they have brought him a commercial song to do, and he's said "I'll do it" and it has put Cliff Richard right in the soup. I didn't like the lyrics or the arrangement.

Peter Cook *The Loneliness Of The Long Playing Record*
PRIVATE EYE

It's Peter Cook, isn't it? He did a very good imitation of John Peel on Cilla's TV show. I don't mind satire on pop, but I think the Bonzos do it best. They seem very much down on the middle class - the people they call "normals." But I think they tend to go a bit far in putting everybody down. They're liable to stop a lot of people - like poets - from doing anything. They attack everything very hard. But I like Peter Cook - he's very good.

Simon Dupree & The Big Sound
Broken Hearted Pirates
PARLOPHONE

Well, my first reaction is it's written by someone who must write



hundreds of songs like this. It's just too obvious. You know exactly what's coming next. The whole thing is a cliché - one cliché after another. If that's their idea of the pop business good luck to them, but it's not the idea of what a pop single should be. I can imagine them saying, "You've got to have some seagulls in there, boy, and fade in the sea." I find it a little fey.

Bee Gees *First Of May*
POLYDOR

Bee Gees - beautiful. There seems to be a Bee Gees revival going on. I like that

very much. This should build up the legend even more. I think that's Barry Gibb singing. He's a better singer than Robin and he's the nicest looking one. That guy has got to be one of the best singers in pop. That's a lovely tune as well. They always write good material and that should bridge the gap between "Massachusetts" and now.

World Of Oz
Willows' Harp DERAM

Is that what it's called - "Willows"? Harp? I couldn't begin to tell you who it is. I quite like the words - to see your maker's face is a good idea. It's refined rubbish, really. I'm not crazy about the song and it won't be a hit, in my humble opinion.

Max Bygraves
You're My Everything PYE

It's got to be Engelbert. Oh what a... No, this is not Engelbert, it's Max Bygraves. Could I hear the first couple of bars again? Just what I suspected - they would never allow a drummer to come in early like that on an Engelbert record. This sounds like a hit to me. It would be beautiful if this was done by the Bonzos - just slightly imperfect. It would be great if they did a big switch and did this kind of stuff seriously.

Andy Forray
Let The Sun Shine In
FONTANA

It's from *Hair*, the American cast. I saw the show three times. I really like it, but his is a rather watered-down version. It doesn't



seem right. I prefer the English cast version. This doesn't come across to me. The best song from the show is "Aquarius" by Vince Edwards. This seems a bit lethargic, and I can't see it as a hit.

Marianne Faithfull

Something Better DECCA

Sounds like the musicians are slowly walking out of the studio one by one. The drummer sounds really uninterested in this piece. Dear me - thank you very much. It's going to fade out, isn't it? Well, I've no idea who she is, but she's English - got to be. It's a terrible production for a start. If you're going to produce a record, you've got to do it properly. It's obviously her first record, and her voice is a bit feeble. I couldn't really understand what the song was about. Did she write it herself? Is it Yoko Ono? Who is it? Oh, no!

Perry & Kingsley

The Savers VANGUARD

I knew the Chipmunks would do an instrumental one day. It's definitely Chipmunk music. It's not really music at all and I don't like it too much as I come from the paranoid generation. There is a place for this in classical music, but I'm always suspicious of music without instruments. This is very funny but it will never take the place of steam-radio. Supposing the Moog synthesizer took the place of pop stars and started making personal appearances all over the country and getting in on Blind Date. This is just an exercise. It can't mean anything at all.



Dave Clark Five

The Mulberry Tree

COLUMBIA

At first I thought it was Zoot Money having a laugh. Now I realise it's serious. Is it Zoot Money? It also sounds a bit like The Love Affair. Dave Clark! Mike Smith singing? Well, you can't get me to like that. It's so - oh my God. I don't like it and it can't be a hit.



ALBUMS

Led Zeppelin I

ATLANTIC

Jimmy Page triumphs! While long hailed as one of the British guitar-slinging heroes, he has been a rather mystical figure to British fans, having spent such a long time either in recording studios working as an anonymous session man, or in America with the late, lamented Yardbirds.

Now, with his own group, the legend comes to life, and his work on guitar, acoustic, electric, and pedal steel varieties can be studied. He proves to be technical, tasteful, turbulent and torrid. His band is imaginative and exciting. Robert Plant is a new singer of stature, and John Paul Jones (bass, organ) and John Bonham (drums, tympani) are more than adequate.

Their material does not rely on obvious blues riffs, although when they do play them, they avoid the emaciated feebleness of most so-called British blues bands. Production by Jimmy and Glyn Johns is excellent. This Zeppelin is really in a gas new bag! MMMARCH 29

Bee Gees Odesa

POLYDOR

"It's going to be sad album, but listen to the words," Barry Gibb warned us recently. Indeed the mood of their monumental work - it's a double album - is basically one of despair and desolation. The strings surge over the Gibb brothers' melodies, which are often very good indeed. Two of the tracks are hits already, "First Of May" and "Lamplight", which give a good indication of the quality of the rest of the set. They have a sense of the dramatic and like to draw on large subjects - disasters or world-shaking events. There are titles like "Seven Seas Symphony", "With All Nations (International Anthem)" and "The British Opera". Not all the tunes are slow-paced. There is the sprightly "Never Say Never Again" and arranger Bill Shepherd must be congratulated on his widescreen-type musical scores which cope with all the Bee Gees moods. The cover matches the general air of lush extravagance. It is probably the most striking and tasteful produced, in red velvet. The Bee Gees can be proud of their achievement; it moves pop forward



ALBUMS REVIEW

1969

along a totally different track from the basic "underground" experiments and is equally worthwhile. MMMARCH 15

Beach Boys 20/20

CAPITOL

Best from the group in a long while, if still not up to the pioneer standards of *Pet Sounds*, that epic of long ago and far away. While they have not sunk back into the depths of "Smiley Smile", the brilliance of *Pet* remains unbeatable. At least they have returned to good melodies and pop simplicity with a minimum of freaking out, a policy shown to be valid by the success of two of the tracks as singles, "Do It Again" and "I Can Hear Music". The rest of the music is patchy and generally attractive. The mysterious title refers to The Beach Boys' 20th album release and a human's normal vision. The inside cover is an eye test card. MMMARCH 29



Cream Goodbye

POLYDOR

Goodbye, Eric, Jack and Ginger. Hello, Clapton Bruce and Baker! So the Cream have gone. But they were always there before: Ginger and Jack roaring with Graham Bond, Eric being beautiful with Mr Mayall. So they were together for a while and now they are apart. But something else will happen. For many they represent five years of British music history and more. They also represent the future. Here are some superb bonus tracks to *Wheels Of Fire*. Three were recorded live in America - "I'm So Glad", "Politician" and "Sitting On Top Of The World" - while "Badge", "Doing That Scaryard Thing" and "What A Bringdown" are studio jobs. On these, Jack plays bass, piano, organ and vocals and producer Felix Pappalardi sits in on bass or mellotron. Sadly, Ginger does not play any solos, but Eric and Jack are on top form. Incidentally, note carefully the Alan Aldridge cover - it's marvellous! MMMARCH 1

1969

JANUARY – MARCH



Ray Davies in '69:
"There aren't many
real hits. The charts
just have to be filled
up each week"

“What would I want with a Rolls-Royce? I’d rather ride a horse”

Many feel the new Kinks single “Plastic Man” goes too far in berating the little guy. **RAY DAVIES** explains his thinking (“nobody likes truth”) and talks about downsizing to a terraced house. “There won’t be enough room for the billiard table,” he says. “Never mind.”



— MELODY MAKER JANUARY 25 —

“WHEN THEY DECIDED to release my new single, I looked at the chart and nearly died,” said Dave Davies. He giggled into his pint and went on: “There was The Scaffold at No 1, Donald Peers and Des O’Connor. I thought, ‘How can you follow that?’

The whole pop world seems to have gone mad.” Dave refused a cigarette, announcing that he had given up smoking, and talked about the single.

“I suppose you’d call it a sort of slow country thing. I’ve always liked country music, particularly Hank Williams. ‘Hold My Hand’ seemed the natural next step after ‘Lincoln County’. I’m also working on an album. I’ve got to do a few more tracks, but it will probably be released in February, depending on how the single goes. I’ve written seven songs for it and Ray has done a couple he wants me to do and which I like.”

What, I wondered, were The Kinks doing? Dave gave up giving up smoking and took a cigarette. “We are doing some songs for the Eleanor Bron TV shows. I think it’s a series of six shows and Ray is writing a song a week which we will be playing.”

Brother Ray is busy songwriting. He did the theme for the film of *Till Death Us Do Part* and is to do the music for another major movie, *The Virgin Soldiers*. Dave has his solo singles. I wondered how drummer Mick Avory and bassist Pete Quaife were making out.

“They have an interest in our company that has accumulated money over the years,” said Dave. “I don’t think Mick and Pete mind being in the background. Actually, Pete has started writing now. He’s been chatting to a few groups about his songs and, who knows, 1969 might be the Big Year Of Pete Quaife.” I said I thought The Kinks’ *Village Green Preservation Society* »

REX FEATURES

album was the best thing they have done, and Dave agreed. “I think the reason it came out so well was that we weren’t taking the mickey for once,” he said. “It may not sound like it, but we meant all of it and none of it is meant as a send-up. Originally we wanted to release a double album for the price of one, but they wouldn’t let us. We also wanted to release an EP, but the company didn’t want to know. I don’t understand why EPs are not supposed to sell these days. I would have thought they were good value for money. They certainly sell a lot of them on the Continent.”

Dave was, surprisingly perhaps, enthusiastic about The Kinks’ recent cabaret debut at the Fiesta, Stockton. “I admit I was apprehensive before we did it,” he told me. “But we really enjoyed it. Everybody at the club was great. It took a bit of getting used to, but now, if I had to work solo in England, I’d like to do cabaret. There are none of the big hang-ups you get on concerts... bad sound and people rushing about in a panic. At the moment, though, I’ve got TV dates in Germany and Holland. I may also do some stage work in Germany. I’m not sure about a backing group yet. I shall have to look around for a trio or something.”

— MELODY MAKER APRIL 12 —

PLASTIC FLOWERS, PLASTIC teeth, plastic food, cups and saucers – plus plastic smiles – may not have been the only thoughts in the mind of Ray Davies when he wrote The Kinks’ latest single, “Plastic Man”.

But as the record indicates – and a conversation emphasises the point – Ray has some pretty deeply held views on the accoutrements of modern life. Ask him to be more specific about his recorded outburst, and he merely smiles enigmatically and says, “It’s like the Danish waitress said in a Muswell Hill cafe: ‘Just look around you.’”

Ray himself looked around at the instant decor of the cafe where he was taking a cup of tea and a toasted cheese sandwich – which came in a plastic envelope. Also done to a nice shade of brown.

You throw that away, I said with masterly superfluity. “It seems a pity,” said Ray with a mysterious smile. He expanded on the new “Plastic Man” single: “This record has outgrown what a pop record can be. This record has more love for people. Sometimes you love a person so much. But he’s got himself in a hole, and the only thing you can do is to kick him to get him out of it. People have had a go at me for using the word plastic, but it’s the only word you can possibly use. You couldn’t call a man a pathetic man.”

And how does Ray categorise plastic people?

“A),” he says – giving measured consideration to the term – “they’re phoney people. People who always succeed in saying the right things. They give the right buzz at the right time. You just can’t get anything genuine out of them. And b), they’re products of 1968 and ’69. They’ve been conditioned to things. They’ve got commitments to meet like heavy mortgages, for instance. But if they take a drink they have got to be careful not to be arrested. Otherwise they’d lose their jobs. And they can’t afford to do that. ‘Plastic Man’ not only summarises my feelings. A) – it’s my feelings and b) – it’s the group. A and B equal X – The Kinks.”

“What is important is that it’s the first ‘group’ record that has been made for a long time. It certainly expresses my brother Dave’s feelings. But it’s a part of each one of us. Somebody told me off the other day because the song did not have a hanging line, like building up for 16 bars and then going into a catchphrase. But the whole thing is a catchphrase. Certain people dislike it because they get certain truths about themselves. Nobody likes truth. But I admit the truth. It’s probably not the greatest song I’ve written and not the greatest song I’ll ever write. But it’s the only song I could have written at this time. Even though I hated it when I first heard the acetate!

“But I think it could be a hit. It does bother me if I don’t have a hit. But only because I feel I’ve made something wrong. But then I listen again, remember why I did it – and I then know I’m not wrong. Those same people who run ‘Plastic Man’ down are going to play it sometime. Then they’ll get something out of it they did not realise before.

“The only thing that upsets me is that people may think twice about anything else I do. A song doesn’t have to be a hit, but it’s got to have an impact. The way record sales are going now, there aren’t many real hits. The charts just have to be filled up each week. There’s got to be a No 1 and climbers. I understand that certain records called hits are selling very low figures.”

May 1, 1969: John Dalton (left), who played bass for The Kinks when Pete Quaife was badly injured in a car crash in 1966, joins Ray and Dave Davies and Mick Avory as a full-time member



For a successful songwriter whose latest commissions include an opera for Granada TV plus songs for a film version of *The Virgin Soldiers*, Ray is singularly detached from the trappings of fame. In fact, he’s planning to sell his large house at Elstree to move into a terraced or semi-detached house. “So there won’t be enough room for the table tennis and billiard table. Never mind,” says Ray philosophically.

More important to him, it seems, is an unpretentious environment. He shakes his head somewhat sorrowfully about those professional anti-establishment figures who, at the first touch of King Midas, rush out to buy a Rolls-Royce. “What would I want with a Rolls-Royce?” asks Ray. “It does only about 12 miles to the gallon. Anyway, driving frightens me to death. I’d rather ride a horse.”

And for a pop star – and Ray would probably loathe the term if you used it to his face – he is distinctly contemptuous about Radio One. “It terrifies me,” he says. “It’s conditioning people. It makes them listen to one thing. There’s no competition. I listen to Radio Four or *Any Questions*. I’d much rather listen to that. The people on Radio One become little tin gods.”

He might have said plastic gods. But he didn’t. *Laurie Henshaw*

— NME APRIL 26 —

RAY DAVIES IS a storyteller. I am sure that if he had been born about 200 years ago he would have been seen wandering about playing a mandolin, entertaining the peasants with his musical tales. All The Kinks’ hits have one thing in common – apart from being straight pop records, they tell a story. None of the old “moon” and “June” or “walk” and “talk” for Ray; there has to be a definite theme.

“I think a lot of people are annoyed about this,” confessed Ray’s brother

Dave. “I know a lot of people in the business don’t like it. They say, ‘What right have The Kinks got to make social comment?’”

“But the thing is, we’re not. Ray writes how he feels at the time. Whatever he’s thinking about at that period comes out in his writing. ‘Plastic Man’ isn’t knocking anyone; it’s really something in all of us, we’re all a bit plastic at times. You can go into a pub all dressed up and behave flash to impress people, then you go back to your wife and kids in front of the telly – it’s all hypocritical.”

Dave brought the new Kink, 22-year-old John Dalton, along to meet me. With them also was Mick Avory. Ray was in America producing

“It terrifies me.
The people on
Radio One
become little
tin gods”



— MELODY MAKER MAY 3 —

A THREE-LETTER WORD HAS led to a ban on The Kinks performing their new chart single, "Plastic Man", on *Top Of The Pops*. At the risk of corrupting a million MM readers, I can reveal that the word is "bum", which appears in a line of the lyric – "Plastic legs that go right up to his plastic bum".

"We did an Ampex for *Top Of The Pops* and they have decided not to use it," said an embittered Ray Davies this week. "They listened to the words and when I reached that word they shifted the camera off me. It's all very childish and I'm sure everybody who watches *Top Of The Pops* already knows what a bum is. They even asked me to sing 'thumb' instead. It was all so ridiculous and very upsetting. What makes it so absurd is that we did it on *Dee Time* and the record is getting played on Radio One without any complaints."

— MELODY MAKER SEPTEMBER 27 —

A CONTEMPT FOR THE establishment-conditioned people of 1969 has emerged all too clearly in the songs of Ray Davies and The Kinks. It has earned them a reputation as intolerant mockers of the little man. "Plastic Man" attacked phoney people and now "Shangri-La" is devoted to life in suburbia. But it looks as if Ray's obsession is drawing to an end with the release of their latest single and new album, *Arthur*.

Bass player John Dalton, who replaced Pete Quaife when he left The Kinks, explained, "I think it's something Ray's had a bee in his bonnet about for about a couple of years, but now the album's finished Ray will probably go onto something else." People may think that with our pop opera *Arthur* we've copied The Who as they've done a similar type of album, but Ray started writing it years ago. We've been recording it for ages.

"Shangri-La" is one of the tracks from the album. There are 12 tracks in all and the album tells the story of a middle-aged man named Arthur whose son decided to go to America. This makes Arthur realise what he's achieved in life, that he's still living in the past in some ways. He realises what he's been missing all his life. There are a lot of good tracks on the album and they'd all make singles. Ray couldn't really make up his mind which track we should use as the single."

John, who had his own group Mark Four before finally joining The Kinks, will be making his first trip to the States next month when The Kinks start a two-month tour of a country where they are regarded in a totally different light than in Britain. "We're regarded as a sort of 'underground' group in the States. Our last album, *Village Green Preservation Society*, is a big 'in' record with the hippies. We'll be playing all types of places, from the colleges to all the progressive gigs like the Fillmore East and West. It's a complete coast-to-coast tour. Obviously some places are bigger than others, but we intend to use brass and strings on this trip. We'll be using a lot of material from *Arthur*, so we'll need the brass. It should be great working with that big sound behind us and it will be different to look at and hear."

When in the States John hopes "to do the whole tourist bit as I've heard so much about it from the other boys" and to meet two of his biggest idols, Elvis Presley and Jerry Lewis. "It seems to me that Tom Jones has brought on this return by Elvis. I think perhaps Elvis is a bit jealous and afraid that Tom Jones will take over his crown."

Elvis apart, John believes that the current return to rock by a lot of groups has come about because of a lack of original material.

"People have run out of ideas of their own and there are so very few good songwriters around these days, so they've had to revert back to the old stuff. A lot of people who are playing the old stuff are the so-called supergroups – something I wouldn't call them. As individuals they might be very good, but they tend to clash onstage and you end up with one person trying to dominate the group." *Royston Eldridge* •

some new Turtles records. John has played with The Kinks before, so he knows their music; in fact he replaced Pete Quaife for a few weeks when Pete had an accident a couple of years ago.

"I've been playing in little groups since," John told me. "I don't feel any different being with The Kinks as I've played with them before."

Pete's departure from the group was not exactly expected and Mick told me why. "He said about three months ago that he was going to leave, but I didn't take any notice. The first time I found out he had left was when I read it in your paper and saw that picture of him with his new group."

So if anyone's thinking of leaving their group, tell us first and we'll let the group know about it the next Friday!

Right now, The Kinks are working on an album which is going to be a sort of pop opera. "I don't know why it's being called an opera," Dave commented. "It's not the sort of thing most people know as an opera; it's an LP that tells a story. A bloke wrote the story and Ray's been writing the music. We're doing it for Granada."

Dave, who was behaving unusually quietly for one whose looning habits are known the length and breadth of every alehouse in the land, has a personal thing about country & western music. His last solo single, "Lincoln County", meant a lot to him, and he even went so far as to threaten never to make another if that one didn't take off. It didn't, and I asked him if he would keep to the threat.

"No, I'm doing an album now of my own songs with the rest of The Kinks playing on it," he revealed. "I have to write songs and most of them are country & western types. I don't write anything like Ray and he doesn't write anything like me. Though we're brothers, we're not all that alike; I'd like to be more like him and he'd like to be more like me. We see each other's faults, then look at ourselves and think, 'I wish I could do what he does.'"

Now that "Plastic Man" has made the hit parade, The Kinks are all set to start appearing in the press again. It is an odd thing about The Kinks that they hardly ever get a mention unless they have a hit on their hands.

"We do work a lot, but never get any mentions until something like Pete leaving happens," confirmed Mick. "We've never bothered about getting a publicist until now, so I suppose he'll start inventing all sorts of things for you to write about."

At that very moment I walked the said publicist and everyone kept schtum. He noticed the obvious silence, but before he could say anything a large pint was pressed into his ever-receptive palm.

"Come on," Dave said to me, "have another drink." Then he added: "I really hope this record gets in your charts."

Well, you see what buying a drink for me does for you, Dave!

Richard Green

**A quick
look round
the plastic
world**

of this and so. They've been conditioned to things. They've got commitments to meet like heavy mortgages, for instance. But if they take a drink they've got to be careful not to be caught phrase that the whole thing is a catch phrase. "Certain people dislike it because they get certain truths about themselves. Nobody likes truth. But I admit the truth."

“When I die, I want to have left some mark of my own”

NINA SIMONE arrives in Europe as “the high priestess of soul”, her *’Nuff Said!* album already a classic. Her message is love, but Simone represents far more. “First of all I’m a coloured woman,” she says. “Coloured artists don’t have to take back seats any more.”

— NME FEBRUARY 8 —

SHE SITS THERE straight-backed in her chair, proud and dignified, as impressive a figure in person as she is on stage. Bearing no signs of the several tiring hours she has just spent on the plane, she handles her interviewers with dexterity and wit, turning back on the questioner that which she does not wish to answer with firmness tempered by charm – all round she is a most impressive lady, the one called Nina Simone.

Nina came to England in December. And since then what had always been a large devoted following from these shores has mushroomed into a sudden surge of pop interest, with the result that, last week, Miss Simone found herself in the position of having two *NME* Top 30 hits after waiting more than a decade to make her British chart breakthrough.

“To Love Somebody” leapt an amazing 15 places – the highest jump of the week – while “Ain’t Got No” was still hovering in the lower regions of the chart after reaching No 4. And, on top of that, the Philips double-sided re-release of Nina’s superb early numbers “I Put A Spell On You” / “Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood” is also selling well.

There are some neat twists of irony in “To Love Somebody”, which is, of course, a Bee Gees original from the pens of Barry, Maurice and Robin Gibb. One lies in the fact that the number was a still largely unexplained flop in Britain for the Bee Gees themselves, and coming as it did, sandwiched between their initial hit “New York Mining Disaster” and their No 1 “Massachusetts”, it might have proved a fatal setback.

“We did have a hit with it elsewhere,” said Barry Gibb this week, “but not in England, because I think they just didn’t want those kinds of songs at the time.” Paradoxically, “...Somebody” has since become one of the most recorded of all the Gibb compositions, and according to Barry, Nina’s hit is only one of 200 other versions. A second touch of irony arises from the fact that Barry, Robin and Maurice »

GETTY



"Popularity
doesn't mean
that much to me.
Nor does money.
Music is my life":
Nina Simone,
October 30, 1969

1969

JANUARY – MARCH

A certain detachment

MM March 29 Nina Simone draws on blues, contemporary folk and soul during a moving, entertaining performance in London.

MOST ARTISTS GO on stage and project themselves to the audience. Nina Simone is one of a rarer breed who makes the audience come to her. She works with a certain detachment and delivers her songs deadpan, although as the evening progresses she allows herself the occasional smile and gets up from her piano and executes some shuffling dance moves across the stage.

Her concert at London's Royal Festival Hall last Saturday was, to say the least, successful. To many, she appears to be some species of Black Goddess. Several young white fans succeeded

Several young fans succeeded in getting on stage and sitting at her feet

in getting on stage and sitting at her feet, transfixed, towards the end of her show. Backed by organ, guitar, bass guitar and drums – her usual group – Nina worked through a varied, often moving and always entertaining programme. Her choice of material is interesting; she draws on contemporary folk (“Turn!

Turn! Turn!”, written by Pete Seeger, Dylan’s “The Times They Are A-Changin’” and “I Shall Be Released”), blues (“Tossing And Turning”) and soul-slanted things like her arrangement of poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar’s “Compensation” and “To Love Somebody”, which was another good arrangement on which she was joined by Doris Williams and Gina Rothschild.

The ovation she received was well deserved. Nina Simone is a great artist and, as the mood of her act suggests, makes no compromises. If you missed here this time, make the Palladium on April 9. Nina Simone is one of the most exciting performers on any stage anywhere. *Tony Wilson*



A SIMONE: one of a rarer breed of artists

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Nina, the Black Goddess, makes no compromises

ROLAND KIRK has set the London music scene alight during his season here. Apart from blowing up the proverbial storm at Ronnie Scott's, frequently bringing the house down with rock and roll sets, he has been jamming at the drop of a saxophone clip. In the last few days he has played with Earl Hendrix and on Saturday night with Stevie Wonder, who blew harmonica and drums.

This unlikely duo were joined by Nitty Gritty's Percy Heath on bass, and pianist Welding Eric. Roland finishes at Ronnie's on Saturday. Let's hope he'll be back soon – we need more like him! At the Showboat, Maitlandson, the Bonzo Dog Band were refused drinks at the bar as they were "consistently dressed." What happens when they look like the Clowd? Keith Moon has advertised in The Times for a European title – apparently you can buy a Count for £5,000. A double album coming of the Cambridge Natural Music festival – what a ghastly thought! Mike Evans of the Deviants says shouts of "yih-ah" are a "high point of intra-audience stimulation." Tony Wilson says: "Round things – it's called Scotch and Coke."

CO
RO
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have made as much out of the song from royalties off the cover versions as they would have done if the Bee Gees themselves had got it to No 1!

"Nina seems to have a lot of interest in our songs," says Barry. "And this really knocks me out because it really is an honour. She has been a star for so long and it is tremendous."

Flip of "...Somebody" is also a Bee Gees song, "I Can't See Nobody", and the group's "Please Read Me" and "The Morning" compositions are among the tracks on Nina's new RCA album *Nuff Said*.

The LP was recorded live before a capacity audience at the Westbury Music Fair, Long Island, last summer, just 48 hours after the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King, and one of the highlights is the song written the same day by Gene Taylor, Nina's bass player, titled "Why? (The King Of Love Is Dead)".

Also on the album is a live version of Nina's hit from *Hair* – "Ain't Got No – I Got Life", a new treatment of the earthy "Gin House Blues" and "The Backlash Blues", a number especially written for Nina by Langston Hughes, one of America's greatest poets, just a few months before his death. On there too is a fresh styling of "I Loves You Porgy", the song that gave Nina her first US No 1 over a decade ago.

Aged about 35 – though she turns aside questions on her age – Nina was born Eunice Waymon in Tryon, North Carolina, the sixth of eight children. By the time she was seven, she had taught herself to play both piano and organ and recalls, "By that age I had acquired a deep and intense devotion to sound."

But at an early age her musical career was almost strangled at birth through her family's lowly financial status and saved only by a local music teacher who realised the child's potential and offered to train her along classical lines at no charge.

By this help, the young Nina was able to attend high school in Asheville, North Carolina, and to continue her musical training for a year and a half at the Juilliard School Of Music. When her family later moved to Philadelphia she became an accompanist for vocal students and gave private piano lessons to finance her own studies with Vladimir Sokoloff at the Curtis Institute Of Music.

At 19, she went job hunting and was offered work in an Atlantic City nightclub on the stipulation that she sang as well as played piano. "I was stunned," she recalls. "In all my concentration on the piano, I hadn't paid any attention to my voice." She began singing spirituals and the audiences lapped it up.

Nina had little difficulty finding work after that and in the late '50s. "I Loves You Porgy" put her on the road to international stardom and to how we know her today – as one of the finest blues/soul singers in the world. *Nick Logan*

— MELODY MAKER APRIL 19 —

NINA SIMONE, THE ARTIST, is the High Priestess Of Soul, the blues singer and the jazz pianist. Nina Simone, the person, is compelling, formidable, and totally involved in life and living.

She was in London last week reaching a much wider audience than usual – thanks to a song from *Hair* and one from the Bee Gees – but worrying because her latest single, "Revolution", is not being played.

"I'm sensitive about all my records, but I'm concerned because this one isn't selling. I'd like the fans to find out why it's not being played, I want to know what they think.

"'Revolution' means what's going on in the world. If you listen to the lyrics of the song you will see, though it does mention the racial problem, there are numerous others – the young against the old, the black against the white, the poor against the rich, and the new breed against the old establishment. I think the young people would like it especially.

"I try to say through my music what thousands of people think and feel but aren't able to say. I'm just a medium. Millions of people go through the same emotions in their own lives. The music that you put out should be very close to what you feel. I'm very happy that I've had the hits – it's thrilling, a bonus, it's the supreme compliment – but I'm not going to change what I do and put out something that doesn't please me. I like to please the public, but not at my own expense.

"I want to sing the best music in life – the best that I can find. Yes, the message is more important to me, but I don't think it can be separated from the music. For me, the message is more important. The message L-O-V-E. Love, baby and care – people don't care about one another."

The state of the British charts interested Nina, especially the current upsurge of enthusiasm for Tamla-Motown.

"Coloured artists are leading the trend of music in the pop chart and this is what should be. It should have happened years before. There are many reasons – we could talk all day about it – but the world is getting smaller. Coloured artists are accepted in ways they could never have been before – they don't have to take back seats any more. The medium is very big now – there's TV, radio and travel. First of all, I regard myself as a coloured woman who is very sensitive about this thing."

"I always want to reflect my people. Young people, black or white, come second. I am a spokeswoman for young people, but first of all I'm a coloured woman. The thing I most want to do is take a year off, or however long it takes, and do an awful lot of reflecting about life and music."

"You have to see what you've done and you have to take time to do that. When I die I want to have left some particular mark of my own. I'm carving my own little niche in this world now." *Royston Eldridge*

— NME APRIL 19 —

SHE SPEAKS THE VERBAL equivalent of big black capital letters. "I am carving my own little niche in this world of craziness. I am into my own thing. Man, when I die I want to leave some kind of mark that is my own."

Nina Simone speaking in her fascinating musical voice that lifts imploringly in tone at the end of each sentence. It gives everything she says an extra touch of drama and importance. But then most of what she says is important – she doesn't have much time for trivia.

She sits regally, dramatically, dressed in gold-brown silk blouse and dark-brown silk trousers, a striped headscarf worn Egyptian-style rising up and away from the back of her neck. She's in London with husband and daughter on her way back to New York after extensive concerts in Europe. At her hotel she's meeting the press.

"I try to say something through my music – what lots of people think but are not able to do or say themselves," she is saying. "That's all. I am just a medium. Millions of people can have



some identification with what I sing because they have come across these things themselves. That's all."

Chairs are drawn nearer towards her corner. She's asked if she wants a drink. She smiles, thinks. "No, I'm trying to get away from all that crap." She's bought an iced coke instead.

The flashbulbs pop. "Smile" asks a cameraman. Nina's reply is to push forward her proud chin and hold an impressive serious pose.

"Smile... Say Cheese" comes the repeated request. There is a half-hearted attempt to comply, quickly abandoned. "No," she replies instead, laughing while trying to maintain the serious pose.

After the successes of "Ain't Got No" and "To Love Somebody", Nina's "Revolution" single is taking a long time to get off the ground. She expresses concern about it and over the fact that it hasn't been getting much airplay on Radio One. "Anybody here from the music papers?" she asks. "I'd like my fans to find out why it isn't selling and what they think about it."

It can hardly be said that Nina's whole career depends on the success of "Revolution", but she appears to show deep concern about it.

"It bothers me because of the record company, the promotion people, because of my husband. Because they are worried – but not me. Music is my life. It gives me a kind of freedom to write and sing what I like. I must have that freedom. If 'Revolution' does not sell then we will go on to something else, period. We're going to do 'Turn! Turn! Turn!' as a single. I did it on *The David Frost Show* and we had a fantastic response to it.

I hope they like that."

What does "revolution" mean to her?

"It means what is going on all over the world. If you listen to the lyrics you will see that although it does include the racial problem it does include all the revolts and rebellions going on all over the world... black against white... poor against rich... young against old... new breed against the establishment, and you can go on and on and on. I believed that young people would like it. I believe that the music I put out should be as close to what I feel as possible. That has always been the guideline."

"I am very happy that I had the hits, very thrilled about them. But really I just cannot change and do something that will just please them. I want to please them. But really I cannot change and sing what I don't believe in. Popularity doesn't mean that much to me. Nor does money. Music is my life."

Musically, Nina's achievements are legion. Personally, there is a long, long way to go. She explained one ambition she'd like to fulfil: "I want to take a year off to have an awful lot of reflection about my life and my music. I really felt a glow inside when I heard about this man who took off 12 years. His name was [pianist] Vladimir Horowitz – he stayed away from a concert hall for 12 years and he came back last year. But he knew what he was doing and all I want is a year or maybe two," she says, with a smile. "You have to go away and see what you have done, and that is what living is all about. You have to keep redirecting your own life."

She speaks of Amsterdam as a city of young people, a city she admires, and of the concert she played there when so many young people attended. Does she regard herself as a "freedom fighter" for youth?

"First of all I regard myself as a coloured woman who is very sensitive about the things I do and the things I say. I always want to represent my people. Young people, black and white, come second. My first identification is as a coloured woman."

She's asked on which she puts the most importance – the message or the music?

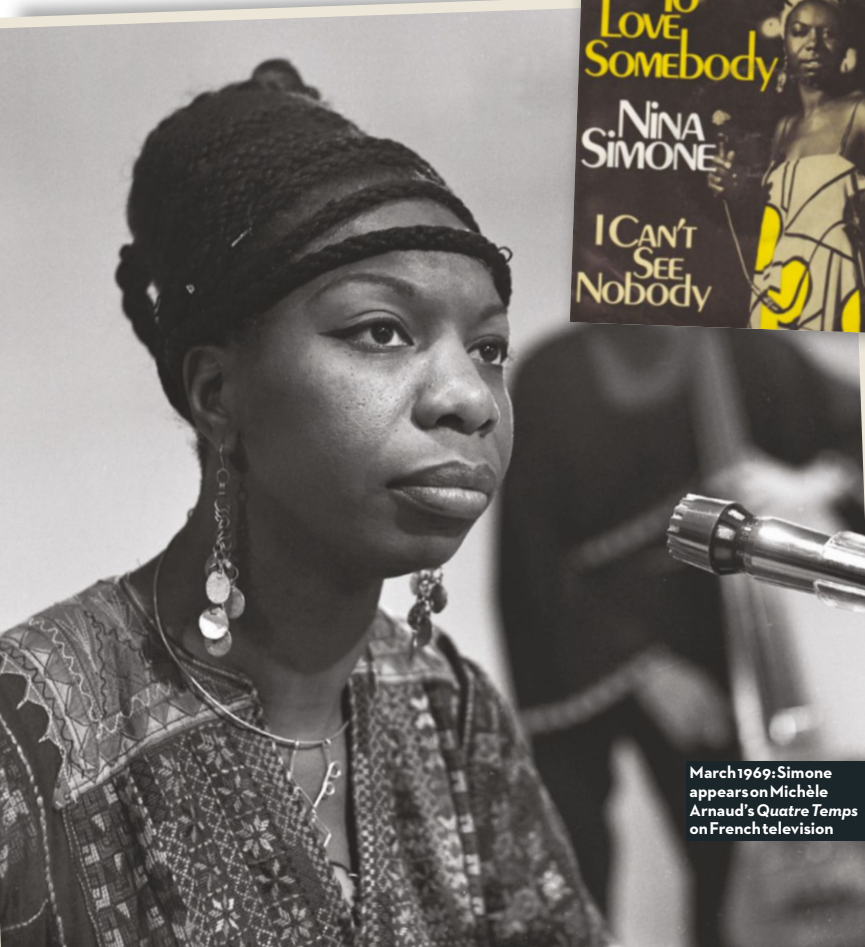
"To me the message is more important, though I think it cannot be separated from the audience."

What then, in a nutshell, is the message?

"L-O-V-E," she spells out. "Love and care. People don't care enough about each other."

'Nuff said. *Nick Logan* •

"The music that you put out should be very close to what you feel"



March 1969: Simone appears on Michèle Arnaud's *Quatre Temps* on French television

1969

JANUARY – MARCH



Blind Faith in June 1969:
(l-r) Ric Grech, Eric
Clapton, Ginger Baker
and Steve Winwood
outside Olympic
Studios in Barnes,
South-West London



“It’s very hopeful, very exciting”

ERIC CLAPTON starts the year on the cusp of forming a new supergroup — **BLIND FAITH**. There is a great performance in Hyde Park, but a troubled American tour tests Clapton’s commitment to the project. “Egos were flying up and down,” he says. “I don’t think the group is going to stay together very long...”

— NME FEBRUARY 1 —

ERIC CLAPTON HAS emerged from self-imposed exile and is this week attempting to book studio time for himself and Stevie Winwood. The former Cream guitarist and the ex-Traffic star, who have long been admirers of each other’s work, decided over a year ago that they would record together at the earliest opportunity. Since the Cream came to an end, Eric has been in hiding at his new country house near Guildford, avoiding people and publicity and pondering his future.

“I tend to regard the whole business of coming up to town as a nightmare,” said Eric when he made one of his rare excursions into the big city on Thursday to talk about his future with Stevie, his friendship with George Harrison and why he thinks even his most faithful fans will give up following him sooner or later. »

GETTY

I waited for him at manager Robert Stigwood's Mayfair offices. Eric was late. "He's just arrived and finding his way up through the offices," said publicist Robin Turner. A quarter of an hour or more passed. "He must have got lost between here and the front door," Robin apologised. Eventually Mr Clapton arrived, with a grin on his face and looking healthy and happy and resplendent in a black velvet jacket and pink velvet trousers with turn-ups.

"You're looking well," he said, sitting himself down and asking if a bacon sandwich could be found while he proceeded to tell me what he had been doing in his Surrey hideout since the Cream split.

"I am a professional listener," he confessed. "I like listening to records as much as playing. That is probably what my problem is. Once again I have got to listening to blues and old rock'n'roll records, including a Buddy Holly Greatest Hits LP I have bought. But I think it is now time I did something. I'm trying to book recording sessions for next week, so I'll have a deadline then and I'll have to do something.

"Anyone who wants to turn up," was Eric's reply when I asked who he'd be working with. Could he be more specific? "Well, Stevie, obviously. But I don't know whether I'll be doing an album of mine, or an album of mine and Stevie, or just Stevie's album. It will just have to sort itself out, because I can't be bothered making those kinds of decisions beforehand.

"Stevie came down and stayed at the house for four days just days after Christmas. We didn't talk much but we played a lot and that I suppose was our version of talking. But it's very hopeful, very exciting. He's frighteningly good. In fact the only thing that holds me back is that he is so dynamic that you could probably end up just accompanying him! I've got to work out in my mind whether I want to do that or to express something on my own."

Does it mean that they will be forming a group together, I asked? "It probably will be," he replied, "but I don't want to commit myself so strongly that I can't back out."

What then are the chances? "Oh 75 to 25," said Eric with an enigmatic smile. Then after a pause added, "Very good chances, actually. There's no-one else. The only thing is that if I do a record with Stevie or form a group with him I am kinda stuck for a rhythm section, and my immediate reaction would be to call up Jack and Ginger because they are the only two that I am familiar with. But I don't know how Stevie would feel about that. He might want to call up Jim Capaldi, Chris Wood, etc. So it's a problem.

"If there was a group it would probably be only temporary but the time might be a lot longer than other people would call temporary. We might drift around for a year or so or a couple of years. And as Jack has said, there is some chance that Cream will all be back together in nine months. I'd quite like to do it all again with another member. With Stevie – yeah. Say someone said get together at the end of this year after I have had all my little diversions, then I might do it – but not as a trio."

Apart from Eric's associations with Stevie, another heavy influence on him of late has come from his friendship with George Harrison. "He influences me a lot," said Eric, "in what he says about things and about music. But there is no chance that we would get involved in a group, because he has the best group in the world on his hands. And he would be a fool to check out of that. But I will still be seeing him, because he turns you on. He is a fantastic person; a very heavy man."

We talked about Tony Palmer's BBC *Omnibus* tribute to the Cream and how different Eric seemed now from the film interviews in the programme. "There have obviously been some great changes. When those interviews were done we had just checked into San Francisco to play the Fillmore and we were very egotistical about everything. We were just God's gift to the world, but that didn't last long. I don't feel so 'dog eat dog' any more. I felt very much as if I was in a competition.

"I was very aware of people talking about this 'fastest guitar alive' bit. But there is no necessity to go into that now; I am now quite prepared to go into a studio and make anything that sounds good to me – and be satisfied with it. I'm not worried about its appeal to other people or like how it stands up against the latest guitarist to come up. I am not so hung up now on being a success. But there is no such thing as a best guitarist. Because if I had a lick that was better than Beck's then Beck would have a lick that was better than mine, and Hendrix is better than all of us anyway," he laughed.

The strange thing about the legendary Mr Clapton is that while much is heard of Clapton the musician and guitarist, little is ever heard of Clapton the man. This is usually the case with legendary characters, as Eric undoubtedly is, and derives from his wish to avoid a personality cult – a situation he not only intends to continue but to intensify.

"If I am in a newspaper it is always about my guitar playing," agreed Eric. "It has always been that way. I don't have a personality appeal like, say a Bee Gee. It's also because I'm so fickle, I suppose. I mean I can't tie myself down to ever looking the same."

I can vouch for that. On *Omnibus*, Eric's hair was wavy and he had a moustache. The last time I saw him, in December at the Stones' *Rock And Roll Circus*, he had no moustache and long straight hair. On Thursday he had changed yet again. Now the moustache is back, his hair is shorter at the sides and he has acquired a fringe.

"I remember once when I was with John Mayall I used to wear military jackets," he recalled. "I played at one place and the whole crowd was wearing military uniforms. And I came on wearing a clown outfit or something strange and there were hundreds of brought-down people everywhere. But I avoid trying to get a personality cult. I expect this year to really drop out of it completely, publicity-wise, press-wise.

"I just don't think you can keep the public interested in someone who is not taking the steps to interest them. I am now virtually in a position where I have nothing to say to anybody. What my plans are, what I eat for breakfast and all that. Even my most faithful fans, whoever they may be, are bound to give up sooner or later.

"No, I'm not deliberately trying to lose them, I am just being myself, but I don't think that will interest them for long. I mean – just a bloke. There's nothing for them to get hung up on."

They manage to get hung up on Lennon, McCartney, etc, as "just blokes," I suggested. "They are not 'just blokes'," protested Eric.

"They are... Well, I'm hung up on Harrison, Lennon, McCartney and Ringo because they are the saints of the 20th century." A lot of people would put Eric in the same class.

"No, I just don't see that," he continued. "I can't see how just being a guitarist is enough." But a very good guitarist. "Not even a good guitarist. But if I was a songwriter and I had things to say that people could follow..."

"I can only really appeal to other guitarists. There can't be too many chicks, or pop music fans either."

What did you eat for breakfast?

"Porridge," said Eric and smiled. *Nick Logan*

— MELODY MAKER AUGUST 16 —

THERE WAS ONCE a standard press picture caption for lady showbusiness celebrities which ran: "Always happiest when among her flowers." Ginger Baker has a reputation as a hellraiser, which he does not particularly enjoy and is not particularly accurate. With angular features and wild red hair, he seems a fearsome figure as he nightly whips up excitement with drum solos on riot-torn rostrums across America.

He is known to get into occasional scrapes with policemen and has been seen at the centre of odd scenes in the more rocking kind of nightclub.

But Ginger Baker at home, when he gets the chance, is a man of peace, dedicated to ensuring his tropical fish receive a balanced diet and a clean environment. He has worked long and hard for recognition and financial reward and even now he rarely has time to relax with the simple pleasures of life in a detached Harrow villa with wife and children.

However, Ginger managed to take a few days off from Blind Faith's hectic tour of America last week and when I called at his home he was busying himself drawing plans for a proposed high-speed cruiser while his family watched unmoved at the desperate attempts of *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In* to raise a chuckle, in colour.

In just over a year in their comfortable and spacious house, Ginger has ordered the transformation of his garden from a heap of wet clay to a pleasant piece of greenery with attractive fish pond with fountains, which he built himself with the aid of road manager, Mick Turner.

And inside, Ginger has two large tanks stocked with an intriguing array of fishy delights of various hues. I arrived at feeding time and was shown »

"I expect this year to really drop out of it completely, publicity-wise"



With Clapton concerned about their stage readiness, Blind Faith live up to their name in front of an audience of 120,000

Subtlety and controlled elegance

NME June 14 Blind Faith make their live debut on a balmy evening in London.

HYDE PARK LONDON
LIVE!
JUNE 7

IT WAS, IF we are to believe the *London Evening News*, dropping the biggest booby of them all, the "Cream farewell concert". That such a powerful newspaper should be so ignorant of the facts is frightening, but gladly not all the press coverage was as ill-informed as the poor old out-of-touch *News*.

But the sadder aspect of this side of the Blind Faith concert was that in their amazement at 120,000 youngsters meeting without incident, the national press missed the opportunity to realise that pop is no longer the preserve of the teenybopper and that these "mods, rockers and hippies", as the *Evening Standard* called them, had come not to scream at some hope-swivelling demagogue, but in an orderly way to listen to adult thinking pop music, about which there was not a word.

So what of the music that caused all the fuss but went virtually ignored in the coverage? What we were witnessing was not the gods at play but a very fine rock group. And if we thought of them in that way and not as superhuman beings then they were good and becoming brilliant with every new phrase. It was 1pm when I arrived, along with a cavalry of colourful young people who had poured out of the Underground at Marble Arch, and already the crowd was overflowing the natural amphitheatre known as the cockpit.

Musically, the peaceful mood of the afternoon was set by The Third Ear Band and their Indian-influenced alchemy, provided by tabla, clarinet, cello and violin. The excellent Edgar Broughton Band followed, and kept up the high standard, with their Beefheart-like

bluesy pop. A big roar went up for Richie Havens as he took the stage and launched into "High Flying Bird" and an act of burning intensity delivered from the heart.

"Freedom" was an emotional closer and at the end of it Richie came off the stage at the back, with his face screwed up with passion, still strumming his guitar for several seconds after the act was over. It was a wonderful feeling of mass communication that was filling the park with sweetness and it rubbed off on Donovan, who borrowed Richie's guitar and asked if he could sing a song or two.

He sang hello to them first, and they warmed to him, and then gave them four numbers which they loved. He picked "Colours" as a finale they'd all know and broke off midway to amuse the audience with the popular prostitution of his own lyrics... "Yellow is the colour of my true love's teeth." Etc.

So to Blind Faith, whose non-appearance was causing apprehension until almost exactly to schedule their faces appeared in the throng at the rear of the enclosure. It was Stevie's apparent musical domination of Eric and Ginger that seemed to disappoint some of the crowd. On every one of the nine numbers it was Stevie who took the vocals, leaving his unmistakable impression of the musical outflow. But is that really such a bad thing? Stevie's talent is growing to frightening

with Eric and Rick's guitars and Ginger's drums he could have no finer canvas on which to create.

And if, as it seems likely, Eric and Ginger would rather be led than be leaders, perhaps they feel some dominant force is necessary to stop their talents producing self-indulgence. I, for one, found no cause for complaint.

It is difficult to chronicle the numbers as most titles went unannounced, but those that were included Stevie's blues number "I'd Rather See You Sleeping In The Ground", his "Means To An End" and the Stones' "Under My Thumb". It was when Ginger announced, half-joking, half-serious, that this was just their first

rehearsal that I began to wonder if we were expecting too much and began to seek a new basis for appraisal.

And it was when Ginger at about that point turned on a flash of brilliant drumming to get the crowd on its feet that the whole set took a night from the good to the excellent. Stevie came back powering away; Rick Grech, bending over his guitar in that peculiar bass player's crouching stance, was making it clear that he wasn't out of his depth in such exalted company; while Eric was playing with subtlety and controlled elegance.

Earlier there had been a certain amount of drive lacking, but Stevie's keyboard storming and Ginger's ferocious drumming were pushing up the level every minute and from that point I began to note down every number as their best so far.

Perhaps Stevie summed it up for all of them when he sang, "I have finally found a place to live like I never had before." Nick Logan

Ginger announced – half-joking, half-serious – that this was their first rehearsal

proportions, those aching vocals that tug at the mind are reaching new dimensions, and

FOR 120,000 FANS

The concert that made history

and already the crowd was overflowing the natural amphitheatre known as the cockpit. Musically, the peaceful mood of the afternoon was set by the Third Ear Band and their Indian-influenced alchemy, provided by tabla, clarinet, cello and violin. The excellent Edgar Broughton Band followed, and kept up the high standard with their Beefheart-like

Ginger would rather be led than be a leader, perhaps they feel some dominant force is necessary to stop their talents producing self-indulgence. I, for one, found no cause for complaint. It is difficult to chronicle the numbers as most titles went unannounced, but those that were included Stevie's blues number "I'd Rather See You Sleeping In The Ground", his "Means To An End" and the Stones' "Under My Thumb". It was when Ginger announced, half-joking, half-serious, that this was just their first rehearsal that I began to wonder if we were expecting too much and began to seek a new basis for appraisal. And it was when Ginger at about that point turned on a flash of brilliant drumming to get the crowd on its feet that the whole set took a night from the good to the excellent. Stevie came back powering away; Rick Grech, bending over his guitar in that peculiar bass player's crouching stance, was making it clear that he wasn't out of his depth in such exalted company; while Eric was playing with subtlety and controlled elegance. Earlier there had been a certain amount of drive lacking, but Stevie's keyboard storming and Ginger's ferocious drumming were pushing up the level every minute and from that point I began to note down every number as their best so far. Perhaps Stevie summed it up for all of them when he sang, "I have finally found a place to live like I never had before." Nick Logan

the outdoor pool in full operational order with concealed lighting and enough fountains and waterfalls to whip up the pool into a maelstrom.

"The fish love it," said Ginger with satisfaction, as great finny lumps huddled in what seemed to me cowardly fashion beneath the foam. We adjourned for a chat in the dining room. "I'm going back tomorrow," he revealed. "I just came back to see my family. The tour has been quite happy. After the team tours we altered its time so we could get some time off and drive ourselves to gigs."

"We did about 1,700 miles in three days last week and we've been doing all the concerts and we finish on August 24 in Hawaii. The kids have been reacting pretty well. A few people weren't too satisfied. Some people wanted Cream and didn't get it."

Did Ginger think Blind Faith was a better band than the Cream?

"It's a different band. Things have been getting better all the while. I'm playing well lately. I do a solo every night—I don't think I could work without doing that. The kids all want that, so I usually end up doing more. I need a number to build up excitement to play a solo, and we do it with 'Do What You Like'."

"There have been a few reports that Blind Faith are Stevie's band. Well, that's bull. I saw one review of our record which said it was Stevie's new band, which is a bit puzzling because it's nobody's band."

I mentioned to Ginger that I had been recently replaying his original recording with Graham Bond, Jack Bruce and Dick Heckstall-Smith, the original supergroup. "I don't really play anything. I just don't play records too much. You do a record and become very involved in it at the time, and then you move on. Sometimes I play a Cream record. Some good records came out of that. Really, when I'm not playing, I'm not musically conscious. I like to get away from it all. That's why I like having a car."

"I'd still very much like to do an LP with Phil Seamen. Work with a big band? Yeah, that's a nice idea. I'm not dead yet—there's some life in me yet. Possibly some things like that will happen. There are still a lot of things I'd like to do with Blind Faith. There are a lot of tunes I'd like us to do. The band didn't really get together at first. When we did Hyde Park I wasn't happy with my solo and Eric didn't get it together too well, which is unusual for Eric. But since then he's got better and better. The first gig where it really started to happen was in Oslo."

His solo on the new Blind Faith album struck me as sounding African-influenced, with slack-tuned tom-toms thudding in waves. "I've always been interested in African drumming," said Ginger. "Nobody can play drums without being interested. Indian drumming is technically incredible but African drumming is more into feel and time."

"Indian drumming is also into time, of course, but with African drumming you get an incredible feel. It often sounds simple, but try and spot where the beat lies. Phil Seamen used to play me an African record and he'd say, 'Right, where is it?' Sometimes I was right, but quite often I was wrong and he'd laugh and tell me to have another listen. I first met Phil in 1960 or '61. I was playing in the Flamingo with Alan Branscombe. He used to be pianist with Johnny Dankworth. I went for the Dankworth job when Kenny Clare left—and didn't get it."

"Anyway, Phil was playing in Ronnie's in Gerrard Street, and Tubby Hayes told Phil to come in and watch me. I'd always dug Phil ever since forever, but I had never gone in for speaking to people I didn't really know. I can't stand it myself when people come up and say, 'Hello, I'm a drummer.' I tend to say, 'So what?'"

"But Mr Seamen came over to say hello and we've been close friends ever since. In talking and playing together he saved me years."

Did Ginger ever regret not getting further into jazz and concentrating on guitar groups?

"I was always called a rock'n'roller in the days of jazz. For me, jazz has stagnated since Parker and Gillespie. There's nothing happening in it now for me. But I saw Max Roach with Elvin Jones and Art Blakey recently and he played the b.....s off both of 'em. Max is incredible."

"But I think what we're doing in Blind Faith is jazz. Jazz was always the people's music—whatever the kids who are aware like. They know what's happening."

"The kind of jazz you get in clubs now is purely musicians' music. If you've got a technique it's easy

to play fast. But if you play slower tempos and play something good, the majority of people can dig it and you can communicate with your audience."

"Simplicity is really beautiful. That's the whole thing with me—to communicate with the audience."

"Nobody is above criticism, least of all me. I take a lot of criticism... you get bad reviews and you get hung up about it. I've had quite a lot recently. But I criticise myself. You go through stages of thinking you are great."

"There are a couple of things on the 'live' solo on the last Cream album and it's nice that I am playing them now. It's a thing that involves playing triples with two feet and the left hand and rolling the cymbals."

"It's quite simple, actually, but it's nice to be able to go straight into it. The trouble is when you are playing to an audience; they don't want to hear you practising. The success of a solo depends on circumstances—how I feel and the mood of the audience. I rely a hell of a lot on audience reaction. I always work hard at it, but sometimes I get annoyed at myself."

After 15 years as a pro musician and being associated with something like eight million dollars' worth of record sales, Ginger still takes a pride in his work and maintains a desire for progress. He never was a predictable musician, and never will be. His greatness is as an original player. *Chris Welch*

— NME SEPTEMBER 13 —

AS FAR AS Blind Faith and setting is concerned, there's an awful lot of record in dire need of straightening. Reports that filtered back to the homeland as Winwood, Baker, Clapton and Grech were engaged on their eventful concert tour of America verged from the sublime to the ridiculous—stories of police brutality and violent flare-ups during performances falling upon rumours of dissatisfaction within the group and even possible break-ups with ever-increasing speed.

Eric Clapton, looking slightly thinner than when he embarked for the US, but looking mightily healthy under a biblical beard, has been appointed to do the straightening. Robert Stigwood's alcohol and John Mayall's *Looking Back* LP, featuring a young, crewcut Clapton in pre-superstar days, were brought in to play to relieve the waiting until a smiling Eric descended upon us after being detained by his manager and accountants above. He was late, but few are late with such charm as self-effacing Mr Clapton.

And, as ever, he proved a cooperative subject. "The violence happened everywhere we played. The worse were LA, New York and Phoenix, Arizona. When I was with Cream it had not really grown then. Now the kids come to a show with one idea—violence and to heckle the cops."

"It is easy to blame the cops. But the audience comes prepared for the fact that there will be cops there and they are bugged from the start. Their main thing is to heckle the cops and the main thing for the cops

is to answer back with violence. Our main thing was to appease them both—and that has nothing to do with being a musician. That's being a politician."

The peak of violence and hassles was reached in Phoenix, according to Eric. "The trouble was really with Delaney & Bonnie [the supporting group], who were having a hard time through lack of billing and weird contact and money scenes. Phoenix was their last night on the tour, and like most nights, we jammed with them. Bonnie got really into it and fell off the stage, down 10 foot onto concrete. Pandemonium broke out."

"The cops dragged her to an office and would not let us in. After arguments we eventually got in and took her to hospital with Delaney carrying her. There were more hassles there with cops and Delaney dropped her again onto concrete and she ended up in hospital with a broken vertebrae."

"What can you do? It is a police state; it is a police country."

Will the group think twice before touring again?

"Bonnie got really into it and fell off the stage, 10 foot onto concrete"





"It needs rethinking; I don't think that kind of thing can go on much longer. There should be some sort of stipulation in the contracts. You have got to make sure there are going to be no cops there. The effect of all this on the group was very bad. We used to get notices accusing us of not living up to our responsibilities because it was happening.

"Sometimes we really did get through to the audiences; sometimes we didn't. We played pretty well on most of the tour; except when we had to play too loud to make ourselves heard. But people were very bitter because they had to see us in such large venues; because they thought we had a big-time attitude, a 'supergroup' attitude towards it. They were just bitter; they hold it against you. But we just wanted to play to as many as we could and then move on. It sounds good in theory, but you cannot get into playing like that. You have got to play a residency at a club or something to really get through.

"Yes, I would like to go back. People seem to know more about me and my music and Stevie's music than they do here. Our album is No 1 in America; it is probably No 40 here. [The Blind Faith album enters the *NME* chart straight in at No 2 this week.] I am so much out of touch with what is going on here."

Couldn't that be your fault because you spend too much time in America? "Yes, that may be true. But that's where they want us."

It could also be said that that's where the money is. "That may be true again, and if that is true then it is my fault. I have been getting too much into the money angle. I have been feeling guilty about it."

Why America before an English tour? "Well, it is still that thrill of going to America," he smiled. "Though we thought when we formed that we would do a couple of gigs here and then go to America. It ended up, as you know, with one gig and then we went to Scandinavia.

"The first thing I did when we got back was to pick up the papers and find that people [at the Hyde Park concert] didn't dig us. My instant reaction was, 'Well, I'm not playing here any more.'"

How much has Blind Faith fulfilled their hopes?

"I am pleased with the album and with a lot of the performances we did. But I don't think the group is going to stay together very long. Stevie's going to do something on his own and I will do something on my own. I am inclined to say, 'Well, that was *the* Blind Faith tour. We may come together again with a different name."

A good part of the criticism of Blind Faith, at Hyde Park in particular, has been directed against the dominance of Winwood's influence over Baker and Clapton. "When we formed Blind Faith I thought Stevie had the best voice, so I encouraged him and pushed him into the front. Maybe

people want me to sing. When I did do a vocal on the tour it used to get good applause."

Isn't it true to some extent that both Eric and Ginger need to be led rather than be leaders and that's why Stevie took the helm?

"Maybe. I felt very insecure sometimes that I am not doing the right thing. But it is my own hang-up and the sooner I get over that the better. After all, it is easier to be led than to lead."

How much musical satisfaction was there from the tour?

"A lot. I learnt a great deal. We travelled the old-fashioned way in a group's coach. It was all due to Delaney & Bonnie. I cannot tell you how great they are musically. They also made me feel ashamed because they were working for virtually no billing, and yet they were always cheerful."

Eric names "Well All Right" and "I Can't Find My Way Home" as tracks on the LP that most sum up what Blind Faith was aiming at and says of the album as a whole, "I think it is the best LP I have had a part in."

Are we likely to see a group called Blind Faith on tour in England?

"You may not see it called Blind Faith," answered Eric at his enigmatic best. "It might have a different lineup; it might be the same. I suppose it would be very unfair for us to wind up before English audiences have had a chance to see us. Chances of an English tour? Fifty-fifty, I would say. Yes, I would like to do one."

Was there any foundation for rumours of dissatisfaction in the group?

"There were times when the group could have been larger and times when it could have been smaller – just Stevie and I. In the first five days there everybody blew out and came back to England, except me. There were differences, mainly because we were being boosted as a 'supergroup'. Egos were flying up and down; I was ashamed because I didn't think we were big enough to take that. A group cannot start like that.

"The best times we had were away from the stage, parties on the coach and things. So far as success of the group was concerned, we underwent too much strain. We got a large percentage of bad nights and a small percentage of good nights."

Eric agreed that to a certain extent Blind Faith was crippled before it even started by the "supergroup" tag. Wouldn't that tag haunt him personally for the rest of his career? And what happens when a "superstar" leaves a "supergroup" and forms another group? A "super-supergroup" and so on and so on.

He was philosophic in recognising the problem. "There is one way to avoid it. Change your name. If I decided to make an instrumental single I would do it under a different name so I can tell if it's being bought for my name or for the music." Nick Logan •

“We are five electric people”

Recharged by America and the success of “Albatross”, nothing can stop FLEETWOOD MAC. “Everyone in the band has been a disturbed person at some time,” says Peter Green. “They can now know a lot of happiness.”

— NME FEBRUARY 1 —

FEARS FOR THE SAFETY OF Fleetwood Mac in the floods that caused havoc and many deaths in California earlier this week weren't exactly alleviated by the international operator telling me that they might have difficulty getting the NME's Tuesday-evening call through to the group at their Los Angeles hotel because the “cable was wet and in a bad way.” Expressing much anxiety here in London on Tuesday was the Fleetwood's manager Cliff Davis, who was also trying to get a call through to them, and their publicist Valerie Bond, who to relieve the concern cracked, “I'm sure they'll be OK. Bad pennies always turn up.”

First there was a wrong number which got a rather annoyed Californian lady out of bed and then on to the line came the sleepy voice of Peter Green on his bedside phone.

“Floods? No, they didn't bother us,” said Peter after a lengthy yawn, “except that it's been raining solidly for days. It didn't really affect the cities, though it slowed the traffic right down and some of the roads were closed.”

I offered my congratulations on their first No 1 hit with “Albatross”.

“It hasn't quite sunk in yet,” said Peter. “There's nothing really happening here in the way that it is in England, so perhaps that is why. It could well have flopped. I wrote it on a plane when I got the first three notes and I thought they were incredibly good, so I took it from there. I never wrote it with anything in mind but it would probably have been an LP track.”

“I thought it had turned out very good when we had recorded it and we were all so pleased with it that I wanted to do it as a single. Everyone else agreed.” »

Peter Green during sessions with various blues greats such as Otis Spann and Willie Dixon at Chess Studios, Chicago, January 1969



Peter said the group hadn't celebrated yet. "We are still waiting to celebrate Christmas," he laughed. "We'll wait until we get home. The whole band can't wait to get back. We all miss our friends very much."

The Mac's follow-up single, Peter revealed, will be a track recorded in New York called "Man Of The World". Peter wrote it and sings it. "It's in the same vein as 'Albatross', very sad," he commented.

Would it, like "Albatross", be a change from what we have come to expect from the bluesy Fleetwoods?

"Well, I don't really care," said Peter, yawning again. "I never have done really. We've never done what was expected of Fleetwood Mac—we've always done the opposite. We just do what we want to do. We are not worried about people saying that we have gone commercial either."

"We still play the same stuff on stage, and just add the hit numbers like 'Albatross'. It is good because that makes the whole act more interesting and the hits provide a balance for more raw stuff."

"But we are not going to go completely one way. We are not going to go over to hit numbers in the same way that we are not going to go completely over to 12-bar numbers."

"The tour so far was going great," said Peter. "The only thing that is a drag is the in-between factor, the travelling, etc. The young people generally are fantastic, and that includes the groups. I was very impressed with Taj Mahal. Grateful Dead we've met but haven't seen play yet."

"Janis Joplin sat in with us at the Fillmore West. She was sat listening on the edge of the stage, and our road manager, who didn't know who she was, pushed her forward. It was great because it was the end of the night and we were all raving and having a great time. I also saw Albert Collins, who was playing with us at the Fillmore. He is in the Buddy Guy, Albert King class and he was about the only one of that kind I had yet to hear live."

Besides recording the single in New York, the group also went into the Chess Studios in Chicago and recorded what could be a double album. Invited onto the session were such blues greats as Willie Dixon, Shakey Hornton and Otis Spann, and Buddy Guy also dropped in for a play.

"Most of the bluesmen in Chicago are really hard up," said Peter. "I would have thought they'd have had money, but a lot of them are really down and out. 'Willie Dixon is like a father figure of the blues but every day he phones his agent for work but can't get hardly anything. It's very sad.'"

I said it was ironic that while the coloured bluesmen there were hard put to earn a living, a white blues band like the Mac could go to the States and get good money. "Yes," said Peter sadly. "It is very ironic."

An amusing fact that I only learnt this week was that the Fleetwood's "Albatross" film clip they made for *Top Of The Pops* was not made in Cornwall as I had thought, but was filmed on the roof of the CBS offices in London! It seems that the Cornwall trip had to be cancelled because Peter had the flu and a photograph

of his face was put onto a film of the other four at CBS, interspersed with genuine sea shots.

"Give my regards to everyone in England," Peter signed off, and I left him to go back to sleep. He probably thought it was all a bad dream! *Nick Logan*

— NME FEBRUARY 22 —

WHITE FACED IN A framework of jet-black curls, Peter Green has the look of either a saintly devil or a devilish saint. I suspect there's a bit of both in the Fleetwood Mac leader born in Alf Garnett-land at Bethnal Green, East London. The first time I met him was at the *NME* offices and the impression he left was of someone continually on his guard, aggressive and taciturn, virtually defying you to like him.

A more recent meeting was on Monday. Still there is the hint of satanic aggression and the nonchalant don't-give-a-damn attitude that is to be admired, but Mr Green is now a changed man, immediately likeable, more friendly and less suspicious. Nowadays he doesn't have to "hawk" Fleetwood Mac around to get publicity; the journalists are the ones eager to see him, and perhaps therein lies the clue to the change.

Monday's meeting was on home territory—home being a house called Albatross in suburban New Malden, Surrey. Peter bought it for his parents, who, out of pride while he was away, gave it its name and erected the metal replica of the Mac's No 1 bird that hangs over the front door.

A Mr Green in faded blue denims with a hole at one knee was there to greet me and show me into a back room filled with the strains of "All You Need Is Love", stuffed animals' heads that glowered down from the walls, a parrot and a budgie that squawked at each other from their separate cages and where Peter's girlfriend squatted before the open fire sewing badges onto a decrepit black canvas "Hell's Angels" jacket.

The jacket was a gift to Peter in the States from a friend who took it off a member of the Rogues motorcycle gang in Chicago. "These guys would rather lose their lives than lose their jackets," he explained. "They are dishonoured for life if they do so."

As I conjured up an image of a poor dishonoured Rogue treading the lonely windswept streets of Chicago in search of his lost jacket, Peter pulled up a leather rhinoceros and invited me to take a seat.

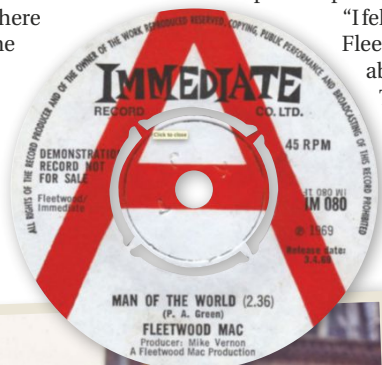
"I felt as if I was lying when I was on stage announcing that Fleetwood Mac was No 1," said Peter as we got on talking about the US tour. "It didn't seem true being so far away."

The group really found a home from home in hotel rooms over there. We got on to discussing a lot of things like life and death and it brought us all much closer together. Now I feel like I have a religion. I believe in God now. This is what I am reading now," he said, suddenly producing several books from a nearby shelf, among them *The Thoughts of Confucius* and a couple on Buddhism.

Peter put on a tape of one of Fleetwood's dates in Detroit and there was much hilarity over Jeremy Spencer's hilarious Elvis Presley impersonations, which nearly always verge on the obscene.

"He really lives those characters; he really believes he is Elvis Presley," said Peter, before recounting the story of the night in Sacramento when they nearly got hauled off to jail on obscenity charges. Fortunately the cops were content to give Peter and Jeremy a ticking off in the street outside the club. Apart from that brush with the law and the floods which caused havoc and death in Los Angeles during their stay, there were two other incidents on the tour that Peter will remember for the rest of his life. On both he might have lost it!

One was the night he and an American girlfriend fled from a New York club pursued by a gangster with a grudge against the girl and a desire to shorten poor Mr Green's lifespan. How they holed up in the hotel with what they thought to be the gang hammering on the door outside and turned out to be the rest of the group makes humorous listening told in vivid detail by Peter from the safety of suburban New Malden.



The Macin '69: (l-r) Danny Kirwan, Peter Green, Mick Fleetwood, Jeremy Spencer and John McVie

Fleetwoods always were commercial!

By NICK

when Peter ventured into Chicago's notorious South Side Negro district to play a solo spot



"Danny was asleep in the next room," Peter recalled. "I had two knives with me and I took one in to him. He was shaking like this inside the blanket and saying, 'Please tell me it's a joke.' I was shaking too but only inside. I didn't have time to explain; I just babbled on about being sorry to involve him."

One of the reasons, perhaps, why according to Peter, Danny went to the States a boy and came back a man! "It may seem funny to look back at it now, but that was the most frightening time I have ever spent in my life. These guys really are hard criminals and it's a bit of a shock when you realise you are mixed up in the New York underworld."

The second memorable incident, also fraught with danger, happened when Peter ventured into Chicago's notorious South Side district to play a solo spot at Pepper's Lounge before an all-black audience. His companions there were bluesmen Willie Dixon and Muddy Waters, but even then it was a tenuous kind of safety.

"That is their whole territory, the South Side," said Peter. "That is all they have left after being pushed by the white man, and any white who walks the streets there is dead. If you can't play, in a place like that they are just waiting to let you know. I could feel the whole attention of the club on me and they were all clapping and shouting at the end. I was feeling so high, so proud after the performance. It was a lifelong ambition of mine to play before an all-black audience."

Peter put on the Cream's *Goodbye* album he brought home from the States and then played me "Man Of The World", the track he wrote and sings and which will probably be their follow-up single. It has the same dreamy quality of "Albatross" and the makings of another hit.

"It is definitely a blues," he commented when it finished. "But people won't think it is because they won't have heard a blues in that sequence before. We are not trying to get away from doing the blues or get away from doing anything. We are just trying to broaden our field of music. I can guarantee that there will never be a night in Fleetwood Mac's history when they don't do at least one slow blues and at least one Elmore James number, and I am exaggerating that."

I asked him how he felt about the tag "New Stones" that had been endowed on Fleetwood Mac. "I like it," was the reply, "because if Fleetwood Mac can at least touch on what the Stones used to do then I'd be happy. The name Stones just glows for me; it is electric. I have the greatest admiration for the Stones. I see Fleetwood Mac as a lifetime thing, because we are more than a group, we are five people. I'm not boasting, but we are five very electric people and very powerful. We have strong views on everything."

"Everyone in the band has been a very sad and disturbed person at some time in their lives, and because of that they can now know a lot of happiness. No-one has any illusions or delusions. No-one thinks they are great, but they know what they can do. We have this incredible humour thing between us, which Jeremy is the root of and we are all in on it. It is like a closed shop to outsiders. If any one of us started getting a bit flash, the others would bring him down. It is a great thing to have. It just keeps everyone in touch and no-one is allowed to get any big ideas."

Finally, the inevitable question – and Peter was waiting for it. Have Fleetwood Mac gone commercial?

"We always were commercial. A commercial group to me is one that sells. The next question will be, 'Are you going to stop playing the blues?' The answer is that I play and do what I like."

That's what makes him likeable. *Nick Logan*

— NME APRIL 26 —

A DISHEVELLED PETER GREEN, looking like a dropout cricket umpire in an almost coat-length white cardigan, was sitting next to a blonde girlfriend, Sandra, offering round a bag of nuts. The 6ft 6in beanpole frame of the Mac's tame giant Mick Fleetwood shook to the music like an electric octopus. John McVie was quietly impersonating Fu Man Chu.

In contrast, Danny Kirwan was a blur of action, leaping from control room to studio, showing not a trace of the shyness he used to be renowned for. Jeremy Spencer was, to coin a phrase, absent.

"Fun with the Mac," observed Peter drily, for my benefit. "Write that

"We have this incredible humour thing, which Jeremy is the root of"

down." "Mick's a laugh," suggested Mick.

We were in a basement recording studio off Holborn Kingsway where Fleetwood Mac were cutting their third LP. It will, Peter informed me, be totally different from anything they've done on albums before. For a start, all the tracks will be new numbers, with the writing honours shared by Messrs Green and Kirwan. In addition, they are producing it themselves. The track taking their current attention was a composition of Danny's, which accounted for his exuberance.

"The ones we have yet to go on are really creative," observed Peter. "The last album, *Mr Wonderful*, was sort of rock blues. No real ideas, just feel. This one is mainly ideas, coupled with the same feel. Like I did in 'Albatross' and 'Man Of The World'. I have been quite happy rock-a-bluesing, but there are just things in me that

have to get out. A big step? No, not for people who have followed us through *Mr Wonderful*, 'Albatross' and 'Man of the World'."

Is it still blues? "I only call a blues a sad song. A sad song sung with feeling is a blues to me," answered Peter. "Anything else is not. I would not call 'Stop Messing Around' a blues. That was rock'n'roll. But we still love playing rock'n'roll. We like to have some fun. We don't want to be too serious."

Peter bit into an apple while Sandra peeled and offered round raw carrots. The group asked me to put the record straight over a piece on the *NME* news page last week stating that Jeremy Spencer was impersonating the Cream on the new EP being released with the new LP. It is apparently not the Cream that Jeremy impersonates; the information was wrongly relayed to the *NME* by the Fleetwood Mac office and the group was horrified to read it. "We are all great fans of the Cream," said Peter. "They are just too £@£!£ good to think we could impersonate them," added Mick. The record is hereby straightened.

"I think it's time to go get some goodies," proclaimed Mick, who was splayed out on his seat with a plimsoled foot in each corner of the room.

"No you don't, Fleetwood," ordered Peter. "You stay here and starve and rot. That's how you get the blues. Print that."

"Write to Mick Fleetwood for three easy stages of bankruptcy," said Mick suddenly, observing the tear in his ancient blue jeans where an expanse of knee was on show. Mick is on stage three.

Fun with the Mac was temporarily interrupted by the arrival of Christine Perfect, which woke John McVie from his quietude and the couple swapped cigarettes and husband-and-wife talk.

There was an exodus of Fleetwood Mac to the studio, an impassioned plea over the speakers from Mr Green – "Where's me plectrum?" – and at the next break Peter and I sat down and talked.

Did he think the new LP might lose them fans? "I think we are going to gain a lot more," he replied defiantly. "We may have lost followers with 'Man...' and 'Albatross' because they were not real followers. Just people who say they like the blues. But I don't really want to lose anybody. I want people just to follow us as people."

"We give ourselves all the time. We say just exactly what is going on and how we feel. People should know us individually as people. If I follow a group it doesn't matter what they do. Unless they go completely to pot... or perhaps I should say off the rails. We just want to do everything we can do. I am into so many different things that people just don't realise. We just want to scrape a lot of different aspects of music. I am not going to stick in one vein; not going to revert to the old days."

The beginnings of "Man Of The World" go a long way back, nearly a year and a half. "I got the phrase 'Shall I tell you about my life' in my mind," said Peter. "Then at a different time I wrote the bit in the middle. All the bits came together. That's the way I write."

"Our intention was to release what was best for the general public – what is generally known as a commercial hit. We want hits same as anybody else. Why else do people put out singles? If this one isn't successful – and I know it must be because of the sales figures – if it died a death I would be a bit choked."

"Albatross" gave me a lot of faith in the public, because that was a great number. 'Albatross' was like my baby. I was proud of it. It will be around when I am dead. Obviously when you get a No 1 it is like a great injection in you. When I made 'Man Of The World' I believed in it that much I thought it might do it." *Nick Logan* •

1969

JANUARY – MARCH

When Steve Marriott leaves the Small Faces there are no hard feelings. Instead, there's a new supergroup, the "incredibonzo" **HUMBLE PIE**, some great scenes on tablas – and a hellish assignment in Belgium. Still, says Marriott, "two good things will come of one good thing".

"To hell with the heavy nonsense"

— NME MARCH 1 —

MONTHS OF SPECULATION about the future of the Small Faces ended this week when singer Steve Marriott broke his silence to tell *NME*, "The group is definitely breaking up." Rumours that Steve was about to leave the group have been sweeping the pop world, but from the seclusion of his Essex country cottage he said, "I want to make it clear that it's not a case of my leaving the group, but rather the group is breaking up to pursue their own scenes."

During their four years together, the Small Faces have been one of the country's most popular and commercially successful groups, and Steve admits, "Of course it's sad in some ways that it's all over, but it's great for each of us to have the chance to do what we really want to. And we had to get away from being labelled a dirty pop group for teen screams. That wasn't what we wanted at all, but while the group stayed together as it was it was an image we were stuck with."

The most favoured story in current circulation is that Steve will team up in a new group with close friend and ex-Herd lead singer Peter Frampton, but his only reply to the rumours was a guarded, "At this stage I'd rather not comment on any future plans. The name 'Small Faces' has become a bit of a hang-up. It no longer means what we originally intended it to mean and the only thing we can do is to get rid of it," Steve told me bluntly. "All our plans are a bit vague at the moment and no date has been set, but we all intend to stay in the pop music business. But I will say that two good things will come of one good thing." »

REX FEATURES





Humble Pie in '69:
(l-r) Greg Ridley,
Peter Frampton,
Steve Marriott
and Jerry Shirley

Ronnie “Plonk” Lane, Faces’ lead guitarist, said that the supposed demob of the group was not because of any personal disagreement amongst the boys. “We just feel that old scene as the Small Faces has become a bit stagnant and we want to feel that we can be free to develop,” he said. When I asked the two other boys what their plans were, Kenny said that his one great purpose in life was to become a really great drummer. “I have been doing a lot of session work just recently and I intend to go on with this for the time being,” he said.

Until now silent, organist Ian McLagan – with a cheeky grin on his face – chipped in: “My one great ambition in life is to play the organ in Westminster Cathedral!” Final word about the split came from Steve: “Imagine if you had a record and you played it every night onstage for three years. Then you get some idea about the sort of feelings that we have about “Sha La La La Lee” and “Lazy Sunday” and the rest. I don’t have to freak out any more. I relax and play music.”

— MELODY MAKER MAY 3 —

SUPERGROUP IS ALREADY becoming a drag term. It has inspired widespread confusion among *MM* readers, judging by the current contents of Mailbag. One enthusiast predicted “supersession music is the music of the future”. Maybe he meant that jam sessions of today will produce better groups of tomorrow. It would hardly be true to say jam sessions, usually momentarily exciting 12-bar rave-ups, are producing anything new musically.

Last week we called the new Peter Frampton-Steve Marriott band, Humble Pie, a pop supergroup. “Bah,” one can almost hear *MM* reader Ernest Drone mutter, reaching for his ballpoint. “Steve Marriott and Peter Frampton are known pop idols, pretty faces, unable to play without the NDO, hidden behind screens. I know this for a fact. Yours sincerely, E Drone.” I know this for a fact – Humble Pie are the most exciting new band I have had the pleasure of hearing in several convolutions of the planet.

Extraordinary as it may seem, although their diminutive stature, not unpleasing features, and shamelessly long hair are liable to arouse ire in mods, policemen and other purists, they can play a fair guitar and sing a nice drop of tune. All they ask is that their music be accepted, or at least given a fair hearing. They have both gone through long and often nerve-racking periods as teenage idols. They have enjoyed being pop stars – to an extent – and are grateful to their fans. But they are getting older. Peter is 19 and Steve 22. They both have a lot to say musically, and they want to say it NOW.

They also want Humble Pie to be accepted as a group, with each member given equal status. Their fellow members are Greg Ridley (bass), aged 22, and Jerry Shirley (drums), aged 16. They have completed their first album, due for release next month. And it sounds tremendous.

I spent a happy day with the group at their Essex hideaway last week, digging the new sounds, hammering tabla drums and eating ice cream. And that sums up the Humble Pie approach. Have a good time and make some good music.

A hired limousine drove Peter Frampton, his girlfriend Mary, drummer Jerry, record boss Ken Mewis and myself out to the secret cottage. Steve lives with his wife Jenny in a low-beamed old-world cottage, surrounded by dogs and irritable farmers. The dogs irritate the farmers and the farmers irritate Steve.

Already at the cottage when we arrived was tenorist Lyn Dobson, who once laid siege to the jazz scene and has now dismissed that as “rubbish” and concentrates on sitar and flute.

Steve and Lyn sat cross-legged on the floor and set up a cheerful whine of greeting. “This is fun house,” explained a happy Steve, looking decidedly Russian in moustache and bejewelled belt.

What sort of a scene was Humble Pie, I enquired? While the womenfolk brewed tea, the menfolk wandered about toying with springs that walk downstairs and dogs that frolicked and scampered.

“It’s a natural thing,” began Steve. “I’m just glad all the secrecy is over. It all started on New Year’s Day when I rang Peter and asked if I could join the group he was thinking of forming after quitting The Herd. We had a few plays and knew it would work right from the start. We wanted it to be basically a group where we could play what we wanted, and not what others wanted from us. We haven’t got to stick to anything made a hit by the Small Faces or Herd. We just hope people will listen to us and like us. My mum likes it and Andrew Oldham likes it, so it must be alright!

“Lyn Dobson is working with us on the records and may also work with us on appearances. He’s the only guy from the other music scene who doesn’t look down his nose at long hair and beat roots. That’s because he’s a longhaired beetroot himself!”

“The Small Faces? They’ll be fine. Splitting has been the best thing for me and them. They won’t be fronted by a teen scream idol who had to be showcased. They’ll be more of a group. The new guy they’ve got is very good, but I don’t want to tell you who he is, because Mac will want to tell you.

“Both Peter and myself have been pushed out to the front of our groups and wanted to break out. The sort of thing we want to get together won’t be all electric. We’ll be using flute, sitar, tablas, etc. We’re excited about the album and when we had a blow yesterday for the first time (apart from recording), we were knocked out that it sounded like the record.

“We’re going to work out a stage act that will feature electric and acoustic things. An hour of electricity becomes boring. Donovan can hold the Albert Hall for an hour with just his acoustic guitar. We want our band to be quietly powerful and to hell with the heavy nonsense. Remember – quietly powerful.”

The group are using tiny 30-watt amps, and swap around on a variety of instruments. Both Steve and Peter will play drums occasionally, as well as piano, harmonica and organ. Said Peter, “We won’t be doing normal gigs. We’d like to do concerts. We don’t want to go through all the old scenes. The new group is incredibonzo. It’s all worked out so well. Jerry’s really together as a drummer and everybody writes in the band. And Steve is getting into piano and sitar, as well as guitar.”

Jerry, their bright and friendly 16-year-old drummer, says, “It’s a big buzz for me being in this band. I started playing when I was about nine, giggling in the back garden wearing my shorts. One day a guy who was passing asked me to join a band! I left school when I was 14 and I’ve been playing drums ever since. I’m not a technical drummer. I think the important thing to do is lay down a beat and keep the band together.”

Greg Ridley, ex-Spooky Tooth bassist, said, “I left them two months ago to join the new band. I’ve been fooling around with the bass for about four years, trying to find a style that satisfies me. Steve suggested the name Humble Pie. It just sounded like a nice name and shows that we are all going to be equal in the group – not Steve Marriott and Peter Frampton and two backing musicians. That’s the way THEY want it. The pop star bit isn’t relevant to what we are doing.”

The group then played me their product. Two sides of beautiful, emotional and highly together music, called *As Safe As Yesterday Is*, which is also the title track. Listening to the soaring voices of Frampton and Marriott and their coruscating guitars, the zooming bass of Greg and Jerry’s closely miked, electrically unpretentious drumming, I realised that along with Baker, Winwood, Clapton and Jon Hiseman’s Colosseum, Britain will have a triumvirate of new bands to startle the group world.

Chris Welch

— MELODY MAKER SEPTEMBER 6 —

A NEW GROUP WAS BORN last week in an arc-lit mudbath – and like many a mewling, puking infant, it coughed and nearly died. But with remarkable fortitude, Humble Pie survived and recovered from the hell camp of Bilzen Pop Festival and went on to prove the experiment of mixing Frampton and Marriott is a winner.

After a near-disastrous first public appearance, when instruments went out of tune, arrangements and nerves suffered and power was cut off, the group felt suicidal. Two gigs later, confidence was restored and some great music emerged. The group – Steve Marriott, Peter Frampton, Greg Ridley and Jerry Shirley – had their first taste of the rigours of touring together when they hit the Great Group Trail across Holland, Belgium and Germany. And I went with them to witness the birth of a band. I saw the upsets, and arguments, the fun and enjoyment and sheer slog.

Along the way they bumped into other weary travellers earning their bread the hard way – Aynsley Dunbar, Brian Auger, Deep

EXCLUSIVE!
Marriott & Frampton
present HUMBLE PIE

"The new guy the Small Faces have got is very good": Steve Marriott at his rural hideaway, Bee Hive Cottage in Arkesden, Essex



Purple, the Bonzo Dog Band and many other pneumonia-ridden exiles. Amsterdam was our main base of operations. We flew there from Gatwick by BAC1-11 and picked up a couple of hired American cars.

Soon after checking into the Esso Hotel, the band had to drive some 180 kilometres to Bilzen in Belgium through torrential rains that sometimes threatened to sweep away the autobahn. Due to my navigation, we managed to leave the autobahn and thoroughly explore the traffic jams of old Utrecht before we hit the right road to Bilzen. The site reminded me of a scene from World War I. On uneven ground, churned into slippery mire, the fans squatted on soaked seats, packed into a small area ringed by arc lights.

Our drivers left us as they attempted to park the cars, and the group, damp, forlorn and lost, wandered about looking for an organiser to direct them to a dressing room, or at least say hello. Steve, unsmiling, hair over his shoulders and buried inside a huge overcoat stretching down to his ankles, took charge.

"You just have to be patient and not lose your temper. I was here last year with the Faces and the kids were really nice. Of course, the organisation was a shambles – it always is at these things. Come on – it's this way."

A fiery, emotional cockney, Steve has never been noted for restraint. But he tried really hard, and I never heard him moan or complain when "organisers" pointed vaguely at a low wooden hut like a Western saloon jammed with boozing groups and thick with tobacco smoke, which was the dressing room, or when the time for their appearance onstage gradually moved round the clock to 2am.

The rain came down in violent freezing showers, but the audience remained firmly in position, cheerfully booing their own local teenybopper groups and giving an ovation to exciting performances from Deep Purple and Aynsley Dunbar.

The saloon began to look extremely unreal as reporters asked Steve in halting English what it felt like to be a star, and were told in terms free of hesitation exactly what it felt like, when the amazing Miss Marsha Hunt suddenly appeared in our midst. Marsha had a plan. She had lost one of her musicians coming through customs, and invited Humble Pie to jam during her set. This proved a bit of a mistake, and the Belgians agreed by booing somewhat heartily the ensuing shambles. Marsha sang "Long Black Veil" well, but with microphones cutting out and her backing not really knowing what it was doing, it was an episode that did not augur well for the top of the bill.

At 1.30am, Humble Pie began to set up. At 2am, with the rain miraculously holding off, the group launched into "Wrist Job", "Shakey Jake" and "Walk On Gilded Splinters". Whenever the group were playing they sounded great, Steve's voice was as soulful and violent as ever, while Peter proved just how good a guitarist he is, showing he has genuine original style. Jerry is a monster on his elaborate drum layout and Greg contributes a powerful voice as well as bright and firm basslines. But sadly,

"It's a natural thing. I'm just glad all the secrecy is over"

as the rain began to slash down again, as Steve's electric piano proved hopelessly out of tune, and as the power cut out the organ, shame, embarrassment and despair took their toll of a first ever public performance the group would rather forget.

After the gig, they were inconsolable, and it was a silent few hours of hard driving back to Amsterdam. But I had recorded the best parts of the set on Peter's cassette, and managed to prove to them that things had not been as bad as they seemed.

The next afternoon was spent rehearsing for an evening performance at Amsterdam's Paradiso Club, and tuning Steve's faulty piano. The Paradiso is the city's Middle Earth-type scene, although it reminded me strongly of Eel Pie Island. It is housed in a derelict church, and an excellent light show is projected from the back of the main hall onto huge screens above the stage. Hippies lie around the floor in the dirt, smoking.

Humble Pie restored all faith and played a beautifully tight, well-rehearsed set. On the second night they were far more relaxed and were playing for their own enjoyment as well as the audience.

News of the great chart success with their first single, "Natural Born Bugie" greatly cheered the group. Said Steve of their hit, "It's quite an up. We never expected it. The record was just a loon really.

Nicked the riff from Chuck Berry's 'Little Queenie' and we sussed it would make a nice single. People are saying it's like 'Get Back' and somebody even played the two records together on the radio.

"How can people be so ignorant? DJs are supposed to know about these things. Don't they know The Beatles took it off Chuck Berry? We've both taken from the same source. DJs should know that, man. There's a bit in it from the Stones' 'It's Not Easy' from *Aftermath*, if they really want to know.

"Oh, and we wanted to get a sound like the Bill Black Combo, because we've got an album of theirs and we think it's a gas. So there you go – Chuck Berry, the Rolling Stones and Bill Black! We've done our second EP already and it has got a beautiful sound. Greg and Jerry play some great bass and drums and Peter is – well, Pete's too much."

Said Peter, "We'll be doing an English tour in the autumn. We will be doing the whole second half and the first half will have a really good band, perhaps with a girl singer. We'd like Julie Driscoll to do it. She'd be amazing. We go to the States on October 24 for six weeks doing a clubs and concerts tour. None of us has been before, except Greg with Spooky Tooth."

Said Jerry, "We owe it all to the Magdalene Hall where we rehearsed in the country. We got to know each other's capabilities musically and... together got to know each other as friends."

For Steve it had probably been the toughest, after working with the Faces for several years, to have to make changes. "My missus helped with the whole changeover scene," said Steve "You need someone who can give you advice and understand. If Humble Pie hadn't happened, I'd have stayed on in the Faces, bringing everybody down. I never, ever thought I would leave the Small Faces. I thought it would just go on forever. I don't know what would have happened. But it feels like Humble Pie has been together for years. I just want to be part of the band and do my job. I don't have to freak out any more. I will relax and play music."

Peter, too, is relaxed and happy at being freed from the pure commercial pop scene and allowed to indulge in his true role as a brilliant guitarist and fine singer. "I remember having to be made up for *Top Of The Pops*," he said, recalling his first taste of stardom. "I used to have half an hour longer than anybody else in the makeup department – 'Lots of eyedrops to make it look as if you are about to cry, Peter.'"

Such days are passed for all of them. Humble Pie are a tough little team, dedicated to producing groove music. They have barely been operating a few days and already they have been through most of the experiences of groupdom: a hit, a slogging tour, criticism, a bad gig, controversy and success. In Germany they scored a winner in concerts in Düsseldorf and on TV. Next on the agenda is Britain and America.

Says Steve, "That first gig was such a blow, but we've been brought up by everything that has happened since. Thank God we can forget all about Bilzen now." Chris Welch •

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MM JAN-MAR A pop at the Fleetwoods, hopping-mad mods and other urgent issues.

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FAIRPORT CONVENTION,
CAPTAIN BEEFHEART,
JANIS JOPLIN AND MORE

"I thought 'Hey Jude' was the record of the year"

NME MAY 24 Paul Simon talks "*The Boxer*", *Catch-22* and winning a Grammy for "*Mrs Robinson*".

"THE BOXER" TOOK more than 100 hours to record and five months to release! Art Garfunkel is alive and well and filming in Rome! Paul Simon is anxious to play concerts in Britain! And the prize-winning duo are definitely NOT splitting! These are just some of the subjects Paul Simon touched upon when I called him at his New York home to tell him about the success of "*The Boxer*" and to get up to date on the Simon & Garfunkel scene.

He was naturally pleased about the progress of the new single, not realising quite how high it had reached in the *NME* in just three weeks.

"It was an experiment," he revealed. "We wanted to record a Christmas album in a church, so we went into one to get the feel and to listen to the sound of the acoustics. It was »



PAUL SIMON SAYS: CONCERT AFTER GARFUNKEL FILMING ENDS

"THE BOXER" took more than a hundred hours to record and five months to release! Art Garfunkel is alive and well and filming in Rome! Paul Simon is anxious to play concerts in Britain! And the prize-winning duo are definitely NOT splitting!

These are just some of the subjects Paul Simon touched upon when I called him at his New York home to tell him about the success of "*The*

NME



Art Garfunkel (left)
and Paul Simon
filming the *Songs Of
America* television
special, which will air
on November 30, 1969



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written last summer and finished in December. It was recorded all over the place – the basic tracks in Nashville, the end voices in New York St Paul's Church, the strings in New York Columbia Studio and voices there too. And the horns in the church."

Simon & Garfunkel's last hit was, of course, the beautiful "Mrs Robinson", which recently won a Grammy award. The rush to record it is still on, but there's one act I wouldn't have thought would have been interested in "Mrs Robinson" who, in fact, are. "Booker T and the MG's have just recorded it," Paul revealed. "It's their next single. I was just in Memphis with them. They do a great job, very, very funky."

Of the Grammy award, Paul commented: "I didn't expect it. I thought 'Hey Jude' was the record of the year. I watched the presentation on television. Art went down and accepted it."

While Paul is busy writing, Art is playing in the film version of *Catch-22*, which is currently on location in sunny Italy.

"We'll have to wait till he gets back before we can do any appearances," Paul pointed out. "The film started in January, which was part of the reason there was such a delay in the record being issued. Shooting ends in June, and then it'll take a year to edit."

"Why that long? It's costing 11 million dollars to make. It's a very big movie. It should be released around summer next year."

So, as Art's acting commitment will not delay concerts much longer, what are the chances of Simon & Garfunkel coming over for some shows?

"I'd like to come over in the fall and do some concerts," was Paul's statement. This should please a lot of people, especially since the split rumours have started circulating.

"We've done none since November and have no plans to do any for the time being. I'd like to do the Albert Hall and Scotland. We've only been to Scotland twice and I liked it – the audiences are very responsive."

Paul takes a strong interest in the current music scene and wanted to know what was happening in England. When I told him about the country & western boost, he replied, "That's good, there's a strong interest in country music here too. It's better than psychedelic music."

"I was glad to see Desmond Dekker make it. I bought a couple of albums by him in Jamaica and 'The Israelites' was on one. I liked it and said to Art, 'Listen to this cut, isn't that good.'"

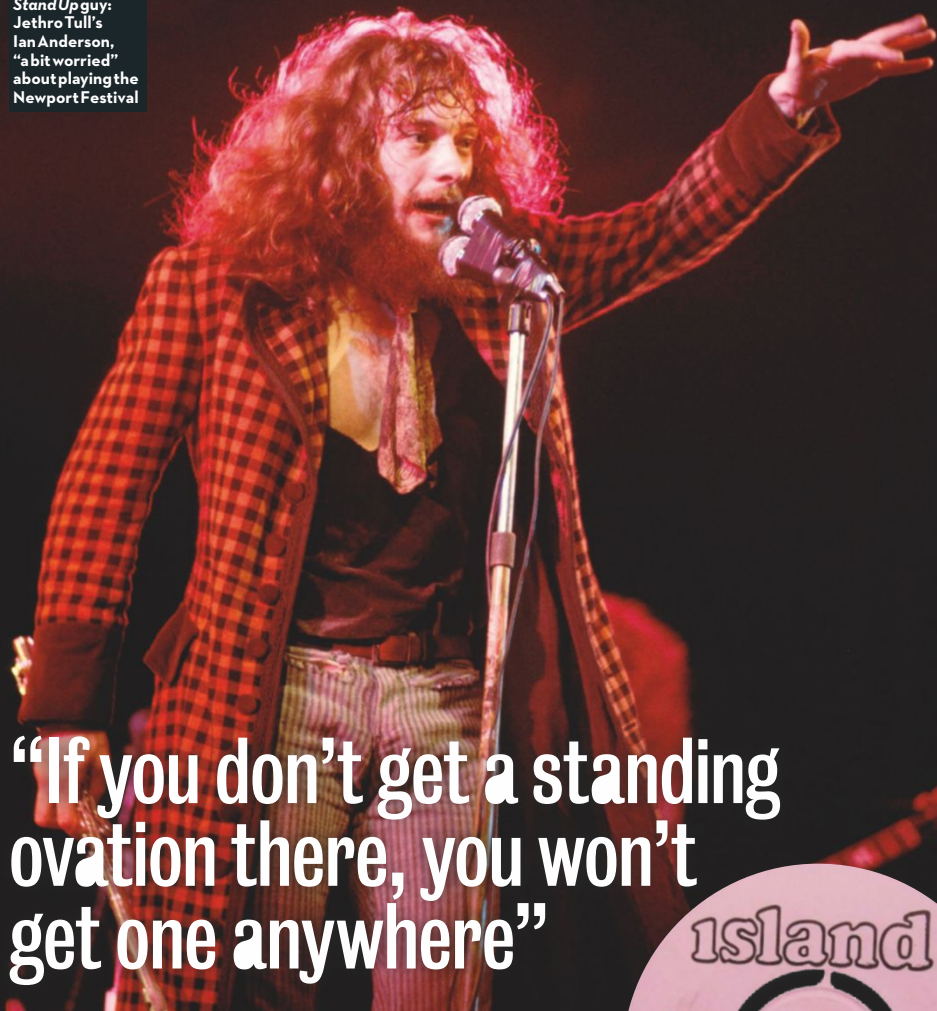
Paul reported that Graham Nash's new interest – Nash, Crosby, Stills – has a unique sound and is already booked out for huge money even though they haven't appeared yet.

"I'm glad that Graham's departure hasn't hurt the Hollies," Paul added.

There are enough Simon & Garfunkel tracks in the can for a new album but again its release is being delayed while Art is becoming a film star. And that is another entry for the not-to-be-missed file!

Richard Green

Stand Up guy:
Jethro Tull's
Ian Anderson,
"a bit worried"
about playing the
Newport Festival



"If you don't get a standing ovation there, you won't get one anywhere"

MM MAY 10 Introducing... Jethro Tull, an underground group thinking commercially.

UNDERGROUND GROUPS AS a rule aren't concerned about the singles charts. The Top 30 holds no interest to those groups who pack them in at colleges and clubs throughout the country without ever having a hit. Jethro Tull are such a group on the underground scene who've just returned home after a highly successful American tour.

They have a new single out this month, to be followed by an album in June... and they're hoping for a chart hit. "The chart scene is really important," said Jethro's Ian Anderson. "You mustn't just bow out of it. I used to think it didn't matter about the rubbish in the charts, but it's not the fault of the kids who buy the records. If someone brings out a good single, it will get the plays and the kids will buy it."

"OK, so you have to compromise, but it's going to do some good in the long run. Eventually it will get the underground on TV. It will need a difference in attitude, but if groups of sufficient name and standing put out good singles it will work. I'd like to see people like the Family, The Nice and John Peel... Peel could do a lot."

"Our new album comes out round about the beginning of June. We were supposed to finish it off last night, but we only did two songs. I wrote quite a lot while we were in the States. It was that and lack of sleep which made me ill, I think. I collapsed a couple of times and we missed the last gig in the

States because I was bad. It happened again in the TV studios in Paris. I thought I'd got lung cancer and TB, but it was just exhaustion."

Was it due to the hectic pace of the American tour? "No, it wasn't all that hectic really. We had a couple of days off and most of the time I stayed in the hotel. I didn't get involved in the groupie thing."

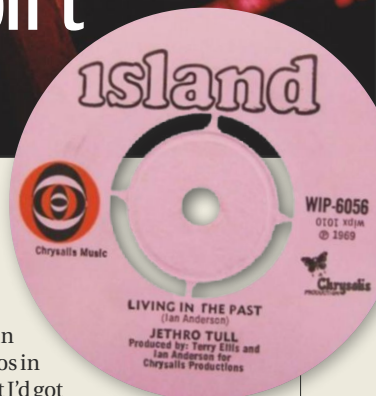
"I like playing in the States but I'd hate to play there all the time. They seem more grateful and they show it more. Everyone goes down a bomb in America. If you're an English group and you don't get a standing ovation

there, you won't get one anywhere. The American groups seem very much into saying a lot about nothing and conversely saying nothing about a lot of things."

The group has been invited to play at the Newport Festival. Are they

looking forward to it? "I'm a bit worried about it; I'm not really sure what they're trying to do. It will be very good, but I don't think you can mix it that far."

"Seeing us might upset the people who've come for Gene Roland and Woody Herman and they might upset the people who've come for us and the other groups. It's good to bring old music and new music together, but I am a bit worried about it all." Royston Eldridge



"They seem more grateful in America and they show it more"

GETTY





An amalgam of styles

MM MAY 24 Introducing... guitarist John Fahey. Self-taught, classically inspired and a self-releaser of expensive records. "One we withdrew," he says. "We were losing 30 cents on each one."

JOHN FAHEY, CURRENTLY on his first visit to Britain, has been something of an underground figure. His name and reputation were known by a few people here some years ago and his album *The Resurrection Of Blind Joe Death*, recorded originally on the Riverboat label, was scarce until Transatlantic issued it some months ago. More recently his Vanguard album *Yellow Princess* was released here, and although it is his second album release in Britain, it is the eighth of 10 LPs he has cut. Now Sonet records are to release two more records made for John's own Takoma label.

His style of playing is an amalgam of many styles and John mentions guitarists such as Merle Travis, Chet Atkins and Sam McGhee as influences and says, "Actually I heard the people who influenced them as well. The early-1900 styles of Negro and white playing, but then I have other techniques. Classical things and Indian - that's just talking

about the right hand. Chords and harmonies come from anywhere. I'm playing a kind of syncopated classical style.

Classical music was what I was raised on. I never heard a hillbilly record until I was 14."

John's interest in country and blues music increased and eventually he went on to gain an MA in folklore. He has amassed a great collection of early recordings and on field trips discovered and recorded such people as Skip James, Bukka White, Charley Patton and Robert Pete Williams. A self-taught musician, he began playing guitar in 1952 and his first public performances in the mid-'50s were as a bluegrass guitarist. Until 1962 he played locally in Washington DC, but his reputation grew and soon he was in demand for concerts and clubs throughout America.

His recording career spans ten years from 1958.

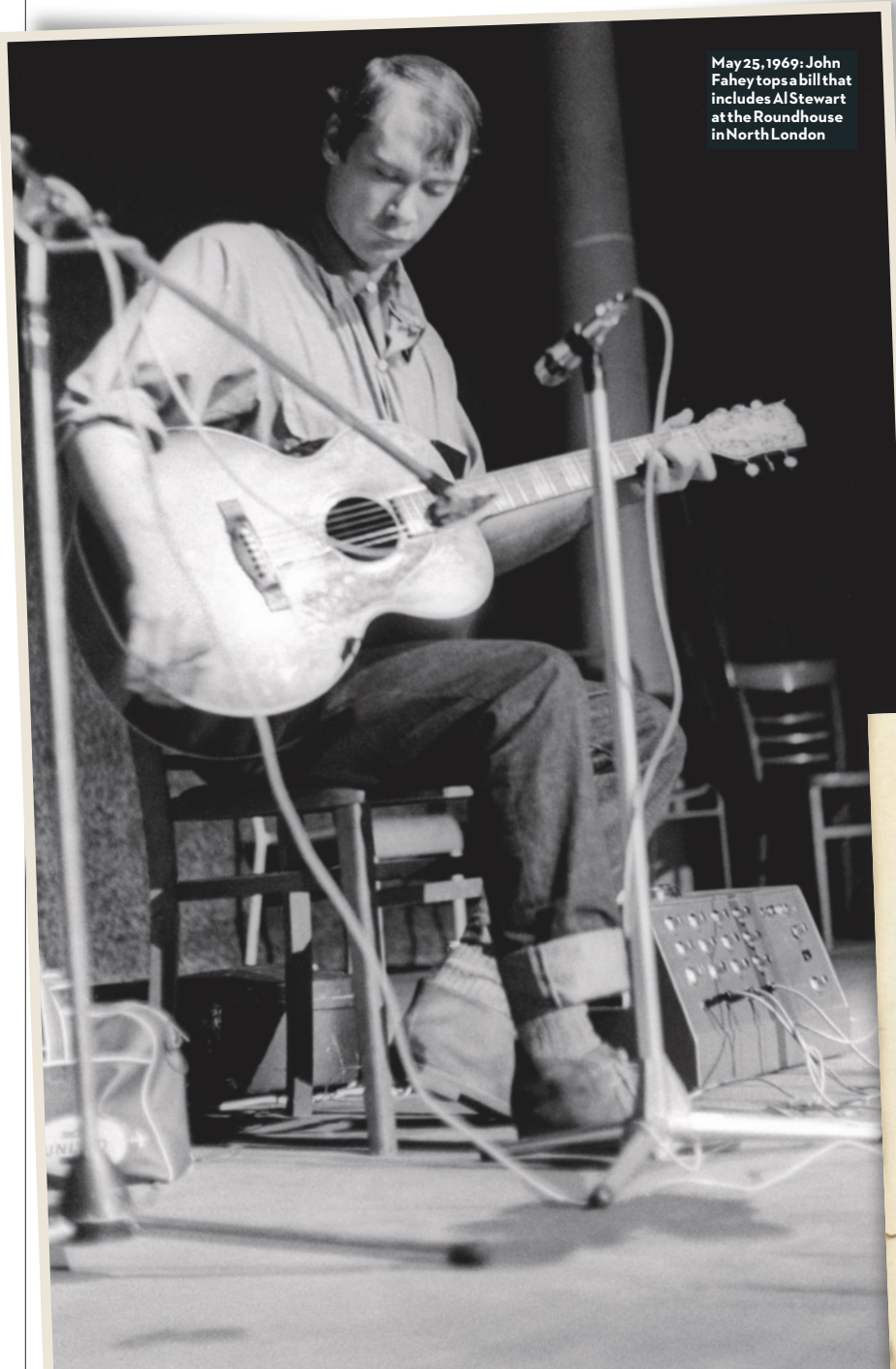
Much of his work is solo but on the *Yellow Princess* album he teams up with other musicians on some tracks. "I really have fun when I work with other musicians," he says, "but I've got hours of tapes where things didn't work out. I only issue what works. I can back all kinds of music except modern jazz.

"I have a couple of things at home on the verge of being issued. One is a kind of classical thing, a three-part arrangement for flute, French horn and guitar. And there is singing on it, only none of us have voices, so it sounds like a classical ensemble with drunken hillbillies singing with them."

John produced *Yellow Princess* himself. "I cut an album called *Requia*, which was horrible. It was recorded in Los Angeles and put together in New York, but they didn't know what they were doing, so I screamed and yelled and they let me produce *Yellow Princess*."

Seven of his 10 albums have been on his own Takoma label. "But there was one we withdrew because we were losing 30 cents on each one. It has photographs, a book and a double cover. We didn't know how much it was going to cost, but some of it was bad anyway."

REX FEATURES



May 25, 1969: John Fahey tops a bill that includes Al Stewart at the Roundhouse in North London

Syncopated classics from the underground

JOHN FAHEY, currently on his first visit to Britain, has been something of an underground figure. His name and reputation were known by a few people here some years ago and his album "Resurrection Of Blind Joe Death," recorded originally

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"The executives were rather reluctant"

MM JUNE 7 Inside Harvest, a new label dedicated to "underground" music.

THIS MONTH, EMI RECORDS launch a brand-new label devoted to "the best avant-garde music of all kinds". In charge of the label, Harvest, is a 23-year-old economics graduate of Manchester University who has been in the record business for less than two years, Malcolm Jones, who joined EMI from university in September, 1967 as a management trainee because he "wanted to work in pop music".

Now he is boss of Harvest, with control of the material it puts out, responsibility for finding its artists and the overall task of recouping for EMI the considerable amount of money it has already spent in launching what is the first "underground" record label to be marketed by a major record corporation. How Harvest was born is really a compliment to Jones' drive and industry.

"EMI, as a major record company, had no policy against underground groups when I joined the company," he said. "But the smaller independent companies tended to grab the sort of artists and groups I am now signing for Harvest."

EMI, in fact, had artists like Tyrannosaurus Rex, but they were just put into the company's existing pop music labels and not exploited as a special entity.

Malcolm joined EMI as a management trainee and had spent exactly a month training when a vacancy occurred. Vicki Wickham, who was in charge of EMI's licensed product from independent producers like Mickie Most and Denny Cordell, left the firm. Malcolm got the

job and started work as the liaison man for these producers and others.

Part of his job was to select repertoire for release through EMI's Columbia and Parlophone labels. He put forward the idea of a new label for special product from groups who were being called "underground" - who had a big following in colleges, universities, etc, but who had no record outlet. But the atmosphere at EMI was not right for a new label. There was opposition, although the idea had been mooted before by another executive, Roy Featherstone. It was never pursued, however.

"The executives were rather reluctant at that time. They saw good things and bad things in starting a new label." Malcolm continued to work in charge of licensed product and started to rearrange the allocation of material to label. He started to put the more adventurous and experimental music on Parlophone and the more obviously pop material (like Cliff Richard, Lulu, etc) went on Columbia. By December 1968, the climate at EMI had changed and Malcolm, who had meanwhile found a lot more acts who could be signed to a new avant-garde label, got the green light from the EMI board.

"I had a number of acts on offer and I wanted to sign them," said Malcolm, "but they would come to me only if I had a proper label to

put them on."

He got the label and signed the acts, some of whom are featured on the list of the label's first releases - names like the Edgar Broughton Band, Deep Purple, Pete Brown's Battered Ornaments, Michael Chapman and Shirley and Dolly Collins, as well as more established groups like Pink Floyd, who were already with the EMI Company as contract artists.

But the go-ahead for the label was only the start. Malcolm had to find and choose material, record the artists, arrange for LP covers and printing, fix promotions, such as free concerts at the Roundhouse in conjunction with Blackhill Enterprises, who manage or are agents for some of Harvest's first signings.

They also had to decide on a name. And that was not as easy as it might sound. "We wanted a name that could be used internationally as the label was to be a world-wide project. There were a number of names in the running, but for one reason or another they were stopped. Some could not be used in America because other companies had them registered. Others were dropped for other reasons. In the end, we settled for Harvest."

It was, said Jones, nice and summery and friendly. But he was hoping that the product would sell on its quality and not on the name of the label in a few months' time. "I want our image to be one of quality music," he said.

The Harvest project - Malcolm hopes in the near future to branch into different types of experimental music; for example, he would like to re-release some early Indo-Jazz Fusions recordings - now has the full backing of the EMI board, who have spent "a heck of a lot" on setting up the label.

How much exactly, Malcolm wouldn't say. "We just spent money as we needed it. There was no budget or anything like that."

He is acutely aware that the undertaking is awesome and fraught with financial dangers, but feels confident in the talent they have and hopes to unearth.

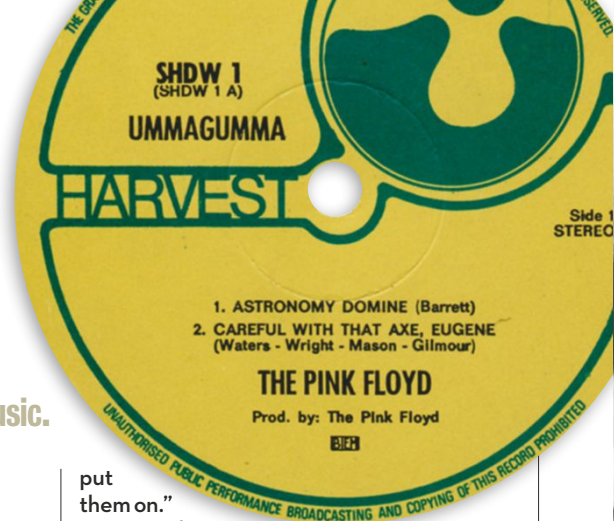
"To be honest, I was surprised, but happy, that I was allowed to do it. I was worried at first that we were doing it too late, but now I think we are starting at exactly the right time."

The project, feels Malcolm, deserves success. "EMI have been so good about it - it really should be big." Tony Wilson

"I was worried that we were doing it too late, but now I think it's exactly the right time"



Deep Purple - whose second album, *The Book Of Taliesyn*, is Harvest's first release - on the roof of the Dorchester Hotel, London: (l-r) Rod Evans, Jon Lord, Ritchie Blackmore, Nicky Simper and Ian Paice





July 8, 1969: Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithfull arrive in Sydney for the filming of *Ned Kelly*

He was subsequently hanged

MM APRIL 24 Mick Jagger plays the villain, in Australia.

ROLLINGSTONE MICK Jagger is to play Ned Kelly, the legendary Australian folk hero who was hanged in Melbourne in 1880, in a new major feature film for Woodfall Productions. The film, which will be directed by Tony Richardson, also stars Marianne Faithfull, who plays one of Kelly's sisters.

Shooting starts on location in Australia in July. This is Jagger's second major film role. He recently completed a part in *The Performers* [sic], which also starred James Fox and Anita Van Pallenberg [sic].

Ned Kelly was born in 1854, one of three sons of a convict, who became an outlaw and organised a reign of terror in Victoria, New South Wales with a hand-picked gang of hoodlums. The authorities regarded him as a thief, arsonist and murderer, but local people,

according to legend, regarded him more as a friend and saviour. Considerable folk tales have grown up about him. He was reputed to wear a special suit of armour.

He was eventually caught by the authorities in a hotel in Glenrowan in 1880. The hotel was burned down and a number of his gang members were burned to death. After his capture, Kelly was taken to Melbourne and subsequently hanged. In the film, Jagger ends up on the gallows. At the end of the film's shooting, The Rolling Stones are planning some live appearances, either in this country or America. But no details were available at press time. They are currently working on their new album and studios have been booked until early next month. After the completion of recording, a new single will be chosen.

"We have arranged for six responsible citizens to decide"

MM MAY 24 Moral guardian Mary Whitehouse turns her attention to pop on film.

MRS MARY WHITEHOUSE'S National Viewers' and Listeners' Association – watchdog of TV and radio programmes – this week swung into action over the re-screening of Tony Palmer's controversial pop programme, *All My Loving*.

All My Loving, first screened on BBC1 last year, was shown on BBC2 in colour on Sunday. Mrs Whitehouse told the *MM* on Monday that she had an appointment at 3pm yesterday (Wednesday) with the "Director Of Public Prosecutions in London". With her were NVLA president and Chief Constable of Lincolnshire John Barnett; the Right Reverend Bishop AW Goodwin Hudson and a family doctor, who has to remain anonymous. "We are taking with us a report on the programme. It is up to the director of public prosecutions to decide what action to take."

Mrs Whitehouse said: "As it was not possible to have a copy of the film, as it would be with a book, we had to arrange for from four to six responsible citizens to view it last night (Sunday) to decide whether in their view it was obscene."

A BBC TV spokesman commented on Monday: "We have nothing to say for legal reasons."

GETTY

MRS WHITEHOUSE THREATENS ACTION AGAINST BBC



TONY PALMER: controversial pop programme

American comedy Times Square 2. The comedy duo completed a highly college tour of the Mothers. They have their own series screened later this year.

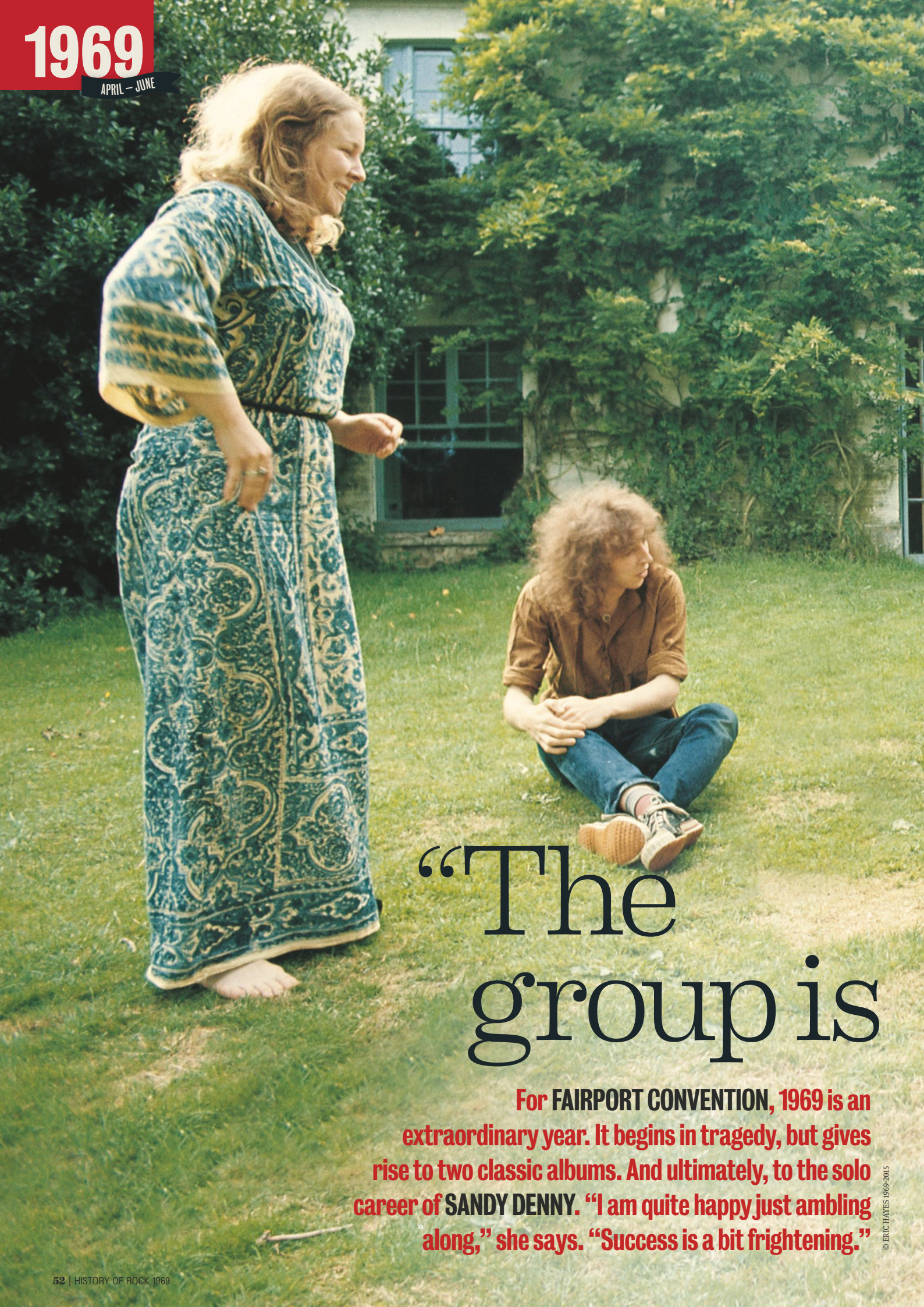
FOLK AT THE

THE DAHLINERS Campbell Folk Young Tradition Carthy and Dave are the stars of Night at the Pub London's Royal A July.

The Folk Night and the festival June 29 July 5. Other stars at include Pentan Corner, Fleetwood, Who, Chuck B.

and go to Germany and Holland for four weeks.

TONY TO LEAVE PYE



1969

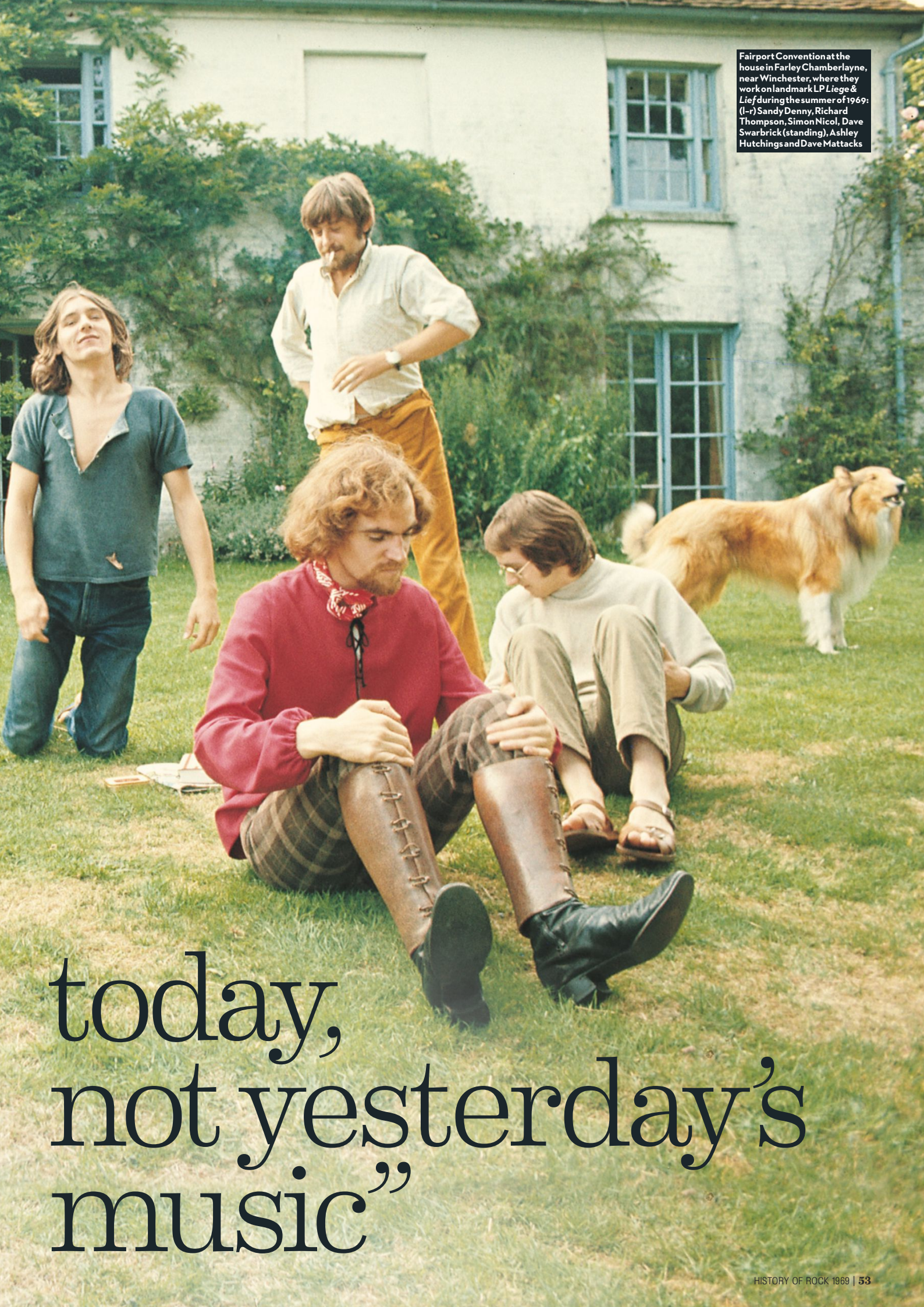
APRIL – JUNE

“The group is

For FAIRPORT CONVENTION, 1969 is an extraordinary year. It begins in tragedy, but gives rise to two classic albums. And ultimately, to the solo career of SANDY DENNY. “I am quite happy just ambling along,” she says. “Success is a bit frightening.”

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Fairport Convention at the house in Farley Chamberlayne, near Winchester, where they work on landmark LP *Liege & Lief* during the summer of 1969: (l-r) Sandy Denny, Richard Thompson, Simon Nicol, Dave Swarbrick (standing), Ashley Hutchings and Dave Mattacks



today,
not yesterday's
music”

— MELODY MAKER MAY 17 —

FAIRPORT CONVENTION DRUMMER Martin Lamble and an American girl known as “Jeanie The Tailor” were killed when the group’s van overturned and crashed on the M1 at Mill Hill on Monday morning. The group were on the way back to London after a gig at Mothers Club in Birmingham. Martin (19) and Jeanie, whose real name was Franklin, girlfriend of Fairport guitarist Richard Thompson, both died instantly. Group members Thompson, Simon Nicol and Tyger Hutchings were all taken to hospital in Stanmore with cuts and bruises. Richard suffered cracked ribs in the crash. Road manager Harvey Bramham was also seriously injured.

Singer Sandy Denny escaped injury because she was not travelling in the group bus. She had made the journey from Birmingham with boyfriend Trevor Lucas, guitarist with Ejection, who had shared the Mothers bill with Fairport Convention on Sunday night.

Anthea Joseph, of Witchseason Productions, who represent Fairport Convention, telephoned her boss Joe Boyd in the States to break the news. He was flying home immediately.

Anthea told *MM*: “Those poor children. We are all in a state of shock because this tragedy is just unbelievable.”

— MELODY MAKER MAY 24 —

THEY WERE PLAYING “Meet On The Ledge” at London clubs last week; it is a tune people most associate with Fairport Convention. Perhaps they were playing the record in other clubs all over the country. For Fairport were, and still are, one of the most liked, respected, even loved of those bands that spend their days and nights hitting the road, spreading seeds of music and truth.

Fairport, who just over a week ago were involved in a road accident that killed 19-year-old drummer Martin Lamble, were the band perhaps we tended to take a little for granted. Their two albums were well received and appreciated. Their following was growing all the time.

They never caused great sensations in public or uttered endless wise sayings in the press. They quietly improved and produced better and better music in two hard-working years together, first with singer Judy Dyble and later Sandy Denny and Ian McDonald (later Matthews), an early member who recently quit.

Occasionally somebody would think it a good idea to get a giant publicity drive going on their behalf, like other groups. Fairport would regard that with high humour. On several occasions there would be vague attempts at getting together with them for interviews which never materialised. Somehow it didn’t matter too much. Everybody dug them – what was there to say?

A colleague recalls the occasion when he met them for coffee and conversation and they answered all his questions by writing notes on scraps of paper. “Impossible!” he protested later. When invited to hear them perform at London’s Speakeasy Club, I recall meeting Judy Dyble. She uttered a cheery greeting, followed by, “Hello, aren’t you fat!” – a view endorsed by a small, curly-haired gentleman wearing an alarm clock round his neck. He was Martin Lamble.

Martin joined the group in 1967 and was hailed as the only drummer “to last more than a week with the group”. We used to bump into each other at odd places and times.

There was a mad trip in Montreux in Switzerland. Fairport had to play to a largely unconcerned crowd of socialites in the Casino. They chattered noisily while the group tried to make piping recorders and pretty songs heard above the din. Later we sat in the lounge at Geneva Airport, drinking coffee and wondering what it was all about. There was the Isle Of Wight pop festival.

It was freezing cold and pitch dark. Seven thousand kids sat in a field listening to endless groups. Nobody knew what time anybody was going to play next, least of all Martin, walking up and down, attempting to carry his bass drum and tom-toms single-handed, following conflicting instructions, looking for the dressing rooms and not even finding the strength to complain.

When the group finally tottered on stage to play their set in a strong easterly gale, the tiny figure crouched over his drums generated a spark of heat that could not be dulled. Martin’s playing was ideal for a band that could perform modern folk and rock material with equal sincerity and conviction. Largely self-taught, he had technique and taste.

Tyger Hutchings, Richard Thompson, Sandy Denny, and Simon Nicol are going to carry on. Fairport Convention will continue to make music and we hope they can recover the spirit to overcome the loss of their friend. The audiences will be waiting for them.

A press brochure once produced to introduce Fairport contained biographic notes jotted by each member. It had one section headed “Martin Francis Lamble”.

Place of birth: St John’s Wood. Instruments played: violin, drums and recorder. Previous occupation: Child. *Chris Welch*

— MELODY MAKER JULY 26 —

WHEN THE FAIRPORT Convention get back into harness fully in the autumn they will be presenting their new English Electric sound. Much of this will stem from the addition to the group of fiddle and mandolin player Dave Swarbrick, formerly with the Ian Campbell folk group and currently working with one of Britain’s leading traditional revivalist singers, Martin Carthy.

Dave is heard on the latest Fairport album, *Unhalfbricking* on Island, playing fiddle on “Cajun Woman”, written by Fairport guitarist Richard Thompson, “A Sailor’s Life”, the group’s arrangement of a traditional English sea-song, and “Si Tu Dois Partir” by Bob Dylan, their recently released single, and playing mandolin on another Dylan composition, “Million Dollar Bash”.

“The album is the first time we’ve worked with Dave,” explains Fairport’s other guitarist, Simon Nicol. “We’ve always admired him. I can’t remember whose idea it was to get him to play, but when we were doing the sessions we used Dave for a certain sound. He fitted in so well that it just went on from there.”

Dave is expected to join the group sometime in September after completing outstanding commitments with partner Martin Carthy. “What clinched it for us was the way we did “Sailor’s Life”, which was done in one session. Dave and Richard just played to one another, each taking solo parts. It was a really nice sound. And we’re getting him a solid fiddle from John Bailey, a guitar builder.”

Continued Simon, “Dave’s a really great guy to work with because he has so much energy. It seems a shame to break up a partnership like that, but they have been together a long time. But you do need change, that’s a fact of life; it’s what you make of it. Martin is a fine solo performer and perhaps this will give him a chance to do things he might not have been able to do before.”

The Fairport Convention’s move towards an English folk sound played on electric instruments is a calculated one and an attempt to create something distinctively English in approach and form.

“It’s a conscious project,” says Simon. “We’ll just explore it for a while. Dave’s got an amazing knowledge in that field. There’s a great wealth of untapped music there. The only people who have been doing anything to it have been people like Martin and Dave and Tim Hart and Maddy Prior. It’s another form that hasn’t been explored, in the same way as the Americans have with their music recently.”

“Tyger is writing some interesting stuff in the style of English ballads but without the archaic imagery which makes them unsingable in the electric context. And Sandy’s still writing, better than ever, and so is Richard.”

The idea is certainly interesting, although it may meet with criticism from the folk music purists, who consider the music should



Fairport in November 1967, with drummer Martin Lamble (far left) and (front) singers Judy Dyble and Ian Matthews



not be touched and reshaped in any way. In fact it seems a logical step in the experiment with traditional music. The Fairport have always played with taste and treated their music with respect and will no doubt do the same with this new idea.

"We want to concentrate on an album of English material," says Simon, "and we won't be afraid to bring in other musicians and singers. It'll be a sort of co-operative venture. And we'll be making another LP of the sort of things we've done in the past but it will be impressed by the other and probably come out more English."

The Fairport are now eager to get back to work full time but they are faced at the moment with finding another drummer to fill the gap left by the tragic death of Martin Lamble in the group's motor crash of a couple of months ago.

"We're still looking through the drummers who have applied to us. There's no shortage of guys. The only problem is knowing who to check with and knowing who will fit. You don't really realise what you're looking for. It's like having a jigsaw with a piece missing. Until we do, we can't achieve anything. We can't plan appearances or an album." *Tony Wilson*

— MELODY MAKER AUGUST 9 —

WHEN THE FAIRPORT Convention hit the road again in the early autumn they will have two new members, drummer Dave Mattacks, who has just joined, and fiddle and mandolin player Dave Swarbrick.

Swarbrick has been a well-known face and sound on the British folk scene for some years now. He was a member of the Ian Campbell group and then later teamed up with singer Martin Carthy, whom he is currently working with. His instrumental services have always been in demand for recording sessions with folk artists and it was when he played some of the tracks of the Fairport's latest album, *Unhalfbricking*, that the mutual decision was taken that Dave should join the group.

"I think it was just hearing them that made me want to join the Fairport," Dave told me last week when he visited the *MM* offices. "I was doing this session with them, and although I'd heard of them, I hadn't any idea what they were like. But they were a gas. They had this gorgeous sound."

The Fairport are moving into a new phase of their development as a group and this is going to involve music that will owe a lot to English

"It'll be based on traditional music, not just an electric copy"

Dave said that reactions to his joining Fairport have been friendly. "Reactions from the folk scene? I've had all this before," commented Dave. "When I joined Martin I was frowned upon as this 'pop' fiddler. I don't think I've sold out."

Dave hopes to be increasing his writing activities with the Fairport and said, "I have done some, but they don't know it yet. I've had a couple of things going round in my head. It may be possible that a lot of writing will be a corporate venture as well as the writing that Sandy Denny and Richard Thompson do."

"And we might take a traditional song and put it in the middle and say, 'What can we do with it?' and what we'd probably do is rewrite it. I think it would be very interesting for the Fairport to play in a folk concert or club. It's a weird lot of stuff. We've been messing about with sounds and it comes out more trad than some of the stuff I've heard in folk clubs. We've been playing jigs and reels as well."

Would playing with the Fairport affect Dave's style, particularly using a solid electric fiddle? "I don't know," Dave answered. "I don't know what an electric violin technique is going to be. The problem with playing with a pick-up is that you have to slow down. Being a folk-style player, my runs have been folk, but what you can do on electric violin will be dictated by the instrument largely. Just what I can do is very much in the air."

Dave's parting from Martin Carthy was something of a surprise, although there had been whispers of it. The break was a friendly one.

"Martin knew even before I did," said Dave. "I said on the occasion, 'There's something I want to discuss with you,' and Martin said, 'Do you want to split?' He was at the Fairport session and he was knocked out by it. I seem to remember him saying, 'Are you going to join?' But we'll still do odd things together."

At the moment, the Fairport and Dave are concentrating on another album, which Dave thinks "will be quite heavy on traditional material".

After that it will be live dates for the Fairport Convention. "I don't think there will be any gigs before the record's done in September," Dave said. "I don't suppose it is likely to be before October. I'm going to be terrified on the first one, though. I'm thinking about it, even now." *Tony Wilson*

— MELODY MAKER AUGUST 16 —

WHEN DAVE MANNING, manager of Drum City, one of London's leading percussion retailers heard the Fairport Convention were looking for a drummer, he immediately thought of 21-year-old ex-assistant of his, Dave Mattacks. So Dave contacted the Fairport and was invited along for an audition and got the job as drummer.

For the past two years Dave has been working with the Geoff Reynolds and Denny Boyce bands in Glasgow, Belfast and London and doing broadcast gigs with the Guy Darrell group. "All very far removed from the Fairport," commented Dave in London last week. "I started off as a group musician" »





Working on *Liege & Lief*: "Fairports are still basically a rock group, and we would be folk musicians going electric," says soon-to-depart Ashley Hutchings (right) of the project that will become Steeleye Span

and I always have been, even when I played with the palais bands. I had that approach, even with the quicksteps."

Although Dave had heard the Fairport on record and John Peel's radio shows, he hadn't heard them live until he started working with them. "I had the audition with half a dozen other guys," said Dave, "then they asked me to go down and play football with them for a couple of days, so it was my football that got me the job!"

Having been a member of a palais band, Dave wasn't certain how they would receive this, because there appears to be some sort of musical social stigma about having been a dance-band drummer. The Fairport obviously didn't mind, or care. He sees joining the Fairport as a "fantastic challenge". He knows what the Fairport are getting into musically but was worried by his lack of knowledge of folk music, although this is being cut down by listening to records of folk music.

"With some of the rhythms we're trying to get something different. We've been doing things like jigs and reels and I've been trying to get away from the military snare drum sort of sound you usually get with that kind of music."

As far as his own playing is concerned, Dave said, "I've always been interested in what's going on on the scene but I've never been a member of the heavy team. I think that's one of the things with the Fairport, there's not a heavy volume thing there. I've always wanted to try as many things as possible within my limits, and this is the most musically satisfying. For some it's jazz; for others, sitting down and reading a part. For me it's the group. I can tell by the couple of blows we've had that this is the most satisfying."

"The Fairport have this unique approach to their music. No-one else is doing anything like it, which is a nice position to be in, musically. You know you're not a second-rate Fred Bloggs & The Nosepickers. Compared with what's going on, the group is today, not yesterday's music, which I've been associated with." *Tony Wilson*

— NME AUGUST 16 —

IF IT IS true that in the final analysis the groups that last are the ones that have done the groundwork, then Fairport Convention are set for a long stay. Few have worked with such devotion to evolving a music of their own, or so

hard towards the recognition that is coming, than Fairport Convention.

Within a few days of reaching the record shops the group's third album, the oddly titled *Unhalfbricking*, had streaked into the top half of the NME LP Chart. And if that isn't enough, their "Si Tu Dois Partir" single from the album gives them their debut in the Top 30, entering this week at No 27. Now the success they've worked so hard for has come so suddenly its taken Fairport a little by surprise.

"Yeah, I suppose I'm happy about it," conceded vocalist Sandy Denny when we met last week. "Yeah, I am very happy. I am quite happy just ambling along towards the big success, but when the big success is suddenly there at the other end of the street and getting closer it is a bit frightening. I am happy as well to sit and watch people on *Top Of The Pops* and tear them to pieces like everybody else and then, when somebody good comes on, say, 'This is what we'd like to see'... Only when it comes along for you then it's a bit of a drag," she added, screwing up her nose for emphasis.

The diminutive sandy-haired Sandy was a solo folk singer before she joined Fairport just over a year ago. The possessor of a beautifully clear voice and of a reputation for consuming Scotch in large quantities, she also has a nice line in facial expressions, one of which is a melting smile. No matter what Sandy said as she perched on her stool beside a mounting line of empty glasses, I have a feeling that Fairport are more than a little thrilled now that "Si Tu Dois Partir" has become a hit.

That kind of success has been getting nearer for some time now. In the two-and-a-half years since they were formed, Fairport have seen members leave—one die in a crash—and new members step in. A tragedy like that which took drummer Martin Lamble three months back would have seen the end of many groups. Not Fairport, whose young members put on years in minutes and found new strength.

"The accident taught me that I loved them all," said Sandy. In those years, the group's progress towards distinctly Fairport music has been steady and sure, and what they've arrived at is music that is highly skilled, yet simple at the same time, vital, honest and, most importantly, full of enjoyment and youthful spirit.

As "Si Tu Dois Partir" would suggest, there's humour there too. The idea for it came some time back one morning at the Middle Earth while the group was 'hooting about' with "If You Gotta Go".



"We thought it would be nice to do it Cajun style," said Sandy, "using accordion and violin and singing it in French because Cajun people have this very Americanised French. Martin was playing his sticks on chair backs and it sounded nice. When we recorded it, we put Martin in a tiny box studio with two sets of chair backs and a selection of milk bottles. He was having a gas."

That unmusical break towards the end, revealed Sandy, is the effect of Martin knocking chairs and milk bottles flying in his exuberance. Sandy's opinion of *Unhalfbricking* is that it is much better than the last album, *What We Did On Our Holidays*.

"It is a lot more natural and not so produced as... *Holidays*," she commented. "The next album is going to be completely different. It will be based around traditional British folk music, which we may put new words to if necessary. And we've got a great violin player in Dave Swarbrick to help us."

An example of what Fairport is aiming at is "A Sailor's Life", the traditional folk song arranged by the group on *Unhalfbricking*. For material they have been digging into the archives of the Folk Dance & Song Society – the British Museum of folk music.

"We're not making it pop, though," added Sandy in case of wrong impressions. "In fact it will be almost straight; only electric. What does it sound like? Heavy traditional folk music." *Nick Logan*

— NME NOVEMBER 22 —

TWO MEMBERS OF Fairport Convention – singer Sandy Denny and bass guitarist Tyger Hutchings – have left the group. Official explanation for Sandy's departure is her unwillingness to travel – she is, however, shortly to begin work on a solo album for Island, and it is believed that other solo plans are being made for her. Tyger is anxious to concentrate on traditional folk music and, with a view to this, has been invited to join Sweeney's Men.

As a result of this internal upheaval, Convention has not worked since a one-nighter in Birmingham on November 2. Only one new member will be engaged to replace the two outgoing members, and the group is currently seeking a suitable singer-musician to fill the vacancy.

Fairport's next album, *Liege & Lief*, is scheduled for December 2 release, but no follow-up single to its recent hit "Si Tu Dois Partir" has so far been arranged. The new LP is described as "British traditional material played electronically".

— MELODY MAKER DECEMBER 20 —

A CLOAK OF MYSTERY has been hanging over the Fairport Convention since their reported split a month ago. The Fairports have undergone a constant buffeting, culminating in the departure of Sandy Denny and Ashley Hutchings last month. But with the power of resurgence reserved for the great groups only, the Fairport Convention have again got themselves together. A spokesperson for Witchseason Productions, the management, announced this week: "The group will go on."

This time there will be no replacement for Sandy, the girl who stepped in for original member Judy Dyble. Dave Pegg, formerly of the Ian Campbell Folk Group, replaces Tyger Hutchings, the bass player who has joined up with Terry Woods of Sweeney's Men to form an all-British traditional folk group, which is likely to be "one step on" from what the Fairports are currently doing.

"The Fairports will be moving into a converted 18th-century pub on the Herts/Essex border, and begin rehearsing seriously next week," says Witchseason. "We hope to have them back on the road as soon as we can. They have a tour of America planned for mid-January, and we want them to be ready considerably before then. When they're ready for recording, they will be straight back into the studios."

The Fairport Convention's new album, *Liege & Lief*, is released on Island next week. As the title hints, it represents the most ambitious

"We weren't sure what to do. To replace Sandy would be difficult"

interpretation of British traditional folk music yet attempted. Apart from "Come All Ye", "Farewell" and "Crazy Man Michael", which were produced by Richard Thompson, Dave Swarbrick, Ashley Hutchings and Sandy Denny, all tracks are well-known traditional songs, such as "Reynardine", "Little Matty Groves", "Tam Lin", "The Deserter" and a medley which highlights Dave Swarbrick's fiddle on "Lark In The Morning", "Rakish Paddy", "Foxhunter's Jig" and "Toss The Feathers". All the arrangements are interesting, particularly "Little Matty Groves", which is often associated with the banjo.

But how will the absence of a girl singer affect

the group's overall sound?

"We weren't really sure what to do. To replace Sandy would be a difficult job. It would be really difficult for the replacement, as she would continually be subjected to comparison with Sandy; so the boys thought they'd have a crack themselves. With the traditional stuff, they really got together for the one album as a singular project only. But I expect they'll expand on that. We're all very happy with the way things have progressed," says Witchseason.

Meanwhile, Tyger Hutchings has been having difficulties in getting his group together. What was aimed as an extension of Sweeney's Men has developed into a merging of a number of well-known artists on the folk scene, and Tyger was still finalising the lineup when we went to press.

Tyger had planned to join Johnny Moynihan and Terry Woods, the Sweeney's Men, who combined traditional and contemporary material. Terry and Johnny recently recorded an excellent album on Transatlantic called *The Tracks Of Sweeney*. To complicate matters, Andy Irvine, who had earlier left the Sweeney's, planned to rejoin, with Terry's wife Gay coming in on vocals and concertina. Then Johnny and Andy both backed out, and Tyger was back at square one. His aim was to incorporate Tim Hart and Maddy Prior into the group, but this week he announced that the final lineup was still undecided.

The group is expected to consist of two girls, who will sing, and play traditional British instruments such as autoharp and concertina, with a bassist, drummer and two others who will feature other traditional instruments such as mandolin and dulcimer, as well as guitar.

"I want to develop along the same lines as Fairports did. They scratched the surface, now we want to take traditional British songs and adapt them to an electric setting, creating an unmistakable British sound. With Fairports, we found that this was far more successful than when we played our own material. But Fairports are still basically a rock group, and we would be folk musicians going electric," said Tyger.

"We've already been practising and I'm very pleased with the aim of *Liege & Lief*. I hope we will be even more British, by virtue of the concertina, mandolin, dulcimer and so on. In many ways we are exploring, and it would be nice if other groups try it as well. There certainly seems to be rumblings in the folk scene at the moment. I believe that virtually all rock music is based on American forms. We've got a number of fine bands but they seem to end up taking American music back to America – it's the same with any music. What we are trying to do is to get people interested in British forms.

"I personally like all sorts of music, but I'm particularly interested in British music. I just hope that the new group will achieve this by reverting back to the roots, and doing traditional material."

Meanwhile, Sandy Denny is back pursuing a solo career. But she is unlikely to be recognisable as the folk singer of pre-Fairport days. She has advanced to a major extent and has clearly developed an individual style which she hopes will take her into concert appearances next year. She is already actively rehearsing a new album, which will be recorded in early 1970; but the extra spare time will enable her to write more songs, and thus fulfil another of Sandy's ambitions. *Jeremy Gilbert* •

Fairport's future... and Tyger's plans

A CLOAK of mystery

as guitar. "I want to develop along the same lines as Fairports did. They



1969

APRIL – JUNE

“Street violence is last year’s flower power”

FRANK ZAPPA makes an inflammatory London appearance on his UK tour – and returns later with reinforcements, the extraordinary **CAPTAIN BEEFHEART**. They talk TV, violence and Beefheart’s new record, *Trout Mask Replica*. “Raccoons come up to the door to listen to the music...”

ALAMY



May 27, 1969: Frank Zappa fails to impress students at the London School Of Economics when he visits to discuss "student unrest"

— MELODY MAKER JUNE 7 —

FRANK ZAPPA & The Mothers Of Invention took the aware youth of Britain by storm last week and – perhaps – made them just a bit more aware. Within a few days of their arrival, they upset a dozen preconceived ideas about their views and music. Zappa took on students at the London School Of Economics and found himself being lectured on student unrest.

The Mothers took off on the road and found a great ovation awaited their efforts to play serious music. I went on the road with them and found my preconceived ideas swept away and replaced by great respect for their dedication and pride in their work.

Frank Zappa & The Mothers Of Invention's image is a perfect example of the results of cross-wired communication and mass misunderstanding. A shock is needed to shake complacency. The Mothers have been trying to give us a shock for some time, jumping up and down, pulling faces. The hippies were the first to embrace their funny faces and horrid music. The Mothers were attractively bizarre and HAD to be anti-establishment.

Freak Out!, their first album, thus became an essential part of hip record collections. From here on issues became confused. One remembers DJ David Jacobs playing one of the Mothers' more obviously amusing singles on *Juke Box Jury* and explaining to a baffled audience and jury that it was "deadly serious". The Mothers looked revolting, and seemed to revel in upsetting everybody. Zappa was grudgingly hailed as a clever producer, releasing stranger and yet stranger albums, leaving behind satire and moving into electronic music. Through stray remarks on TV and in interviews, Zappa appeared as an extremely sardonic anti-hero.

The truth is that Zappa is a composer of serious music who works in a rock'n'roll framework, and cherishes a sense of humour. The Mothers are schooled and sensitive musicians who play Zappa's music with devotion, care and enthusiasm. They are not as ugly as their photographs.

The absurdity and humour in the situation of appearing as "freaks" to touch the nerves of the dullards of society has probably worn a little thin for them, especially if it becomes a block to acceptance for their music on a wider scale.

Talking to Frank in hotels, on the coach, and in an M1 snack bar, and being in close proximity to the Mothers, convinced me of their total concern for music. I asked Frank about the LSE lecture, and whether he had gone there with the intention of upsetting them.

"No – not at all. I was asked to talk to the students, so I went along. I don't like to talk, but I will answer questions, even their asshole questions. No, I didn't misjudge them – I had a pretty accurate idea of the mood of the students. It's difficult to sit in front of people who don't like a thing you say. It makes you a little bit nervous. It's disturbing to see people in colleges so impressed by such a lot of dogma. If you think I was too patronising in my answers to questions, I would say the questions were idiotic.

"I think it's horrible that people can talk about a revolution in carnival terms. They want to be heroes and go out and WIN. Infiltration – that sounds like work. That's the hard revolution. I told them I thought street violence is now just last year's flower power. They wanted to know about Berkeley so they can imitate it. But the students made me feel as if I was some old creep talking. I just think a violent revolution doesn't change a thing. Don't forget the establishment are extremely well armed."

The coach trip to Birmingham with the Mothers proved a normal, enjoyable outing, with Frank serenading us on acoustic guitar. The most remarkable events were being confronted in the Blue Boar restaurant with a waitress who wanted to know if the Mothers were "a group or just Americans" and seeing Maynard Ferguson and Julie Felix materialising in our midst.

Birmingham Town Hall is old but strangely intimate in a Victorian way. The audience can sit in galleries at the side and behind the stage. The acoustics aren't bad at all. Before eager, attentive

Midlands youth, washed in soft water, fed on black pudding, and succoured by Mothers Club, the hip lifeline that sponsored the concert, the Mothers Of Invention played a programme of chamber music and rock'n'roll that drew a tumultuous ovation.

Zappa strolled on stage, cigarette in hand, to announce a delay while the band tuned up. The delay drew some sporadic handclapping. "Be quiet," said Zappa, rather as a missionary would still some troublesome natives.

Was this delay some further example of flashy Americanism? And how about the false starts to numbers and all that conducting? And did you hear about his lecture at the LSE? But doubts and myths dispersed like frost under salt as the Mothers grappled with their scores and their instruments locked in sound.

And what a sound! The horn section was amplified, but not enough to beat the volume of the electric instruments and drums, for the Mothers have all the inner balances and awareness of dynamics displayed by the best jazz or symphony orchestras.

The lineup of the group includes Ian Underwood, a Berkeley student who plays Mozart piano, as well as sax, clarinet, flute and organ; Bunk Gardner, their grey-haired flute, soprano, alto, tenor, bassoon and piano player; Euclid James "Motorhead" Sherwood plays baritone, tenor, harmonica, and tambourine; Roy Estrada is on bass guitar and "high pitched harmonies". Don Preston is the electronics expert and organist, and Buzz Gardner is on trumpet.

The percussion department is exceptionally strong. The use of two drummers is no gimmick. Jimmy Carl Black is a superb heavy drummer who provides an unerring pulse in contrast to the more descriptive style of Arthur Tripp, who also plays xylophone, vibraphone, marimba and tympani.

"Igor's Boogie", their complex opener, featured a tenor, trumpet and two-clarinet lineup which Frank later wrote out for me at our hotel. "Hot Rats", which followed, was a fine example of modern American orchestral music, which proved how advanced is Frank's writing and how skilled are the Mothers at interpreting his scores. On the lengthy "Shortly", Frank played excellent guitar and after this hugely applauded marathon, which made great demands on the concentration powers of both audience and players, the light relief of a straight rock'n'roll set broke up the audience.

Jimmy Carl Black laid down THE most solid off-beat while the horn players dutifully swung their instruments in a beautiful parody of 1950s-style rock. Biggest surprise was the appealing quality of Frank's teenage voice, well up to the standards set by such groups as Ruben & The Jets, on tunes like "Bacon Fat" and "My Guitar Wants To Kill Your Mother".

The chamber music was Zappa's writing for unaccompanied trumpet, clarinet and bassoon, and this proved as successful with the audience as anything else they cared to play. The unfortunate image of the Mothers as an all-swearing hippy freak show had been blasted. The sheer brilliance of their performance convinced that the Mothers must be one of the world's greatest groups.

Shouted one fan at the end of the evening, "F--- the supergroups, this is it!" Said Zappa, "You wanna hear us on a good night."

"I'm in favour
of being
comfortable...
the same as
anybody else"



"ZAPPA WON ON points." "Zappa was a flop." "Zappa was RIGHT!" Not a cross-section of public opinion painstakingly assessed by selected interviews; just a cross-section of personal reactions to the Mother Superior's "lecture" to students at the London School Of Economics.

When the Lords of the spray-can came into collision with the Mother Of Invention in their slogan-daubed lecture hall on Tuesday of last week, there was an explosion of non-communication, an embarrassment spectacular, more aimless than the most inane TV panel show.

The blame can be shared fairly equally. It is tempting to assume Zappa's intentions when he came on to talk about "student unrest". Perhaps he saw them as young monkeys he could easily annihilate. Perhaps they saw him as a Che Guevara of pop. The monkeys nearly annihilated Zappa. Che Guevara crashed to the ground in a cloud of dust.



June 6, 1969: Frank Zappa and keyboardist Don Preston with The Mothers Of Invention at London's Royal Albert Hall

They appointed him as a prophet. When he failed to make the grade with the right answers to a barrage of questions that began to sound like a McCarthy witch-hunt, he was rejected and attacked.

LSE is a "hot" university. The walls of the lecture hall have slogans sprayed across them – "Act Now" and "Strike". The people there are impatient. A lot walked out before Zappa finished, perhaps to eat sandwiches, perhaps to fill sandbags.

The students were in deadly earnest, unconcerned with absurdities or liberalism. They embraced Zappa, lured by his LPs, stray quotes in magazines and filmed interviews, found him wanting and sprayed him with abuse.

Zappa came armed with a cool manner, some Groucho Marx-type quips, both to be burned by shining idealism. The lecture began with Frank asking, "Any questions?" Friendly laughter – a settling down for the revelations and super-chat to come.

"How seriously do you take yourself and your music?" A question to set the ball rolling. "Not enough to be dangerous." Ho-hos, then silence. Further questions fail to spark much response.

Then the heavies got to work. One strident voice likened him to Bob Hope, which earned a hearty round of applause. They stamped on his "facetiousness" and clamoured for some positive statements on his beliefs. Sadly his delivery of the concept of infiltration of media, government, church, army, etc, instead of direct confrontation, sounded weak and feeble. It merely induced groans and jeers.

"What are you doing?" demanded one youth, hotly. "I'm sitting here being abused." But there was to be no more laughter for Zappa wisecracks, and he lapsed into a kind of dazed silence.

"Are you upset, Frank?" asked one kindly student, summoning reserves of pity from his vastness. "No, I'm not upset."

The students were upset, however, at statements like: "Everybody is part of an establishment. What makes you think you are not part of an establishment here? I'm in favour of being comfortable. People have different ideas on how to be comfortable. I just aim for that goal the same as anybody else."

"What happened at Berkeley last week?" "Oh, you want a hot poop – an inside on the demo? I'm not hot on demonstrations." "Yeah, demos aren't comfortable," called out one chap.

"People are really thrilled about rioting in the street. It's this year's flower power." A cry of "bollocks" greeted this remark, and Frank was accused of being a narrow-minded, fantastically hostile, snappish bigot. Zappa had failed to fill their need for a hero figure. *Chris Welch*

— MELODY MAKER OCTOBER 25 —

THE MOTHERS ARE dead. Killed by a public apathy towards a style of music which the rest of the world will catch up with maybe around 1975.

After Frank Zappa had announced that he and his loveable bunch of freaks were no longer together, the *MM* rang him at his Los Angeles home to ask about the reasons for the break-up.

"I don't like to say that we're breaking up – we're just not performing any more," he replied enigmatically. "We're not getting across, and if we'd continued to progress at the rate we've been doing for the last year and a half, we wouldn't have any audience left at all.

"We were heading towards concert music – electronic chamber music. We performed it several times in America and had horrible reviews and an unpleasant audience response. The reviews we got were so simplistic, and I don't want to go on having to put up with all that bullshit. We played my bassoon concerto at the Fillmore East, and one critic described it as an 'oboe concerto'. He also said that he'd paid his money to hear rock'n'roll and he didn't see why he should put up with all that classical garbage.

"People have a great need to put music into little boxes, and they've never been able to do that with us. Am I discouraged? Sure I'm discouraged. But I don't want to make it sound as if we quit just because we got a bad press. If we'd done that, we'd only have lasted six months. "It looked as though we weren't going to be able to achieve the goals we'd set for the group. There was too much resistance from all quarters, so we decided to cool it. »

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February 26, 1969: Captain Beefheart (Don Van Vliet, right) and The Magic Band in the grounds of the house in Topanga Canyon, California where *Trout Mask Replica* was written, rehearsed and part-recorded

"Maybe in two or three years people will be able to look back and assess what the Mothers accomplished; maybe they'll be able to catch up with the music. And who knows, it's possible that sometime in the future we may even put the band back together again."

Meanwhile, Frank has a typically unlikely plan to put out the 12 unissued Mothers albums he has ready for release. "I'm negotiating with *Playboy* magazine to start a Mothers record club. Members will be able to receive the albums either one a month for a year, or all at once."

"Why *Playboy*? It's got a large circulation. I couldn't do it through an underground paper, because they don't reach enough people. And it's going to cost a fortune just to press and put covers on these albums. I'm also doing a pilot TV show this week, and if it works out then I'll have my own weekly TV series. It will be syndicated, which means that stations will be either showing it or not showing it—they can't cut or censor it."

"They are building a set in the studio exactly like my basement room, only slightly larger, and in this fraudulent replica of my basement there will be amplifiers and musical instruments so that I can throw people into the corner and tell them to play. For the first show I'm trying to get, as guests, Hubert Humphrey, Captain Kangaroo—who's a kind of folk hero in the States, he has his own kids' TV show—Mick Jagger, Captain Beefheart and Lightnin' Slim. It will last one hour. The people will all talk together, and we'll see what kind of madness we can get into."

Frank's record label, Straight, also has its next batch of four albums coming out shortly.

"The GTOs' album is finally coming out, and there'll be new ones from Tim Buckley and a group called Pin Rod." Frank will be bringing Beefheart over to Europe for the BYG pop and jazz festival this weekend, and says that he hopes to bring the Captain and his Magic Band to Britain for a press reception.

"Beefheart's operating at a disadvantage at the moment," he said. "One of the lead guitarists hit the bass player in the mouth and broke his dentures. So the other lead guitarist smashed Jeff's ribs and put him in hospital. Then the whole group got together, got Jeff out of hospital, bought him some clothes, and sent him back to the desert. Now one guitarist—Zoot Horn Rollo—is playing both guitar parts, which are very intricate. I don't know how he does it."

I expressed a sincere hope that the end of the Mothers would not mean the end of Frank's compositions, and he replied, "Well, I've booked the Albert Hall for a concert on April 25 next year. It'll be an orchestra playing my compositions, which will be the first time this has happened."

No more cruising past the hamburger stands, digging the music of Ruben & The Jets, but... the Mothers are dead: long live Frank Zappa!
Richard Williams

— MELODY MAKER NOVEMBER 8 —

FRANK ZAPPA BREEZED into London last week in an orange T-shirt. His aim was to launch the British end of his record label, Straight, who are to be distributed in this country by CBS. With him was the wondrous Captain Beefheart, star of one of Straight's first releases: the double-album *Trout Mask Replica*. Braving Zappa's sharp and accurate wit, the amiable enigma that is Beefheart, and the full might of CBS' top brass, *Melody Maker* spoke to both gentlemen.

April 25, 1970 is the date when Frank Zappa, the Incredible All-American Composer, takes over the Albert Hall. Judging by Frank's achievements with the late Mothers Of Invention over the past four years, and by the three concerts and six albums they have bestowed on a grateful if slightly bemused British public, it will be a date worth remembering by all music fans, as well as Mothers freaks. For Frank has plans which, if they materialise, will set London back on its ears.

"I'm trying to get Pierre Boulez over to conduct the concert," Frank told me in London this week. "The largest composition, which is a ballet, needs a 100-piece orchestra, and I want to get dancers to leap about all over the audience. Also, if it's possible, I want to get the musicians so well rehearsed that they can memorise the parts and go out into the audience while playing them. But that will need a lot of time and it may not happen."

Has he completed all the music for the concert?

"Sure—it's all in my briefcase upstairs. We'll do some of the things from the *Lumpy Gravy* album. You know—the stuff that people say sounds like Henry Mancini? It might be expanded for the concert. There seems to be a certain amount of pressure on me to get myself or some of the Mothers

to play in the concert. They're concerned about selling tickets and paying the orchestra."

Why did he choose to stage this concert, the first at which his music has been performed by an orchestra, in Britain? "Because it would be impossible in America. Hiring the orchestra would cost a fortune."

Mothers fans will be glad to hear that Frank has, at last, found a backer who will give him a budget to finish the *Uncle Meat* movie, the soundtrack from which was issued in this country a few months ago.

The film is about the Mothers, and among many interesting episodes is footage of a couple of their British concerts, plus a sequence which shows them trying on the dresses they wore for the *We're Only In It For The Money* album.

Frank's latest record, which should appear in this country shortly, is *Hot Rats*, about which he says, "It's surprisingly easy to listen to. Some people have even been known to tap their feet to it."

"The emphasis is split between the composing, arranging and playing. I play guitar, and Ian Underwood plays all the reeds and all the keyboards on it – including a real pipe organ, with a lot of special effects like percussion sounds and tin whistles, which was in the studio."

Frank has just finished an album with French jazz violinist Jean-Luc Ponty on World Pacific, for which he did the arrangements. "They just hired me as an arranger. People used to do that, you know, when the Mothers were young. They hired me instead of one of the usual Hollywood hacks – I did a couple of songs for The Animals, and I played on them too."

I asked Frank about the Actuel Pop & Jazz Festival in Belgium, from which he had just returned. "I guess it was more of a political than a musical success. The festival was moved around so much that it was a triumph to get it on at all. It was so disorganised that when all the lights and amplifications worked on the first night, the organisers looked at each other in amazement. They couldn't believe that it was really going to happen. But I was there. Six to 12 hours a night, I was there."

"It was very difficult because it was so cold, and in that temperature several things happen to musical instruments: guitar-players' fingers get cold, which makes it hard to play, and the strings go out of tune at different levels."

Did any of the groups or musicians impress him?

"Yeah, I really like The Nice. They were good musically, and they've got a very exciting stage act, too. And I dug Colosseum – particularly Dick, the guy who plays tenor and soprano. Does he do sessions in London? He ought to – he's really a bitch."

THE LEGENDARY CAPTAIN Beefheart is a large, comfortable man of deceptive simplicity. He also has a grey top hat and a warm smile. It was Beefheart's *Safe As Milk* album, of course, which led the rock revolution in the balmy days of 1967, shortly after which he made a visit to Britain, received with mingled horror and adulation.

Since then he's been fairly quiet, and there has been only one record, which he considers a failure, to remind us of his presence. Last week, however, he visited London again – on his way home from the Actuel Festival, in the company of Frank Zappa, on whose Straight label his amazing new double-LP set *Trout Mask Replica* is shortly to appear.

Beefheart is friendly and approachable, but occasionally

"It costs a lot of money to go on the road. It really does. I can't afford it"

obscure. This is, I'm sure, unintentional, but it does tend to make communication difficult.

When I asked him if, as rumoured, he intended to make his home in Britain, he replied, "I already have one person in Britain and one in the States. Astral bodies – you understand?"

Er, well, maybe, but did this intention arise from a disenchantment with American life?

"Over here you don't have guns – there isn't that kind of sexual hang-up. At home I live in a house where raccoons come up to the door to listen to the music – I really do, raccoons and coyotes."

I told him I'd heard that, while making *Trout Mask Replica*, the group were shut away in his house for weeks on end.

"I didn't shut them away. There's no leader in the band; everybody's not responsible for themselves."

The entire double album, which has to be heard to be believed, was conceived, written and recorded in just eight-and-a-half hours, according to Beefheart. One of the tracks, "Orange Claw Hammer", has a tune which bears an uncanny resemblance to the old Bob Dylan song, "North Country Blues".

The Captain doesn't seem to have given many live performances in the recent past. Would he like to go on the road and play more?

"I'm sorry that they put these obstructions up... or down... or whatever, so that people can't hear me giving. It costs a lot of money to go on the road. It really does. I can't afford it. You don't make any money for playing."

Surely, I replied, there are plenty of people who are making a lot of money from going out and working.

"Yes, but they're WORKING. Can you name me anybody who's making money from PLAYING?"

Therein lies, apparently, the basis of the Captain's beliefs. Beefheart is justifiably annoyed at the way his first two albums, *Safe As Milk* and *Strictly Personal*, were produced.

"Hank Secola did a beautiful mix on the first album, but they wouldn't let it out because it was too real. Then the tapes for the second album were taken away and really ruined."

"I really wonder about mixing. I don't like the idea of it. *Trout Mask Replica* has a natural sound – as natural as you can get from amplifiers."

He's known Zappa for a long time – in fact at one time they contemplated forming a group together – and I asked him, naively, if he trusted Frank more than any other producer.

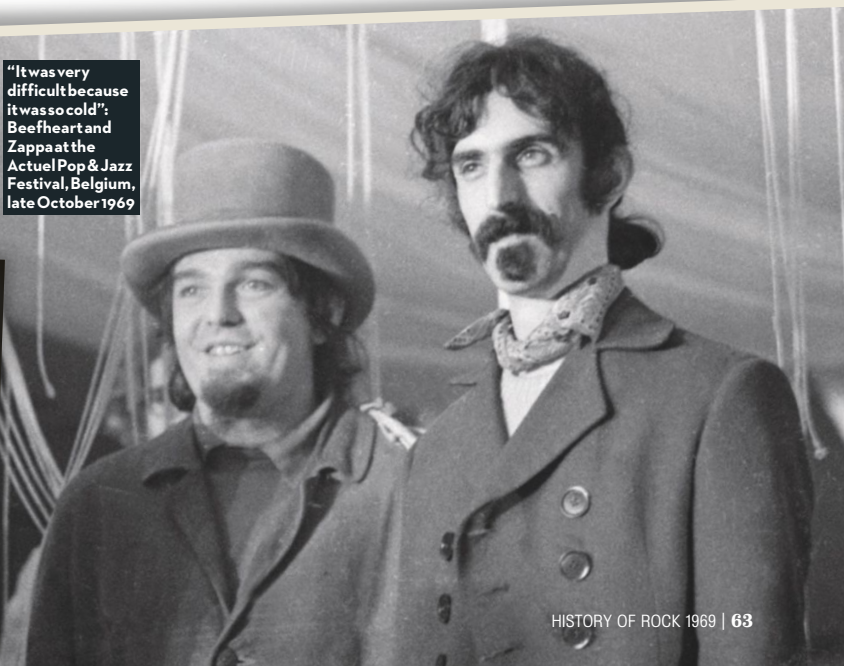
"I don't trust anyone – it puts too much of a burden on them. But you might say I'm happiest with this arrangement."

Did he have plans for a new album?

"I haven't started anything yet. But it's there... it's almost there. There'll be more playing on the next LP. The group had only been together six months when we made this one." *Richard Williams* •

"It was very difficult because it was so cold": Beefheart and Zappa at the Actuel Pop & Jazz Festival, Belgium, late October 1969

THE MOTHERS
ARE DEAD,
BUT ZAPPA'S
STILL VERY
MUCH ALIVE



PHOTOGRAPH

1969

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July 1969: The Who pose for *Vogue* magazine, (l-r) John Entwistle, Keith Moon, Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey



“It’s like the rebirth of The Who”

Over six months, **THE WHO** record and deliver *Tommy* to the world. Pete Townshend defends the “sick” story, and delights in his achievement. “The way it worked out,” he says, “was like literature.” “Some of the songs are bloody hard,” adds Roger Daltrey.

— NME MARCH 22 —

WHO-BAITERS OF THE world unite! Another opportunity for you to knock, attack and cudgel the group you love to hate is about to present itself upon the scene – in the form of “Deaf, Dumb And Blind Boy”. The aforementioned handicapped youth is the central figure in The Who’s new double album, which is due for release shortly. A single, “Pinball Wizard”, has been taken from it and enters the chart this week at No 26.

Pete Townshend came along to a West End restaurant to explain seriously the story behind the album and maybe ward off some of the criticism that is bound to come. “There’s already been a reaction in America and they haven’t even heard it yet!” he began with a wry smile. “I expect some controversy and I don’t mind a bit of press activity, but I don’t want it to get out of hand.”

Satisfied that I would be a nice gentle boy and not “ave a go”, Pete went on: “I’ve been thinking about it for ages, as you know. I’ve had a number of ideas in my head to write a sort of pop opera. It puts across a number of values... gives a modern idea of what good and bad is. A simple feeling of spiritual development in day-to-day »

GETTY

living. To use a normal guy wouldn't have been unusual enough for mystery. The deaf, dumb and blind boy can feel jolts and bumps and things which can be translated into music. He isn't born like it; it's a block instilled by his parents. He sees his dad murder his mother's lover and they tell him he hasn't seen anything or heard anything.

"Gradually he loses his senses because of the pressures put on him and the album goes into his musical experiences. He spends all day in the amusement arcades and becomes a pinball champion, playing by feel. A doctor starts to remove the block with a strange technique—the boy has to look at his own reflection and in the end that's all he sees.

"He isn't affected by anything around him and he becomes a sort of pop hero and in the end becomes what all boys would like to be. He opens a holiday camp and the whole thing develops into a religion almost. But there's a minor revolution and it all becomes a bit nasty."

Which all sounds somewhat confusing, but Pete assured me that, through the songs, it's all clear to the listener. He says the LP can be taken as one of three things—a spiritual symbol, the life of a pop star or a rock'n'roll album.

"It adds a new facet to what can be done in pop music," he pointed out. "It's some of the best stuff I've ever written, equal to 'My Generation'. I never set out to write anything as good as that, but it just happened. I'll help keep the group in a unified direction, stop them from splitting into different directions. It will take the place of the old act, but with no tricks and costumes and special lighting."

The Who don't bother much about British tours, which is a pity for their fans who have remained loyal for years. Pete, however, with his businesslike brain, has thought about the subject and has certain ideas.

"I see no reason why, if it's really worked out, with the right towns and the right

"A policeman came into our dressing room and fired a gun at me"

acts, a tour shouldn't sell out," he commented. "You could do it in an empty swimming pool and take away the preconception that the kids have about their local theatre. They don't want to go through an entrance all lit up and under marble pillars to see a show." *Richard Green*

— MELODY MAKER APRIL 19 —

"WHEN THE REVOLUTION comes in England, the first to get his head cut off would be Mick Jagger, the second would be John Lennon and the third would be Yoko Ono. Tom Jones would be made prime minister."

This gloomy prophecy of a reactionary revolution, as opposed to the usual dream of instant socialism, comes from Pete Townshend, a pop star. And says Pete: "In two years' time the police in England will be armed."

This may all sound like unnecessary pessimism. After all, is not English order, freedom and tolerance a byword throughout the uncivilised world? But it must be remembered—Pete Townshend is a pop star, the lowest caste of society. He could be refused service in a pub, refused a hotel room, barred from a country, hounded by police or newspapers. Or, as in Pete Townshend's case, he could have a bullet fired at his head by a policeman at point blank range. Thus he sees the worldwide swing to violence, intolerance, etc in uncomfortable proximity. He is fairly convinced freedom-lovers, individuals and other democracy freaks would be the first to go.

The Who, highly pleased with the success of "Pinball Wizard" after a couple of failures with songs like "Magic Bus", were exercising their individuality at BBC TV's *Top Of The Pops* studio last week with a merry afternoon and evening of taping and high jinks. Not all *Top Of The Poppers* were willing to join in with the spirit of the occasion, however, and when Keith Moon caused a diversion during the show with a certain amount of leaping and hollering, one or two long faces were noted among the Men At The Top.



April 1969: performing "Pinball Wizard" on *Top Of The Pops*, where not all the production staff appreciate Who high jinks

"Fun – that's what it's all about, fun," complained Keith to me later in the bar. "Everybody thinks I'm laughing at them, but I want them to laugh with me."

Whereupon he broke into hearty laughter and flicked drink in the direction of Ian McLagan, of the Small Faces, who had dropped in to see his old mates in action. The Who have been working extremely hard in recent weeks, completing their new double album, and are now taking a well-earned holiday. But before they fled from *Top Of The Pops*, Pete chatted about "Pinball Wizard" and other pressing topics.

"It's sold much more than 'Magic Bus' already," he reveals. "I knew that would be a bomber, despite all the promotion we did with the bus touring Fleet Street. This has been a hit without any promotion, and I'm glad that in the end it really depends on the record. We did 'Dogs' and 'Magic Bus' because our American contract forces us to release a certain number of records. I didn't think 'Pinball Wizard' would be a hit, especially as it's an uptempo, swinging rockaboogie about a deaf, dumb and blind person."

Although some DJs have called the hit "sick", it is, in fact, a serious song from The Who's next album and, says Pete, "We have done everything to stop giving offence or causing trouble. It's not sick."

Why have The Who decided on a double album? Doesn't this generally mean padding and poor production? "We hate double albums after so many half-hearted ones have been released. You usually get two or three good tracks and the rest are terrible. But we had a lot of good stuff that needed expanding. I feel anti-pop now. I don't call our music 'pop' any more. It would be nice to be in a pop industry where music with meaning sells, but that happens so rarely. The best scene in England are the colleges, where they listen to music."

The Who are going to America soon for another tour and the conversation fell to comparing England and America, violence and pacifism. "England is on the downward path and will be like America soon," Pete maintained. "Still, it should help the music. There's nothing like a good depression to make the jazz swing. The mods are coming back to Britain. To think I was like that once. The only reason they wear short hair is because you get kicked out of the pubs quicker if you've got long hair, it's frightening."

"The good thing about joining armies is the thing about discipline. Everybody needs discipline – this group couldn't work without it. That's the only good thing about the army, because you have to suffer all the brainwashing that goes with it. The army is the straight man's acid. Be a dropout and join the army!"

"We've never had much trouble with police, but I think the police in Germany and America must be the most violent. They all want to cut your heads off. There is always a reason when the people become violent in America or Ireland, but the police are mindless and despise the people."

"The English police are different, of course, but they are learning. They'll have guns like the rest in a couple of years. Once you've got a gun, you've got power. In New York a superintendent of police saw me smash my guitar onstage. He came into our dressing room, took out a gun, aimed it at my head, fired an inch from my skull and said if I smashed my guitar in the second half he would blow my head off. He could have killed me, but he probably went home to his wife and kids and thought nothing about it!" *Chris Welch*



Keith Moon shows off the bottle of bubbly he says he hurled at his wife Kim in their huge flat in Highgate, North London

Disturbing and faintly vicious

MM June 7 The Who's *Tommy* assessed.

A DOUBLE ALBUM can often prove a boring disappointment these days, with the gimmick

presentation becoming more important than the quality of the music. Pete Townshend's opera for The Who succeeds in maintaining interest and a high standard throughout the four sides.

His story of a blind, deaf and dumb boy has already aroused controversy, but as a serious work it cannot really be accused of being in bad taste except by those who have not listened. The Who's dynamic instrumental power and Townshend's writing (not forgetting John Entwistle's writing), plus fine production by Kit Lambert, results in music which covers a variety of moods.

It can be disturbing, faintly vicious but generally compassionate. The story is concerned with mind expansion under extreme circumstances. Before the afflicted child is cured, he undergoes assault, cruelty and an LSD experience. From his ordeals he emerges with great sensibility and awareness. His genius as "a pinball wizard" is merely a kind of parable device by Townshend.

Pete has planned a pop opera of some kind for years, and many others have talked about such a project. At a time when pop is undergoing a period of heavy criticism, The Who's achievement in creating something worthwhile and valid should be acknowledged as an important facelift to the somewhat battered image of pop. *Chris Welch*

— NME APRIL 19 —

PRINCE PIZZOWL TEENUQUE Moon, self-styled ambassador to Highgate, made his grand entrance in the local exactly 100 minutes late and graciously explained, "Matters of state, you know." His subjects, instead of showing the required respect, fell about laughing. This is because "His Highness" is the latest guise of Keith Moon, Who drummer extraordinaire.

Since he advertised in a national newspaper recently for a title, Keith has been enjoying his own brand of regal status. He likes being introduced as a prince and he screws up his eyes and shakes with mirth when people respond. Keith is feeling pleased that "Pinball Wizard", or "Piebald Lizard" as he insists it be called, is doing well. Apparently this means the group will not have to work so hard on it.

"Oh good," he replied when I told him its high *NME* position. "We can have a holiday now. That's the best time to go away, when they all want you here." Keith has been spending some time recently in Bournemouth. To prevent panic among the more staid members of that community, I hasten to add that he has only been staying with his parents-in-law and has no evil intent.

"You have to get away now and again, else you'd go mad," he grinned. "That's why I won't have a phone. You'd get home from a gig about 4am, get the baby off to sleep and the phone'd go, there'd be people yelling, 'We're coming round,' and the next thing they'd be lugging crates up the stairs. You'd lie in bed watching them troop through, alsatians, performing elephants, the lot. They can't phone me now, so I'm safe."

And he broke up into another period of squeaking laughter. Whoever wrote "laugh and the world laughs with you" must have had Mr Moon in mind. He ordered another round of "tomato juices with the wonder ingredient – vodka", then told me, "The LP's finished. Actually, it was quite a quick one, it only took about four years! There's only the mixing to do now."

As Pete Townshend revealed in the *NME* a few weeks ago, The Who's act is to be based entirely around the "Deaf, Dumb And Blind Boy" album. Keith, in a rare moment of seriousness, elaborated.

"We may have to cut a bit because the album lasts about two hours," he commented. "Maybe we'll cut it to 90. We're doing that now on stage, though. 'Specially places like universities, where it goes on »





"We like to learn by others' mistakes, not ours": Pete Townshend in the recording studio at his home in Twickenham, London, 1969



until one. We go on about 11 and there's no hurry.

"It doesn't mean the group'll change, just the act. That's only to get the feel of a continuing story across. All the songs are linked by a theme and one carries on from another."

A friend asked Keith what the growths at the side of John Entwistle's mouth were. He had seen them on *Top Of The Pops* sporting them. "Oh, the best way to annoy the Ox [a Who-ism for JE] is to keep calling him Peter Sarstedt," Keith advised, once more the satanic smirk playing about his mouth.

Someone else asked Keith what the programme had been like and he replied, "We were about the only group down there; they're filming most of it now. One bloke that was on was that coloured guy who's good with his hands... Black & Decker's his name, I think."

At this point, a reporter phoned and asked to speak to Keith. Keith decided it was time for a merry jape and put me on the line to answer the questions for him. We wait with baited breath for the resultant feature.

Enter Pete Townshend to try and persuade Keith that a rehearsal is necessary. Keith tells Pete that I've already written the feature while waiting for him and I add that Keith's statements have been outrageous. "Oh Christ, what's he been saying?" Pete moaned. "I can just see next week: we'll be holding auditions for a new drummer!"

Pete dragged a protesting Keith away before further harm was done, Keith wanting to go back to his 15-room flat above a garage. "It's useful being above a garage, you can make as much noise as you like," he pointed out. "I only use two rooms and let some to a little old lady. There's one where a bloke had a party about a year ago and I haven't bothered to take the decorations down yet."

There is also the room where a champagne bottle emerges from a wall. Keith alleges that having got upset with Kim, his wife, once he aimed the bottle at her head from a distance of two feet and missed. It stuck in the wall, where it has remained ever since. Much to the amusement of two-year-old Mandy, who is used to seeing Daddy do funny things. *Richard Green*

— MELODY MAKER MAY 10 —

PETE TOWNSHEND'S TRIUMPH! That's the verdict after a hair-raising curtain-raiser to The Who's long-awaited opera *Tommy* last week. For two years Townshend has been toying, planning and talking about his musical project. At last it has been completed in the form of a double album.

And, in a generous, unprecedented hour-long show for the press and pop industry held at London's Ronnie Scott Club, The Who gained an excited reaction from critics. The group played selections from their controversial opera, which has been branded as "sick" in some quarters.

As enormous speaker cabinets were piled high along the walls of the club and hummed ominously at the assembled throng, Pete drily explained the storyline. "It's about a boy who is born normal, just like you and me. Then he witnesses a murder and becomes deaf, dumb and blind.

"He is later raped by his uncle and gets turned on to LSD, as has been explained in various in-depth interviews. It's not sick, contrary to what one hears on Auntie [the BBC]. I think Auntie is the sickest thing in this country." (*Applause*)

Pete went on to explain the boy develops a talent for playing pinball, is healed and becomes the hero of the younger generation. A lot of the storyline escapes the memory owing to The Who's partially successful attempt to make the audience deaf, dumb and blind. In the confined space of Ronnie's, a venue used to the refined rhythms of jazz, the overwhelming intensity of The Who's performance left scores of people literally deaf. Some 20 hours after the event, my ears were still singing and I was barely able to sleep without a vision of Keith Moon thrashing like a demon swimming before me.

Despite the discomfort of those nearest the speakers, nobody wanted to miss a minute of the group's riveting rave-up, which included their classic versions of "Shakin' All Over" and "Summertime Blues". And the opera underlined Pete's flair for inventive lyrics and original composition, not forgetting the sense of humour and sense of the dramatic always evident in his work.

"Pinball Wizard", their current smash, is one of the best songs from the set, but there are plenty more which will make their double album real value for money, unlike many recent doubles. As a playing group The Who seem to be

"We've calmed
down a lot.
Our act
hasn't calmed
down at all"

at their best ever, with a sudden spurt of activity in recent months almost amounting to a renaissance.

Said Roger Daltrey later, "We're really pleased about everything at the moment. I think Pete's opera is incredible. It's been a long time coming, it's true, but the actual studio time was only about eight weeks. Of course, we're knocked out with the single. It's about the most commercial song on the album. I suppose it's about our biggest hit since 'Happy Jack', isn't it?"

"I haven't really got into singing it yet. Some of the songs on the album are bloody hard. They take a lot of concentration to remember, with all the key changes and breaks. I can't say I enjoy singing 'em yet!"

"Pete's lyrics are really getting ridiculous. Some of the things he's doing are unbelievable.

"In the last six months it's been like the rebirth of The Who. I suppose in the early days we were too far ahead of the time and now audiences are catching up. We've calmed down a lot. Our act hasn't calmed down at all. I mean, we have changed as people. That's what makes everything so good."

Even if The Who have calmed down, they can still scare you. There were moments during *Tommy* when I had to clutch the table for support. I felt my stomach contracting and head spinning. But we wanted more. It was thrilling to watch Pete leap and twist around with his guitar, Roger hurling and spinning his microphone like a rodeo star, and Keith wriggling around on his drum stool, sometimes disappearing into a blur of sticks and grimaces.

Some might call Keith's playing destructive and tasteless, and their volume crippling and cruel. Both are vital ingredients to The Who, a group who must surely be hailed as one of the mainstays of British pop. They may be loved or hated. We can't do without 'em. *Chris Welch*

— MELODY MAKER JULY 19 —

THE WHO'S POP opera *Tommy* will eventually be seen as a full-length feature film. Already highly successful in record form, with sales figures looking healthy on both sides of the Atlantic, the next move is to create a tangible film role out of the character conceived by Pete Townshend and The Who and portrayed in their rock opera.

The film will be made by Universal International, Townshend told me at the Pop Proms at the Royal Albert Hall recently. The group will have had a hand in the screenplay and the script, but not in the direction. "We'll be working with a scriptwriter," said Pete, "but at the moment we have not really got anybody lined up at all. All we've got is the budget of a couple of million dollars."

Who would play Tommy? "None of The Who," answered Pete and added mock-thoughtfully, "Steve Marriott?"

The Who received the offer of the film following the success of the album in America, where it is still high up in the top-selling album charts. According to Pete, the film script won't be able to follow too closely the action sequences of the album. "We'll have to bend it a bit," he said. "The main thing is to get the basic, simple concept in rock'n'roll high spirits. You couldn't have some of the visual things on film. Some things, which may seem quite sick, would be capsulated."

The Who have been featuring *Tommy* as the major part of their act, complete or in excerpts, for some time now, particularly as a prelude to the actual issue of it as an album. Would the group continue to feature *Tommy*, or now that it was on record, would they move on to something else?

"No, we're not really thinking that far ahead," Peter answered. "We've always followed our noses as far as musical policy is concerned. We've kept our eye on rock history and we like to learn by others' mistakes, not ours. Any follow-up will be on an intuitive basis."

How satisfied was Pete with the end result on record?

"Well, obviously not 100 per cent satisfied; the original aim was to record it, and we did what we wanted. That was to get an album that told a story like an opera does but keeping the rock'n'roll format, which was much harder to do than it looked. It was quite a heavy story told in quite a heavy way. The way it worked out actually was like literature. It wasn't meant to happen that way, but nothing happened in *Tommy* itself that wasn't meant to happen."

The Who's popularity means a big demand for personal appearances, both in Britain and in the States, and the group will be kept busy from now until the end of the year. One of the major considerations is the filming of *Tommy*, which they hope will start in the autumn. "What we'll do is get American money but use an English film crew and do it ourselves."

They have several major commitments in the USA, including the Tanglewood Music Festival, presented by Fillmore promoter Bill Graham and composer Leonard Bernstein ("Bernstein likes *Tommy*"), with a show that includes BB King and Chuck Berry, and the Woodstock Music Festival, where the lineup is reported to include Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, The Band, Jefferson Airplane and Credence Clearwater Revival, both in August, and later, possibly in October, a promotional tour with Track Record artists such as Marsha Newman, currently chart-topping in Britain.

Which presents another worry for Peter in that he has to think about a follow-up to Newman's "Something In The Air" hit single. "And Roger Daltrey has a group called Bent Frame that he is producing," added Pete.

"We'll be going over to America more often but for shorter periods so we can balance it out between Britain and the States. And we are also hoping to do a live album sometime in the future, because that's something we have been asked to do." *Tony Wilson* •

A lively offering

NME Sept 27 The Who take *Tommy* to the South London suburbs.



IF THE WHO needed any confirmation as to their standing with Britain's pop fans, they could not have wished for a warmer reception than the one they received at Croydon's Fairfield Hall on Sunday. In a concert lasting two-and-a-quarter hours, Pete Townshend, Roger Daltrey, Keith Moon and John Entwistle proved that they are still among the front runners in the popularity stakes.

The aisles and standing room was full to capacity, and needless to say, every seat was booked weeks before the concert, which was mainly taken up with a lively offering of *Tommy*, the group's pop opera and latest album. The act was virtually the same, which met with a mixed reception at the Royal Albert Hall's Pop Proms two months ago.

Daltrey was his usual energetic self, moving with the same enthusiasm his voice possesses: his white tunic flowing in his wake. Pete played his guitar whilst covering every inch of the stage, and making a successful task of introducing the numbers. Keith Moon... well, what can he be but the most exciting drummer to watch and a very competent one to listen to?

John Entwistle might as well have been a corpse, had not his bass guitar been so excellent. He stands with head pointed in the direction of the floor, but unwittingly contributes just as much to the show as the others.

I still do not find the *Tommy* LP worthy of a full hour's hearing, bar the exciting "Pinball Wizard", but the hits with which they introduced and completed their act proved that The Who are more than likely to be around for as long in the future as they have been in the past.

"I'm A Boy", "Substitute", "My Generation" and others all met with

tumultuous applause from the happy audience, who responded magnificently to rock'n'roll evergreens like "Shakin' All Over" and "Summertime Blues". For an encore, the group reappeared with a perfect rendition of "Magic Bus", the single which deserved to be a massive hit but wasn't. All in all, a delightful way to spend a Sunday evening, and one which I hope to repeat before too long.

Gordon Coxhill



WHO'S TWO-HOUR-PLUS SHOW

IF THE WHO needed any confirmation as to their standing with Britain's pop fans, they could not have wished for a warmer reception than the one they received at Croydon's Fairfield Hall on Sunday. In a concert lasting two and a quarter hours, Pete Townshend, Roger Daltrey, Keith Moon and John Entwistle proved that they are still among the front runners in the popularity stakes.

1969

APRIL - JUNE

"Not a lot of bottle"

MM April 12 In his inimitable way, Keith Moon reviews the singles.

WHEN KEITH MOON laughs it is as committed a performance as one of his drum solos. He throws his whole body, muscles and nerves into mighty guffaws. There wasn't much to laugh at in this week's Blind Date session. "A poor selection, wasn't it?" he remarked with commendable restraint. But Spike Milligan and Hubert Gregg between them managed to detonate Keith's sense of the absurd at least thrice.

SINGLES

Barry Ryan
Theme To Eutopia MGM

Shades of 2001. I know who this is because he records in the same studios we use and I was there for this one. This bit is more

or less an instrumental - the overture. It's nice. If you are using orchestration to the extent Barry does, it can be overpowering. It tends to submerge the singer, and I don't think that's what orchestration is about. Ah, church bells. The dead are rising from their graves! Actually, he sounds a bit like Neil Sedaka, and who was that other cat... Len Barry! Perhaps I can listen to more of this later.

Hubert Gregg
My Pal Harry
TANGERINE

Haha! It's not a drag queen, it's

that guy on the radio - what's his name? I wasn't going to say Danny La Rue - but I will. Danny La Rue. I've thought of what I was going to say - Alan Breeze? Clinton Ford? Tony Blackburn! I thought it was the Bonzo Dog Band at first. I know - the geezer who does *University Challenge*, Bamber Gascoigne. The suspense is killing me - who is it?

Stan Getz
I'm Late I'm Late VERVE

I can never get into the mood to listen to jazz. I can never get quiet enough. I go to Ronnie Scott's where they smash it out, and I can enjoy watching the band. Is this a film score? I've no idea who

Chris Barber & his band
Battersea Rain Dance

SPECIAL

SINGLES
REVIEW
1969

it is, so you might as well tell me. I like big bands, and in fact I like jazz a lot more since I started going to Scott's. I liked Buddy Rich and the Francy Boland Big Band - all the musicians everybody else likes and says are good.

Spike Milligan
The Q5 Piano Tune PARLOPHONE

Spike Milligan! Hee, hee, hee! It must be Milligan. Great electronic music by mouth. I've only got to hear Milligan's name and I crack up. This is incredible. Not really a hit, but I must have this one. He is a genius - call him a genius. I'm trying to get all the master tapes of the Goon Shows. If you go to the States, there is no humour like that at all. They are just cynical. There are two kinds of humour. One has pathos and can make you laugh or cry, and the other is absurd and it doesn't matter if you laugh or not. That's my kind of humour.

Isley Brothers
Behind A Painted Smile

TAMLA MOTOWN

Sounds like the Goons' piano player. Yeah - great sound. I wouldn't say it was a new group, but relatively unknown, right? This is too good to be their first record. Is it the Alan Bown? Ah, the Isley Brothers. Fantastic. They sound a bit like The Four Tops. Can I take that one?

Chris Barber
Battersea Rain Dance

MARMALADE

It's a bit like Blood, Sweat & Tears. Nice, funky brass - I'm beginning



to really dig that sound. I like Blood, Sweat & Tears and Francy Boland. Is this Kenny Ball? Chris Barber! That'll be resident down the Marquee. Chris is one of the few jazzers to get out of that trad thing – that Trad Lads on Radio One thing. Good for Chris – doing something new. Talking about Blood, Sweat & Tears, I saw them at the Scene Club in New York. They're even better live than on record. You sit in front of the brass section and it hits you in the chest. They've had lots of personnel changes. Al Kooper was there when I saw them. He's an incredible arranger. He worked on a couple of sessions with us on organ, but nothing was ever released.

The Kinks Plastic Man PYE

Tony Blackburn! Song by The Kinks, of course. No, we never did a song about plastic. Aluminium. They've done some nice things, "See My Friend" and "Waterloo Sunset", but they haven't done much since. I've liked some of the songs on their albums. I don't think they've got a lot together. Yes, I like Ray's songs, silly little bastard that he is. Lots of luck. No, that's not a lot of bottle. That means not a lot of good. Like, I sussed out the song and I knew it wasn't a lot of bottle.



Keef Hartley Leave It 'Til The Morning

DERAM

Chet Atkins? Definitely got to be English, with plenty of wince. That's our word for treble – lots of wince and blah. A harmless little ditty. English groups get this sound, because it takes a long time to find a studio and engineer that is right for you.

Roy Orbison My Friend

LONDON

Dozes off in chair – brackets. Who is it? I like ballads to have a bit of guts, instead of all this weeping strings and weeping voice. Melancholia. Still, it's a great late-night smoocher.



ALBUMS

Dr John Babylon ATCO

A strange and disturbing piece of musical commentary. It deserves attention not only because of its musical content but because of the insight it gives into American attitudes and beliefs, influenced or tortured by race and war problems. In the states the old patriotism – "jingoism" – apparently remains a tougher and more dangerous bird of illusion than it proved to be in Britain. Pop music is well in the forefront of the crusade against unhealthy aspects of jingo-patriotism with such manifestations of the patriotic morality musical *Hair*.

Very surprisingly, Dr John Creaux is white. His voice has all the accents and intonations of a black singer. His language is hip Negro and so is his humour. As a singer his voice lacks technique, and if he wasn't saying such interesting things, could be exceedingly boring. But his intensity in castigating America, or Babylon, is strong and compulsive listening. Thoughtfully included are the lyrics in the sleeve. The music is odd, faintly menacing, faintly Charles Mingus of 10 years ago with modern rock guitar. One of the most attractive qualities is "Barefoot Lady", a love song with largely meaningless lyrics.

Chris Welch, *MM* May 3

George Harrison Electronic Sound ZAPPLE

Last Christmas, one of the party games I played was "guess the unusual sounds". This LP is similar. "No Time Or Space", recorded in California, resembles noises on a building site, air going into tyres, a machine gun fired by a bird, a rude noise here and there, a dentist's high-speed drill, the whole meaning little to me. The other side is "Under The Mersey Wall", recorded at George's house in Esher. It does try to capture a musical sound from electronics, but it comes in jerky snatches to start with, like someone learning an instrument. It takes a little more form as it goes on, but all I can say is, "It's different." And for intellectuals, a rare LP for "reading into it" something that probably isn't there. *NME* May 17

Bob Dylan Nashville Skyline CBS

The new Bob Dylan LP, the country-oriented *Nashville Skyline*, is probably the lightest thing he has ever recorded.



ALBUMS 1969 REVIEW

No lengthy political stanzas, no social protest, no mysticism. Musically, it is fuller in sound than the stark, austere *John Wesley Harding* and the songs all have the traditional country "boy meets/loves/loses/remembers girl" motif running through them. Certainly the musicians – including Ken Buttrey, Charles McCoy, Pete Drake and Charlie Daniels – know Dylan. The arrangements of the melodies, all tuneful, are fairly simple and in keeping with equally simple lyrics. Dylan's singing is possibly better than on *John Wesley Harding*, on which we heard for the first time the new smoother vocal sound. The Johnny Cash-Bob Dylan duet on "North Country Girl" (previously recorded by Dylan on *The Freewheeling Bob Dylan*) is taken casually and followed by the first instrumental ever cut by Dylan, "Nashville Skyline Rag", a bouncy little tune featuring steel, dobro



and acoustic guitars and piano. There is plenty of variety, and among the outstanding songs are "I Threw It All Away", a sad, slow ballad with a gentle organ underscoring the melody. "Lay Lady Lay" is another easy-paced song with some good lyrics, and the '30s-style "Peggy Day", again strongly in the country bag, is corny but with some humour in the lyrics.

"To Be Alone With You" is a lightweight rocker, there's more country style on "One More Night", and a heavy beat emphasises "Tell Me That Isn't True", another mournful number. However, the mood lifts markedly for the happy mood of the lyrics on "Country Pie". "Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You" is another good song given a heavyish treatment and is the final song on the album.

Not as remarkable as some of his previous albums, but the generally relaxed presentation, variety of mood and fairly uncomplicated conception of the songs makes *Nashville Skyline* enjoyable, and the kind of album which grows on you with each playing.

MM May 3

1969

APRIL - JUNE



January 30, 1969: The Beatles, with Billy Preston on keys, play for 42 minutes on the roof of Apple HQ at 3 Savile Row, London. Footage from the performance will form the final part of their documentary film *Let It Be*.



“Take our
word
for it.
This is
music,
baby”

While Ringo makes another film, John Lennon is more positive than ever about **THE BEATLES**, who are strangely skint, uncertain about playing live, but madly prolific. “As soon as I leave here I’m going round to Paul’s place,” says Lennon. “We’ll sit down and start work.”

GETTY

— NME MARCH 29 —

A DESERTED CENTURION TANK and a “dummy” tree upturned in a ditch provide the first bizarre indications that we’ve arrived. A viciously cold wind sweeps in across the common, buffeting the white tent in the distance and the group of moving figures that together form an oasis of life amid the unfriendly sea of bracken and stubby brown grass.

Out there on Chobham Common, in wildest Surrey, they are on location filming a Beatle and an ex-Goon in *The Magic Christian*. As the only route out to the film unit is not so much a road out to the film unit as a switchback over a mudbath, the wisest move is to adjourn to the mobile press office parked among a cluster of vehicles off the road while a courier with a walkie-talkie is dispatched to Mr Starr.

The press room is inside what looks from the outside like a much-travelled furniture truck and in fact is, except that inside it is plushly furnished with heater, phone link, desk, leather settee and well-stocked bar. “First in the world – ingeniously incognito,” gloat the publicity people with justifiable pride. When eventually the familiar Beatle face appears grinning at the rear, it is a Ringo attired in tweedy plus fours and deerstalker and accompanied by the sound of stomping feet shaking mud from a hefty pair of labourers’ boots.

“You’ve never done me before,” says Ringo as welcome, begging a few minutes’ grace to get his circulation on the move. If John is the Beatle the public has singled out for the brunt of ridicule and contempt, then Ringo is the Beatle they cling to for reassurance as the flak of shattered images falls about their heads. Ringo is the cosy Beatle, the good-old mop-top-Beatle boy who is nearing his 30th year – as everyone keeps reminding him.

“I think maybe people think they are safe with me,” says the least objectionable or the most loveable Beatle, whichever way you look at him. “I am married. I am a family man. There is nothing bad – bad from the public’s view – to publish about me. I try to keep two lives going. One is only to do with me and mine and the other is to do with thous and thine. I agree to give them the Beatle, the Ringo. But the Ritchie I prefer to keep for my family.”

And John?

“John has just had a divorce and been busted, so of course he is sorted out for it. People forget that divorce is happening all over the world. But Mrs Smith, she never gets a mention. I don’t know what people think of John at the moment. Maureen was in Liverpool and I know a lot of people there are saying that he has gone a bit crazy. But all he is doing is not keeping up with the image they have created and they think he has gone off his head. All we are is nice people. I’m not being smart saying that. We are just nice people.”

Ringo’s services were required back on the common, so we piled into a crowded Land Rover, collected Peter Sellers and with the warning “Mind your heads in the back” and a cry of “All the fun of the fair!” from Mr Starr, we made our bumpy way to where the action was. Sellers, playing the richest man in the world, and Ringo, his adopted son, were supposed to be on a grouse shoot in which the army intervenes. The two are required to stroll side by side, guns in hand, down a slope. No dialogue needed. It is over in five minutes. “No need for Orson Welles to worry there,” cracks Ringo as we make our way back.

Meanwhile, back at the camp, it is lunchtime, and with Mr Starr and Mr Sellers in the rear of Mr Starr’s silver-grey Mercedes, it is off to the village pub where a table and steaks have been booked. While Ringo reaches for the wine and attacks his steak, we discuss The Beatles’ bad press and he

argues that it goes in cycles, and that what might be bad for the public to read is not necessarily bad press for them.

“One minute the press will be all over you saying good old Beatle boys. Next year it will be those dirty old scruffs. I prefer it when it is nice, but the other doesn’t bother me any more.”

A shrugging of Beatle shoulders is accompanied by a morose Ringo expression. Can he put his finger on the turning point of what was for a long time a good relationship with the press?

“Drugs,” he answered. “But there was a lot before that. It always has depended on the journalist or the paper, however they felt at the time.

They can write a story good or they can write it bad. For instance, when we were on tour you might find in one paper it was ‘Beatlemania In Bradford’ and in another ‘Beatle Rioters Smash Up Bradford’. Perhaps the reporter came round and tried to get an interview and couldn’t get in, so he went off and wrote it badly. If they managed to get in and we gave them Scotch then it would be good old Beatles doing a grand job for Britain.”

Does he always understand the actions of his fellow Beatles? “No, I don’t always understand – but then I am in a privileged position of being the person who is probably



February 22, 1969: publicity shot for *The Magic Christian*, in which Ringo plays a homeless orphan adopted by Sir Guy Grand (Peter Sellers)

closest to them and I can go and ask. I read the paper like anyone else and I think, 'What's this, what's going on?' But then I can go and ask them what it's all about."

The lady who served our steaks came to tell Ringo that she had a daughter away at art school who'd be ever so popular if she had his autograph. Ringo obliged. What was his reaction to John and Paul's weddings?

"Fantastic. I heard about Paul's when he phoned me to tell me and I heard about John through the office. I knew why he went away, that he was going abroad somewhere to marry, but I didn't know where or when."

On to the cheese and biscuits and talk about his son Zak, who is now nearly four and approaching the age where his schooling must be considered. Ringo expresses interest in Summerhill, the "freedom" school. "I hated my schooldays," he says suddenly. No, he wouldn't send his son to public school, unless he asked to go for himself.

Twenty-eight now, Ringo enters his 30th year in July. "When I was 18 I thought that was the time to die. But the old thing is true about being as old as you feel. I don't feel old and I don't think I look my age. It doesn't worry me."

His role in *Candy*, he feels, came off well, but he adds that in *Magic Christian* he is largely playing himself. His next film, he hopes, will see Ringo develop as an actor who can sustain a totally different character for 90 minutes. He doesn't find acting particularly difficult.

"*Candy* was the test and I thought it was easy, so I felt confident to accept this one."

A film featuring all the Beatles is now closer than it's been for a long while, he says, because for the first time all four have agreed that they should do one. It is now just a question of the right script—which won't be easy.

"Everything that has come up has been *Hard Day's Night* or *Help!*, and the casting was like in those films. It was just the four lads—rags-to-riches thing in different forms. John would be witty, Paul would be pretty, I would be shy and George would be George. If we do one, Paul and I should be baddies. Why? Because no-one would expect Paul and I to be naughty. People really have tried to typecast us. They think we are still little mop-tops and we are not."

Current Beatle work involves the completion of their next LP and among the several tracks so far recorded is one by Ringo titled "In An Octopus' Garden (Or 'I Would Like To Live Up A Tree')".

Virtually certain to be their next single is "Get Back", which features organist Billy Preston. What's it like? "Paul takes lead vocal and you can say it's a lovely little toe-tapper."

With an infectious beat that'll get your feet tapping?

"Yes," says Ringo, grinning. "If you can sit down when this one is on," says Ringo Starr, "then you're a stronger man than I am." Put that in. It'll give me a smile when I read it. It'll make me happy!"

Loveable shake of mop-top head. *Nick Logan*

— NME MAY 3 —

SAYS JOHN LENNON: If I could only get the time to myself right now – instead of all this Monopoly and financial business with Northern Songs – I think I could probably write about 30 songs a day. As it is I probably average about 12 a night. Paul, too... he's mad on it. It's something that gets in your blood. I've got things going around in my head right now, and as soon as I leave here I'm going round to Paul's place and we'll sit down and start work.

The way we're writing at the moment, it's straightforward and there's nothing weird. Songs like "Get Back", things like that. We recorded that one on the Apple roof, but I'm not sure if that's the version that went out. We always record about 10 versions –



March 12, 1969: Paul McCartney, the last Beatle to marry, outside Marylebone registry office with American photographer Linda Eastman

"I know people in Liverpool are saying John has gone a bit crazy"

you get lost in the end. I'm not really interested in the production of our records. In fact, I wish I didn't have to go through the production and balancing the bass and all that. For me, the satisfaction of writing a song is in the performing of it. The production bit is a bore. If some guy would invent a robot to do it, then it would be great.

But all that "get the bass right, get the drums right" – that's a drag to me. All I want to do is get my guitar out and sing songs. Sure, I quite fancy giving some live shows, but Ringo doesn't because he says you know it'll be just the same when he got on, nothing different. I can't give you any definite plans for a live show when

we're not even agreed on it. We've got to come to an agreement.

For a start, there's too much going on now for us to even talk realistically about going on tour. In a way, that's why it's unfortunate that all the publicity came out about doing live shows when it did. We were only thinking about it vaguely, but it kind of got out of hand.

I suppose the next Great Beatle Event will be the next LP, in about eight weeks. A lot of the tracks will be like "Get Back", and a lot of that we did in one-take kind of thing. We've done about 12 tracks, some of them still to be remixed, and Paul and I are now working on a kind of song montage that we might do as one piece on one side. We've got two weeks to finish the whole thing, so we're really working at it. All the songs we're doing sound normal to me, but probably they might sound unusual to you. There's no "Revolution No 9" there – but there's a few heavy sounds.

I couldn't pin us down to being on a heavy scene, or a commercial pop scene or a straight tuneful scene. We're just on whatever's going now. Just rockin' along. The follow-up to "Get Back" is "Ballad Of John And Yoko". It's something I wrote, and it's like an old-time ballad, but we won't now bring it out straightaway. We'll release it as soon as the other Apple singles go out of the charts... we don't want to kill the sales. The song? Well it's just the story of us going along getting married, going to Paris, going to Amsterdam, all that. It's "Johnny B Paper Back Writer"!

As I say, we don't want to release it straight away, because it might kill the sales, and I suppose we're cowards that way. I don't regard it as a separate record scene... it's The Beatles' next single, simple as that. The story came out that only Paul and I were on the record, but I wouldn't have bothered publicising that. It doesn't mean anything; it just so happened that there were only us two there. George was abroad and Ringo was on the film and he couldn't come that night. Because of that, it was a choice of either remixing or doing a new one – and you always go for doing a new one instead of fiddling about with an old one. So we did, and it turned out well.

As for all this financial business that's going on – it does get in the way of writing, but I don't find it much of a drag. It is like Monopoly... what with all these bankers, and played round a big table with all these heavies. You know the bit: "Then I'll give »



1969

APRIL – JUNE

you the Strand or Old Kent Road,” and you say no – you give me two houses. It’s just like that. Really, the outcome of this whole financial business doesn’t matter. We’ll still be making records and somebody will be copping some money, and we’ll be copping some money, and that’ll be that. I don’t have any involvement in Mary Hopkin’s records, it’s pure Paul.

But there is one discovery I’d like to promote. We got this other song we were singing last night, and I think it’ll be quite a laugh for her to do a pop record. It’s one I’ve written myself, and it’s about Yoko, but I’ll just change the word Yoko to John, and she can sing it about me.

This TV film *Rape* we did for Austrian TV... so it didn’t get fantastic reviews, but then neither does every record The Beatles make. Hell, do you remember the reviews of “Hey Jude”? I remember Stuart Henry saying, “Och weel, y’either like it orr y’don’t.” The critics are the same with *Rape*. It’s a good film, and we stand by it. There’s a few people understand it, and the rest have no idea. They don’t know the difference between Jean-Luc Godard and Walt Disney. It’s funny. The critics can accept it from Luc Godard but they can’t accept it from us two – because they’re so hung up on who Yoko and I are and what we do, they can’t see the product.

But that’ll die, and Yoko and I will have to overcome our image, and people will have to judge us on our art and not the way we look. Back to songwriting, though – you can’t say Paul and I are writing separately these days. We do both. When it comes to needing 500 songs for Friday, you gotta get together. I definitely find I work better when I’ve got a deadline to meet. It really frightens you, and you’ve got to churn ‘em out. All the time I’m sort of arranging things in my mind. This film The Beatles made recently, of us recording and working – somebody’s editing that at the moment. It’s 68 hours, and they’re trying to get it down to five for several TV specials. Or then, it might be a movie. I don’t know. It might make a series like *The Dales*!

This “image” thing people are always on about with The Beatles – image is something in Joe Public’s eye. That’s why it’s a drag when people talk about fresh-faced Beatles like it was five years ago. I mean, we’re always changing. Like the TV clip of “Get Back”. Now I’ve got the beard – Paul’s clean shaven – George is the one with the moustache. Even we can’t keep up with our own image. I come into Apple one day, and there’s George got a new head on him! So if that’s the way it is with us, I tell you, the public doesn’t stand a chance of keeping up with how we look. And anyway, how we are is up to ourselves personally.

Music is what’s important, and as far as that’s concerned in my case, Yoko and I stimulate each other like crazy. For instance, did you know she’d trained as a classical musician? I didn’t know that until this morning. In college she majored in classical composition. I’ve just written a song called “Because...”. Yoko was playing some classical bit, and I said, “Play that backwards,” and we had a tune. We’ll probably write a lot more in the future. I’ve written with other people as well. For instance, there was a mad thing I wrote half with our electronics genius, Alex. It was called “What A Shame Mary Jane Had A Pain At The Party”, and it was

meant for the last Beatles album. It was real madness, but we never released it. I’d like to do it again.

There was another song I wrote around *Pepper* time that’s still in the can, called “You Know My Name And Cut The Number”. That’s the only words to it. It just goes on all the way like that, and we did these mad backings. But I never did finish it. And I must. Why did we spring “Get Back” on the public so suddenly? Well, we’d been talking about it since we recorded it, and we kept saying, “That’s a single.”

Eventually, we got so fed up talking about it, we suddenly said, “OK That’s it. Get it out tomorrow.” *Alan Smith*



January 1969: rehearsals at Twickenham Studios, filmed for the *Let It Be* documentary and described by John Lennon as “hell... the most miserable sessions on Earth”

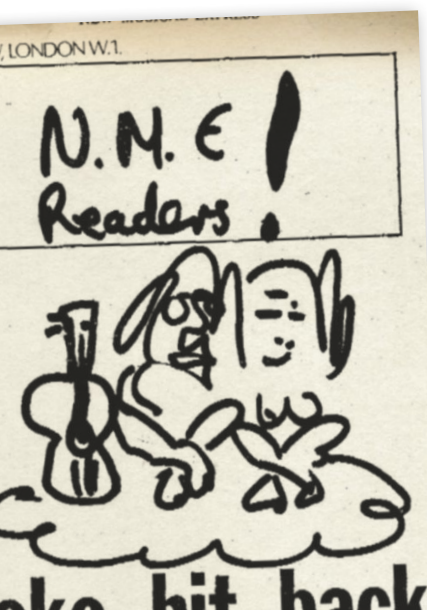
— NME JUNE 21 —

THE SUN BURNS brightly through the Savile Row window and it’s a hot and sticky busy day at Apple, with Yoko hammering away at the electric typewriter and John Lennon in conversation, and all the while the beautiful No 1 smash sound of an unreleased Lennon song called “Give Peace A Chance” soaring and thumping around the room.

A statement of fact is that this record will sell several million and that, like “All You Need Is Love”, it will echo like an anthem across the world. A pleasant and intriguing Irishman named Cecil McCartney has been in, not to claim some long-forgotten Beatles relationship, but to talk about war and peace and his loathing for the fiery death they call napalm. Lennon has been inspired and the result is that several hundred plastic children’s dolls have been bought and now await mutilation and destruction in a grisly protest burning in London’s Kings Road the following day. One of them lies on the table, naked and pink and innocent and with its feeding bottle aloft.

“We’re only at the beginning of selling our peace product,” John is saying, “and I think and I hope it’s beginning to work. Yoko and I can only go on the reactions we get from people when we’re going down the streets together – of course. I know we don’t get people really against us. Some of them do give us a dirty look, but the others... bus drivers and lorry drivers and that... some of them say, “Owyer doin?” and ‘Good luck’ and all that stuff.

“The way I see it is, even if they don’t get the gist of us, or why are those people hammering in nails or staying in bed... they know we’re in favour of peace. They know what we stand for. This is only the start of the campaign, and they’ll soon all know our message, and what we’re trying to say.





"Sure, I know we've been criticised by some papers, but you know, some of these journalists and people talk as if they feel they represent somebody. One journalist might think we need more communication... but that's unfortunate. They must get out of the habit – newspaper men and pop stars, anybody, must talk for themselves. I mean, how does one journalist know how most people feel? OK, so the people in his office might agree with him. But how many straights does he know – how many people that aren't boozy journalists?"

I nod, swigging swiftly at the bottle of whisky I whip from my pocket in a sudden secretive swoop.

"In the same way, I can only judge from my side in that how many straights do I know besides at Apple, or those I meet? I can only judge the reaction I get by people waving or sending me letters. And that happens. Sure, Yoko and I both know the criticisms about us spending £2,000 at the Hilton on a bed-in when we could spend it feeding babies in Biafra. The situation is, I've done that as well – the charity bit. And I respect the sentiments behind charity, and I will continue to do things like that. But it doesn't solve the problem.

"It's like nursing the cancer after somebody's got it. There's a lot of cancer to be cured. But it still doesn't stop research. And we look to what we're trying to do for peace as research – to prevent Biafra happening next time. I could give all my money to Biafra, and maybe a few thousand kids would be safe for that day. But the war would still go on. I'm using my money as an overall campaign to advertise the cause of peace.

"I'm happy with life. The only blots are war and starvation"

happy as anybody can be. The only blots are violence and war and starvation and all that. You can't be happy with all that going on.

"If I have a good percentage of happiness, it's because I'm grateful for life, and I'm in love and I'm happy with my wife and I thank God for it. And all that bit. In fighting and doing my bit for peace, I don't believe that thing that man will always fight because it's in his nature. That's just the establishment, for thousands of years, telling us that.

"They say that because it suits the establishment, it suits the military, to tell us we're all basically soldiers. We're just as much non-violent as we are violent. It's all that 'Be a man, my son' thing we get, and 'You wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for me, my son'. 'I fought'... you know the whole thing.

"I believe you can use music as some sort of a platform to bring people together, but so can you use dancing and painting and even walking and all of the media." »

"You know, these people who criticise... what are they doing? You've got to remember – all of you – that this is me and Yoko's best effort. It's with both of our minds. So if any of you out there can think of a better idea, then we'll do that. But until you come up with an alternative, and not just 'Why don't you give it to the spastics and not to the deaf', then we'll stick the way we are.

"The thing about trying to bring change is that everybody in the world sits back and blames everybody else. The whole human race is like that. We vote people into parliament to run the government for us, and then we sit back and claim how badly they're doing it. We always use a scapegoat, and the whole system's just like that. Everybody sits in the armchair and says Harold Wilson did this and Harold Wilson did that... but it's our fault, not Harold Wilson's."

He picks up the pink doll and pulls its plastic arm out of the socket, and pauses for a moment and looks at the table and listens as Yoko speaks rapid Japanese into the telephone.

"Once," I told him, "you used to frighten the hell out of me. There was a time when I'd expect your next words to be 'you four-eyed git'. Now, I find myself more at ease in your company: you're far more mellow."

He tries to push the doll's arm back into place and he says, "That's because I'm more myself now. I'm introverted, and in saying that, it would have been to prevent you saying 'four-eyed git' to me. It's just a case of simple games... The Games People Play. It's just that. I had the game of aggression. Aggression was my defence. As soon as somebody came near me, I'd make the first punch. If they couldn't handle that then maybe I'd be cruel – or maybe I'd be kind. Now, I'm relaxed enough to be myself and be less frightened of what people are going to say.

"Another thing is, when I didn't wear glasses I used to be more uninhibited. In Hamburg, for instance, when I could never see the audience – I'd just get carried away on my own."

He looks around for a prising instrument and then he puts down the baby's arm and takes hold of the feeding bottle, and then he tries to jam the bottle into the empty armpit. He doesn't say anything, but he gets it in in the end – one arm, one feeding bottle.

"The thing about performing now is," he says, "we still just don't agree on it. We're just four middle-aged teenagers, who don't agree on it. We're all professional musicians, sure, but musicians aren't necessarily performers. I mean, I'd go out. But you're talking to me, and The Beatles as such don't want to go out on the road. I don't mind... having a bed-in is being out on the road as far as I'm concerned. I think George and Ringo don't really fancy it, but I don't want to point a finger at them and say they're the reason. Maybe there's also a little something inside me saying the same thing.

"Singing in front of an audience and playing, I'd enjoy. But the rest of it all... that's the problem. Maybe in 10 years... like Elvis... who knows."

He takes hold of the spare arm and he pulls it and presses it and moulds it to a pliable plastic.

"I'm happy with life," he answers me, "as



"Talking in our beds for a week": John and Yoko's first "Bed-In", at the Presidential Suite of the Amsterdam Hilton, five days after their wedding on March 20, 1969

WAR IS OVER!

IF YOU WANT IT

Love and Peace from John & Yoko

ready is like an unfinished rehearsal for that show that we never did. It's the Beatles show that never was. There's bits of dialogue on it and 'Get Back' is the most finished tune. So you can imagine what some of it's like. We've no date for it yet because there's a book with it and that's not ready yet. There is another album, and that's by John and Yoko—and that's also got a book with it. It's like a wedding album. And it's great.

"In all this new Beatles stuff there's obviously McCartney hits there... and there's one beautiful ballad called 'Let It Be', which is a cert for somebody. A cert. And there's quite a few cert hits on it for other people."

He twists the doll's arm inside out and looks down at it with some satisfaction.

"I think Apple's running much better," he says. "I don't know if you can tell. We're rectifying the past mistakes. Clearing up. It's also been convenient for people to leave at this time. I like that expression: 'convenient to leave at this time'."

"I'd like Apple to be more commercial—sure. I'd like it to be economically viable. I don't care about respect. We'd still like to attract talent, but we want it to be self-contained and to be able to look after itself."

Musically, adds John Lennon, The Beatles have more than ever before to say, and they have one album ready and another one half-ready.

"The Beatles album that's

In the past, all we got when we said, 'Come to Apple,' was people who'd been turned down everywhere else.

"At the moment, there's only really us and Mary Hopkin as names on Apple, although George's done some good stuff with Billy Preston and I think he's got good possibilities."

It's time to go and he smiles warmly and proffers the inside-out doll's arm, with its hand which now faces in the wrong direction. I get the impression he only now appreciates the subconscious havoc he has piled upon it.

"Here," he says, "d'y want this arm? As a souvenir?" *Alan Smith*

— NME JUNE 28 —

THESE DAYS, JOHN Lennon is happy to talk but not to drop himself into some new, fresh drag of a controversy. And on some topics, he's become pleasantly and likeably evasive in the way that only Paul McCartney has really developed to a fine art.

He told me, "There's one film idea we're interested in, but I'm not telling you what it is. There's certainly hope for us doing another film... it's being kicked around. The only reason I don't want to talk is that other people are naturally involved, and I don't want to screw 'em up."

"Anyway, we got a fantastic film out of making our next LP. It really is incredible... just the sweat and strain of four guys making an LP. It's pared down to about four hours. It could make a major movie. About our music, these characters who talk about us progressing, or not, really want

to mind their own business! Progressing to what? Music is music. All these characters complain about us and Dylan not being progressive, but we're the ones that turned them on to the other stuff – so let 'em take our word for it. This is music, baby.

"When we feel like changing, then fine. It's the same with this other half album we're into, the one after the next. This'll probably please the critics a bit more, because we got a bit tired of being sort of just strumming along for ever. We got a bit into production again.

"I tell you, this next Beatles album but one is really something. So tell the armchair people to hold their tongues and wait. 'Shut up and listen,' that's the answer. And remember... there can be just as much complexity in one note as there can be in any symphony or *Sgt Pepper*.

"Not that I'm interested in classical music – I think it's history, and I'm not interested in history, only as a hobby. I'm interested in NOW. And the future."

About America: "I can't disguise that to get my visa back means a lot. A lot. I need to go there, for business at least. I'll just have to keep trying. I know Donovan seems to have been OK about getting his visa back but he only did a big anti-narcotics thing, didn't he? So there we are.

"Anyway, these days I don't take drugs, alcohol or meat. They all interfere with my head. And that's straight. Or sugar... I think it's all bad. These days, I'm completely macrobiotic. I know it sounds strange, but it's great... and it keeps you high all the time.

"You don't just get high now and then this way... you're permanently high." *Alan Smith*

— MELODY MAKER SEPTEMBER 20 —

JOHN LENNON HASN'T had a royalty cheque for two years. And, believe it or not, he's feeling the pinch. The man whose group has again been voted top in both the British and International Sections of the *Melody Maker* poll told me that The Beatles' own company, Apple, has become something of a monster which is out of control.

"The problem is that two years ago our accountants made us sign over 80 per cent of our royalties to Apple," he said. "We can't touch any of it, and it's a ridiculous situation. All the money comes into this little building and it never gets out. If I could get my money out of the company I'd split away and start doing my own projects independently. I'd have much more freedom and we'd all be happier. I still feel part of Apple and The Beatles, and there's no animosity, but they tend to ignore Yoko and me.

"For instance, [Radio One DJ] Kenny Everett recently made a promotional record for Apple which was played at the big yearly EMI meeting. It plugged James Taylor, The Iveys and so on, but it didn't mention the things Yoko and I had been doing. And I think that what we're doing is a lot more important than James Taylor. Apple seem to be scared of us. They didn't want to have anything to do with our *Two Virgins* film, for instance.

"The Beatles' wealth is all a myth. The only expensive things I've ever owned are my house and cars, and I just haven't got anything else. Don't even break even on the films we make, and that worries me."

I asked John about his recent evening of films at the ICA. (A selection of John and Yoko's films, including Ono's *Bottoms* and Lennon's *Self Portrait*, which detailed the rise (and fall) of his penis, were shown at the New Cinema Club, Institute Of Contemporary Arts, September 10, 1969.) Why, for instance, did he feel it necessary to make a film like *Self Portrait*, with its highly controversial content, when Andy Warhol did the same thing years ago with his films *Empire State* and *Sleep*?

"It's not like Warhol at all. He's negative and we're positive. I can't stand negative things, and our attitude is completely different. *Self Portrait* has vibrations of love, and it has an immediate message of humanity.

"When Yoko showed me her *Bottoms* film I thought it was ridiculous, but she explained it to me and I was convinced – I don't remember how. I think it was the humour of the film, and that's what we try to keep in our films. If we're going to get these films shown, we've got to get into the scene. We'd like to make a film that wasn't so underground in concept, but

we wouldn't do something like *Barbarella* or *2001* – although that was a lovely trip.

"Films are moving ahead so fast – much faster than music or anything else. We're hoping to have talks with a big production company which I shouldn't name – oh well, why not, it's United Artists – who seem to be interested. We'd like to get on at the West End."

Yoko, who was sitting by John's side, chipped in, "We don't know how to go about it. We're sussing it out at the moment."

John continued, "It's not like films, it's more like TV. Dylan was right –

it should be less important. Our films, and the Beatles and Stones albums, shouldn't have so much noise made about them. The process of production is so slow. We'd like to speed the process up, and get a new album and film out every month. For instance, we haven't been able to get our *Wedding* film out yet. And the trouble is that people will say we copied Jane Birkin on one track, but we didn't. It's just that we couldn't get ours out fast enough.

"Most of our films are like portraits. For instance, *Smile* is simply a portrait of me sending out love vibrations to Yoko, who's on the other end of the camera. People say it's boring, but they'll look at Van Gogh, which doesn't move at all, and they'll have it on their walls."

I suggested that perhaps the audience at the ICA had been dissatisfied because the environment was wrong.

"Yes, it would probably be best if people had the film at home and could show it on their walls and look at it when they felt like it. The ICA night was too long – but they asked for five hours of film and that's what I gave them."

Wasn't the work of John and Yoko coming to resemble an open diary, I asked? And don't most people keep their diaries in their desks at home?

"Yes, but who doesn't like to read other people's diaries?" he replied.

"That's exactly what it is – but you must realise that The Beatles' albums, and Dylan's for that matter, are all diaries. We're just bringing it out into the open and making it more honest."

Does this theory inevitably lead to disposable works of art?

"Yes, that's what we're aiming at," said John. "Yoko's having her book of poetry, *Grapefruit*, reprinted and at the end there's an instruction to the reader to eat the book."

Yoko added, "When you keep things they become tombstones. The world would be clogged up with useless objects."

Have they any new ideas for their well-publicised campaign for peace?

"There's this Peace Ship plan," said John, "which is very strange because I recently read a book which contained almost exactly the same idea. There was this bloke in a white ship from which he broadcast peace messages, and then when I'd read the book a real guy came to me with the plan for doing it. Someone's also given me some ideas for doing things in Nigeria and Biafra, but I can't talk about it at the moment."

Does this suggest a more direct involvement with war and peace?

"Not really, because I think that what we've done already, like staying in bed for peace, has been very direct. It wouldn't do any good, for instance, if I was to go to Vietnam and get shot. That proves nothing, but it's what people are always telling me to do.

"We're after people's minds. If we go to see Nixon, for instance, it wouldn't make him down tools, but we think we could find out what he thinks and tell other people. We'd know where he was at.

"You can't change anything by violence. You have to be aggressive, that's part of everyone and I'm aggressive, but we have the machinery to challenge it. We don't have to get involved in other people's games, and I think that all the killers should be allowed to take their tanks into the desert and kill each other off. But I don't want any part of it, and we've got the power to do something about it."

With two albums in the can *Abbey Road* and *Get Back* [sic] – would there now be a lull in The Beatles' recording schedule?

"The trouble is that we've got too much material. Now that George is writing a lot we could put out a double album every month, but they're so difficult to produce. After *Get Back* is recorded in January, we'll probably go back into the studio and record another one. It's just a shame we can't get more albums out faster." *Richard Williams* •

"Apple didn't want to have anything to do with our *Two Virgins* film"



1969

APRIL - JUNE



A rollercoaster
of a human being:
27-year-old Janis
Joplin in 1969

“They’re
paying me
\$50,000
a year to
be me”

With a furry hat and a quantity of gin and orange, **JANIS JOPLIN** arrives in London. As she tells anyone who will listen, the stories they’ve heard are all true. “I’d rather have 10 years of superhypermost,” she says, “than live to be 70 sitting in some goddam chair watching TV.”



— NME APRIL 12 —

IF IT WERE possible to become a touring attraction by presenting just yourself as a person then Janis Joplin would clean up. If there were any medals going for living she would take the gold. Janis Joplin as a person is an overwhelming experience, a rollercoaster of a human being. The 27-year-old American singing sensation with the volcanic voice and the legendary penchant for Southern Comfort and words four-lettered descended upon London from Sweden on Wednesday evening.

By 3am Thursday morning she was at London’s Speakeasy in the presence of her seven-piece band making her presence felt and the Joplin legend was beginning to swing London’s way. The stories began to circulate. She had, reports said, a bottle of gin in one pocket of her huge fur coat and a bottle of vodka in the other, from which she was taking alternate unladylike swigs.

At noon on Thursday her band were appearing in driblets and drabs for rehearsals at the Revolution when Janis made her entrance, dressed as she was the night before and looking as if she’d come straight in from the Speakeasy. A cleaner carrying a broom walked idly past. “You the one who’s rehearsing here?” Janis nodded. “I’ve been hearing a lot of stories about you. They all true?” »

GETTY

1969

APRIL – JUNE



Like a child at their first party

NME April 26 Backed by the Stax-style seven-piece Kozmic Blues Band, Janis winds up her European tour with a live British debut.

IT IS NOT A VOICE to charm the birds off the trees, more one to kill them stone dead on the boughs. But it charmed a near capacity crowd to the Albert Hall on Monday for the British concert debut of Janis Joplin and her seven-piece band.

From the moment she rushed out on stage, grasped the mic and launched into her first galvanising vocal, Janis was everything that was expected of her. As soon as she stopped singing, I began to have doubts. The whole conception of the band, very Stax-like with brass to the fore, seemed wrong. Janis' choice of songs seemed wrong in part too, though when she was singing you could forget that. But when she stopped and

the band was on its own, the whole show seemed to flag, not through any fault of their playing but through the material.

Surely such an incredibly bluesy voice should put itself to blues numbers with a blues-based backing.

Janis herself, the

voice, was superb. How such an almighty rasping, then a clearly sweet voice comes from such a diminutive frame without doing her an injury I'll never know! She looked like a child at their first party, a mane of unruly hair, little or no makeup, a garish blue low-cut trouser suit and a pair of golden sandals.

The audience loved her and warmed to her. Early numbers were received with the kind of applause generally reserved for the end, and when the end came she was called back to take two encores. Champagne was drunk on stage and Janis was visibly moved by her reception.

An audience on their feet with enthusiasm, scores of people dancing in the aisles and more crowding round the front of the stage is a sight seldom seen at the Albert Hall.

Near the end, Janis was standing in an ever-decreasing circle as her army of fans advanced, and when she finished on "Ball And Chain", the last of the two encores, it was an amazing scene. The last was by far her best number.

The Yes played the first half and sounded ridiculously good. I've seen them three times now and each time they were twice as good as before. There's been a tightening up in all departments and the group is a veritable mine of ideas. They make a pleasant contrast to the surfeit of "heavy" groups around. Nick Logan

"I s'pect so," said Janis.

She sat down on the side of the stage, hung her head in her hands, likened her condition to a part of the human anatomy and told us that she was sharing her room with seven others and something would have to be done. By the time Albert Grossman, her manager (and also Bob Dylan's), arrived the figure had swollen to "14"! She flew across the floor and flung her arms around her manager's bear-like frame.

Janis was to have been on the cover of America's *Newsweek* that week but General Eisenhower's death had elbowed her out. Grossman had the cover which was to have been.

In quick succession came a display of pleasure at the way the photo had come out and anger at the fact that it wouldn't be seen. She grasped it in her hands, stared at it for an instant, stamped her tiny foot bullet-like into the Revolution floor and swung a clenched fist skywards. A stream of devastating curses accompanied the action.

"God-dammit, you mother£&!!? You £&!!?" And swinging round to appeal to the gathering: "Fourteen heart attacks and he had to die in my week. In MY week."

She was introduced to the press and smiled a sheepish girlish smile. "Hi. Ain't this so silly? It's so silly." We left the band to rehearse and adjourned to a nearby pub where Janis, in her huge fur hat and coat, black trousers, gold sparkly waistcoat and bangles on her arms, provided an incongruous sight amid the bowler hatted businessmen lining up for their midday pints and pies. She's a lady of extremes. One minute creased up laughing; the next looking sad and lost as she tells you that she doesn't know anyone in London and she's alone in a foreign city without even a TV set.

She's homesick. She lives in a three-roomed flat in San Francisco; has a dog which she is fond of and a Porsche with a "real portrait" painted on it. What can she do in London? – Where can she go? – King's Road – "Is that good? Will I find hippies there? Will people stop and talk to me and be friends?"

April 21, 1969, Royal Albert Hall, London: "It was dynamite! It was like a big hot rush"



STANDING OVATION FOR JANIS

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Near the end, Janis was standing in an ever decreasing circle as her army of fans advanced and when she finished on "Ball And Chain," the last of the two encores, it was an amazing scene. The last was by far her best number.

Yes played the first half

She drinks her gin and orange juice and tells that she first became aware of the power in her voice when she was 17. She was a painter then and used to go down to the beach with some boys she knew. They were playing Odetta records. She said she could sing just as well. They laughed. She sang and proved them wrong.

She was born in Port Arthur, Texas—a small gulf town—the eldest child of a refinery executive. She was the town's beatnik rebel, the girl from the Deep South who mixed with blacks, who became known as “mad, silly Janis” and adopted the credo “Get stoned, stay happy and have a good time” that she still has today.

For five years she drifted in the folk-beat world of Texas, New York and finally San Francisco, from where the name Haight-Ashbury was beginning to achieve global renown and where the hippies were emerging. Eventually she found her way into Big Brother & The Holding Company, unleashed her talent with the group at the Monterey Festival in 1967, and the beginnings of a legend were born. An eventual break from Big Brother was always on. Reviewers praised Janis consistently and slammed the band with the same consistency. So Janis left and formed the band she has now.

She's in Europe for concerts—one in London—and for a couple of TVs in Britain, but she doesn't know what. She says of her kind of living: “You mustn't compromise and you don't have to. I'm a living example of that. People aren't supposed to be like me, make out like me; but now they're paying me 50,000 dollars a year for me to be like me.”

When she sings, she says she likes her audience to have a good time right along with her and to get up on stage and dance with her if they want. She always thought it would be good to sing in Britain “because they like blues singers. People like Memphis Slim could always get a gig over here, whereas they couldn't find work over there.”

The only qualms she has are over the reserve of the British. She says that she went to see Fleetwood Mac in Stockholm. “The audience were impassive—I think that's the word. They were appreciative but while they were playing they just sat there. In the breaks they clapped and at the end they went mad. For me it is hard to play when people look as if they are asleep.”

She's asked what her reaction was to the tag “The Judy Garland Of Pop” given to her by San Francisco's *Rolling Stone*, in a critical article. “I don't know what they are on about,” she replied, looking sad again. “For a while it really hurt me—and that was from people who are supposed to be on the same team. I thought they would be helping me but they didn't. They turned round and hurt me. She shrugged: “£@!?'em. I'm proud of myself now. Before, I used to scream about them. They used to hurt me. But I am into my singing now, I can see it growing. I am proud of it.”

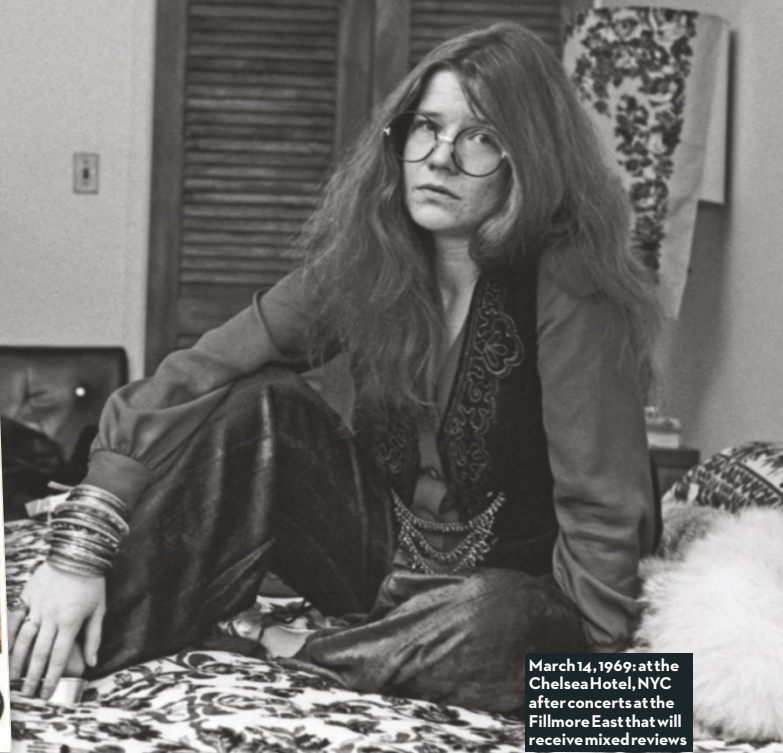
She creased up laughing. “Hey, you gonna write that down?” Janis said a meaningful thing...”

She went sad and reflective again and said she knew no-one in London and I asked if she knew any groups. How about Fleetwood Mac, who she sang with one night in the States?

“They told you about that?” she asked, surprised. I said they had, and told it as a highlight of their tour and she smiled, happy again. “How about that.”

An American voice from across the bar signalled that Janis was wanted. Her gin and orange was drained in one gulp and a dangled arm wiped across her lips. Her thing is that she lives every minute of her life for every precious ounce she can wring out of it.

As she says, “Man, I'd rather have 10 years of superhypermost than live to be 70 sitting in some goddam chair watching TV.” *Nick Logan*



March 14, 1969: at the Chelsea Hotel, NYC after concerts at the Fillmore East that will receive mixed reviews

— MELODY MAKER MAY 3 —

SHE BURST INTO THE green room of the Royal Albert Hall like a cork from a bottle of just-opened Moët & Chandon champagne. Excited, elated and bubbling over, Janis Joplin couldn't have been more happy. “We did it, we did it!” she exclaimed. And a room full of pressmen ain't going to bring me down!” Janis added. Indeed trying to would have been like attempting to tear down the Pyramids with a toothpick. Janis had just left the stage after a triumphant British debut which had left most of the audience on their feet yelling for more.

She hadn't expected it. Perhaps she had believed too much about the traditional British reserve. Certainly her hour of belting, grinding vocalising against her soul-slanted seven-piece backing group had created enough excitement and emotion to make a fair proportion of the audience forget their inhibitions.

“I don't want to offend propriety or anything, but if you want to dance, then that's what it's all about—right?” she told the audience. They responded by dancing in the aisles, in the boxes and on the stage. “We've been incredibly thrilled, this audience was great. American audiences are getting too jaded,” she said, bouncing around the green room, hardly able to contain her obvious delight at the reception she had received.

“This is the fourth crowd out of seven we've had on their feet dancing. I didn't expect it. In Frankfurt we had people right up on the stage after the second number. I was surrounded by all those lovely cats, singing right in

their faces, man! This was thrilling. I thought the British audiences would be so cool! They were really getting into it.”

Janis described this visit as a “promotion tour” and that she would be back as soon as she could. “The concert scene on this European tour has been exciting, but this one was a little bit more exciting because it was, well, the Albert Hall, man. It was dynamite! Maybe it was because I broke through a wall I didn't think it was possible to break through! Everybody said don't expect any reaction, but it was like a big hot rush, like a door opening, a new possibility, a kind of fresh air.

“It was like...” she paused, searching for a phrase “...like holding onto someone and really

exploring them. You can feel their hands on your back then all of a sudden they have two more hands. It never occurred to me it could be that pleasurable.” Then Janis decided to end the impromptu press conference. “I'm not sitting here talking to you. Jesus, man, I'm going out to have a ball. I'm so happy, Jesus, I'm so happy.”

As quickly as she arrived, she departed, rushing out of the room to round up the group and friends. From the corridor her voice came shouting back to us. “Jesus, I'm so happy, not even a roomful of pressmen could bring me down.” The “roomful of pressmen”—all three of us—pocketed our notebooks, pens and toothpicks and departed slightly overwhelmed by this amazing young lady. *Tony Wilson* •

“You mustn't compromise, you don't have to. I'm a living example”

1969

APRIL – JUNE

“First of all, it’s rock’n’roll”

Even without visiting, CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL fire the UK imagination with their visionary Southern music. The band, claims John Fogerty, are uncomplicated people, making rootsy rock. “When I say a hurricane is coming,” he says, “that’s what I mean.”

— MELODY MAKER JUNE 21 —

TEN YEARS IS a long time for anybody to wait for a hit, but that’s how long Creedence Clearwater Revival waited to see their name in the British and American charts with “Proud Mary”. The single is a track from their *Bayou Country* LP to be released here soon, and this will be their second album to be issued here. The sound of Creedence Clearwater Revival has an earthy, basic feel about it and the group’s leader, guitarist, harmonica player and songwriter says, “The sound comes from Louisiana.”

Certainly on tracks such as “Born On The Bayou”, “Bootleg” and “Graveyard Train”, there’s a peculiarly Southern feel about the sound, with hints of blues, country and Cajun music in what Creedence Clearwater play. Explains leader John Fogerty, “I just had this life-long dream I wanted to live there. All the great records or people who made them somehow came from Memphis or Louisiana or somewhere along the Mississippi River in-between.”

“I never even thought about social pressures. To me it just represented something earlier, like 1807, before computers and machinery complicated everything, when things were relaxed and calm. And singers like Howlin’ Wolf and Muddy Waters gave me the feeling that they were right there, standing by the river. »

GETTY





Creedence
Clearwater Revival
in 1969: "We make
our records sound
like we do onstage"

1969

APRIL – JUNE

"Carl Perkins, the first one who ever made me think about being a musician and singer, made his greatest records there by the river in Memphis. I really enjoyed the whole Southern folk legend... Mark Twain, Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, the river and all that went with it. The river and the South just seem to be where all the music that's kicked everything off started from or sounds like."

The Bayou country is a long way from San Francisco, where the group originally got together – John Fogerty, with his brother Tom, drummer Doug Clifford and bass guitarist Stu Cook, in 1959. The group began by playing blues and then went through various scenes backing other singers and working in the San Francisco area.

After a bout of duty in the army, John rejoined the group in 1967. They worked together as The Golliwogs for a while, then changed their name to Creedence, which also brought them a change of fortune. In 1968 the group released a single called "Susie Q", which made the American chart, and followed it up with a version of the Screamin' Jay Hawkins classic "I Put A Spell On You", both singles being included on their first album. And then came "Proud Mary" and the Bayou beat of Creedence Clearwater Revival became an international sound. Currently the group are working on their third album and are hoping soon to visit Britain.

"I think the best way is with a hit," comments John Fogerty. "We'd like to come as soon as possible. The sooner we get over the better it'll be. I don't know how our music will go over."

Certainly it has impressed American audiences like the Fillmores East and West, and John thinks the American audiences are probably the best in the world. But does he have a great deal of respect for British bands. "They seem so much better than American bands. They seem better trained. And they play incredibly fast."

If Creedence Clearwater Revival are as good live as they are on record, they need not worry about British bands. They are one of the most exciting groups to come out of America and have managed to come up with a distinctive sound – the Bayou beat. *Tony Wilson*

— NME SEPTEMBER 20 —

"BAYOU ROCK? IT means absolutely nothing to me." Having heard so many definitions of the gutsy, foot-stomping rock of Creedence Clearwater Revival, all of them coming back to the label "Bayou rock", it came as something of a surprise to pick up that statement from the group's leader and songwriter John Fogerty over the transatlantic phone line this week. Speaking from the group's record company offices in San Francisco, John went on, "I suppose my songs do have derivative rhythms, but it is mostly accidental. My thing with Southern music has always been with the people of the South; people like Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Howlin' Wolf."

How does he account for their success? "I don't try to. I have seen a lot of things written in the papers about it being a folk-rock revival, a rock'n'roll revival and, the latest, a blues revival. I don't know about any of them. What we do have is a pretty basic rock approach to our music. We call it rock'n'roll and that's enough for us."

But he did agree that their success rested largely on the appeal of their music to both a dancing and a thinking audience. "That's true. First of all it's rock'n'roll. Its function is to move you whatever. Then you can put the frosting on the cake. Words that make you think; guitars that are growling or funky; and so on. That's the way we go about it. Music is emotional. When you lose that and it becomes ultra-sophisticated and mathematically precise it leaves me dry."

John was delighted with the news that "Bad Moon Rising" was then at No 2 in the NME Chart, poised to take over at No 1. "Someone here told me about it but it's easier to believe when you



hear it from somebody actually in England." And what of 'Bad Moon Rising'? "It is not drug orientated or political," he said firmly. "Somebody wrote that I sang about 'grass' and that it was an allusion to marijuana, but that's not in there at all. Others take it that it means the right wing is dissolving, or the left wing is dissolving, whatever your views."

"When I say a hurricane is coming, that's exactly what I mean. It is just a story about natural catastrophes, which are so big that they can override the personal ones."

Misinterpretations of "Bad Moon" apart, John affirmed there was some political and social comment in their music. "There is in quite a few of the songs. People used to say that all the words of your songs are simple and that used to bug me. Since I don't go in for 18-letter words like 'insurrection' and 'resurrection', et cetera, some people tend to overlook the meaning of the lyrics. All that '*Canyons of your mind exploding*' stuff – that is a load of rubbish to me. But quite a few of our songs are socially and politically inclined."

The good sun is now shining over Creedence Clearwater Revival... but it wasn't always that way. They've been together now for a decade with the same lineup – a considerable feat in these times of break-ups and splits – but along the way, at various moments, hurdles have presented themselves which might have broken up many a group.

Fogerty, at the age of 14, drummer Doug Clifford and bassist Stu Cook formed the group at junior high school in California 1959. Tom Fogerty, brother of John, joined later. "Early on, there were different schools we went to and families planning to move away," recalled John. "We managed to persuade them not to. We wanted to do what we are doing now more than anything else in life, and that's what kept us going. We drifted apart and went off to different schools, but we never disbanded the group."

Later on came one of the biggest hurdles when John and Doug were drafted into the US army – and straight away decided they wanted out.

"We were in the reserve towards the end of our service," said John, "and we still kept the group going, travelling to dates 200/300 miles from the base and returning during the early morning. We managed to get out in the end: both with honourable discharges. There are many ways of avoiding the military, most of them involving going to jail, but we managed to fall somewhere in the middle."

Marriage was recounted by John as another problem. He, Tom and Doug are the married members; Tom with two children, him with one. Then there was "the real smart manager" who named them The Golliwogs and gave them funny hats to wear – and then there was poverty.

"We didn't have any money to buy strings for guitars, or amps or anything. It wasn't until the end of 1967 that the president of the record company came up with enough money to get us some equipment. It wasn't extravagant; we got one amp for \$1,400 and a drum stool for Doug. The company wasn't that much in the black that they could lash out – and that was one of the best things that ever happened to us."

I asked John for a word or two on the members of the group. What sort of character was Doug, for instance? "That's the word. A character," he replied. "Doug is the funny one. Even though we don't make a great deal

out of being funny on stage – we don't have an act – he is the one with most of the funny stories. He is the one finding humour in the most oppressive situations."

Stu? "Probably the most left wing of all of us. He is quite a bit into the San Francisco scene as a musician and philosopher." Tom? "He's probably the most intense of the four; like very serious or sincere. He is the most likely to say what he is really feeling. Like right out of nowhere he will say something that is so honest, people cannot believe what he has said."

John dodged talking about himself but said, "Since we have been together for so long we are all each other's best friends. We are pretty tight; we have our own little circle with few friends from outside."

Is that why they've stayed together so long? "It's a two-way street," he replied. "The longer you are together, the easier it becomes to get over any problems you have, because you have come up against and surmounted them

"All that
'canyons of
your mind'
stuff is a load
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BAYOU ROCK? IT'S NOT US, SAY CREEDENCE

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CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL. No. 1 in this week's

Fogerty, brother of John, joined later. Early on there were different



"We have our own little circle with few friends from outside": (l-r) Tom Fogerty, John Fogerty, Stu Cook and Doug Clifford

before. It was because of over-riding these problems that we have got where we are today." *Nick Logan*

— MELODY MAKER SEPTEMBER 20 —

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL took just five weeks to make the No 1 spot in the *MM* Pop 30 this week with "Bad Moon Rising". This great rocking song is the follow-up to their first British hit, "Proud Mary", a track from Creedence's *Bayou Country* LP, and like "Proud Mary", it scored heavily in the US as well.

"Bad Moon Rising" is a typical Creedence Clearwater song and a good example of what a hit should sound like, comprising a strongly lyric, a simple but effective melody line, a driving beat and quality production. "It's not a personal story," said Creedence leader, guitarist and singer John Fogerty when he spoke to *Melody Maker* from California. "And it's not political. It's just meant to be a statement on the good and bad sides of life. It's not a protest song, like the sort of protest songs we've had over the last few years. Just a sort of 'beware' type thing, mostly about natural catastrophes. The words were meant to mean exactly what I wrote."

As well as the two singles, Creedence Clearwater have had two albums released in Britain, *Creedence Clearwater Revival* and *Bayou Country*, and their third was recently issued in America, *Green River*, the title track of which is their latest single hit in the US.

"It's basically the same sound," commented John. "I find it hard to make definitions about our music. It's the same instrumentation, with a bit of harmonic and electric piano, but mostly guitars."

The Creedence sound reflects many influences – blues, rock, country and the Cajun style of Louisiana. The music has a Southern feel to it, although the band originally came from San Francisco, where John, his guitar-playing brother Tom, drummer Doug Clifford and bass guitarist Stu Cook teamed up in 1959.

For 10 years they played blues and rock in and around the San Francisco area under the name of The Golliwogs. The group split for a while when John went into the army but reformed in 1967 as Creedence Clearwater Revival. In 1968 they had their first American chart entries with "Susie Q" and the Screamin' Jay Hawkins classic "I Put A Spell On You", both singles being incorporated in their first album.

The Creedence sound is distinctive and interesting, with enough going on in it to keep the listener's attention. "Our basic sound doesn't change," said John, "but delivery changes. As with anyone who writes songs, I go off on tangents. But this is the kind of music I wanted to bring to the fore, the kind of music I most respect. But we do try and change just a bit."

Did the group have much trouble in recreating their recorded sound on stage? "In our case we make our records sound like we do on stage," answered John. "We try to record exactly the way we play, therefore, in person, people say we sound just like we do on record. We expand here and there and ad lib, but not to the point of being boring like psychedelic bands."

"Of course, the tape echo we get in a studio is impossible to do on stage. But there is usually a natural echo in the halls we play. If we did the tape

echo in person, nobody would understand what we were saying."

The group have had a number of favourable reports regarding their live appearances, particularly with regard to their overall stage balance. "We try to get a clean, clear effect," stated John when questioned about this. "The idea is that every instrument is to be heard. After all, every guy in the band has the right to be heard if he's playing. If you turn up the amps, well it might be good for the amplifier people and please them, and it might be exciting to watch them explode, but it just distorts everything. We like the rhythm section to be clean so the lead vocals and guitar are heard against a clean blanket of sound."

The group are now in the fortunate position of being able to limit their personal appearances, although they are still kept busy with rehearsing and recording. "We are slowing down a bit," said John. "We've been on and off the road since January. We're playing about two or three times a month until the end of the year. Songwriting takes up a fair amount of time and we do television appearances, and at the moment we are recording our fourth, and possibly our fifth album. We've shifted our interests but we're still as busy as we were. Business-wise, we have more appointments with accountants and companies, but they come in spurts. We might have four weeks when nothing happens and then we have to see them all in a couple of days. We rehearse all week and take Saturday and Sunday off, unless we're working. We usually work at weekends."

Unlike some groups who take success as a signal to stop working and to rest on their laurels, Creedence Clearwater Revival are firm believers in keeping their music in shape in readiness for the next gig, whenever it might be. Getting stale musically is something John and the group want to avoid. "We've noticed with some bands that when they make it, they take it easy. When you stop appearing and stop rehearsing, it's a drag because when you've got to play somewhere it's just like rehearsing. Nothing is together. So we're going to keep rehearsing."

One advantage that John is able to use now is the prerogative to pick venues. "Most of the halls in this country are dumpy, awful," he said. "They're bad in some way or another; you can't hear the voice or the lights are too dim, something like that. With success, you are able to pick and choose more. If I could pick only the good venues that I like playing, they wouldn't amount to more than about 15. Also you've got more time to rehearse. We've noticed with some bands, they play the same old things for a year and after a while any song gets stale."

With two hit singles in Britain so far – and on the strength of that it wouldn't be unreasonable to predict a potential third with "Green River" – it would seem a British tour for Creedence Clearwater Revival must be the next item on their list.

"We have no definite plans, as far as that's concerned," said John, "but I think if we came, it would be around March, when the weather is clearer. It's the first thing we're thinking of in terms of next year. If we come to England, I'd like to stay a while, at least two weeks, and get there a couple or three days before we actually play so we can get used to the place. I don't like hopping-about tours. I don't think we'd go to Europe; we'd come straight to England." *Tony Wilson* •

1969

APRIL - JUNE



June 13, 1969: The Rolling Stones introduce Brian Jones' replacement during a photocall at the bandstand in London's Hyde Park (l-r, Keith Richards, Mick Jagger, Mick Taylor, Bill Wyman and Charlie Watts)

MIRROPIX



“Free concerts
are OK – if you
can afford them”

The ROLLING STONES have split. Out with Brian Jones; in with a new guitarist, Mick Taylor. After 14 months away, the band return to live performance – a free concert in front of 250,000 people. “I’m all for rebelling against the establishment,” says Mick Taylor. “This is a dream motivated by fear of the unknown.”

— NME JUNE 14 —

“W E’D KNOWN FOR a few months that Brian wasn’t keen; he wasn’t enjoying himself and it got to the stage where we had to sit down and talk about it. So we did and we decided the best thing was for Brian to leave.”

Mick Jagger was talking for the first time on the BIG subject of Brian Jones’ departure from the world’s second-biggest group. No hint of bitterness or internal strife and the “let him get on with it, he’s going to be the loser” attitude that we so often hear in similar circumstances.

How did a comparative unknown like Mick Taylor land the job? “I’d never heard him live, only on records,” Mick replied, taking another grape from a huge pile of fruit in The Rolling Stones’ Mayfair boardroom. “He’d been through the John Mayall school of guitarists—people like Peter Green and Eric Clapton. I didn’t want to go through the whole bit of auditioning guitarists, so I spoke to John Mayall, a man whose judgement I respect in these matters.”

A snort of cynical laughter and then: “John just grunted when I told him we’d like to see Mick, so I took it as a ‘yes.’”

Taylor went down to the Barnes studios where the Stones were cutting tracks for their next two albums, and fitted in right away. “He got on well with Keith, which is good, and he picked things up quickly, so we got the track done more quickly. I don’t know totally what he does, but we will see. He doesn’t play anything like Brian. He’s a blues player and he wants to play rock’n’roll, so that’s OK. He’s on one track of the album, but I don’t know which album because there will be one out in September and another before Christmas. We’ve got 17 songs up to now and we’ll have to sort out which ones go on which album.”

Mick doesn’t know what Brian plans to do now. He did one of his frequent send-ups of all things current and told me, “He’s gotta do his own thing, man. You’ll really have to ask him what he’s got in his mind; he hasn’t said anything to us.”

Mick Taylor was preparing to go away so that he could rethink and plan his music when he got a call from Mick Jagger inviting him to a Stones recording session at Barnes, London. A few weeks later, he was taken on as Brian Jones’ replacement. Mick spent two years with John Mayall’s Bluesbreakers and had reached the stage where he wanted to take time off to consider his next musical move. So he resigned and began a rest.

“He is very quiet. I can’t see what he has in common with the Stones,” said his friend Pete Gibson. “He had several offers during the last tour of America, but wasn’t interested. I think he was going to session and odd things until he’d decided properly.”

Mick himself has been hiding in Buckinghamshire since the announcement, but on the phone he had said, “I was invited to do a session with the Stones. It puzzled me. I had never met Mick Jagger in my life and here he was phoning me. I went down and played on some tracks and thought little more about it. Then they asked me if I wanted to be a Stone. I was amazed. Brian Jones was leaving, I was told. I said I’d love to be a Stone and that was that.”

To break Mick in with the group, the Stones will do two open-air shows in Rome and London. Brian, who revealed the news of his departure at his Hartfield, Sussex home on Sunday, confirms that he and the Stones will remain the best of friends. “I want to play my kind of music, which is no longer the Stones’ music,” he said simply, in explanation for his career change. *Richard Green*

— MELODY MAKER JUNE 21 —

W HAT MAKES MICK Jagger run, leap, bounce, smile, scowl, work, duck, dodge, embrace, jeer, love, soft, hard? The mystery boy of pop is a mystery man of pop. Like sherry trifle or hash cake, he is sweet with a kick. Mr Jagger is currently going through a Revive The Rolling Stones campaign. They recently perked up with the addition to the ranks of Jimmy Miller as record producer.

Since the end of the touring days, management splits and records that weren’t as successful as they should have been—not to mention the occasional brush with the forces of law and order—the Stones have been, in truth, clinging on to reality with the skin of their teeth.

Mick’s strength, drive and work have ensured that not only have the Stones survived more than most groups have ever suffered, they have kept creative and enthusiastic. Where others might quail, they are keen for new projects. The surprise addition of Mick Taylor, “unknown

guitarist from John Mainall’s Jazz Band” as some national newspapers would inform us, is going to be the boost to relaunch the Stones as a working group back on the road. What a gas!

They may not be actually revisiting Ken Colyer’s Club for Sunday-afternoon blues sessions, but by the ghost of Cyril Davies, we can expect a free concert somewhere not one thousand miles from London fairly soon! And the group that pioneered the British R&B boom back in the early ’60s and created the climate for both the blues and progressive groups of today will be back—playing music and having a good time.

So what’s it going to be like, Mick?

“Amazing—it’s going to blow your mind! It’s just so together, it will be amazing.”

Mick was leaping about in white trousers, refusing cigarettes and listening to rock’n’roll on the office record player. Having seen recent photographs that made him look several hundred years old, it must be reported that Mick looked extremely well and very young.

Explained Bill Wyman, who was in the vicinity, “It’s giving up smoking. I packed it in a couple of months ago and put on half a stone.” And he looked incredibly young as well—but enough of these medical bulletins.

Said happy Mick, pausing only to greet a passing lady reporter, “Mick Taylor is very quick to pick things up and he’s getting on well with Keith. By the way, I read it all in the newspapers that Brian was our lead guitarist—well, I don’t think he was. Mick Taylor has been through the John Mayall school, and when I knew he was leaving I thought I’d try and get hold of him. I had him down to a session and he was quite good, then he came to another and he was very good. I don’t know Mick so well I can say he’s as good as Eric Clapton, but anyway, that’s not what The Rolling Stones are all about.”

Would the new Stones do a concert at the Ken Colyer Club, I suggested pointlessly?

“I don’t want to go back to the womb. We want to do something new. I’m not interested in repeating ourselves. The new band isn’t going to be like early Stones. The thing is to go on, on, doing something new.”

The Stones seem to be going through an extremely busy and creative period. “Well, that’s the way we like to do it—in phases.

“The thing
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JAGGER TALKS TO NME ABOUT THE NEW STONE, THE EX-STONE, AND TWO ALBUMS



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NME Exclusive Interview with **RICHARD GREEN**





July 5, 1969: two days after Brian Jones' death, Mick Jagger pays tribute to the Stones' founder member before they headline a huge free concert in Hyde Park

It's cooler for me, because I like to cool out now and then and go on to something different. Keith and I have written about 24 songs recently. Some of the group want to do the old ones, and we'll probably do a lot of the tracks on the last album. In fact, all of that album contains stuff we can play on stage."

The Stones' last appearance was a concert a year ago. Their next one will be in Rome, June 25 and 26. Was Mick nervous, and why Rome?

"It doesn't make me nervous—it's just a natural thing for me to go on stage. We chose Rome for the concert because it is a very good visual thing. And the other reason, which I haven't told anybody else, is I wasn't satisfied with the Rolling Stones part of the *Rock And Roll Circus* film we made and we want to do it again in the Colosseum, which was the first ever circus.

"The film should be due out in September with the next LP. We wanted the LP out in July, but the moguls of the record industry say it's a bad month because all the factories that make records are on holiday. In fact, we have done two albums and the first will be out in September. Two of the tracks will have Mick on guitar."

What will Brian Jones be doing next? "I can tell you very little—it's better you ask him yourself. I guess he just wanted to do something different and he has done for a long time. I hope whatever he does comes off."

Mick was with Marianne at the Blind Faith concert in Hyde Park. How did he react to their performance?

"I thought they were very nice. I was right at the back of the stage and I couldn't see them, but I thought somehow they were very strained. I guess they'll get more together, and Ginger was fantastic. He's a beautiful drummer—the best drummer I have ever heard. I was a bit surprised Steve didn't play any guitar, though. I wish he had stood up and played—I love to see Stevie wiggle his bum a bit." *Chris Welch*

— NME JUNE 21 —

MICK JAGGER HOLDING court is quite an experience, as I discovered last week. His answers are often vague or cynical, but the majority are serious. He adopts an air of nonchalance and gives the impression of rather being elsewhere. One perfect example of this was his reply to my question: What are you doing to prepare for the Ned Kelly role?—"Not enough, I'm spending all my time talking to the musical press and messing about."

Typical Jagger, but probably honest. At least, you can expect forthrightness from him, if not always what you regard as a satisfying answer. He leaned back in his chair drinking apple juice, having already rejected one glass as he claimed there was soap in it. He occasionally took a grape from the fruit bowl on the large oval desk which dominates the boardroom and played the Edwin Hawkins Singers' *Let Us Go Into The*

House Of The Lord album, the next Three Dog Night LP *Suitable For Farming*, which is excellent, and an early Elvis collection featuring such goodies as "Rip It Up" and "Blue Moon".

On the subject of recordings, Mick told me, "We've almost got two LPs finished; the tracks are mostly four to five minutes long, so we can't get more than 10 on an album. The next album won't be out until September 'cause the record companies don't like issuing things in the July period. They'll put out an album and a single together and that's fine—I'll be away filming anyway, so we can't do anything on them for a while. We'll put out another album and a single before Christmas as well. We're just doing things a bit faster; we tend to concentrate on all our own songs, and we can only do what we produce... If we only write 30 songs, that's all we can do. We'd rather have 10 good songs than a load of ordinary ones."

Though he hadn't decided what the new single would be when I spoke to him, Mick revealed, "One side is a heavily produced ballad with a lot of things happening on it—it really will surprise you. The other side is more of a Stones thing."

Asked if the new albums would be very different from previous Stones LPs, Mick replied immediately, "We don't want to repeat ourselves, they're all different. Like *Satanic Majesties* and *Beggars Banquet*—they're both different. I would say the next one is still a very driving thing, not soft, but not too heavy. I quite like it."

Though it was a really hot day and everyone was walking about in summery clothes—the birds' especially daring, I'm pleased to say—we pressed on with seriousness, and of Jimmy Miller, their record producer, Mick said, "He's a groove most of the time. He's very easy to work with. He sometimes makes suggestions, but he usually sits up in his box. If things aren't going well, he comes down. He's very good with the rhythm, and he's very good with spoons!"

When I mentioned the Stones' Rome dates in the crumbling Colosseum, an event which could well accomplish what the ravaging hordes of ancient layabouts failed to do and raze it to the ground altogether, Mick laughed. "Yeah, there are a few problems; it hasn't got any seats for a start! But we can surmount them. I'm quite keen on free concerts; they're OK if you can afford them."

"I'm ready to do some concerts in places, I've always been willing. The last one was the *NME* concert last year, but time doesn't mean much, it could be a minute or a year. You can get stagnant by keep going on stage; the same as you can get stagnant not doing shows."

Mick decided against another apple juice and ordered a lager, which was poured by a performing publicist who had just squirted another can of the stuff all over himself. We talked about acting and Mick commented, "*Performance* is quite an interesting film, in its own way. I'm reasonably satisfied with what I did. You have got to be the person, »

and I've been reading about Ned Kelly. I don't mind doing it... I'm really only interested in music. I don't like to stop working, we've been in the studios all the time, but it's good to do something else and come back with renewed vitality."

Then there was the *Rock And Roll Circus*, which was done ages ago and has never been seen. "It'll probably be shown in the autumn to coincide with the album," he said. "The editing's not quite finished yet. It'll blow your mind, baby. TV is so appallingly bad; this is just what it needs."

Richard Green

— MELODY MAKER JUNE 21 —

MICK TAYLOR, 20-YEAR-OLD ex-Bluesbreaker from Welwyn, and just over a week as the new guitarist with the group that first brought rebellion to pop. That, in a nutshell, is all the world knows of Brian Jones' replacement in The Rolling Stones. But as the new Stone says of his press release, "Forget about that. That's all I've been asked so far – will I buy my parents a new house, what car will I buy, what clothes do I like?"

Mick Taylor taught himself to play guitar when he was 15, and apart from a very brief spell as an engraver and a labourer, has been a musician all his life. His group career started with The Gods. "The Gods disbanded about three weeks before I joined John Mayall. I'd gone along to see the Bluesbreakers play about 18 months before I joined them. Eric hadn't turned up, so I sat in. John remembered me and contacted me when Peter Green left. That was about two years ago."

Two years and three tours of America later, Mick left Mayall, the father figure of British blues. Why?

"I left John about two weeks after we came back from the States. At that time he wasn't really sure whether he was going to get another guitarist and drummer, and I felt I had gone as far as I could. There wasn't anything to stay for, musically.

"I'd felt that way for about six months; it was just getting round to leaving and deciding what I wanted to do. I'd thought about forming my own band and I wanted to take a bit of time off and do some recording, which I still hope to do in the future. I hadn't really much idea of what

"It's just a mix of soul, folk and blues, and I like playing those things"

I wanted to do when I left John. I would have formed a band, I suppose. It would have been a good, honest rock'n'roll band. I mean good, heavy music, not rock and roll in terms of Elvis Presley."

Although he established a fine reputation as a guitarist during his years with Mayall, Mick never achieved the status of his predecessors, Clapton and Green. Why does he think this was?

"It was probably quite a lot of things. I was the third guitarist that John had had and by that time there were loads of guitarists playing that sort of thing. Well, there were a lot of bass guitarists around as well. Another reason was that I'm not strictly a blues player. I like playing all sorts of things, so my heart wasn't in it.

"John wasn't an easy person to work with because he's got such a strong musical personality, but it was very enjoyable most of the time until those last six months when I began to get fed up. Then I'd get up on stage and just got through the motions.

"The group used to change so much you never used to know where you were anyway. I think John has got a really good band together now. He was always changing the group, but the musical policy stayed the same. This time it's a complete change – the music is different and everything – I'm looking forward to seeing them."

When did Mick make contact with The Rolling Stones?

"It was just over two weeks ago. Mick Jagger phoned up and invited me down to some recording sessions, then it all happened from there. I took part in the session and did a couple of tracks. I don't even know what they were called. I'd never met any of the Stones before. My name had just cropped up and Mick phoned. I was expecting the call because I'd heard that my name had been mentioned.

"After the second session, Mick told me that they were thinking of getting another guitarist in. I fitted in very well with what they were playing. It was about a week later, I was asked to

join. I thought about it for about a week – examining my reasons for wanting to join them. In the end, I decided it was what I wanted to do.

"It's not really that big a change. I've always been aware of their music, so musically it's not going to be a big change at all. What they do is just a mixture of soul, folk and blues, and I like playing all those things. I don't just like playing 12-bar blues all night. The roots of their music are still in the blues. It's going to be a fantastic experience playing with the Stones and it will give me an opportunity to develop my own ideas."

The image of The Rolling Stones is far removed from that of Mayall. Was Mick worried about being labelled as a Stone, with their reputation as "rebels" and the considerable publicity they attracted during recent drug cases?

"I'm all for rebelling against the establishment, so it doesn't really worry me. I kinda prepared myself for all the publicity and I'm certainly not going to change my way of thinking because I'm in the public eye. Drugs? Because of pop music and drugs a lot of good things have happened. I'm not really concerned about drugs at all. When you take drugs anyway, you get really high and you feel good, but you are not too aware of what it means and what you are doing. You should be able to feel good within yourself without drugs. I don't drink and I'm a vegetarian because I want to be healthy and as aware as I can in a natural kind of way."

Is Mick worried about the influence rock musicians have on youngsters?

"I feel it's good, although I'm not saying that the kids should try and do what the stars do. It's not just pop music any more. It's a new culture and it's opened a lot of people's minds to what's going on in the world today. Pop music is a medium through which a lot of things have to be said. Just listen to the lyrics of some of the songs that people like Dylan and The Beatles are singing."

Joining the Stones obviously means greater financial security, but security is a thing that doesn't worry Mick.

"I'm not really worried about security. It's a dream motivated by fear of the unknown. You can live happily without worrying about tomorrow. I don't really think much about the future – if you base your whole existence on material gain, you'll never be satisfied.

"It doesn't mean to say that I'm going to alter because I've joined the Stones – after all, I've only been with them a week." Royston Eldridge ●



Mick Taylor:
"I don't drink
and I'm a
vegetarian"



Mick Jagger: planned to play the park after seeing Blind Faith's show there on June 5

— LONDON HYDE PARK —
LIVE!
— JULY 5 —

pretentious, though Beefheart's "Gimme Dat Harp Boy" was mildly enjoyable. By now it was a bit hairy in the press pound, but the Angels marshalled by one called "elmet" were displaying remarkable powers of persuasion to keep the barriers upright.

"You push that f!?!?£! barrier and I'll smash your 'ead in, you !££?£." Nice to know they were on our side.

Without explanation, otherwise able MC Sam Cutler announced that the ladies in the press enclosure, with or without passes, would be asked to leave, which seemed grossly unfair. "Marsha Hunt is here and she'll make an example by leaving," said Sam. Marsha duly went but didn't look pleased.

And so to Alexis Korner, who sounded like a send-up of Alexis Korner, and his new group who did "Polly Put The Kettle On" and other blues and had no drummer. Family were as always good, harder on stage than on record. Veins standing out on his neck, Roger Chapman whipped himself into towel-flaying and mic-bashing passion - a bit cruel to the mics, who were appearing free as well.

One more to go - Blackhill's own Battered Ornaments, who failed to please the crowd and whose beat strangely corresponded with the throbbing in my backside. The massive stage decorated with plastic palm trees was fast filling up, with people hanging from the scaffolding of the two flanking supports. Marianne and son Nicholas, Allen Klein and Julie Felix could be seen. Someone from backstage came front with the story of the Stones arriving in an armoured army truck and suddenly they were on stage led by a young girl in a white dress with matching trousers.

The girl transpired to be Mick Jagger, who announced his intention to read a Shelley poem in memory of Brian. "Cool it and listen," said Jagger, with familiar slurred

incoherency. And they did.

"Lemon Squeezer" [sic; "I'm Yours And I'm Hers"] was a fair opener, accompanied by the release of the 3,500 butterflies, most of whom stayed around fluttering to enjoy the 75-minute act. "Jumpin' Jack Flash" followed and then "Have Mercy", the ties on Mick's frock being released with each number to reveal a purple vest.

The sound was good and strong and among the best I thought were those from *Beggars Banquet*, namely "Stray Cat Blues" story of a groupie, and the country blues "No Expectations".

Two new numbers suffered by being new and then came a chance for Mick Taylor, looking the height of innocence in contrast to the Jagged one, to show his worth on the bluesy "Love In Vain", another good one.

Bill Wyman looked as cool as ever, a million miles removed from it all, and likewise Keith Richards. Charlie Watts, on the other hand, set to like he'd never been away from his drums (I suppose he hasn't) and the two Micks were exchanging glances and thoughts fascinating to guess at.

"Gimme Little Drink" was another new one, followed by "Honky Tonk Women" and then the exciting "Midnight Rambler", hard and heavy, with Taylor and Richards engaged in guitar dialogue and Jagger adding emphasis to the stuttering music by playing his heavy metal belt whip-like onto the canvas. Great stuff.

"Do 'You'd Better Move On," suggested one optimist in the crowd.

"This is the only old one," announced Jagger before the classic "Satisfaction" (possibly the best pop number of all time).

This was the signal for the crowd - many were already on their feet dancing - to rise en masse.

Finale was "Sympathy For The Devil" (second best of all time?) and it really was tremendous stuff. The enclosure had ceased to exist; a mere handful of screamers struggled to touch Mick, while the rest just stood there soaking up the goodness.

The best rock'n'roll band in the world? Or, any advance on quarter of a million? Nick Logan

Soaking up the goodness

NME July 12 The Stones are back, playing al fresco.

TEN FEET ABOVE, Mick Jagger pouted, blew kisses, looked debauched, happy and sad, leapt skywards, sat down, sung, talked and generally entertained in the manner we haven't seen for 14 months but immediately recognised and loved. He also shook his bottom as is his wont, and I, after six hours of earthy contact with Hyde Park, made the discovery that by pressing my palms to the grass I could lever mine a glorious inch above the ground and for a brief moment alleviate the discomfort.

If you are worried lest my posterior is to take precedence over the proceedings, I am attempting to colour the scene for the 51,750,000 who couldn't make it, to make the point that there were too many groups on and to explain the strange occurrence of more people roaring approval for the Stones than there were clapping.

There were, of course, a few thousand who had spent double or treble the time I had on the grass, and after a while it became an effort to survive the heat and pain, let alone bring two hands together and enthuse. So it is as much a compliment to the crowd's bravery as it is to the Stones' electricity that the group generated the response they did - though I felt that when they rose en masse at the end it was as much with a communal sigh of relief as it was to demonstrate their approval.

But to start at the beginning...

The press enclosure would have had us believe that 80 per cent of our papers are represented by 16-year-olds with Brownie cameras, but that is by now a familiar scene at such events. Then there were the Hell's Angels, full of menace in black sleeveless jackets and Nazi badges. It was nice to have them on our side if every five minutes you had to produce a blue pass or be hustled unceremoniously away.

Third Ear Band, first on, struck while the audience was still receptive, as did the excellent four-man King Crimson, who sang of "20th-Century Schizoid Man" and did a Donovan song urging everyone to get stoned, taking great flights into jazz and getting the crowd on their feet.

From then on the music degenerated as my discomfort mounted. Screw, a five-piece outfit, were naive and

250,000 happy fans and just a handful of screamers

TEN feet above Mick Jagger pouted, blew kisses, looked debauched, happy and sad, leapt skywards, sat down, sung, talked and generally entertained in the manner we haven't seen for 14 months but immediately

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'COOL IT', SAID JAGGER

AND THEY DID REPORT



1969

JULY – SEPTEMBER

LED ZEPPELIN,
THE ROLLING STONES,
BOB DYLAN AND MORE

“I say my prayers for him”

NME **JULY 12** RIP, Brian Jones.

THE CORONER'S VERDICT: “Misadventure.” This is the final word on the tragic death of Brian Jones, 25 [sic; he was 27], an original Rolling Stone who left the group only four weeks ago to concentrate on giving the world the music he loved – rhythm & blues – which he felt the Stones had deserted.

Brian was working on his new music until late on the evening of July 2, and decided to cool down with a midnight swim in the pool beside his Cotchford Farm mansion at Hartfield, Sussex. His companions – interior decorator Frank Thorogood and Swedish girlfriend Anna Wohlin, 22 – left him in the pool and a nurse, Janet Lawson, visiting Frank, found Brian at the bottom. He was rescued, given the kiss of life and massage, but pronounced dead by a doctor at about 3am on July 3.

Brian Jones was the Stone who loved R&B music the most ardently. That music was his life. As Jimmy Miller, the Stones' recording manager, said: “He was entirely a musician. He never quite adapted to the commercial and image aspects of the Stones.

“As a musician he should be remembered for the brilliant bottle-neck country guitar work on *Beggars Banquet*, for his interpretation of blues – played honestly as a white man. And he composed a brilliant score for the German film *Mord Und Totschlag*.”

Mick Jagger spoke for all the Stones when he said: “I am just so unhappy. I am so shocked and wordless and so sad. Something has gone. I have really lost something.

“We were like a pack, one family in a way. I just say my prayers for him. I hope he becomes blessed, I hope he is finding peace... and I really want him to.”

The concert in Hyde Park last Saturday, with 250,000 fans attending, was the greatest tribute any pop star could ever have... and the Stones dedicated it to Brian Jones.

His father sums up what we all feel: “We had our violent disagreements, but we never stopped loving him.” *Andy Gray*





"Entirely a musician":
Brian Jones during a
recording session at
Olympic Studios in
London, June 10, 1968

1969

JULY – SEPTEMBER

Allen Klein: tackling The Beatles' woeful tax situation in 1969

"The people I negotiate with are bad losers"

MM July 19 An interview with publicity-shy Beatles business manager Allen Klein. "If being concerned is ruthless, then I am ruthless."

A BELIEF IN SOME quarters, that The Beatles are like four little boys wandering innocently through a penny arcade – ripe for the pickings by the sharp operators rubbing their hands on the sidelines – was firmly discounted by Allen Klein, American financial wizard brought in by The Beatles to handle their affairs.

I put the question straight to Mr Klein: Was he the ruthless operator that some inevitably associate with those who hack their way through the jungles of high finance?

"How did that idea get around?" smiled Mr Klein. "If being 100 per cent concerned with the people I represent is being ruthless, then I am ruthless." He is certainly out of sympathy with those British businessmen who cloak their activities in a cloud of politeness while they drive a hard bargain.

"They cut you up – and the blood comes out a lot later," he says with a typical touch of American colour. "As Paul McCartney once

said, 'Some people feel this way about me because I negotiate very tough deals. And the people I negotiate with are bad losers.'

"Why will people underestimate The Beatles, and refuse to take them seriously? They're not four little boys who don't know what they're doing: they're four grown men.

"If all this business happened to anyone else, no-one would take any notice of it. But because it's The Beatles, everything they do is magnified. My prime function is to see that, other than paper equities, The Beatles have sterling £1 equities after tax. That's the first thing. And that's what I'm working on now."

"And to do this, they had to free themselves from the NEMS-Triumph situation. Triumph bought from them their interests in NEMS. And for their 10 per cent interest in NEMS, each one received £115,000 subject to capital gains tax of 30 per cent."

Mr Klein laughed off the

idea that a) John Lennon's preoccupation with peace and lie-ins made him unaware of financial matters and b) that his much-publicised activities might be a gimmicky device loaded with more commercial considerations than idealism.

"John," said Mr Klein, "is probably one of the most commercially minded of them all. But only because he realises that there must be constant changes. He was the first to recognise this; now they all know it. It's not an easy thing to break out into new directions, to have the courage of your convictions. But don't forget – many people have died for their beliefs.

"John Lennon does what John Lennon believes is right. John made 'Give Peace A Chance' because he wanted to get his message across in the simplest possible way. Would it have satisfied his critics more if he had called it 'Give War A Chance'? Would that then have been alright?"

Mr Klein turned to Apple – that glittering palace of Beatledom in London's Savile Row that has come under fire for its real or imaginary extravagances.

"I intend to make it financially successful and tailored to The Beatles' own specifications," he said firmly.

Did this mean more staff cuts?

"That's not necessarily a requisite," said Mr Klein. "But when you get a lot of energy wasted, it doesn't make for an efficient organisation."

Did Apple plan to broaden their activities in the recording field?

"The Beatles don't intend to make it into another EMI. But they will continue to sign up artists they believe in – and concentrate on these. They had the foresight to sign up Billy Preston – you have to give George Harrison credit for that. And Paul

recorded Mary Hopkin.

"But I leave this side of Apple's activities to them; they leave the business to me."

Could Mr Klein's business activities with The Rolling Stones possible conflict with those of The Beatles? "There's no conflict," he said. "It just means I do two jobs in one day."

Certainly at present, Mr Klein has his hands full. Of his current assignment, he says: "You have no idea of the monumental task involved."

Mr Klein's job, in short, is to see that The Beatles get a fair share of the financial cake. For, as he says, "With everyone taking a little piece – there's not really

much left for them." As he puts it, after you filter a dollar through a limited company, and stockholders, and when the amount of money at the end is subject to a high tax rate, there isn't a lot left. As Mr Klein points out, a change in the tax law would ease the problem. But, at present, he is too busy with The Beatles' affairs to take on the Chancellor Of The Exchequer too! But we feel that that wouldn't even be beyond his capabilities. *Laurie Henshaw*



"John Lennon is probably one of the most commercially minded of them all"

After the Stones and the Beatles, will Allen Klein take on the Chancellor?

BELIEF, in some quarters, that the Beatles are like four little boys

Beatles Saviour or Svengali? So many

"Pete Townshend said, 'I'm gonna make you a star'"

NME JUNE 28 Introducing... Thunderclap Newman. At a gymkhana.



Thunderclap Newman: (l-r) John "Speedy" Keen, Andy "Thunderclap" Newman and Jimmy McCulloch

NOBODY REALLY EXPECTS anything connected with The Who to be quite normal, but with Thunderclap Newman Pete Townshend has come up with a gem. Apart from the group's fantastic progress in the *NME* chart this week, the members themselves are all exceptional. The contrast between 26-year-old Andy Newman, who resembles a cross between Burl Ives and the mad professor from a Hammer film, and Jimmy McCulloch, who stands 5ft nothing and is 10 years younger, is the biggest surprise.

Then there is John Keen – "Speedy" to all and sundry – who wears a scarf round his long hair, is an original looner and who writes most of the group's material. Finally, Jim Pitman-Avery, who has been drafted in lately as bass guitarist after a stint in strip clubs and American bases.

The group is resident in Hampshire in the mill where I lived during my country period. The Robin Hood up the road is the focal point of interest, plus Fred's riding school nearby. I met Andy at the pub, where he outlined the group's history for me.

"Townshend phoned me in November and said he would like to come and play with some other boys and make some film music," he began. "Later, he sent a letter about forming the group permanently. He said, 'I'm gonna make you a star,' and I thought, 'Oh yes, I've heard that one before.'"

Pete, Andy, Jimmy and Speedy recorded three tracks at Christmas time and the original plan was for them to be sent to Kit Lambert (The Who's

co-manager) as demos, then Pete decided to put "Something In The Air" out as a single later. "Before then I had been very semi-pro," Andy said. "I doubt if I earned more than a fiver. I always went in to play good music.

"Originally, I knew a friend called Rick Seaman, who went to Ealing Technical College. One day at a friend's house he heard me playing the piano and asked me to do some tapes. He sat with them on top of a bus going 'yeah, yeah'. He took them to the college and some got into Townshend's ears; that was before he formed The Who."

We drove in Andy's battered Volkswagen to the stables where an all-day gymkhana was in progress. Alan, the group's roadie, was entered in a couple of events, so the others had turned up to watch him. Or, more precisely, to laugh at him. Andy and I were greeted by Jill, the girl from the local grange, and her groom, aptly

named Miss Dobbin. They showed us where the refreshment tent was and in there we found Speedy propping up another girl.

"I knew Pete when he was in Detours, before The Who. He heard a few things I'd written and got me signed to Fabulous Music. One day, he just came up with the idea of putting Jimmy with Andy."

As he does most of the writing, Speedy is looked up to as musical leader, but he thinks of Andy as "sir". With Andy's size, that's a pretty sensible thing to do, anyway.

Jimmy, who could easily have stepped out of one of those Walt Disney films about the little people but whose ideas are far in advance of his size or age, wandered in. "Pete was going to put me out playing guitar and singing on my own," he revealed. "I had just packed up with my old band when I met Speedy. I started playing when I was 11 at old folk's gigs with my brother's band and I met Pete in Denmark Street one day and got talking to him."

Jim Avery has been with about 10,000 groups in his 21 years, among them The Attack, TNT and Freddie Mac. He and Speedy were songwriters for Essex Music, having known each other since the Ealing Tech days.

He met Speedy again one day in Kensington Market, was invited down to Hampshire and became part of Thunderclap Newman. Pete had played bass on the record and it didn't seem possible to tour with The Who and Newman.

By this time, Andy was sitting in the back of a van playing piano to a bunch of small girls. He was immensely enjoying himself and he broke off only to attempt to psychoanalyse me.

He became serious again and talked about the group's music. "On a gig, people will wonder why we don't sound like our records. The only way to get over this is to say, 'One policy for records and one for live performances.' You get a rapport with an audience, but you don't get it on a record."

The riding packed up for the day and nobody had taken much notice, except Tony Ashton of Ashton, Gardner & Dyke, who also used to be semi-resident at Thunderclap's mill. Tony has a wonderful habit of becoming unseated. Pete Townshend is going down to the place this week for discussions and rehearsals and, if things are going as they are, prepare the group for their first No 1. *Richard Green*

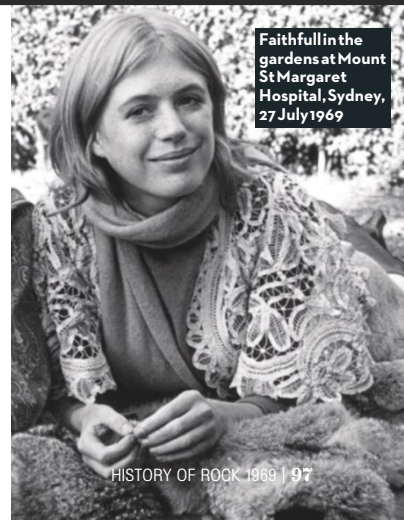
"I knew Pete when he was in Detours, before The Who"



"She is still very poorly"

MM July 19 Marianne Faithfull comes round after an apparent overdose.

MARIANNE FAITHFULL RECOVERED consciousness in a Sydney hospital on Monday after five days in a coma following a reported drug overdose last week. She had flown to Australia with Mick Jagger to co-star in the film *Ned Kelly*. Shortly after arriving at Sydney, she collapsed and was rushed to hospital, where for some time she could breathe only with artificial aid. On Monday, she sat up and spoke to Mick Jagger, who had visited her each day. "She is still very poorly but she is now breathing without artificial aids," said Mick. Marianne was to have played Mick's sister in the film, which tells the story of the notorious Australian robber who became a folk hero. She has been replaced in the film by 20-year-old actress Diane Craig, who went to Australia from Britain 10 years ago. Jagger has already filmed some scenes for the film. He has had his hair cut short and has worn a false beard for some of the scenes.



Faithfull in the gardens at Mount St Margaret Hospital, Sydney, 27 July 1969

America is calling for **LED ZEPPELIN**. The dress codes in Welsh ballrooms are a distant memory. Now, they're selling out Carnegie Hall as their campaign rolls profitably on. "It's a bit flash," says Jimmy Page of his plan to buy a White Rolls-Royce. "But I really fancy one."

"They wouldn't let the group in – we didn't have ties"

— NME MAY 10 —

THE SUCCESS OF Led Zeppelin is getting out of hand. The group that Jimmy Page formed when The Yardbirds collapsed about him has exceeded his wildest dreams. All they wanted was to play what they wanted to play, to have a hit album or two if they were lucky and for moderate successes here and on planned visits to America. Out of small ambitions has come overwhelming acceptance from the States, a first LP that soared to No 5 in the NME albums chart and packed audiences wherever they play in Britain.

"I'm just amazed," said the friendly, likeable Jimmy Page when we talked before the group left for its current US tour. "I never expected much to happen in England again and what has happened is beyond everyone's wildest hopes. Why? Because I thought that there were so many other good things happening here that people wouldn't be interested in Led Zeppelin."

Now the only disappointing thing for the group is that so many people are finding themselves unable to get in and see them at venues capacity-full. And, adds Jimmy, there are fans who have travelled miles from their hometowns to see them, and even more they've met who have been following the group around the country. Yet Jimmy refuses to accept that »

GETTY



The early Led Zeppelin:
(clockwise from left)
John Paul Jones,
Jimmy Page, Robert
Plant and John Bonham

they could be even bigger. I think he'll be proved wrong. We talked over beers in a pub and later in the group's publicist's office and took up our discussion from the last interview on the subject of British venues which, says Jimmy, are partly responsible for the big English group exodus to the States.

"Most places here, they just go to have a dance or to have a drink," he maintains. "Not to listen. They don't care who is on."

That quote prompted a letter from an *NME* reader in Newport agreeing with Jimmy's observations and stating that he had hitchhiked 15 miles to see Led Zeppelin in Cardiff. He had to queue for half an hour and then with 30 others was told he couldn't get in because he wasn't wearing the required shirt, tie and jacket.

"Yeah," said Jimmy, knowingly, when I told him. "It was at one of those lush, chandelier ballrooms and at first they wouldn't let the group in because they didn't have ties. Robert Plant and John Bonham had to call the manager to get in. If it had been me, I wouldn't have had anything to do with it. Then there was a bloke who had come miles to see us and they wouldn't let him in because he was wearing a cravat. Robert got him in."

A tale of our times, indeed, but there's more to come. "We'd been told that we'd have to do an exact 45-minute spot," continued Jimmy, "and if we went a minute over, that was it. So we cut it down and when we started the last number; if we'd been allowed to complete it, it would have over-run by six minutes. They turned on the revolving stage as we were playing and the DJ came round. The audience was whistling and booing," Jimmy shook his head sadly.

"It was a terrible shame because all they usually get in those places are Mickey Mouse groups and I'd played Cardiff before with The Yardbirds and they were great audiences. That sort of thing is just not fair to people who come along to see you. There would be more trouble in places like that if you played an encore than if you went offstage early. We won't be doing any more of them."

Happily, that was the only blot on their first round of live appearances in England which ended when the group returned to America for their second tour there, on four times more money than the first one. "And for a new group we went in for fantastic money then," said Jimmy with a justified gleam. A fact I gleaned from our chat was that it was Jimmy who was responsible for Jeff Beck joining The Yardbirds. It was in fact Jimmy, then one of the youngest session men

"What we play is music from the stomach rather than the head"

around, who was first asked to step in when Eric Clapton left.

"I was a bit ill, actually," he recalls. "I've never been that strong a person and I didn't fancy the idea of touring. So I said, 'No, but I do know the guy for you—Jeff Beck.'"

Jimmy and Jeff had been friends for years and later did team up for a period of The Yardbirds' lifespan before Beck left to form his own group. From session work with the likes of Tom Jones and Burt Bacharach to guitar with The Yardbirds and now Led Zeppelin is a curious transition, but it has served to give Jimmy a wider insight into all aspects of pop than some of his progressive contemporaries who might

be accused of a bigoted outlook.

Left Jimmy genuinely concerned about an earthquake which apparently had been forecast for San Francisco at the very time Led Zeppelin were due to play there. "Apparently the forces of fire and water are due to meet there then," said Jimmy, who wasn't treating it as a joking matter. Earthquakes permitting, the Zeppelin is now taking off. *Nick Logan*

— MELODY MAKER SEPTEMBER 13 —

LED ZEPPELIN AND the adjective "heavy" are practically synonymous. They were made for each other, and it's difficult to think of one without immediately associating it with the other. But rumour has it that the "heavy" scene is on the way out, to be replaced by some unspecified new fad—possibly the fusion of country with rock. How does Jimmy Page, ace guitarist with the Zeppelin, feel about it? I put the question to him recently during one of his all-too-short visits to London.

"I can't see the heavy thing going out," he replied. "Ever since the underground thing started a couple of years ago, people's tastes have been broadening. You can have a group like the Pentangle, who are into a light, folkly thing on one hand, and us on the other. The scene is broad enough to take us all in, and I don't see why that situation shouldn't continue."

Judging by the reaction to their most recent Stateside tour, with Jethro Tull, Jimmy's dead right. They did amazingly good business from coast to coast and, at one New York venue, 21,000 people turned up at an auditorium that could hold just 10,000. The promoter squeezed an extra 1,000 bodies inside, which left a mere 10,000 disappointed, and he then promptly offered the group 30,000 dollars to appear again two nights later. Unfortunately they had to refuse, through previous commitments.

CHRIS WALTERS



June 28, 1969: Led Zeppelin play an early slot at the Bath Festival Of Blues

They have also just received a gold disc for a million dollars' worth of sales for their first album, and as the new LP, *Led Zeppelin II*, already has advanced orders for 350,000 copies, they look like having two gold discs inside a very short space of time.

"It was tremendous in America," Jimmy told me. "We went down very well, and so did Jethro, particularly on the West Coast. I think the scene is very healthy at the moment. People have all kinds of records in their collection, and that's a very good thing. Like they may have albums by Crosby Stills & Nash, who are still basically a Top 40 thing, as well as us. I think that what we play is music from the stomach rather than the head, although it does come from the head, too.

"I don't get much time to listen to records in the States, but over here it's my way of relaxing. I listen mainly to guitar-dominated music, naturally, and I dig all kinds of things, including flamenco. Have you heard Manitas De Plata? He's ridiculous. That gypsy thing is fantastic."

It's widely realised that America is the group's main scene, and that's where they earn the most acclaim... plus hard cash, of course. Does Jimmy feel that British audiences aren't very rewarding by comparison?

"Britain is one of those places where you've got to make it, but it's a lot more difficult. Over here you feel you've got to knock yourself out before the people start listening to you, but in the States they listen from the start, and if they don't like you they simply don't come to see you again.

"But it's far from being a walkover for British groups in the States," Jimmy warned. "It's fatal for a group to go over there when it hasn't got its internal affairs sorted out. Jeff Beck, for instance, takes a new band every time he goes over there, so it's no wonder he's sick of the country.

"America couldn't be better for us at the moment. The scenes there are just incredible. The new system is to put groups on a percentage of the gate money, and we drew \$37,000 from one amazing gig in Los Angeles.

"When we formed the group a year ago and took it to America for the first time, I think it was my name that was the attraction, because I'd been there several times with The Yardbirds and we always did pretty well. The biggest problem with the new group was getting everyone's name across to the fans, and I think we'll probably spend six months of the year in America in the future. That sounds a lot, but people don't realise the size of the country. You can get lost there!

"I can't see this group ever getting stale, because new ideas are coming up all the time. The new album is so different from the first, and the next one will probably be just as different again. John plays organ, and we're going to use that on stage in future, and I play steel guitar, so that opens a lot of new musical doors for us. And then Robert is such a fantastic singer. Every time he sings a song his phrasing is different, which is very stimulating.

"I do jam occasionally in clubs, but you've got to know that it's going to be good before you start, otherwise it's not worth doing. I've seen so many really boring jams."

Jimmy and the band are currently taking a month's holiday before bringing another hectic session of travelling. When I saw him, Jimmy was trying to decide between hitching to Spain "to see some real flamenco guitarists" and going to the Isle of Elba to stay in a friend's villa. He is also looking out for a white Rolls-Royce – "I suppose it's a bit flash, but I really fancy one" – the only hang-up being that he can't drive. After the holiday, the Zeppelin will go into the studios to record their first serious single.

"Atlantic put out a single from the first album in the States, but it was never meant as a single. Jethro Tull have proved that a good single can get through, so we're going to try it. I don't see any reason why we can't cut a good two-and-a-half minute track, and a lot of the things on the new album are quite short – about four minutes. But they're really just frameworks for out stage performances, when we really stretch out."

Before his rise to fame with The Yardbirds and the Zeppelin, Jimmy was a top session man, playing on two and sometimes three different sessions a day. Would he ever consider going back to that life?

"Definitely not. It used to make me into a nervous wreck, and I'd enjoy perhaps one session every two months. But I do like doing things like Joe Cocker's album, where he knew just which musicians he wanted.

"I wouldn't mind doing that sort of thing, where the music's satisfying, but as for the rest... NO!" *Richard Williams*

— MELODY MAKER SEPTEMBER 27 —

AT FIRST SIGHT, 21-year-old Robert Plant's sudden rise to fame with Led Zeppelin might seem to have been a classic case of overnight success. In fact, it wasn't that way at all. Robert has known bad times and failure, when gigs were scarce and money »

Drive and intensity

MM Oct 25 Led Zep kick off a fourth US tour in fine style.

THERE IS A sustained excitement about a Led Zeppelin performance I do not recall in any other group – apart from The Who. With most bands there are ups and downs, moments of boredom and bad playing, and that was true even of Cream in their heyday. But Zeppelin play their marathon sets, which often run well over two hours, with a drive and intensity that demands your attention.

And they have a sense of the dramatic and a professionalism that leaves the impression of reserves of ideas and power. They play hard, fast and furious. But they are in control.

From the moment of their 8.30pm kick-off at Carnegie Hall, I stood in the wings fascinated for the duration of their act by their playing and by the reaction of New York fans. A huge cheer greeted them as Robert ran on stage dressed in black, followed by Jimmy in white satin trousers, John Bonham in a leather hat and John Paul Jones in red.

A battering snare drum intro to "Communication Breakdown" made me blink and the sexy guitar sound of "I Can't Quit You" made me wince. Robert and Jimmy between them produce vocal and guitar screams that had the audience wriggling in their seats. The boys as well as the girls were soon leaping to their feet, grabbing at Zeppelin to shake hands in congratulation. The whole bright, plush hall seemed filled with kids who loved everything they did, from the roof to the front rows.

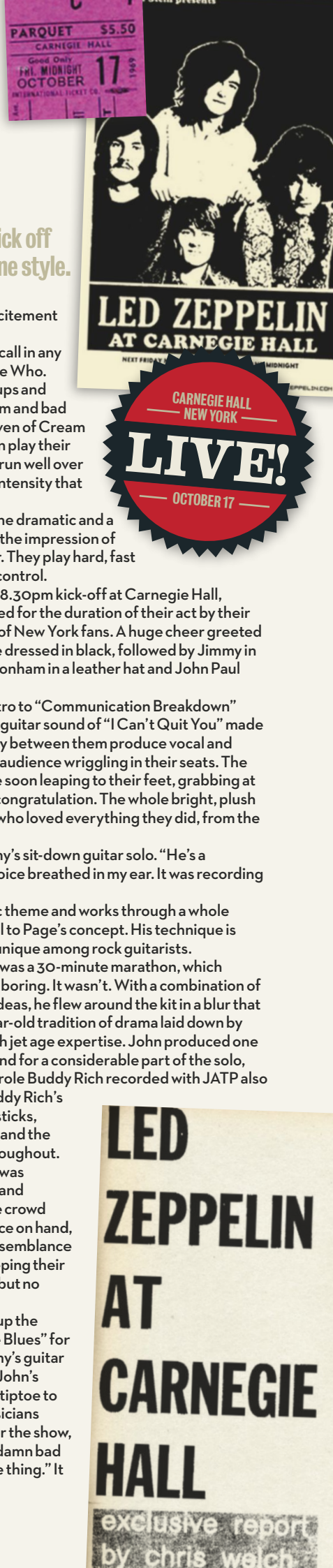
Silence prevailed for Jimmy's sit-down guitar solo. "He's a masterful guitar player," a voice breathed in my ear. It was recording engineer Eddie Kramer.

The solo starts with a basic theme and works through a whole gamut of ideas which appeal to Page's concept. His technique is remarkable and his taste is unique among rock guitarists.

John Bonham's drum solo was a 30-minute marathon, which sounds as if it would be very boring. It wasn't. With a combination of speed, brute strength and ideas, he flew around the kit in a blur that remained true to the 30-year-old tradition of drama laid down by Krupa on the same spot, with jet age expertise. John produced one blockbuster after another and for a considerable part of the solo, maintained the high-speed role Buddy Rich recorded with JATP also at Carnegie Hall called "Buddy Rich's Explosion". He played with sticks, beaters and even his hands, and the applause came in bursts throughout.

After this the atmosphere was electric and as Robert leapt and gyrated across the stage the crowd erupted. There were no police on hand, but the ushers maintained a semblance of order and goodwill by keeping their cool. There was excitement but no unpleasant incidents.

John Paul Jones' bass set up the driving riff of "Summertime Blues" for the obligatory encore, Jimmy's guitar cut through the thunder of John's drums and Robert stood on tiptoe to sing his head off. As the musicians fanned out across town after the show, somebody said, "It was too damn bad they didn't record the whole thing." It was me, actually. *Chris Welch*



practically nonexistent. When he received the offer from Jimmy Page that resulted in his joining the Zeppelin, he was at a particularly low ebb.

"My band was breaking up and I didn't know where to go next," he says, "and then I got a call from Jimmy which changed everything."

Robert is from Birmingham, and became interested in the blues while at school. "I was turned on to the blues by a guy named Perry Foster, who I later learned was involved with The Yardbirds in their early days, before Keith Relf joined them.

"I played kazoo and washboard in the sort of bands which, if they had been raised in London instead of Birmingham, would probably have become The Rolling Stones. We used to do the whole country-blues thing: Memphis Minnie, Bukka White and Skip James numbers, which at that time, about six years ago, were really deep blues – and they are now, too. This sort of music turned my mind to the ideal that I could really express myself through the medium of the blues. I had a certain freedom, and while other singers were copying all the pop records, I could get up and sing blues with any group.

"The Band Of Joy was really a launching pad for my ideas and my theories about music. I liked Buddy Guy very much – things like 'First Time I Met The Blues' – and that rough sound, coming after Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon on those old Pye albums, really was devastating.

"Anyway, slightly later on, my manager got me some acetates of unreleased material from the States, things like Buffalo Springfield. That made me realise that crash-bang music, for want of a better word, could be combined with meaningful, beautiful lyrics, and it was a big pointer for me. You know the Springfield's 'Bluebird'? That's the sort of thing I mean.

"Then everyone began boosting the Cream up as the greatest thing in the world. But I couldn't see it. I'd rather listen to The Youngbloods or Poco, who maybe aren't the greatest musicians, than to a virtuoso like Ginger Baker.

"Then the Band Of Joy began to crumble up, and all my hopes started to vanish. I worked with Alexis Korner occasionally, in a band with Steve Miller on piano, and had a wonderful time. Then Terry Reid told me that Keith Relf had left The Yardbirds, but although I respected them very much for their own originality I didn't know that our ideas were on the same lines.

"Jimmy Page and Peter Grant, our manager, came up to see me in Birmingham when I was with a group and trying to invade Smethwick with the West Coast sound! They suggested I go to Jimmy's house for a few days to see if we got on together and it was fantastic because I rummaged through his record collection and every album I pulled out was something I really dug. I knew then that we'd click.

"Nobody in Britain wanted to know us, but Jimmy told us it'd be different in the States. The first time we went we started off right down the bill on the West Coast, but by the time we got over to the East, we were at the top. I was very nervous when we started off, because everything I'd done previously had more or less been a failure. The first album was done in a hurry, and we were all feeling our way around the group. Now, as we get more familiar with each other, better things will come."

Robert is noted for the ferocity and violence of his voice, and for the power he needs to carry it over the rest of the band.

"The voice really started developing when I was 15, and we were singing Tommy McClennan numbers and so forth. I don't really know why it's as powerful as it is. After the first album, I concentrated on developing the range of my voice, and on developing it so that I can do more things. I'm very hung up on the songs of Moby Grape and Arthur Lee, of Love. That's nice stuff, and I'm beginning to write in that sort of style. This group has really woken me up from inertia.

Years and years with no success can keep you singing, but it can bring you down an awful lot." *Richard Williams*

— MM OCTOBER 29 —

LED ZEPPELIN EXPLODED over New York last weekend. And the *MM* was there for two sensational shows at the world-

famous Carnegie Hall. Young New Yorkers went wild for the group led by guitar giant Jimmy Page, which in less than a year has conquered the American rock scene.

Fans leapt on stage to grab lead singer Robert Plant as Zeppelin piled climax after climax during two-hour-plus shows that went on until after 2am. With their first album scheduled to become Platinum and their second a Gold before it has even been released, Zeppelin have proved that English bands are still all-powerful in the States. And they have achieved their success with a high degree of musicianship, devoted to hard work and a magic that has converted both hard-rock aficionados and screamers.

Carnegie Hall was the prestige debut of Zeppelin's fourth tour of America this year, which will take them to Detroit, Chicago and Boston... all the way to California. Said an exhausted but happy Page post-Carnegie, "I never expected anything like the success we have had when we started the group. Our following here is huge – they travel miles to see us. And that's really encouraging."

Zeppelin began when Jimmy, tall, skinny, with a lopsided flowing hairstyle, and one-time session man supreme, quit The Yardbirds at the end of last year. He gathered around him a tough team of unknowns – Robert Plant (vocals), John Paul Jones (bass, organ) and John Bonham (drums). Initial reaction to the news of their formation was: "It's going to be just another band." From their first gigs and later their first album, the truth dawned – a monster group had appeared in our midst.

Our Zeppelin flight to America began on Thursday last week. It was my first trip to the States, some days having been spent being inoculated against smallpox and communism. Robert Plant and John were to be met at Euston Station from Birmingham. I clutched my passport and my tickets and a box of harmonicas for Robert, waiting for them to emerge from the grey mass of commuters.

The train was late, but Robert and John appeared filled with the cheeriness of musicians on their way to earn a few dollars more – a few hundred thousand dollars, to be precise. A car took us to London Airport and on

the way Robert Plant chatted merrily. "I think a lot of people have been against us for some reason. I just can't understand it, but they say we are a made-up, manufactured group because we are successful right away. But we just got together in the same way all groups get together. I don't see how some magazines can call us 'hype'.

"When we went over to America for the first time last Christmas we found we weren't even billed and we got a bit depressed. But Atlantic Records began pushing our LPs to the towns where we were due to play, so people heard us before we arrived. People were ready to accept us from the album and it was up to us to prove ourselves on stage. From then on it just grew."

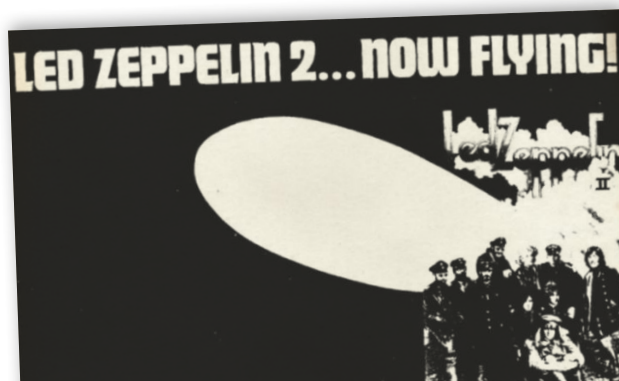
When will Zeppelin's next album be released and how different is it from the first? "It could be out now, but the artwork has been held up in England, it's such a drag. But it should be out in America next week," said Robert.

"The tracks were done all over the place, in Los Angeles, New York and London. On one number I put the vocals on a backing track that had been recorded in Atlantic Studios in New York in a hut in Vancouver. It's hard to say how different it is from the first but you can distinguish the two and the songs are better. The band is better together. We have been together longer. The expectation is still there and we are planning to do some quieter songs, which can be equally effective as groups like Fairport Convention prove."

Robert Plant was knocked out when they gave him a copy of Paul Oliver's *Story Of The Blues*, a fascinating document which kept him engrossed for the seven-hour TWA flight.

Crossing the Atlantic by Boeing 707 was not nearly as boring as I had feared. With a colour movie to watch and six channels of stereo music to choose, plus the delights of first-class eating and drinking heightened the excitement of a personal discovery of America. Filled with fearful tales of violence, I was determined to have an open mind and accept America as it happened. And like Led Zeppelin – America was a gas, too. Huge buildings, big cars, neon and speed – you've seen it on documentaries,

"The first album was done in a hurry... feeling our way"





"Our following here is huge"; Zep reflect on their stateside success at the Chateau Marmont Hotel, Los Angeles, 1969

and it's all there, 3,500 miles from home, but strangely familiar. We drove to the Hilton Hotel, and as it was late I stayed in my room, watching TV and heeding the warning notices to bolt my door against intruders.

Robbers hide in lifts, cupboards, toilets, anywhere, to spring upon the unsuspecting, but I had no unpleasant experiences to jaundice my view of the States. Watching New York's appalling TV service, which beams little better than *Dr Kildare*, *The Monkees*, *Archies* and *Krazy Kat* on eight channels around the clock, was an instant bring-down.

The toughness of the city was offset by the people's genuine concern and involvement with the Moratorium on Vietnam and the election of a new mayor. The glumness of the passing pedestrian not wanting to get "involved" was offset by the warmth and spontaneity of the young fans' reaction to Zeppelin in concert.

Friday was spent on a visit to the Atlantic Studios, where I watched Les McCann recording an album and met Dr John Creaux of "Night Tripper" fame. All at Atlantic were buzzing with excitement at Zeppelin's visit, busy inflating rubber Led Zeppelins made in Japan. I heard people almost shouting, "Led Zeppelin and The Who are the two biggest acts in America. It's like The Monkees never existed." It was revealed that the group were due to get something like \$15,000 per night against a percentage of the gate, which could bring them \$20,000 a night for 14 days.

And the excitement increased as zero hour for the first concert approached. Carnegie Hall... My first LP bought at the age of 15 was Benny Goodman's Carnegie Hall 1938 concert. Listening to Gene Krupa on drums turned me on to jazz... And 10 years later, here was I standing on the stage where "Sing, Sing, Sing" was recorded.

"This is it, lads," said John Bonham, eyeing his drum kit as the audience took their seats. "Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich – they've all played here. So I'd better be good tonight!"

Quite a few British faces turned up to cheer on our lads and drink their champagne in the dressing room. Chris Wood of Traffic, who had been working with Dr John, appeared at my side in the wings, and Screaming Lord Sutch in a yellow jacket and wearing a Barking Britain badge amazed me with his news and gossip. At 8.30pm the first concert began. There were no other groups on the bill. It was all down to the Zeppelin for two hours.

I was frankly amazed at the reaction. Later in a Jewish delicatessen on Sixth Avenue I asked Robert and Jimmy about it all. "You should see the

kids in Boston or Detroit," said Robert, drenched in sweat and blemished with an unfortunate rash that broke out during the first set. You can control the audience if you are reasonable with them and don't chuck them off stage too violently."

Said good-looking, quietly spoken John Paul Jones, "We played over three hours without a break in Boston once. You get to the stage when you don't want to get off stage!"

Said Jimmy, "After doing such a long show you don't really feel like repeating it the same evening, especially after a long flight. But nervous energy sustains you."

WHY has Zeppelin been such a success? "Everybody in the group is strong. It's not like some groups where you have one stand-out and the rest are passengers. When people see our shows, they can come back again and find out some different facet of our ability. John Paul Jones, for example, is playing amazing bass things – he's frightening."

Jimmy's great solo instrumental feature is on "White Summer". "There are all different bits in it. There's 'Black Mountain' off the first album and I just play – improvise until enthusiasm lags. It's the sort of thing I sit at home and play all night on an acoustic. There are Indian and folk influences in 'White Summer', which gives you a chance to show you can play all sorts of things as well as the blues. Somebody in the audience offered me a bottle of champagne after I played it – and that's how involved they are in music over here. They are involved in England as well, but they don't make it so apparent."

Zeppelin and their management team left New York the next day for Detroit and I stayed on the creep about Fifth Avenue, one eye sightseeing and the other looking out for your friendly neighbourhood murderer. But the only terror incident came when I sat in a Cadillac outside the Hilton, waiting for my chauffeur to take me to the airport.

The wizened face of an old lady poked her head through the window. Warning messages screamed through my head (remember, friend, when driving in New York always secure your windows and doors).

"Are you rich?" demanded the lady, making a curious gesture with her fingers and nose.

"Well, er, no," I stuttered.

"Huh – gotta be a limey." And she stumped off without even trying to rape me. *Chris Welch* •

1969

JULY – SEPTEMBER

“We haven’t stopped working for months”

After Hyde Park, “Honky Tonk Women” tops the charts, and Keith, Mick, Charlie Watts and Mick Taylor reflect on their recent achievements. Soon, a new **ROLLING STONES** album – and maybe a second – is due. It will be “like *Beggars Banquet*”, says Keith, “only heavier”.

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October 1969: in a rented house in L.A., Keith Richards and Mick Jagger check proofs for the *Let It Bleed* cover with Alan Steckler (far left), who works for their manager Allen Klein

— MELODY MAKER JULY 19 —

MICK TAYLOR is a soft-spoken youth with a quiet calm, and a kind of lazy independence that makes it difficult to assess his true feelings, until a burst of enthusiasm bubbles to the surface. Perhaps he is still a little dazed and unsure of his situation in being escalated from the ranks into one of the world's top groups – The Rolling Stones.

A few weeks ago he was known to fans as the guitarist who had stayed longest with John Mayall following in the footsteps of Clapton and Green. He was a steady, solid musician, popular for performances like “Snowy Wood” and able to fit in with any of Mayall's bands, from *Crusade* to *Bare Wires*. Then came a call from Mick Jagger and he was on the front pages and much in demand by a press who hailed him as “an unknown”.

Since the summons to stardom, Mick has recorded some album tracks with the Stones and made the historic appearance with them in Hyde Park. But now there is a 10 week lay-off while Mick Jagger is filming in Australia. How will Taylor fill in time?

“I want to get a flat in London, and then go to America,” Mick told me this week, hair drifting over his ears, a handbag slung over his shoulder, à la John Peel. “I’ve got a lot of friends in America and I really enjoy being on the West Coast. It’s not a nice place to live permanently, but it’s a very creative environment for a musician. I haven’t got any plans to record there at the moment – it’ll be more of a holiday really.

“Yes, I feel I am a Rolling Stone now. I didn’t at first. It wasn’t like being part of the group until we did that concert in the park. I’ve done quite a bit of recording with them now, and I’m playing what I want to play. I don’t want to play solos all the time – I like to play songs. I agree the only thing you could really hear in the park was the PA system, and of course Mick was in a bit of a state beforehand. We want to do a tour next, probably a world tour in the autumn.”

Would Mick like to do some things on his own? A smile. “Next year – as soon as I get some time. I don’t want to form a band – just get some session musicians – people I know. I’ve never been the leader of a group, and anyway, I think musicians should work in cooperation. In a group, everybody’s ideas should be considered.

“I enjoyed working with John [Mayall], but he is a hard man to work for. For the last six months I was in his group, I knew I shouldn’t have been there. It didn’t feel right.

“I’ve got to get my own playing together. It’s not so much a case of getting away from the blues, but there are so many other things I like. I want to get into playing acoustic guitar. It’s such a moving sound. I like John Williams very much and I thought of ringing him up to ask for tuition, but I don’t know if I’ve got the nerve.” Another smile.

“I’d like to record a solo album and get Henry Lowther to do the arrangements. He isn’t just a great trumpet player – he’s a good arranger and composer.”

Mick firmly decided on his next course of action – cat catching and flat hunting.

— NME JULY 26 —

TWELVE THOUSAND MILES, nine hours and a different day separate us as we talk with Mick Jagger. Here in London it is 9.30 in the evening, hot and humid... Halfway across the world, in Australia’s outback, it is 6.30 the “next” morning – with a mist up! A red, very red, mist; coloured by the psychedelic-gore of what Mick describes as “the amazing

sunrises we get here.” Jagger has been up since five... that is the drill! Hands off locks, feet in socks – at five! Sharp!

Mick is on location filming the controversial title role of thug, bushranger, murderer – Ned Kelly. There has been so much bitching, backbiting, biased rubbish because a Pommie plays the great anti-hero of Australian history that one is forced to cogitate how Charlton Heston escaped a Papal Encyclical for playing Jesus Christ! But then, producer Tony Richardson has been presented with publicity lineage it would be hard to buy on a global basis.

Jagger is excited about “Honky Tonk Women” and its chart success. He says, “Nice to hear out here; nice to know that people really like the Stones music – NOW! There have been other No 1s – but at this time it has special significance.”

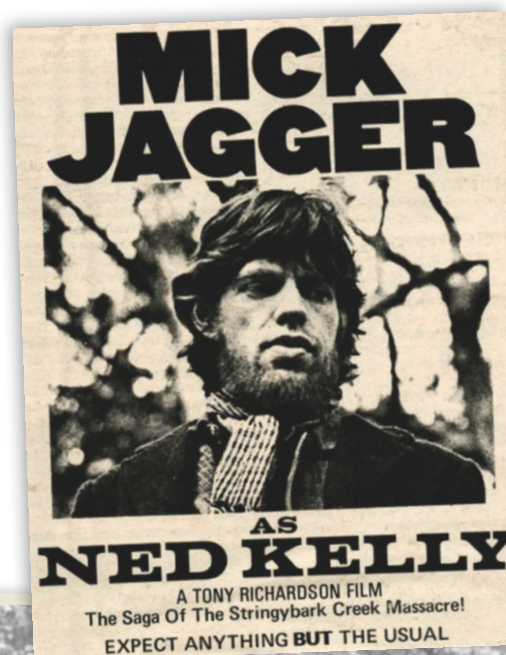
Then he returns to his present whereabouts. “Mount Fairy-area is miles from nowhere,” he declares. “I live in a farmhouse. We have gum trees, kangaroos, cockatoos, spidery anteaters and a load of birds who set up an almost revolting din...”

Life is pretty Spartan: “...but I’m feeling amazingly healthy and I’ve put in a lot of horse riding.”

Ned Kelly was a master of the rough-equine art. He was a Mark II (though any Aussie will kill you for the thought) version of the great Ben Hall. Big Ben had set the pattern; a bushranger who wore armour and was shot 15 years before Kelly was hanged. Kelly took the style and caught the historians’ fancy.

The armour? “I’ve seen mine – 10 minutes ago,” went on Mick. “God, it’s heavy... bloody heavy. I think I’ll be able to walk in it... just!”

Mick has been putting in time practising shooting.



Mick Taylor (second left) becomes part of the gang: “I want to get into playing acoustic guitar”



"I'm hitting the target," he says. This is no small beer, because the rifles and pistols are muzzle-loaders and shooting straight isn't so easy with them. "Mid-19th century... all good authentic stuff," laughs Jagger.

Each day, before he starts work, Mick makes a rough-tough Jeep ride of 28 miles to a waterfall, further out, which Tony Richardson has chosen as the set for Kelly's "hideout" location shots.

"It's an uncomfortable ride, over terrible terrain. One aches in every limb after it."

But amid the filming, one facet of Mick's musical life is showing a plus entry—his guitar playing. For, when day is done, there is nowt else to do but play away the evening. "I play until I fall asleep," Mick told us.

Which filming sequence has been the most interesting to date? "Well," his laugh reverberated halfway across the world—as if he was chuckling into a water main pipe, such was the top-echo on his voice, "there was the hanging scene! Jagger hung! That should please someone, somewhere!"

His voice has a more serious tenor: "The scene was shot in Melbourne Jail. The same 'nick' where Ned Kelly, and hundreds more, were 'topped'. It is left empty now. Horrific! That place is just allowed to stand... Ugh!"

What, we ask, about the reports of "fuzz" anti-Jagger feeling, because he and Tony Richardson used the liquor-dry police canteen (adjoining the jail) and were given a special dispensation for white wine with their meal?

"There was no needle from the coppers—in fact some joined us in a glass of our wine. But... you know how it is... a 'dead' day and someone has to have a story. Whatever it is!"

And his next major interest project in the film? He thinks: "... Er, next week I start killing the police!... However, in the meantime, the Canberra fuzz kindly extended an invite to me to be their guest at the police ball! Pity I shall be working."

But one incident we would love to witness. It is the preparatory lessons before Ned-Michael-Philip-Jagger-Kelly goes in front of the camera to trip the light fantastic (and dance). Can you imagine? Mr Anti-Establishment-Jagger learning Irish dance steps. Lord Above Us! As if there hadn't been enough vocal flak about his Ned Kelly role, without invoking the wrath of the IRA for a possible accusation of allegedly anglicising THE jig!

— MELODY MAKER AUGUST 2 —

SO THE STONES are No 1—and Charlie Watts goes rolling on. Cheerful, honest, sometimes blunt, never pretentious, Charlie stays much the same whatever cataclysmic events are crashing around his head. While policemen, Australians and journalists work themselves up to fever pitch on the subject of the Stones (Rolling), Mr Watts remains cool, amused, and only very occasionally annoyed.

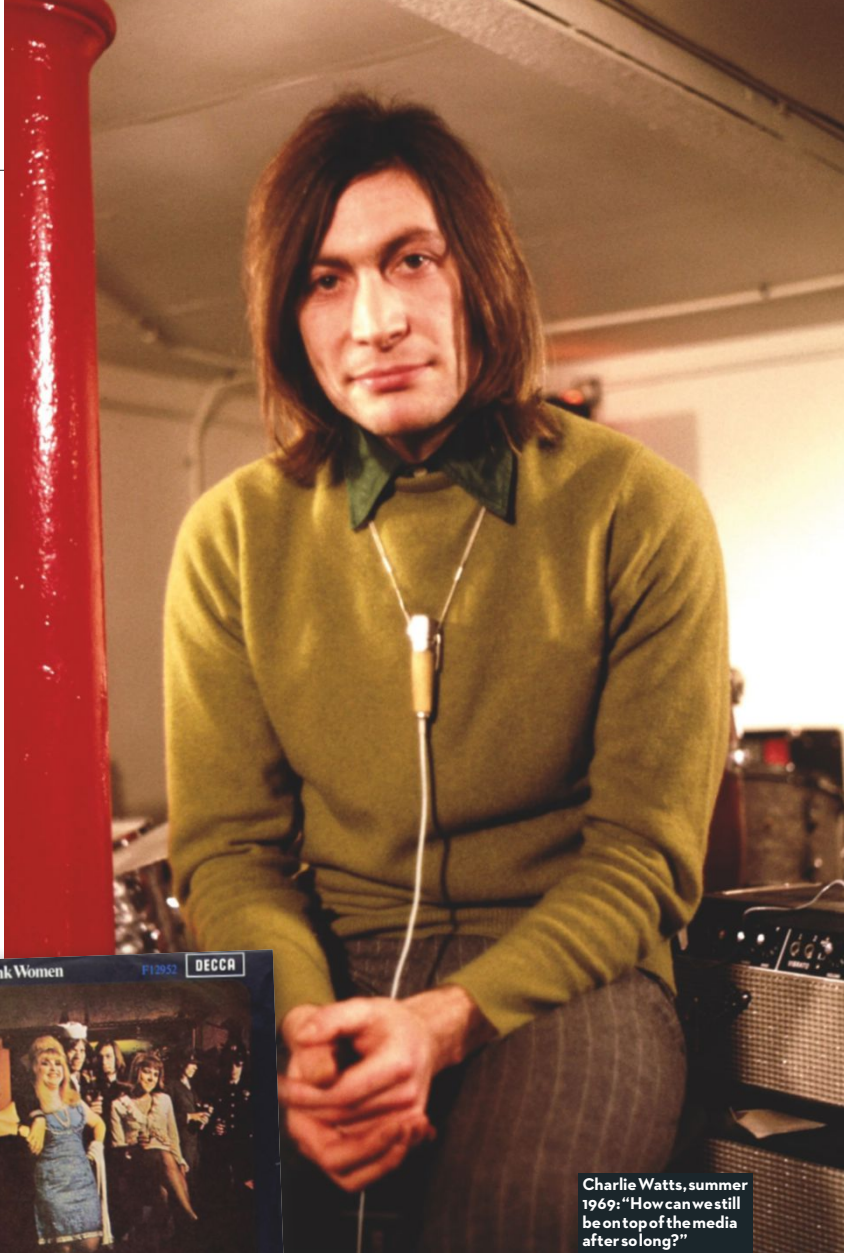
Charlie came up to London from his country retreat on Monday to see me, which was nice, because as he said: "Fancy coming all the way up here for this."

The conversation, helped along with South African sunflower seeds, cups of tea, cigarettes and sandwiches, ranged casually over a wide range of topics, from Mick Taylor to Phil Seamen. Yet, somehow, everything seemed connected. People Charlie admires... things the Stones are doing... going back on the road again... a mixture of appreciation for creative people and pride in the Stones' own role in creating pleasure for others.

Things genuinely appeal to him—phoniness is a bore. "Have you heard the Clarke-Boland Big Band album?" he inquired as he entered the room in a sharp leather jacket and a surprisingly short haircut. In fact he looked extremely well, as did Bill Wyman, who was also floating about.

"Has Mick Taylor got a flat yet?" he asked one of the staff. "Mick doesn't know what he's doing." A smile, a light for a cigarette, and a signature for a telephone bill.

"I thought
'Sympathy For
The Devil'
turned out a
bit of a fiasco"



Charlie Watts, summer 1969: "How can we still be on top of the media after so long?"

How was Mick Taylor fitting into the Stones? "I'd never seen him play before and when Mick asked me what I thought of him we listened to some of his records. But it was more of a personality thing. We wanted someone we could get on with and he got on well with Keith. I mean, I can play with him on drums, but it's different for two guitarists. He's done a couple of things on the album, which is finished. How different is it? Well, it was a better play. It's great—I think. Better than *Beggars Banquet*. Jimmy Miller was the producer and he's great. He's got a good pair of ears.

"I can't tell you what's on the album yet, because it's like arguments. Nobody has said which tracks are going to be on it yet, but there are some nice songs. We haven't stopped working for eight months—mostly recording and doing funny things. Hyde Park was the end of the working period. I suppose it was a long day if you were in the audience, but for us it was just on and off. I enjoyed the play. I had reservations about doing it at first, because it was going to be in the open air and I've done that before, and you lose all the sound.

"I was worried about the sound, but that guy, the compere—what's his name? A smashing guy—Sam Cutler—he said it was better because we had the canopy over the stage, which Blind Faith didn't have. I thought 'Sympathy For The Devil' turned out a bit of a fiasco. Mick wondered what to do for an ending, and I knew an excellent drummer called Remi Kabaka. He never actually showed, but we got Ginger Johnson's African drummers, who are great."

It seems the Stones have never been busier this year. Had they all been seized by fresh enthusiasm?

"It was a quiet time last year, apart from a couple of busts," agreed Charlie. "I suppose »

1969

JULY – SEPTEMBER



Keith Richards in July 1969: "Musicians with me all the time – Taj Mahal, Dr John, Led Zeppelin, Blind Faith..."

there has been a renewed enthusiasm. A 'we've got to play' bug went around, which is quite nice. Things seem to be working out nicely. Mick Taylor coming has made it easier because it was getting quite hard on Keith. It's OK for me, I can sit back and play the drums, but that's not making records. Keith and Mick have got to do the directing and Mick Taylor is really a help.

"He's much better than we've used him so far. He's only played on four tracks, but he's free to play what he wants. He hasn't had a chance to do as well as he's going to do.

"Everybody keeps on saying what a good face he's got... I suppose he has. Will he stay? He might get fed up after a while. He might be a genius. I don't know. I see no reason why he shouldn't stay. He can do what he wants with us, anyway."

How did Charlie feel about the Stones playing to a quarter of a million people at the Hyde Park concert? How did he feel about their huge popularity after such a long time?

"Everybody was expecting a lot to turn up. I never quite believe figures, but it was fantastic when we walked on stage and saw them all. It was an amazing sight. Somebody said he thought the armoured van we arrived in was a bit drastic. A sense of power? I was never into that. Being No 1 still surprises me. How can we still be on top of the media after so long?

"Mick is very good at getting on top of medias. I'm not at all. If you don't do a thing like the Hyde Park concert, you tend to think your popularity is 90 per cent hustle. But then you see all those people and you realise perhaps it's 40 per cent hustle and 60 per cent people really liking you. You do regular things – make a product and go on TV looking nice to sell it, but you feel it's not real. But when you do a free concert, you think maybe people really do like you."

What's happened to the *Rock And Roll Circus* TV show the Stones filmed some months ago?

"I hope it will be shown. Everything is finished. The thing was, everybody in it was good, but we didn't like our bits. It wasn't filmed as well as we wanted, because we were at it all day and the film crews were tired by the

"Mick Taylor coming in has made it easier – it was getting hard on Keith"

time we went on at 1am. It's a bloody shame the film is just sitting around, because it should have been out four months ago. It's really a good film. The bad bits were our link-ups between acts with us saying, "And now we present..." I'm a total embarrassment. That's why MGM have never offered me a part – the voice doesn't happen.

"We were supposed to go to Rome to finish it off and we were all set to go. But somebody goofed and said we were doing a SHOW at the Colosseum and the Rome authorities said, 'Blimey, it's a show.' It's alright to have Michael Caine running up the steps making a film."

Will the Stones really go on the road again?

"It will happen. I don't know when. Bill, do you

think we'll do a tour? If we do anywhere, we'll do England and I expect we'll do America as well, which will make it a long tour. I only say I don't like touring because I hate living out of suitcases.

"Looking back, we always had fun on tours. Sometimes it could be boring, but we were lucky that we all liked each other. We were lucky personality-wise." *Chris Welch*

— NME AUGUST 9 —

A PART FROM THE occasional glimpse of a Stone and the awareness that any minute anything might happen, the Rolling Stones' office is much like anybody's office. Pleasant, chatty girls fetching tea; white-shirted, sober-suited men with sleeves rolled up, one with short spiky hair who might have been the daddy of a skinhead. I was waiting for Keith Richard.

Mick Taylor, being interviewed in the boardroom, sauntered out in a crumpled white garment like a nightshirt, mumbled a semi-surly "Hello" and passed into the next room. Bill Wyman made a colourful appearance preceded by the long blonde Astrid, collected messages at reception and dispersed into the inner sanctum.

Today's

A PART from the occasional thing might happen, chatty girls fetching with short spiky hair with Keith Richard.

"Would I like to wait in the boardroom?"

Mick, having met enough press for the day, was in there also waiting for Keith and playing the Delaney & Bonnie LP so low it was barely audible. "No, interviews don't bother me," said Mick, adopting a sitting position of knees tucked under chin. But not the nationals. "They're so unaware of what's going on," he grimaced. "All they're after is scandal."

Bill wandered in and Mick wanted to know if Charlie was back from Greece.

"Yeah, he phoned me the other night. What did Charlie phone for? Astrid? Astrid. ASTRID. Yeah, that's right, he'd got his house insured by some bloke who was good and he thought I might want to use him." House insurance? Can The Rolling Stones be ordinary mortals after all?

When Bill left to good-natured Taylor jibes of "Going to do some gardening?", Mick speculated on a lengthy wait for Keith and was about to air his views on skinheads when in roared a beaming figure in a wide-brimmed black hat, purple vest and green trousers. "I'm all bombed out," announced the unshaven Keith a little breathlessly after descending forcefully on a chair.

Stonelike pleasantries were exchanged by the two Stones and recording sessions were arranged. "Have you spoken to Mick?" asked Mick on a parting note. "Yeah, he's bored stiff. There's nothing to do there and he wants to be back."

A KEITH RICHARD INTERVIEW is a rare occurrence, as it is almost two years since he last bared his mind to the press. Why? "I just couldn't take seeing the same people."

Then why now?

"Being away from them for long enough. There were so many things that happened in-between that stopped us all getting into things again. I even wanted to get away from my guitar in 1967. I love it again now; music is with me all the time. I listen to as much as I can."

Who to?

"Taj Mahal. Dr John. Led Zeppelin. Blind Faith. Everything is becoming more and more mixed, barriers are falling away. Like Johnny Winter's as white as they come but when I first heard him I was convinced the sound was something from Chicago. The divisions in music get less and less every year."

We were facing each other across the boardroom table, Keith behind his blue-tinted circular glasses having me at a disadvantage because I couldn't gauge reaction from his eyes. Though his mood was mostly friendly, at some questions I felt him fixing a disapproving glare. But because the lenses had a mirror effect when viewed face on, all I could see was the reflection of a colourful bowl of fruit.

"Hyde Park? Yeah," he smiled. "I can't stop dreaming about it. It had to be the biggest crowd I've ever seen. They were the stars of the show: like some massive religious gathering on the shores of the Ganges. I was a bit shaky at first, but then I started enjoying myself and it was just like it was two years ago."

I prefaced a question with the Stones' observations that they didn't want screamers and Keith interrupted to correct me: "I have always dug them. If people want to listen and they are all sitting there quietly I will concentrate on playing and give them something for their ears. But if they are screaming I will forget about solos and just hit it. An artist feeds off an audience and vice versa. Also I think that one of the reasons people go to those shows is to lose a bit of energy."

It has fallen on Keith to be the chief Stone spokesman while Jagger is away entertaining Australia. Though Keith's content to do it now, the brunt of interview work will fall back on Mick when he returns. Does Keith think he could take the kind of stick Mick has had to take from the press in recent years?

"In a way, if it happens to Mick, it happens to me anyway," he replied, and I could see the reflection of the fruitbowl coming up. "I don't give a \$£!"

"The future? We all have our visions of playing in our wheelchairs"

What effect does it have on Mick?

"He usually laughs. When you think about it, there is nothing you can do. And to bother to fight about every little detail... well... They know they are making you appear an even more glamorous person to a certain public no matter what they write. You know, the old bit about any publicity is good publicity."

"We just do what we want to and it is funny to see what things we do that they pick up on and splash across the headlines. I think the way they treated Brian was terrible... you know, mentioning drugs the first thing... but that was mainly the Sundays."

I suggested that maybe the Stones went out of their way to be provocative and enjoyed the response, citing Mick, who I imagine had a ball in Australia choosing a different outfit each day to stun the staid Aussies.

"Yeah, Mick does do that," agreed Keith, smiling, then more serious. "They were like vultures over Marianne. When I spoke to Mick, I knew she wasn't as serious as she was made out to be. I guess in a way he is having a ball."

When Mr Jagger returns from being Mr Kelly, the Stones will have enough finished material to stock two LPs. Working title of the first album is *Sticky Fingers* and Keith comments, "I think it is the best stuff we have done so far. It is like a progression from *Beggars Banquet*, only heavier."

We digressed to talking about "Satisfaction" and I was fascinated to learn that at first Keith didn't like the song many consider to be the Stones' finest single achievement. It wasn't until Mick had played it to him "for ages" that Keith got to like it. Further sidetracking took us into the influence the music of The Band had on *Beggars Banquet*. Keith was friendly and responsive.

"Yes, I suppose I am in a more peaceful frame of mind than I was two or three years ago. But I don't know how I will be when we get back to touring – probably biffing photographers on the nose again, with people holding me back. Everything was violence then."

Violence came up again later when we talked about youth and the police. "A lot of kids don't want to live the same sort of lives as their parents, and their parents don't recognise their right to choose a different life because they are so conditioned. But things are going to change, because it is now like two forces, with youth on one side, and both are getting bigger and stronger."

"I don't like the way police attitudes have changed. They are getting new power and it is growing at an alarming rate, because once something is that big it wants to get bigger. It is becoming a social police, more and more concerned with how you live. Clashes have happened already in America and the police are really loading themselves up with hardware."

Where do the Stones fit in? "We are just up there shouting with everybody else."

What for? "Who knows – nobody can really say. Just not this. People cannot afford to be intolerant any more."

Keith is now 25 and has moved to a new house in Chelsea near Mick Jagger's, where the child Anita Pallenberg will present him with next month will grow up.

"How will I bring it up? I do have ideas but I don't want to talk about them yet. Brian? I could talk about Brian, but I don't want to; not yet. It's too close."

"The future? I don't think about it," he laughed. "We all have our visions of playing in our wheelchairs. I don't know. My, aren't we getting a bit heavy? For the immediate future I want to keep the Stones playing, because if I don't all the work of the last few months will be blown. First priority is to finish recording for a while. Then finish the *Stones Rock And Roll Circus*. Number three, do a few live shows before the end of the year."

"Well that's fine," I concluded.

"Good," said he, jumping up to leave as abruptly as he arrived, a parting "I must go and fix some sessions" hanging in the air behind him. *Nick Logan* •

'more peaceful' KEITH RICHARD looks ahead to touring again . . .

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1969

JULY – SEPTEMBER

BOB DYLAN wants to see the home of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. In so doing, he mobilises 150,000 people to visit the Isle Of Wight Festival. Various Rolling Stones and three Beatles are there to watch. And the possibility of a “super session” on stage? “Great!” says Dylan.

“We are having a holiday”

— MELODY MAKER AUGUST 30 —

THE SUPERGROUP TO END all supergroups – George Harrison, Rolling Stones, Blind Faith, Bob Dylan on stage together – could be the grand finale to this weekend’s Isle Of Wight Festival.

A spokesman for the festival told the MM, “George Harrison has been in touch with Bert Block, of Dylan’s management office, saying he would like to take part in a session with Dylan – with Dylan’s approval, of course. Blind Faith are flying in from Honolulu after asking if they could appear too. And Jack Bruce has also said he would be ready and willing to join them all on stage.”

The Rolling Stones – who, except for Mick Jagger, who is now filming in Australia – are staying on Keith Richards’ yacht off the island, and it is »

STEPHEN GOLDBLATT



Backstage at the second Isle Of Wight Festival: (l-r) organisers Ray and Ronnie Foulk, New York Post journalist Al Aronowitz, Barbara Block (Bert Block's wife, AKA Barbara Carol, jazz pianist), Bob Dylan, Sara Dylan and Bert Block (Dylan's agent)

understood they also have expressed a wish to take the stage with Dylan after his performance.

Bob Dylan did not arrive last Thursday, as previously announced, but flew into London on Monday night (25) and travelled directly to the island, where his backing group, The Band, are already rehearsing. By Monday, over 500 fans were already camping on the festival site – including American students who had built a wooden hut and named it “Desolation Row”, after a Dylan song.

The festival site has now been doubled in size and the organisers, Fiery Creations, say that tickets will not be on sale at the festival gate. There is sufficient room to ensure that none wishing to go to the festival need be disappointed. TV and radio crews from all over the Continent are heading for the Isle of Wight, and Sweden, France and Germany are among those who will be carrying the music live.

— NME AUGUST 30 —

“I WANT TO SEE the home of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.” That is the reason Bob Dylan gave at his Isle Of Wight press conference on Wednesday, for coming to Britain. Beyond that, he would not elaborate, but he did say that the songs he will perform at the festival on Sunday night might well be “things you’ll have heard before but with new arrangements”.

Sitting in the middle of a line of 10 chairs, Dylan, looking a lot like Fidel Castro with his short beard and hair style, and continually tapping his sunglasses on his right knee, told me he had last appeared in St Louis a month ago. Asked what he felt about a report that The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Blind Faith and the Bee Gees wanted to jam with him, he smiled and replied, “Great, great!”

Did he think, I asked, he had changed a lot since we last saw him at the Royal Albert Hall? “I believe there’s a conscious thing since the accident. I haven’t really changed. It has more to do with the show I was doing than anything else. It really had nothing to do with me personally.”

Does he feel that his days of “protesting” are over? “I don’t want to protest any more. I never said I am an angry young man.”

Then I asked him why the acetates he made with The Band had never been released. At this point, road manager Bert Block broke in and said, “Those songs were for the publishing company. Dylan and The Band record for different companies.”

Because of his lack of public appearances, I wondered if he liked doing shows. He replied: “The more the better!”

That was all I could ask him in the 15 minutes I had with him on Wednesday afternoon at the beachside Halland Hotel, Sea View, Isle Of Wight, where the Stones are staying during the festival. I’m staying here too, so I should have lots of news for you next week.

How did I find Bob Dylan? About the same as in 1965 when I last saw him. He’s still shy and inclined to be cynical. Perhaps if one could get him alone he might relax. But surrounded by his helpers, it was difficult to communicate freely with him. But I was very happy to have spoken to him on behalf of the NME.

IF BOB DYLAN CAN be considered as the spiritual leader of The Band, then some of his mystique has certainly rubbed off on the group. Little is really known about them, mainly due to their lack of appearances.

The Band’s album, *Music From Big Pink*, which had a startling effect on many British groups, is shortly to be followed by another recorded in the converted playroom of a house in the Hollywood Hills. During the past few months, not much has been seen or heard of The Band, but they appeared recently at the Mississippi River Festival when Dylan went on with them unannounced. There was quite a reaction to that!

They began live 10 years ago in Canada as The Hawks, backing rock’n’roll star Ronnie Hawkins. Then, after three years, they went on their own as Levon & The Hawks. Levon Helm, the drummer and only American in The Band, recalls, “We swung and grooved as best we could but it got to be a drag after a time. If you just play rhythm & blues like everyone wants to hear, you end up being just a house band.”

Dylan actually asked The Band to go along and jam with him, though, because of their style of music; they hadn’t heard much of his work. The two forces found they were influencing one another and they became Dylan’s band. Their sound isn’t exactly gentle, but it is free from much of the psychedelia that still pervades a lot of American groups’ efforts. It’s fresh and original and still basically rock.

Music From Big Pink was voted album of the year in an American magazine. What isn’t generally known is that it was cut in only two weeks. The five members of The Band live in Woodstock, scene of the recent festival disaster, near Bob Dylan and Tim Hardin. The lead guitarist is Robbie Robertson, who says, “I was listening to music when I was very young and I can’t remember when I began playing, it was so long ago. I remember listening to country music a lot.”

Pianist Richard Manuel started lessons when he was nine but fell out with his teacher because “she didn’t want me to play by ear”. So he gave up and later formed his own group, which one night played opposite The Hawks. He left and joined them. The organist is Garth Hudson, who recalls, “My father had a lot of instruments around the house and my uncles all played in bands.” He played piano when he was five and accordion with a group seven years later. He joined The Hawks in 1962.

The aforementioned Levon comes from Arkansas, near the home of Sonny Boy Williamson, and has a strong early-blues influence. He won’t listen to records because, he says, like TV you can end up listening and not playing, which is all he wants to do. Bassist Rick Danko can also play mandolin and violin. He joined The Hawks when he was 17, though he had always had a hankering to be a country singer. He doesn’t read music and only switched to bass from rhythm guitar when he joined The Hawks.

Besides backing Dylan at the festival, The Band have their own spot, which is bound to attract a huge crowd. In itself, their act should be a big event. *Richard Green*

— MELODY MAKER SEPTEMBER 6 —

BOB DYLAN HAS BEEN an elusive person during his visit to the Isle Of Wight. Apart from his one press conference on Wednesday, he has been spending most of his time at the 16th-century stone farmhouse Forelands Farm, near Bembridge, rehearsing with The Band. The farmhouse is set in picturesque sunken gardens and has its own private swimming pool. Beside the farmhouse is a converted barn where Dylan and the Band have been practising.

At the entrance to the farmhouse is a pair of boarded-up, wrought-iron gates, where one or two civilian guards keep a constant watch from a parked car. They earn a reported £15 a day for this duty.

Outside the cottage, labourers working on the road have been gathering near the barn rehearsal room to listen to Dylan and The Band run through such numbers as “Lay, Lady, Lay” and “Nashville Skyline Rag”. But one reporter has managed to penetrate the security lines – he is *Daily Sketch* writer Chris White. Chris went to Forelands Farm and eventually met Bob Dylan, after speaking to Al Aronowitz, a journalist friend and unofficial press agent for Dylan.

“Dylan walked out of the barn into the garden,” said White. “He was wearing a brown leather coat and green-lensed sunglasses. I asked him if I could have a word with him and Dylan replied, ‘Sure, what do you want to know?’ I asked what the attraction about the IOW was and he explained that it was a place where Alfred, Lord Tennyson had lived and that it was a place he had always wanted to come to.”

Dylan is believed to have rented the house for at least three weeks. White asked Dylan if he had any thoughts about taking other engagements. “Not at the moment,” replied Bob, “but we will consider any offers we get.

“It’s not the money I’m interested in; I just want to play music”

200,000 roar approval

OUR days before he was due to appear at the Isle of Wight Festival on Sunday, Bob Dylan told me that the more he played the better. It seemed all the stranger, in view of that, that he should perform for only just over an hour. His explanation afterwards was: “I was here at five-thirty, ready to go on, but I was kept waiting until eleven. I stayed long enough, I didn’t want to go on much longer.”

There was definitely a severe x-up about the time Dylan and the Band should have gone on stage. Journalists hoped for. The piano played a heavy part in a spot that consisted mainly of numbers from the “Big Pink” album. Of the selections, “The Weight” and the “Four Tops” “Loving You” were about the best and most well-received.

For the rest of the three-day event, Friday night was the night of the Nice. There is no other conceivable way to describe what I saw.

But Dylan didn't quite

August 27, 1969:
Dylan relaxes after
an 18-minute press
conference at the
Holland Hotel in
Seaview, IOW

Basically, we are just having a holiday. It's nice to be working with The Band again. We're just getting a bit of practice in. They are a great bunch."

Bob also said that he was aware of the large number of fans he had in England.

"They write to me a lot. They are the most loyal fans I have and that was one of the reasons that I wanted to come to England to make my comeback. It's not the money I'm interested in; I just want to play music."

"I found Dylan easy and pleasant to talk to," said White. "He was a complete contrast to what the publicity makes him out as and a contrast to his lack of communication at the press conference. He was a completely different person to what I had expected. It was an insight into the person and not the public image. Something you caught very little of with all the paraphernalia of a press conference. I think he is a person who is quite willing to talk to you on his own. Basically, he is a shy person."

I spoke to The Band's Robbie Robertson, who told me, "We've been rehearsing with Bob since we got here, working out what we are going to play. He's a bit vague about it, and we've been trying to get the feel of the place. But he just likes to play all the time. We've had to say 'give it a rest'. We could hardly finish our first album because he wanted to play all the time."

THE YOUNG WAITRESS at the Old Fort in Seaview, a few miles away from the Woodside Bay, Wootton site of the Isle Of Wight music festival, was completely unconcerned that Bob Dylan was on the island. "I don't really care," she said. "It just means that I shall keep away from Wootton."

And indeed the fact that one of the world's most popular and most influential performers and song-writers is on the island had appeared to have little effect on the leisurely pace of the popular holiday resort.

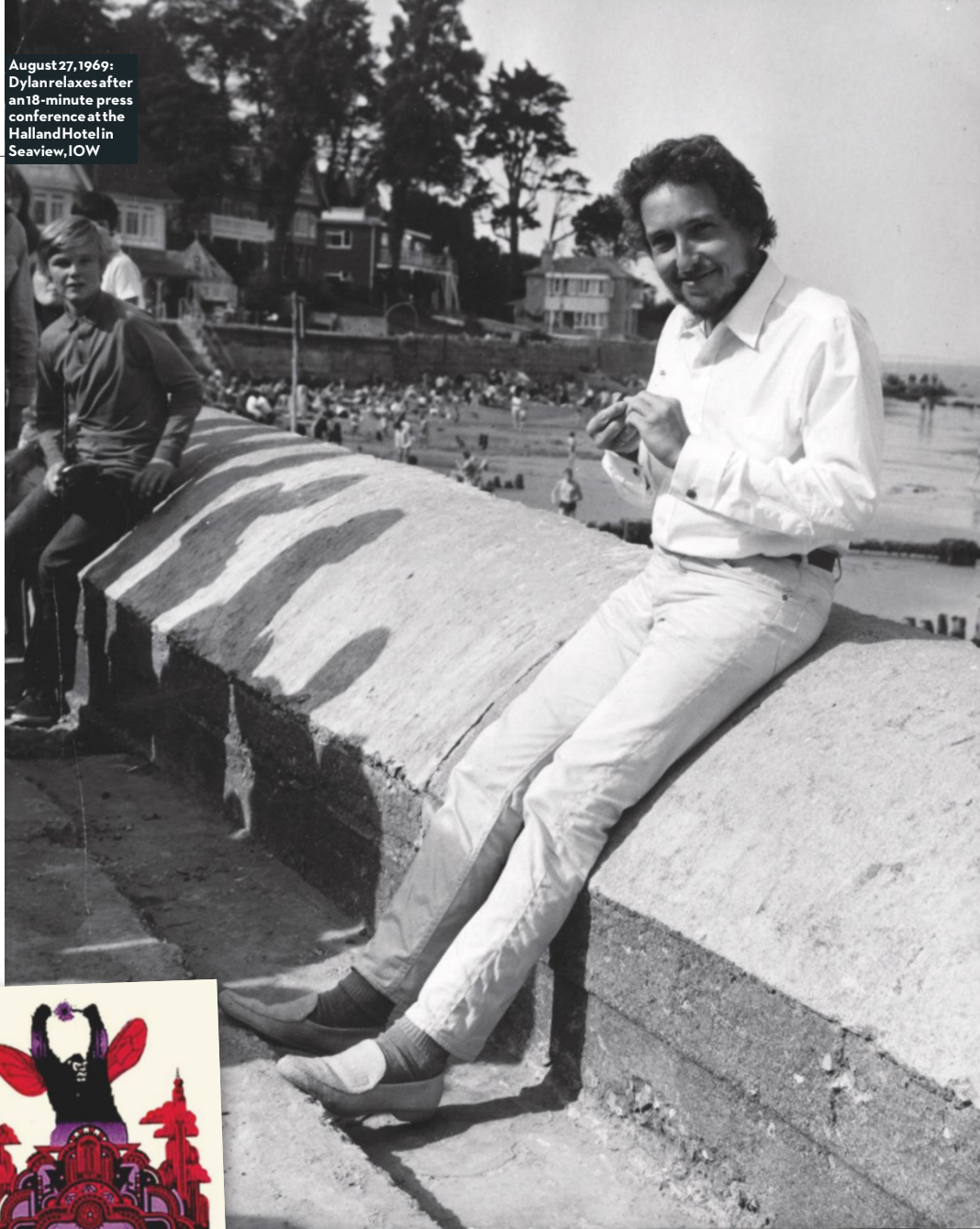
At the 100-acre site itself, where preparations were being made, there is already a canvas township set up with a couple of thousand campers making their temporary homes for the festival. People have travelled from all over the world – Scandinavia, America and Canada.

Some of the housing was quite primitive. A group of American and Canadians had erected themselves a mini bivouac of corrugated iron, plastic sheeting and rough grass thatching. A handwritten board declared somewhat appropriately that this was DESOLATION ROW.

In order to cope with any trouble that might occur with the expected 150,000 festival-goers – and by Thursday the locals had estimated 5,000 had already arrived – a special plain-clothes force, with its headquarters in a nearby house, was on hand. In a field adjoining the music area, 25 booths were selling food and clothes and there were numerous hot dog, ice cream and fish-and-chip stands doing roaring trade two days before the festival begins. There was also a marquee housing a discotheque and cinema where underground films were shown.

Other entertainments laid on to keep the fans happy while they waited included an environmental playground and a jousting tournament between cars decorated in bizarre fashion.

But what of Bob Dylan? The 28-year-old American reported to be receiving £12,000 for his appearance had been living in virtual seclusion – even Lord Montague of Beaulieu wasn't allowed to see him. However, George Harrison had been to see him at the 16th-century Forelands Farm, Bembridge, where Dylan had been rehearsing with The Band for the past week.



On the Wednesday prior to the festival there was a rather disastrous press conference given by Dylan. Disastrous from the point of view of the kind of questions asked and the formalised atmosphere it was given.

Flanked on either side by friends and festival officials, Dylan faced an army of reporters, photographers and camera crews. With his hair trimmed short, bearded and dressed in a white shirt and jeans, he was bemused, bothered and bewildered by many of the questions flung at him, questions of obvious irrelevance concerning his marriage and drugs. Asked what had been the attraction of the IOW: "We wanted to visit the home of Alfred, Lord Tennyson."

About the expected audience at the festival he commented, "The more the better, I just hope it's a good show." Dylan said that he had new arrangements. "Everything we will do is on record."

Questioned about his change of style in dress and looks, Bob said he had dropped the old style because it was gimmicky and he no longer needed gimmicks. Somebody asked him if he thought of himself as a "square", to which he said, "He had better ask the fans."

In reply to whom he wanted to meet, Bob said, "Anyone who is around. I'd like to meet Georgie Fame." About his performance, Bob stated, "My job is to play music. I'm just going to take it easy; you've got to take it easy if you're going to do your job well."

Mention was made of The Beatles' offer to use their Apple studios. "I'd sure like to, I love The Beatles."

After 20 minutes the press conference came to an end. It seemed in effect that Dylan was simply saying: "I am my music, listen to it." But this, it seemed, was not enough for many pressmen at the conference. Disappointment and annoyance were expressed at the fact that no great words of wisdom had been delivered by Dylan, but really it seemed hardly the time or the situation to do so. *Chris Welch and Tony Wilson* »

PA

1969

JULY – SEPTEMBER

“I was kept waiting until 11pm”

NME Sept 6 Dylan closes the IOW Festival with an all-too-brief set.

FOUR DAYS BEFORE he was due to appear at the Isle Of Wight Festival on Sunday, Bob Dylan told me that the more he played, the better. It seemed all the stranger, in view of that, that he should perform for only just over an hour. His explanation afterwards was: “I was here at 5.30, ready to go on, but I was kept waiting until 11. I played long enough; I didn’t want to go on much longer.”

There was definitely a severe mix-up about the time and Dylan and The Band should have gone on stage. Journalists were originally told 9pm until midnight, but his was altered during the afternoon. In the evening, approaching seven, it was changed again, but co-promoter Ron Foulk wasn’t able to give a definite time.

When Dylan eventually appeared, dressed in a white suit, smiling broadly and being handed his guitar by an assistant, the crowd of almost 200,000 (rather less than had been expected), gave him a mighty roar of approval. At least they hadn’t minded the wait.

Watched by a celebrity-packed audience which included John Lennon, George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Keith Richards, Bill Wyman, Charlie Watts, Steve Winwood, Jim Capaldi, Francoise Hardy, Amen Corner’s Alan Jones and Mike Smith, actress Jane Fonda and her husband Roger Vadim, and actor Richard Johnson. Dylan opened with “Everything She Needs” which must be about the shortest thing he does. He hunched his shoulders slightly as he went into “Mr Tambourine Man” and “Maggie’s Farm” and the atmosphere was getting better. The Band, who hadn’t been too hot in their own spot, sounded nice behind Dylan – the two acts fused together really well. All his numbers were familiar, but, as promised, new arrangements had been worked out especially for the festival. “Lay, Lady, Lay” got a long round of applause as it began and, if such things can be judged by audience response, looks like being a hit single.

Then we heard “I Pity The Poor Immigrant”, the fantastic “Like A Rolling Stone” and “I’ll Be Your Baby Tonight”. For me, “Rainy Day Women Nos 12 & 35” was about the high spot

and it was disappointing when, just after midnight, Dylan walked off stage. The crowd obviously expected more, but they didn’t get it. It was all over and several people gathered backstage to protest about the shortness of Dylan’s act. Despite that – an unqualified success. The Band’s set was as nice as people expected, the sound was good but there wasn’t the originality we hoped for. The piano played a heavy part in a spot that consisted mainly of numbers from the *Big Pink* album. Of the selections, “The Weight” and The Four Tops’ “Loving You” were about the best.

For the rest of the three-day event, Friday night was the night of The Nice. There is no other conceivable way to describe what I regard to be one of their best sets yet. Of course, there was an encore and it had to be “America”, but it proved to be an encore and a half – almost a show in itself.

We saw Keith Emerson standing on the organ and playing at the same time, no mean feat, Brian Davison in really great form on drums and Lee Jackson doing good things with his bass. “Karelia” was as interesting as ever, and Tchaikovsky’s “Pathétique” (with a little doctoring) was a fine starter. The one piece that really scored for me was Tim Hardin’s “Hang On To A Dream”, which is on the new album. Keith ran up and down the scales on his piano while Lee injected into the song a soft quality I didn’t know he possessed. It got all very jazzy and sung like the Young Holt Trio. Ten out of 10, me lads.

The Bonzo Dog Band preceded The Nice and, as usual, relied heavily upon visual humour for appeal. Bobby Pickett’s “Monster Mash” was treated well and “Canyons Of Your Mind” and “Urban Spaceman” were received enthusiastically.

After all the ballyhoo and baloney about Marsha Hunt, I expected great things, but I must admit disappointment. After the show she told me, “It was a drag.” And that’s just about it. Wearing black

leather shorts, boots and gloves, she gyrated about the stage in what was, presumably, meant to be an erotic manner. Sorry, love, it left me cold. For the record, her numbers included “Wild Thing”, “Walk On Gilded Splinters” and “My World Without You”. Oh well, perhaps it will be better next time.

During all the goings-on I met Noel Redding, who was as staggering as ever. He said, “We couldn’t get the Rolls on the ferry,” and left it at that. Later, he spent a long time chatting to Jane Fonda and Roger Vadim and they agreed that he could send them a film story and music he has written! Moody Blue Ray Thomas cadged a fag off me and promised good things to come. Which they did. “Dr Livingstone”

from “In Search Of The Lost Chord” sounded as good on stage as it does on record – this is one of the strong points about the Moodies, their ability to reproduce almost exactly their recorded sound on live appearances. Justin Hayward and Ray Thomas sang “Never Comes The Day” together and we heard “Peak Hour” and “Tuesday Afternoon”, which was a hit in America but not a single here. “Nights In White Satin” was very popular with the crowd, who dug every minute of the group’s act. Loud and prolonged cheers and cries for more brought the boys back for “Ride My See-Saw”, a pleasant little rock and roll number. I think what people liked most was the Moodies’ professionalism and musicianship.

The Who made their usual spectacular entrance – this time by helicopter. All of us backstage got covered in all

WOOTTON
ISLE OF WIGHT
LIVE!
AUGUST 30

**“Lay, Lady, Lay”
got a long round
of applause as it
began and looks
like being a hit**

George Harrison, John Lennon, Ringo Starr and wives watch the show from the VIP enclosure

GETTY



sorts of flying muck and the NME's intrepid photographer, Stuart Richman, was almost decapitated by a sheet of hardboard that suddenly took flight! The group went straight on stage, to be greeted by a roaring welcome from well over 100,000. I noticed Julie Driscoll looking well and nice as the first number "I Can't Explain" began. Roger's long-fringed jacket was open, revealing a bare torso. Pete Townshend's outfit consisted of a white boiler suit, John Entwistle maintained a serious expression and Keith Moon had a look on his face as though he was suffering the ultimate torture.

"Young Man Blues" which was written by Mose Allison, began quietly and became a roar-up. Then came the inevitable long selection from *Tommy* – very clever and intricate but it tended to go on a bit long.

Pete was jumping up and down while Roger swung the mic round and round on the end of a long lead and The Who were really getting into things. Eddie Cochran's "Summertime Blues" was great, as was "My Generation". "Shakin' All Over" was obviously dedicated to the bird I was with as she didn't stop shivering all the weekend. I was very glad to have seen The Who – they were right on form. Their loud sound does not detract from their performance, which is as visually exciting as musically together. Between numbers, Ricky Farr was an able, considerate and witty compere.

Bedecked in a Wyatt Earp-style hat, he handled the huge crowd well and showed no sign of irritability, neither did he resort to the sort of cheap gags we so often hear from comperes. Pete Townshend said from the stage that Joe Cocker was going to be a hit. He was right.

He still plays an invisible guitar and his lengthy tour of America hasn't detracted from his appeal to the fans. His voice is incredible and numbers like "Do I Still Figure In Your Life" and "Let's Go Get Stoned" deserve high praise for their effectiveness. The Grease Band get right in with Joe's lead and ought to be regarded as more than just a backing group. By the time he had been on stage for about four numbers, Joe had the audience behind him to a man.

His treatment of Traffic's "Feeling Alright" sounded as great as ever, and over a well-deserved drink later, Joe told me that he feels fit and is all ready to get going again now he's back home. On Saturday's showing, he's gonna go great guns.

There were also some drags like the hundreds of non-press people crowding the press enclosure; the exorbitant prices charged by the taxi drivers who doubled their fares after midnight; and the people asking seven-and-six for hamburger and chips. Richard Green

— MELODY MAKER SEPTEMBER 13 —

EXPERIENCED GAMBLERS HAVE been known to break into a cold sweat and furtively finger the trigger of a gun at the throw of a dice or spin of a roulette wheel. But these are men who regularly play the long odds. Men who know the rewards and penalties to expect. How much more hazardous it is to plan a music festival headed by such an immortal and – let it be said – controversial figure as Bob Dylan, involving a total outlay of £120,000 on the basis of one comparatively minor event held just 15 months beforehand?

For that was all the experience of festivals the brothers Ronald, Raymond and Bill Foulk had before they went for the jackpot with Dylan. Ten thousand people had attended their Isle Of Wight Festival starring The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown and Jefferson Airplane. But far more experienced promoters might have balked at the massive problem of trying to stage the most famous folk singer in the world.

But over a year's unremitting hard work paid off. Like the ardent prospective bridegroom who refuses to take no for an answer, the three brothers approached the Dylan ménage again and again. They even followed up their hard sell with a colour film of the Isle Of Wight. This, and a personal trip to Dylan in New York, finally tipped the scales. And the outcome was a festival that has made the closing months of 1969 a landmark in the world of "popular" music. Now, the brothers Ronald, Raymond and Bill have balanced their books and, happily for themselves and future festival fans, come up with a nice balance.

"Our profit is not all that whopping," says Ronald, "but we have achieved what we set out to do. The biggest satisfaction when he looked out on the vast crowds was knowing that all our efforts have been worthwhile. We've given enjoyment to a lot of people."

That enjoyment wasn't without cost. The financial outlay involved would be enough to make Charles Clore blink. To start with, there was £20,000 for Dylan, plus 50 per cent of the profits and £5,000 first-class airfare for him and his party. The Band swallowed another £8,000; Richie Havens took £3,000. Tom Paxton cost £750, The Who £900 and Pentangle £500. "The rest of the bill accounts for another £6,000," says Ronald.

The stage set back Fiery Creations another £10,000. Then there were the additional attractions, plus catering, camping, security and travelling arrangements to take care of. To say nothing of publicity expenditure. But, despite all the money – and headaches – involved, the festival was an unqualified success. So much so that the brothers are already planning a similar event for next year. Dylan has said he is prepared to go again, although recent reports suggest that he will not visit Britain again. But it's a safe bet that, with the prestige the brothers have gained from this festival, they will aim for other big fry of equal calibre.

Hitches? Inevitably there were some in a venture of this proportion. "We've learned that we shall have to make better arrangements for the press," admits Ronald. "So many people were gate-crashing into the press enclosure, some important people couldn't even get in."

Some hoodlums burned portions of fencing and part of a marquee. And there was a tense incident backstage when a gentleman wielded a bottle. But, as press officer Peter Harrigan puts it, "There was remarkably little trouble when you consider the crowd was over 150,000. You can get far more trouble at a Cup Final with only 30,000 present."

There has been much ado in some sections of the press about Dylan allegedly giving short weight – one hour's performance instead of three. "We would have liked him to do more," says Ronald. "But he was under no obligation to do so."

Litter was a problem. The organisers did their utmost to clear up the previous night's refuse before midday, but the task was impossible to accomplish in the limited time available.

If anyone was disappointed with the Dylan Festival it was those sensation seekers whose febrile imaginations conjure up lurid visions of orgies and drugs at every gathering of pop, jazz or folk followers.

One can imagine them rubbing their hands and sharpening their pencils when the first ferryboat of fans set foot on the Isle. They may have felt a flicker of a voyeur's titillation when a young lady cast off her clothes and danced in the nude. But that flash was soon extinguished by the surging sea of musical enthusiasm. And this, after all, was what the Dylan Festival was all about. Laurie Henshaw •

Stealing Dylan From Woodstock: When The World Came To The Isle Of Wight Vol 1 by Ray Foulk with Caroline Foulk is published by Medina Publishing at £22.95. www.medinapublishing.com

1969

JULY – SEPTEMBER

SINGLES
REVIEW
1969

WILSON PICKETT

HEY JOE



“Why shouldn’t blues bands get hits?”

MM JULY 19 Newest Rolling Stone Mick Taylor reviews a selection of pertinent, not all especially recent records.

MANY OF THE records played in Mick Taylor’s Blind Date session were not to his taste and he remained fairly inscrutable. It was sometimes difficult to tell if he was digging them or loathing them, but he flipped over Procol Harum and it was obvious that Mick’s tastes are broad – and not limited to blues or guitarists.

Fleetwood Mac Need Your Love So Bad BLUE HORIZON

Is that a reissue? Fleetwood Mac, obviously. It’s a beautiful song. Peter is a great guitarist and a great singer, but I don’t think he came across too well on that one. He sings straight and the strings are a bit slushy. “Albatross” was the best record they ever made. And why shouldn’t blues bands get hits? Oh yes, I read Mailbag every week! That’s required reading. I go through it religiously... it makes you wonder.

Wash Hopson He’s Got A Blessing ACTION

Is it the Staple Singers? It’s good – I like this style of music, but it sounds dated. They are probably releasing it because of the Edwin Hawkins Singers. There will be a spate of “Singers”. Quite pleasant, but it doesn’t grab you.

McKenna Mendelson Mainline Better Watch Out LIBERTY

Reminds me of Canned Heat. They were a good blues band. No, I don’t want to listen to any more.



The intro was nice and it’s a really good sound. You never seem to get a sound like that in English studios. But the tune is very unoriginal. Is it a white American group?

Memphis Slim Rock Me Woman from the LP Legend Of The Blues, Vol 1 BEACON

I don’t want to hear any more – it’s Memphis Slim doing his usual thing, which is great if you like Memphis Slim.

Procol Harum A Salty Dog

REGAL ZONOPHONE

Procol Harum – I haven’t heard this one. Is it from *A Salty Dog*? This was a single and it’s great. They always seem to use that descending chord sequence – Bach, I suppose. I would say this is even better than “Shine On Brightly”. This is the sort of music

I really like. I suppose if you had to classify it, you would have to call it pop classic. This was too good to be a hit. You get some really great songs sometimes, but they just don’t appeal to the public because they are not commercial enough. This is the best thing I have heard so far. Beautiful – they are definitely one of the best groups. I did a gig with them in America when I was with John [Mayall] and they were much more appreciated there than they are here, but I think they are getting more appreciation here now as well. The drummer and bass players are so good. They work well as a rhythm section.

Wilson Pickett Hey Joe ATLANTIC

I expect Aretha Franklin to come in at any minute. Is it Aretha? Oh, “Hey Joe” – no idea who it is. The band is nice. They sound like the session musicians Aretha records with – the Atlantic house band. It’s a great version, but it’s not going to make much impact because the number has been done so many times. I still like the Hendrix version. Who was it – really? Didn’t sound like Wilson Pickett – it was much cleaner.

Third Ear Band Mosaic HARVEST

Third Ear Band – actually, I really think they have got something going. It’s the sort of thing I like to listen to at 3am. You have to be in a certain kind of mood to get into them. I enjoyed their appearance in Hyde Park. Not on the last one, but with Blind Faith. They really came across on a bright sunny day. But perhaps a whole LP of their kind of music would be too much.



MICK TAYLOR 1

MICK TAYLOR is a soft spoken youth with a quiet calm, and a kind of lazy independence that makes it difficult to assess his true feelings, until a burst of enthusiasm bubbles to the surface. Perhaps he is still a little dazed and unsure of his situation in being

‘Now I feel like a Rolling Stone’

The feeling is one of joy at being alive

MM/NME The Fabs keep it simple, Fairport enjoy themselves, CSN fulfil their promise.

The Beatles Abbey Road APPLE

It's strange that we have now reached the point where nobody worries TOO much about what The Beatles are doing on record. There are no cries of, "We demand a new *Sgt Pepper!*" for example, or yells of, "Whatever happened to their 'Mr Moonlight' period?"

Now we can just sit back, relax and enjoy Beatle offerings and appreciate them on their own level. Too much has passed under the bridge to start getting uptight, and the truth is, their latest LP is just a natural-born gas, entirely free of pretension, deep meanings or symbolism. Paul and John have written some good tunes and their own ability to interpret them instrumentally has improved wholesale. Paul is on drums on several tracks, and his approach is surprisingly funky, while George's lead guitar is showing a healthy Clapton influence. "Carry That Weight" and "I Want You" show the Beatles in extremely heavy mood. While production is simple compared to past intricacies, it is still extremely sophisticated and inventive. *Chris Welch, MM Oct 4*

Fairport Convention Unhalfbricking ISLAND

It's not so much that they're such skilled craftsmen that makes Fairport Convention one of the most listenable groups there are, but the almost indefinable quality about their music that suggest youthfulness and vitality. Even on the sad songs, the feel that



permeates through is one of a joy of being alive. Their approach to material is never preconceived, their range wide. At the same time, complexity never takes over for its own sake and the impression that they are enjoying themselves aids your enjoyment too.

Unhalfbricking shows the diversity of their skill. Three are Dylan songs: "Si Tu Dois Partir", a French language version of "If You Gotta

Go", has charm, zest and humour and is also a single you should all rush out and buy. "Percy's Song" has appeal through the merging of different voices and the muffled quality of Sandy Denny's "Million Dollar Bash" features the violin of Dave Swarbrick, who is rather partial to a dance song with each member playing a verse. Richard

Thompson has two songs; Sandy has two, the beautiful "Who Knows Where The Time Goes" displaying her vocal powers at their best. Longest track, the traditional "A Sailor's Life", is brilliant Fairport. Rising and falling to an underlying throbbing rhythm, it features Swarbrick's fiddle prominently and is always inventive but perfectly controlled. Other titles: "Genesis Hall", "Autopsy", "Cajun Woman" *Nick Logan, NME Aug 7*

Crosby, Stills & Nash

Crosby, Stills & Nash ATLANTIC

This is the group that Graham Nash upped and left The Hollies for. Actually, the other two, Americans, have quit groups too, and the trio have concentrated on high-pitched harmony singing, not unlike The Hollies produced, which can't be bad. Of the 10 tracks here, Graham Nash composed three tunes - "Marrakesh Express", "Lady Of The Island", "Pre-Road Downs"; Stephen Stills wrote "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" (over seven minutes), "You Don't Have To Cry", "Helplessly Hoping" and "49 Bye-Byes"; David Crosby penned "Guinnevere", "Long Time Gone" and (with Stills) "Wooden Ships".

I liked "Marrakesh Express" a lot, a song that trots along like a train might, with Graham taking lead (this is their first single). In contrast, they go sentimentally slow on "Guinnevere", which is not without beauty; and "Wooden Ships" is a soft, mystic song-dialogue by Stephen and David. "Helplessly Hoping" has Graham soloing in another wistful fragment.

They are inclined to jerk their phrasing a bit, which has certain attraction, but what I liked best about this album are the varied instrumental passages between the singing, some of which are very beautiful.

A most interesting first LP which should attract a lot of attention for this exciting new group. It has a double cover and the words are printed on a leaflet inside the sleeve.

Allen Evans, NME Aug 2





1969

OCTOBER – DECEMBER

THE HOLLIES, ROLLING STONES, BEATLES, DAVID BOWIE AND MORE

“If it gets to No 1, I’ll play the instrumental”

MELODY MAKER **OCT 4** The BBC has banned “Je T’aime – Moi Non Plus”. But what if it gets to No 1?

TOP OF THE POPS producer Johnnie Stewart told the *MM* this week that even if “Je T’aime – Moi Non Plus”, by Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg, reached the No 1 spot in the BBC chart, it would still not be played on his programme.

“If it gets to No 1, I’ll play the instrumental cover version of the song by Sounds Nice,” he said. “I’ve already made enquiries about getting them for the show and if they’re available they’ll be on.”

Philip Soloman, managing director of the Major Minor label, who took over the Jane Birkin record after Philips dropped it, commented: “If they did this I’d be very hurt and upset, and I’d probably take legal advice. The BBC pays £5,000 a year for the charts, and then they don’t use them. I’d be against it if they played the instrumental version.”

The record stayed put at No 3 in this week’s *MM* chart. As previously reported, it has been totally banned by the BBC because of its erotic content.

GETTY

Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin in March 1969: their version of "Je T'Aime... Moi Non Plus" will reach No 1 in the UK, becoming the first banned record to do so



1969

OCTOBER–DECEMBER

"Big. Slightly mean. Slightly dangerous"

NME OCT 18 The inside story of Johnny Cash's trip to San Quentin prison. "In prison he is, in a sense, talking to his own audience."

February 24, 1969: a "very tired" Johnny Cash at San Quentin State Prison, where "A Boy Named Sue" gets its first live airing

SAN QUENTIN. THE name has a ring of dread and despair. "It is the most evil place I have ever been in," says TV producer Jo Durden-Smith. "Arriving there was like stepping on to a film set from a Humphrey Bogart movie; you know, the catwalks with the armed guards patrolling the top."

The prison itself stands on a promontory of land out into the San Francisco Bay. To get in, the film crew has first to pass through a metal outer gate and travel a long road along the promontory to a second gate. More road, and then a third gate past which they were in the forecourt facing the massive main door of what Durden-Smith describes as "a castle". Inside, in the prison's main hall, some of America's most hardened convicts sit at their wooden tables waiting. To have relatively long hair like Jo has can, at this stage, be a little unnerving. Some of the inmates have made a decorative banner that suggests a lot of care and time – "SAN QUENTIN WELCOMES JOHNNY CASH".

TV's road to San Quentin began in the Golden Square, Soho office of Granada Television. It was Geoffrey Cannon – now editor of *Radio Times*, then at Granada for a short spell – who put forward the idea and Jo Durden-Smith who took it up. Originally they wanted Folsom Prison. Johnny Cash had played there before and recorded a live album, but there were difficulties. Saul Holiff, Cash's manager, suggested Quentin. The prison authorities said yes.

"Every year at San Quentin on New Year's Day there is a concert to which every artist in the Bay Area goes to perform for the prisoners," said Jo Durden-Smith when we talked in his busy office on Friday (a poster of

the regulation San Quentin short back and sides is pinned to a wall). "Cash himself had appeared before at one of the shows. That is the only concert they have, but although this was a new departure for them they were amazingly co-operative."

Why did he want to show Johnny Cash in a prison?

"It seemed to us that to some degree the best Cash performance was the one at Folsom. It is like Jagger said in the Stones' film: 'If you are having a good time then the audience will have a good time and it goes round and round. That is how it is with Cash. He is singing about their minds: about a portion of American life. And in a prison, he's singing to people who can identify with him to a large extent. You have to remember that country & western is two streams: country and western. Country is the music of the poor whites, and many of the prisoners are poor whites."

"It is a traditional thing – the history of America is so tied up with racial and political violence and the great struggles to overcome poverty, the whole *Grapes Of Wrath* thing, Momma's apple pit, salt beef for dinner. It's a tradition that carries with it strong passions for possession and sexual propriety. What a man must defend. Your woman is your woman. That is one stream. Country music is people living on the edge. That is the kind of background Johnny Cash comes from. The western stream again is full of traditions. A man must live like man and die like a man, by violence. That is the whole mythology of the Western. Why country and western is so popular is partly because it appeals to a very simple American character... simple people full of national feeling; tremendous patriotism; very strong on law and order."

That concert also bore out Jo's views on the patriotism inherent in the music. Lloyd Bucher, captain of the American spy ship *Pueblo*, which was captured by the North Koreans, was in the audience. "Cash called him up to the stage and was comparing him with the heroes of the Alamo..."

"Cash wrote the 'San Quentin' track the day before – in a motel bedroom"

with Johnny Cash in San Diego, a town on the California-Mexico border, where his roadshow was in a concert.

"You could see something quite clearly there," says Jo. "The area contains a large number of blacks and Mexicans, but there wasn't one in the audience. C&W is white music – you can't blame it for that."

That concert also bore out Jo's views on the patriotism inherent in the music. Lloyd Bucher, captain of the American spy ship *Pueblo*, which was captured by the North Koreans, was in the audience. "Cash called him up to the stage and was comparing him with the heroes of the Alamo..."

The film crew arrived at San Quentin on a Sunday and spent the

REX FEATURES

HIS MUSIC MAKES CASH A MYTH

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Says
QUENTIN
TV Producer

By NICK
LOGAN

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day arranging the hall lighting for colour. Bob Johnston, producer of Bob Dylan as well as Johnny Cash, came on the Monday with an eight-track from CBS and Cash himself arrived during the afternoon for the concert in the evening.

"He was very tired," recalls Jo. "He had been on the road a long time and his voice was giving him trouble. He wanted to get it done quickly, which is a professional approach. He was immensely helpful to everything we suggested. We wanted him to sing a song (not included on the album) which a prisoner had written. We only had the words, no music."

"Cash sat down and set them to music the day before. He also wrote the 'San Quentin' track the day before - in a motel bedroom."

Johnny Cash did little socialising with the film crew, but I asked Jo how he found him as a person. "The first thing that struck me when I saw him was that he was very much bigger than I thought. He does look the loner, the kind of western hero... big, slightly mean, and very slightly dangerous."

Did he feel he was sincere? "Oh yes, you may find the music false but you cannot find Cash false. But then, on the music side, there is a watered-down version of country & western. Cash's country & western is not watered down. It is full of violence and very strong basic emotions. Cash is a very enigmatic figure," says Jo, summing him up. "It may be that I don't know much about him, but again it is not surprising that I don't. He has probably understood that to fill the public with stories about his past would be a mistake - a country singer ought to be a myth, a legend." Nick Logan

"We set out to upset everybody. And we did"

MM December 6 Introducing... The Upsetters, and their charismatic leader, Lee Perry. "One wonders what he'll come up with next..."

FIVE JAMAICANS WITH such colourful nicknames as Scratch, Oney, Reggie, Family Man and Capo have upset a lot of wiseacres who said reggae was strictly for the birds. Appropriately enough, they're called The Upsetters. And for the record they were christened Carlton Barrett, who plays drums; Alva Lewis (guitar); Aston Barrett (brother of Carlton, bass); Glen Adams (organ) and No 1 man Lee Perry, singer and arranger.

Ask why Lee is known as Scratch and he says, "The first record I made was called 'Chicken Scratch'. Ever since, I've been called Scratch." Ask the others how *they* got their nicknames and they fall about in paroxysms of laughter. It's all very "in" and somewhat mystifying. But there's nothing mysterious about the name Upsetters. It means just what it says. Explains Lee Perry, "We set out to upset everybody. And we did just that."

Lee is speaking musically, of course. He emphasises that the group's adroit blend of melody with a heavy beat is ideal for kids to dance to. "And they're learning fast how to dance to reggae over here," says Lee, with the understanding of a man who obviously knows how people should move to music.

What was mystifying - until Lee clarified the matter - was how The Upsetters came by such a title of "Return Of Django". Those steeped in jazz lore might reasonably believe it is some sort of tribute to Django Reinhardt. Far from it. The Upsetters seemed collectively perplexed when the name of the late and great gypsy guitarist was thrown at them. Their particular Django, it appears, is a hero in a Western film back in Jamaica. "We all like Westerns," says Lee enthusiastically.

Despite the flurries of snow that were falling at the moment, they also dig Britain. Though they hadn't had much chance to see much of it, having been here only a week, Lee, who had arrived earlier, said he hoped to settle here. Back home, he produced records before launching out on his own. "I'd made enough records for other people," says Lee. "I thought it was time to do something on my own."

Already, The Upsetters have produced a follow-up to "Django". It's called "A Live Injection". Lee explained that the title was inspired by the injections people get before they have an operation. One wonders what he'll come up with next. But titles don't really matter while you can produce hits. And The Upsetters obviously have found the formula for this.

And even though reggae may be dismissed by some as more suited to a skinhead hop than a Festival Hall concert, there may be a lesson here somewhere. Perhaps it is that jazz is basically dance music. Get back to the roots, and people respond. They even buy your records and give you a hit. Perhaps The Upsetters won't be the only group to tip up the avant-garde apple cart. Laurie Henshaw



"The power seems rather peculiar"

MM NOV 15 Stones support act King Crimson file a report from their first American trip.

"A MERICA IS EVEN more American than we had expected," said King Crimson's Ian McDonald on the phone from Chicago. "For example, they have a TV programme instead of our *Epilogue* called *Sermonette* - unbelievable!"

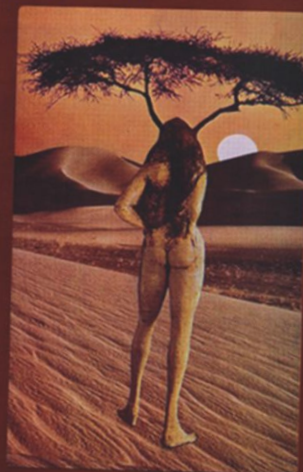
Crimson are on their first trip to the States and will be away for eight weeks during which they play a string of major dates, including a Miami concert with The Rolling Stones for which they are being flown by helicopter. "The album is out here now and seems to be getting plays on all the New York stations," reported Ian. "Actually, we were surprised to find that people knew us when we arrived. This was partly due to people reading about us in *MM*, and we have also had bits in the underground papers here."

"Among the people we have worked with so far is Al Kooper, who was disappointing. He was backed by a new group, a second-rate soul band. We also worked with Om, a very nice heavy rock band, and Steve Miller."

"Audiences here still seem to favour English groups - perhaps because they seem to project more than the Americans. One unexpected problem - the power seems rather peculiar over here and I've been having trouble with the Mellotron. Every time the lights go down it goes out of tune. Audiences seem pretty much the same as in England but we have re-paced our show so that it builds more to a climax."

Ian said there was a possibility of the group recording a single for Atlantic during the tour. Bob Dawbarn

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1969

OCTOBER–DECEMBER



Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (singing, strumming, seated and scoffing) with drummer Dallas Taylor (standing, right) in 1969

“These guys are fantastic”

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH have a new member, already known to Stephen Stills. “They’re friends,” says David Crosby of **NEIL YOUNG**. “They’re not at war at all.” Meanwhile, **THE HOLLIES** have hit big with “He Ain’t Heavy” — but can’t stop talking about Graham Nash.

— **MELODY MAKER AUGUST 9** —

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH are no longer just the ex-Byrd, ex-Buffalo Springfield and former Hollie supergroup. They’ve added new partners to the rock band with a name more like a group of City solicitors. Newcomers to the “firm” are drummer Dallas Taylor, guitarist Neil Young and former Motown session man Greg Reeves — and they’re already at work on the second album. The first featured just the original trio plus Taylor.

“Neil joined roughly a month ago,” said Dave Crosby on the transatlantic phone from Los Angeles. “He and Steve have been friends for a long time — from pre-Springfield days — and they kept in touch after the Springfield split. He and Steve have always had a good musical relationship and when we decided to make the three-man vocal group we had into a band he came along. We tried to work it out with Bruce Palmer on bass but he’s into Indian or neo-Indian music. Then we got very lucky and Greg Reeves came along, courtesy of Motown.

“Greg’s been playing sessions during the last two years. He’s only 19 but he’s fantastic; he also plays stand-up bass. He’s really made the band tighten up.”

American reports have hinted that Young’s teaming up with Stills isn’t a good thing. It’s been suggested that the two former Springfield guitarists have too big a talent to combine together well for long. Has Neil’s joining created any problems for the growing band? »

ALAMY

1969

OCTOBER–DECEMBER



"It's grown into a fully integrated rock'n'roll band"; the expanded CSNY with former Motown session bassist Greg Reeves (far right)

"You shouldn't believe all you read in the trades, no disrespect to *MM*," said Dave.

"Only rarely do Neil and Steve play guitar together and when they do it's interlocking parts. The reason for the Springfield falling apart wasn't because of Neil and Steve. They weren't at war at all. Primarily it was because the Springfield couldn't grow to a musical level; the clashes came between everybody else in the group, and if you've ever worked with some of them you'd know why."

I asked David if he was worried that they were being talked about as a supergroup. Does the "supergroup" tag pose any problems?

"It doesn't worry me and it doesn't excite me. People are trying to label everything; it's just a cheap attempt to make us into something we're not. We're just a bunch of musicians playing music. Our music is going in every direction that I've been able to figure out. One song comes out like Motown, one comes out folk and one comes out like Bulgarian harmony. There's no way I can tell in what direction we're going in—we're going in so many directions at once."

"There are now five writers in the group, can you dig it? It works out with still more material and it's varied. This album we're working on is different from the first, which was mostly overdubbing as it was just the four people. These are tracks played live. I resented the change at first because I didn't want to lose that three-part vocal harmony, but it's grown into a fully integrated rock'n'roll band. These guys are fantastic—it's so perfected. I heard them do a song of mine the other night and it was just cooking and bouncing along, and you could still hear yourself talk over it. We're doing every kind of arrangement we can think of. Our vocal capacity is really something."

Graham Nash, the ex-Hollie and very much a part of the group's distinctive vocal sound, is suffering from a polyp on the vocal cords.



"There are now five writers in the group – can you dig it?"

How serious is the infection and will he have to have an operation?

"Well, we're keeping our fingers crossed. It's the same thing that affected Stevie Wonder and Grace Slick, which put Airplane out of business. We hope Graham's going to be able to sing but we've had to cancel a few dates because the doctors said they wouldn't be able to guarantee those cords. But apart from that, Graham's having a whale of a time; he's got his chicks and his music..."

It was a hot sunny Los Angeles day and a dark London night when we talked.

"I really envy you. I'd love to be able to go into Chelsea for a meal right now. We nearly came over to England a couple of weeks ago; we really wanted to be there. It's a bit more civilised," said Dave. "We'll see you soon." *Royston Eldridge*

— **MM** SEPTEMBER 20 —

TOWARDS THE END OF 1968, Graham Nash left The Hollies. He felt limited within the Manchester group and left Britain to link with friends of similar

belief on America's West Coast. Nash linked with friends Dave Crosby, Steve Stills and Neil Young to produce "Marrakesh Express" and a debut album. The Hollies in their turn added Liverpool's Terry Sylvester, returned to the chart with "Sorry Suzanne" and generally became a happier, tighter group. On the eve of the release of The Hollies' second single since Nash left, I asked Hollie Tony Hicks what he thought of "Marrakesh Express" and how far Graham had progressed musically since joining the ex-Byrd and former Buffalo Springfield.

"It's the greatest, a sort of Peter, Paul & Mary kind of thing with very strong, thick harmonies. We're not striving to jump ahead, we never have, but I think we're as far ahead as Graham, maybe more so with this new record."

GETTY

The new Hollies single is "He Ain't Heavy... He's My Brother", a number not so instantly recognisable as The Hollies and not written by them. "We had about three numbers to choose from. One was a very heavy country number, the other was similar to 'Sorry Suzanne' and there was this one from Bobby Scott. It's basically a very commercial song with slightly stronger lyrics, they're more meaningful.

"Alan takes the vocal lead. I think it will do us a lot of good and may appeal to a wider public, taking in some of the Tom Jones/Humperdinck fans. The demo record was released in France and is already at No 5.

"We've half-finished a new album, there are about another six tracks to do. It will be all original material – *Hollies Sing Hollies* – and should be released around November. There's a bit of country and some very heavy stuff, more the sort of thing that the soul people will do. Terry's written some songs with Alan and myself and Bernie's got an instrumental.

"It's taken Terry a great deal of time to feel really relaxed with us. He felt he shouldn't be there at first but now he's fine. We always rabbit on stage and now if Terry's got something to say, he says it. The group has never been better, everything's much more interesting. We're not just offered the run-of-the-mill type of television. The *Hollies In Concert* show we did helped there, and I think we could improve on that now."

In the New Year The Hollies will probably be going to America for a college tour and television. Will they be touring Britain again?

"I'm sure we'll do a concert tour here in the New Year. If we've got something new to offer, we'll do it. The thing we did with Felix was a good idea; it was a project with some thought going behind it. I wouldn't mind doing something like that again.

"We'll be going to Australia as well. It's not a monster market but we've been having hits there as long as we've been doing here. We'll be doing three weeks in the Checkers Club in Sydney, which is like the Talk Of The Town."

The Hollies are obviously happy as a group. Are they happy about the current musical scene and the direction in which it is going?

"We're ready now for a new Beatles and I hope I find it, although I doubt if it will be another group. Record sales are down by half and so are album sales, even though they're much better value and give the artists a chance to be more inventive. I can't see this heavy trend lasting too long. It's just a try to put a bit of vitality in the music, although its great Jimmy Page has made it. He's a guitarist in front of all the others. Heavy music's been around since Hendrix, they've just given it another name.

"There've been some good things to come out of the underground but it's basically head music that comes out of getting stoned. The only thing is people think they've got to be stoned to write it and other people think they've got to be stoned to listen to it."

Tony left to join the other Hollies in the recording studio, where they are completing another album of "unstoned" music destined once again for the charts, as undoubted is their 20th single.

Royston Eldridge

— NME SEPTEMBER 27 —

WOW! IT WAS QUITE A weekend for The Hollies. Allan Clarke started the ball rolling on Friday evening when his wife Jenny presented him with a second son, Toby, and as they say in the top people's paper, a brother for Timmy. The same day, the group's latest – and my say greatest – single, "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother", was released to universal acclaim from the pop press disc reviewers.

On Saturday, I joined Allan, Tony, Bern, Bobby and Terry (whose team, Liverpool, won three-one in the afternoon, thus

completing his joy), their manager Robin Britten and lovely fan club secretary Lynne Wheeler at EMI's HQ in Manchester Square, where The Hollies were to play hosts to more than 100 of their fans at their first ever fan club convention.

From as far away as Belgium and Sweden came secretaries, representing thousands of fans who couldn't make the trek, while the girls (and not a few boys) tucked into the EMI goodies, listened to promotion man Mike Regan doing his Butlin's Redcoat routine, and watched their favourite group on film in *The Hollies In Concert*. I helped the rest of the group congratulate and celebrate with Allan in an upstairs room.

"Oh, I don't feel too good," the proud dad groaned, supporting his heavy head with his hand, "but Jenny and the baby are fine. He's seven-and-a-half pounds and he's even got some hair already! I put a toy in Timmy's cot on this morning and told him it was from his new brother. It was so he didn't feel left out when Toby comes home from the hospital and gets all the attention for a while."

Eventually we got down to business, the business of the new record, and the worries that each new release brings.

I was quite surprised to hear Allan say "if" when talking about its chart potential. "We've had a lot of hits," he said, "but that doesn't automatically mean that we are going to keep on having them. I'm a firm believer in taking each record as it comes, taking it on its own merits, and forgetting all that's gone before.

"People are saying that 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother' is something very new and progressive for us. That's not strictly true. On one or two of our albums there are songs not very different from this one, with me using the same kind of voice.

"As for progressive, what does it mean? What is this new thing everybody is talking about? I don't know and I don't care. Give me something I can understand. I don't want to have to have things explained to me before I can appreciate a piece of music."

A few minutes earlier, I had suggested to Tony that if The Hollies had been recording songs like "Heavy" a year ago, Graham Nash might still have been with them.

"I see what you mean," Tony replied, "but he would have left anyway because he wanted to live in America and play with the people he is playing with. But I think he would like our record. I'm sure he will."

Tony, by the way, has sold all his camera equipment, which is a little sad because his results were getting better all the time.

"It was just a matter of time. I had all this gear, but it was sitting in a corner gathering dust. I liked to take my cameras abroad and take shots in any spare time we had, but we just don't have enough to make it worthwhile.

"I dare say I'll take it up again one day, but for the time being I make do by looking at the pictures people take of us." »



GETTY

1969

OCTOBER—DECEMBER

While The Hollies have been unusually quiet on the home front in recent months (all that to be changed in the coming weeks, of course), they have not been idle. One by one, they have been adding to their list of conquests in Europe.

"It's like a campaign," Bern told me. "Scandinavia was the first one we managed to score in. We've been abroad quite a lot in the past few months, and I think we are beginning to make some headway."

"It's about time," added Allan, "after all, we have been having hits for six years here. The only way to keep your standing and expand is to travel, and win more people over."

"We only knew one way to win fans, and that's to play for them. They can hear our records, but that's not enough, they hear everybody else's as well."

The line of thought was confirmed a little later on by the Belgian fan club secretary, who reported that following the group's appearances there, The Hollies are rapidly becoming a top name in Belgium.

"We are beginning to break Germany," said Bobby, "and France is the next on the list. The thing about France is that a lot of their own singers and groups cover British and American hits, and naturally the French kids buy their versions. But we'll keep trying, and I'm sure we'll make it in the end."

I asked Allan if we could expect more philosophical songs from The Hollies in future, following this single and the *Hollies Sing Dylan* album.

"I really don't know. It all depends on what songs come up. We don't set out to project anything in particular with records, so I can't say. I don't expect 'Brother' to set any new trend with us; it will just depend on what we are offered next."

"Tony went out and found this one at a publisher's office, so he can take the credit. Tony seems to take it upon himself to go out and find numbers for us to record, and as long as he comes up with winners, why should we worry?"

The next release from The Hollies will be an LP entitled 'Hollies Sing Hollies', which suggests quite rightly, an album devoted to songs penned by the group. "Surprises?" answered Allan. "I don't think so, it will be a collection of songs written by us to be recorded by us, and I can't think of anything that will surprise anybody."

"The thing about The Hollies is that nobody knows what to expect from us, and by that yardstick they can't be disappointed. That's how I live my life. I don't get unduly elated or downcast by anything. That way you never get brought down. Just take everything as it comes, good or bad, learn to accept it, and you'll be alright." *Gordon Coxhill*

— NME OCTOBER 18 —

BY THE LAWS OF POP, The Hollies shouldn't even exist, let alone be engaged upon their 19th and possibly their fastest-moving hit single with "He Ain't Heavy... He's My Brother". Almost alone among their successful contemporaries, they wear a group uniform on stage. And while their image may not be exactly faceless, they have never come across to the majority of the public either individually or as a collective personality.

Still against the unwritten rules of the game, with most artists finding it necessary for survival to align with one of pop's warring factions—teenybopper, family entertainer or progressive—The Hollies can't be slotted comfortably into any of the three, but have a foot in all at the present time. They began in the first, progressed to the second and have taken a tentative step into the third with their current—some say their best—single.

Perhaps Tony Hicks sums up the reason for their success when he says, "The Hollies have

never followed any trend. Images and gimmicks, they all die in the end."

And he goes on to give an insight into the Hollie philosophy by turning round the question "Why do they wear a stage uniform when so few other groups do?" with the reply "Because so few other groups do."

Tony agrees that it may be because of their semi-faceless image that The Hollies survive in magnificent style, even after Graham Nash's departure, when others of our long-established outfits like the Small Faces, Dave Dee, Kinks, Dave Clarke and The Tremeloes have split or fallen from favour.

Money has a lot to do with dissension and splits in groups, said Tony when we met last week at the office of The Hollies' manager. "The Hollies are run like a business. We all have an equal say at meetings and are ready to listen to another's point of view, and everyone can see where the money comes from and where it goes."

Then again, according to Tony, in the early days most groups don't have the experience or the maturity to overcome squabbles.

"If you can mature and get past that phase then you carry on. If not, that's when the splits come. We had our troubles, maybe not as much as most."

As a buffer against the demands of working so closely together, The Hollies use outside interests as an outlet and feel they are very important. Terry Sylvester, for instance is a football fanatic. Tony's hobby was his cameras, but he gave that up a few months ago. An interest in stocks and shares has taken its place.

"How much have I got? Oh, a few grand. I've just bought some shares in the Tom Jones-Engelbert Company. I find it a great enjoyment rushing out to buy *The Times* every morning and checking the prices. Yes, I do take gambles, because I can't be bothered to study things too closely. But I've done very well so far."

Tony's other interests include a share in a London photo agency which handles David Bailey among others. I was intrigued to learn that when The Hollies are playing abroad Tony uses his spare time by acting as a rep for the agency. He chuckles at the thought of himself as a rep but enjoys it all the same. It was Tony who does most of the hit searching for The Hollies, who found "He Ain't Heavy..." in a music publisher's office.

"They played me a complete load of rubbish and then got out 'He Ain't Heavy...' and said, 'You won't like this one.' The demo was nothing like our version, but I could see where the harmonies would fit in."

As he had done in the past, Tony took the song for a second opinion to Hollies producer Ron Richards, "whose verdict I respect enormously".

The others in the group had only slight doubts, although they felt the song was fantastic, but the general feeling was: "Yeah let's have a go."

Naturally, Tony is overjoyed that public



"The Hollies are run like a business; we all have an equal say": (l-r) Terry Sylvester, Tony Hicks, Bobby Elliott, Bernie Calvert and Allan Clarke on a *Top Of The Pops* set

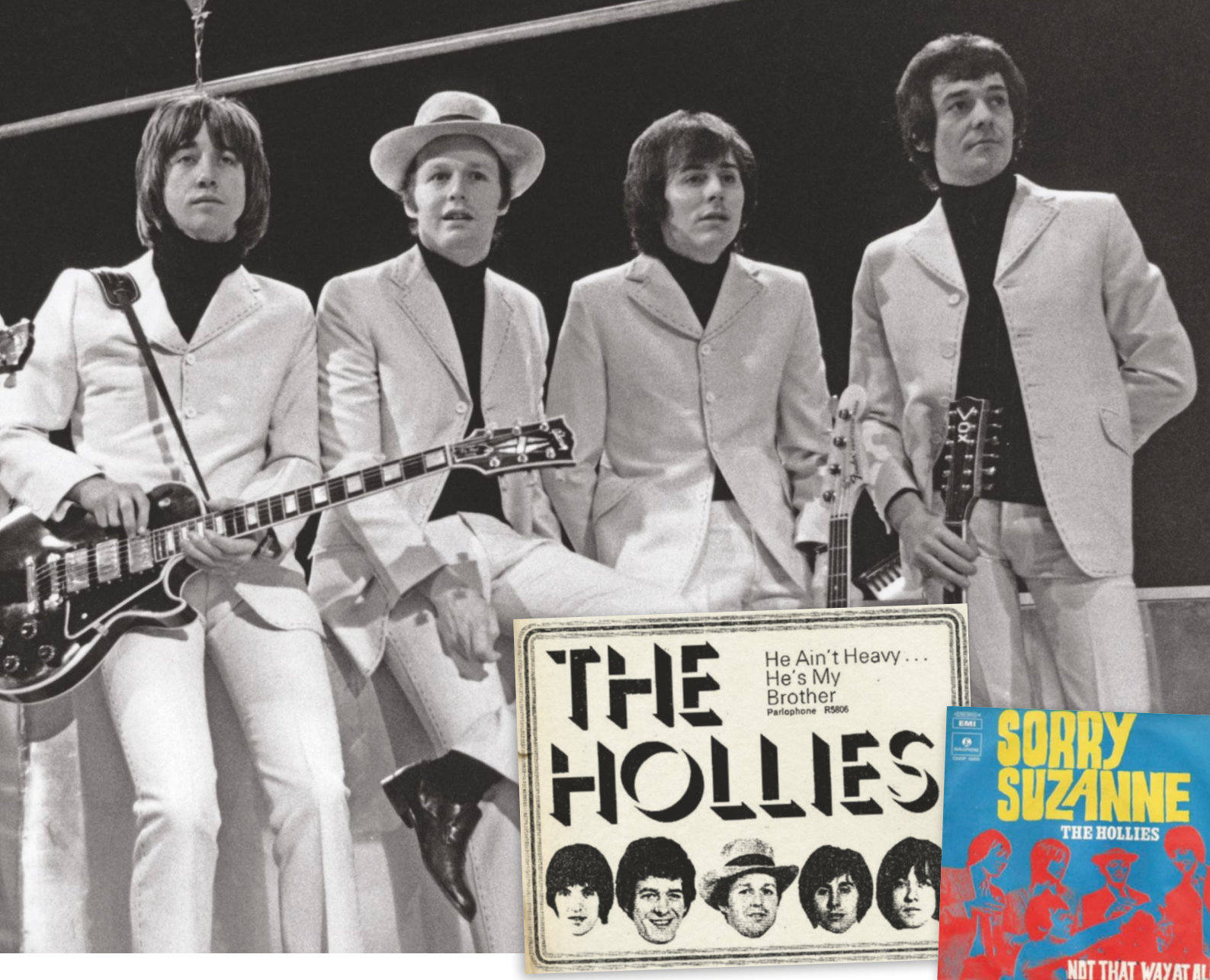
"Tony takes it on himself to go out and find numbers for us to record"

Have - a - go Hollies cut most progressive hit ever

The HOLLIES pictured in their dressing room prior to a recent "Top Of The Pops" spot to promote their latest hit, "He Ain't Heavy... He's My Brother". L. to r. they're TERRY SYLVESTER, ALLAN CLARKE, BERNIE CALVERT, TONY HICKS and BOBBY ELLIOTT.

all the laws of pop, the Hollies shouldn't even exist let alone be engaged upon their nineteenth and possibly their fastest-moving hit single with "He Ain't Heavy... He's My Brother". Almost alone among their successful contemporaries they wear a uniform on stage. And while their image may not be exactly faceless they have never come across to the majority of the public either individually or as a collective personality.





and critical reaction has justified his faith in the song. "I have had a lot of people coming up to me and saying they really like the record. It is very rewarding and satisfying. 'Sorry Suzanne' and those were commercial and nice songs, but not exactly mind-shattering. Mind you, it is not setting a pattern or a new direction for us – which is what you are going to ask next."

With "Heavy" in mind, I wondered what Tony's music tastes were away from The Hollies. I had seen him at the Blind Faith concert in Hyde Park. Did he like it?

"Not very much. I think it is true what people said: Clapton was too far in the background. Really I am not a fanatical music listener; I suppose if anything I like the kind of stuff Graham is doing. I like vocal stuff, and they make the best use of three or four voices. Our relationship with Graham? We are all still friends. He stayed with me the last time he was over here. I can only really listen to the kind of music we might do. Things that are strong on vocals. It is only recently that I started playing more guitar – I bought all four Cream LPs. I put a bit more guitar on the new LP."

"*Hollies Sing Hollies* is out November 4th," suggested their manager Robin Britten helpfully, while keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings.

"I haven't got any frustrations about direction at all," said Tony suddenly, as if anticipating my next question. "I think we have definitely made quite a big step with this record and that will bring in a new variation on everything. We have really widened our listening public."

If The Hollies were starting out now, what kind of music would they be playing? "I suppose if we were completely new we would be playing what everybody else is. I would probably be playing flute with my leg cocked up in the air."

What did he think of Jethro Tull? "Love them – they are really great." Did I sense a frustrated desire despite what he said earlier? "No, I wouldn't like to join them because these people don't live the kind of life I want to lead. I don't know them, but I'm going on the appearance they give."

But you like the music? "Yes, and if I was back at that age with all the enthusiasm for riding around in vans all over the country, I am sure I would probably like to be with that kind of group. But I have done all that, I couldn't go back." There was no regret in his voice, just a matter-of-fact appraisal. "I would love to do 'Living In The Past', though; I would love to stick harmonies on that. But we wouldn't, because that was a very good single and I don't think we would improve on it."

Of *Hollies Sing Hollies*, Tony feels it is one of the best albums they've done. "Again, most of the words are meaningful, with a couple of what could be called typical Hollies stuff. Bernie's done a full orchestral piece, which is lovely."

As a final question I asked Tony if, when Graham left and The Hollies faced a crucial period, he had felt any desire to quit too?

He thought for a while and replied, "I have been allowed to do what I want within the group. Graham's friends were all in America and he had to go where they were. My interests are business interests and they and group work complement each other. There is no reason why I should have to leave. We have had a very enjoyable life; we never regret anything we do or have done."

That may sound like an epitaph, but undoubtedly won't be. The Hollies look set to carry on in the face of all the trends – the group for all seasons. *Nick Logan* •

"The demo of 'He Ain't Heavy...' was nothing like our version"

1969

OCTOBER–DECEMBER



"...and there's nothing I can do": David Bowie basks in *Space Oddity*'s recent ascent to No 5 on the singles chart at his spacious new pad—Flat 7, 42 Southend Road, Beckenham, Kent—in October 1969



“Salvador Dalí, 2001 and the Bee Gees...”

A strange record, “Space Oddity”, brings a truly original figure to the top of the charts. A pro-skinhead, anti-hippy arts lab director, there’s more to DAVID BOWIE than pop: “I don’t want to be one of those singers whose career depends on hit singles,” he says.

— DISC & MUSIC ECHO OCTOBER 11 —

DAVID BOWIE IS 22 years old, thin, with a halo of fair hair, a delicately soft face and two cold eyes. One is pale kitten blue and the other green and it makes it rather disconcerting to talk to him. If he reminds you of anyone it is a gentle mixture of Bob Dylan and Donovan with 90 per cent pure Bowie. He says he sings like “Dylan would have done if he’d been born in England” – and he’s an absolute charmer.

His charm is so overpowering that it has given him more freedom to achieve his ideals than you would have thought possible in this day and age. Local authorities wilt before his smile – and attendants in car parks (not known for their cordiality) are given to rush about finding him parking spaces even when they’re full up.

Bowie was born in Brixton and now lives in Beckenham, Kent. His father, “a delicate Yorkshireman”, recently died. And his stepbrother, whom Bowie considers a genius, is in hospital. So most of his tenderness is directed towards his mother, whom he takes to the recording studio and *Top Of The Pop* to cheer her up. »

PHOTO SHOT

Before “Space Oddity” his name may not have meant anything to you at all. But in fact David Bowie has been tottering on the brink of enormous fame for some time – diverting his energies into many channels, with his music often taking a back seat to other driving ambitions.

His history is amazing. Four years ago he was playing with a group called The Buzz. Then he made a few very good records on his own – “The London Boys” and “Rubber Band” among them – where he sounded amazingly like Anthony Newley. He has also worked with Lindsay Kemp’s mime company, which he loved. And a girl who saw him work was once moved to remark that she felt extremely motherly towards him because his ribs stick out so much.

Between being engrossed in Buddhism and the work of Stravinsky, Bowie formed what he considers his biggest achievement to date – the Arts Laboratory in Beckenham. This threatens to become much more than the name implies, and is now set to turn Beckenham into the first self-sufficient community in Britain.

Although all these outlets don’t strike you as being compatible, Bowie says of course they ARE, because they are all concerned with communication. He says he hates sounding pretentious, but when you get down to the nitty gritty, communicate is really all he’s trying to do.

David Bowie is an extraordinary human being. Brixton would not seem a part of London given to the production of dreamers and idealists, but Bowie is both. “I had a very happy childhood. I was lonely but I never wanted and I never went hungry, but I saw people deprived around me and kids going to school with their shoes falling apart and I suppose, yes, it did leave an impression on me that I wanted them to have better.

“I’m really a born idealist. I worry and I don’t think before leaping in, but I believe there are only three things worth talking about – love, hate and communication. Even talking is ridiculous – you have to put things into practice.”

Possibly because of this outlook – of determined effort – Bowie is very much against the underground movement. He thinks it started to die two years ago and was doomed from the start because it was a middle-class institution and wasn’t really helping the people who needed help. In fact one track on his album – a seven-minute piece of emotional dynamite called “Cygnets Committee” – sets out his thoughts on this subject.

He thinks it will annoy a great many people, and he’s right. The title, he says, is because “a cygnet is pretty to look at but is totally helpless”, and the lines emote a desperateness throughout, with the “hippy” element stating violently “We can FORCE you to be free” and Bowie as narrator voicing his own protest: “I believe in the power of good – I believe in the power of love...”

“The whole hippy thing was ridiculous. Mainly middle-class kids rebelling against their parents. They aren’t underprivileged when they can afford to buy kaftans and clothes made of expensive materials. It’s the lower classes and the Negroes – they’re still the underprivileged of this world.”

He does have material possessions – a small blue Fiat and a house called Haddon Hall which he and his affable young record producer, Tony Visconti, and their respective girlfriends are moving into soon. And he manages to live quite comfortably on about £12 a week – a sum he has consistently earned over the past four years.

He is NOT a boring, angry, kicking-out young man, even though he says he was rebellious at school because he felt sorry for the teachers who didn’t know what they were doing. He IS artistic and he does have enormous empathy with people, so that walking through London he will smile and wave and keep bumping into people he knows.

In fact, he says, most of them are acquaintances more than friends because he distrusts people. He only likes working with people he knows well and admires – like Visconti – and says he trusted too many people in the past, and got frequently kicked in the teeth for his efforts.

David Bowie is a very difficult person to sum up, to arrange as a psychiatrist might in little sections of motive and result. But one thing is very, very certain: in the future he is going to mean much more to the world than just a name, an ex-mime actor or a leading inhabitant of Beckenham, Kent. Beckenham will now surge along fine without his active pressure, and he has two good people – Angela and an accountant called Chris – to look after other things so that he can throw more energy into his music.

“Space Oddity” is the first tenuous link in a long chain that will make David Bowie one of the biggest assets, and one of the most important people British music has produced in a long, long time. *Penny Valentine*

— MELODY MAKER OCTOBER 11 —

FANS OF DAVID Bowie have for years been expecting him to make some proper impact on the music scene. If a reasonable position in the *MM* Top 30 is acceptance, then David has at last broken through with his attractive and highly original single “Space Oddity”.

David is a good-looking young songwriter who first made an impression with his original compositions and a group called The Buzz – or was it The Fuzz? At any rate, he has been floating around the scene, making many friends and influencing people, without gaining much kudos. He has a refreshingly casual attitude towards the pop scene, and is really more concerned with his work in the arts lab movement than his singles.

“I haven’t really wanted to make any records for ages,” he told me this week. “But people have been on at me to record again, so I went into the studios. I have been doing mime for a year and a half – this is my comeback! That first album, I did it in 15 minutes for 5s 6d. You could say it was rushed. I got discouraged with pop by the lack of work, and at that time it was all Tamla Motown. I didn’t stand much of a chance doing my style of music.

“I got more interested in theatre and mime. Mime is limited when you start, but I think it’s a marvellous medium which requires a lot of concentration on the part of the audience. Apart from that, I run an arts lab, which is my chief occupation. It’s in Beckenham and I think it’s the best in the country.

“There isn’t one pseud involved. All the people are real – like labourers or bank clerks. It started out as a folk club... arts labs generally have such a bad reputation as pseud places. There’s a lot of talent in the green belt and there is a load of tripe in Drury Lane. I think the arts lab movement is extremely important and should take over from the youth club concept as a social service.

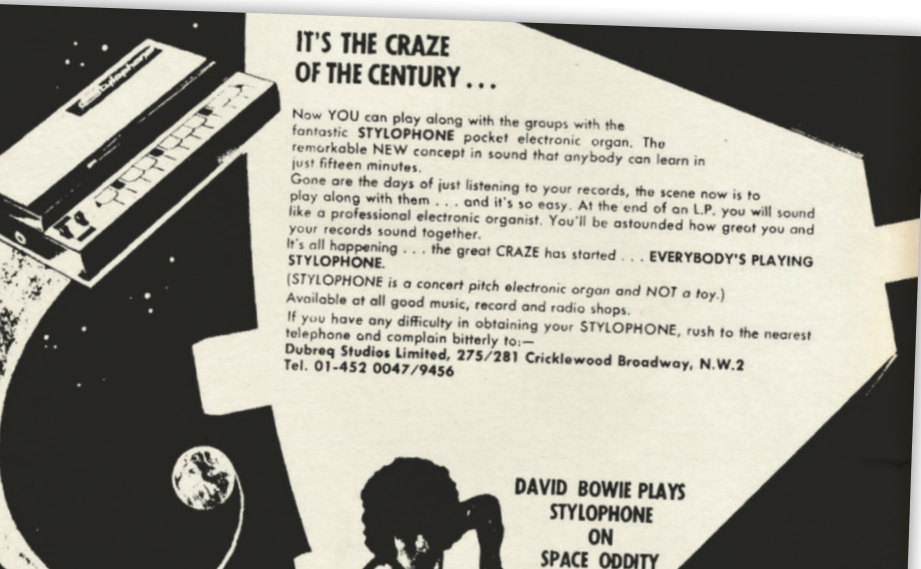
“The people who come are completely pacifist and we get a lot of cooperation from the police in our area. They are more than helpful. Respect breeds respect. We’ve got a few greasers who come and a few skinheads who are just as enthusiastic. I think a lot of skinheads are better than hippies and the hippy cult is so obviously middle-class and snobbish, which is why the skinheads don’t like them.

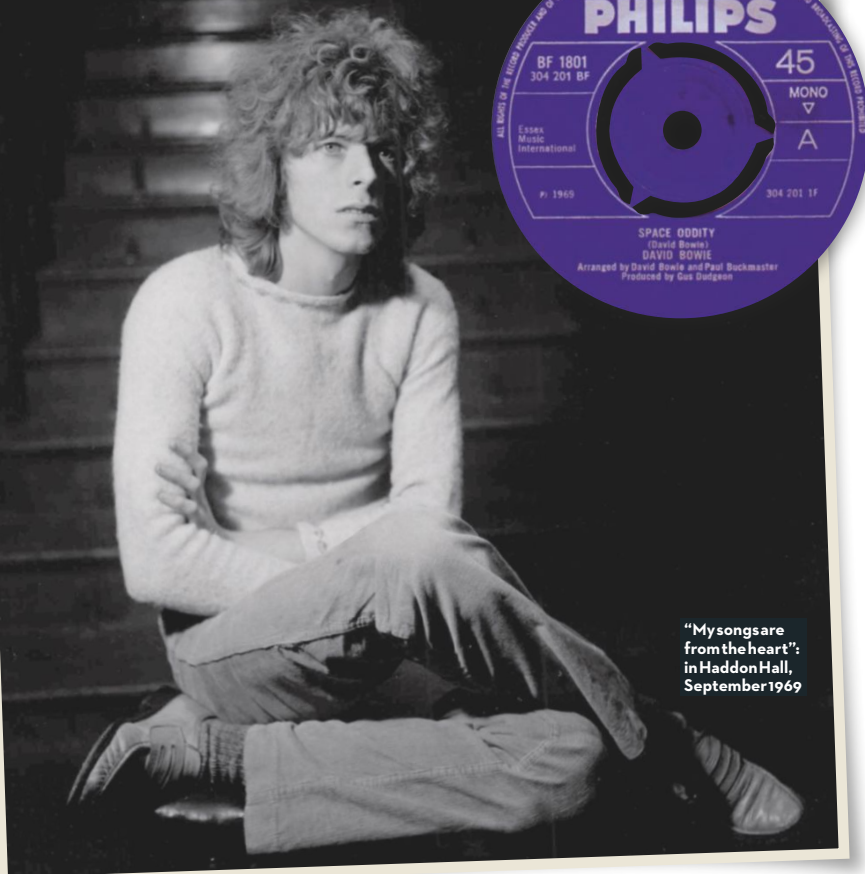
“The hippies don’t know about people – they really don’t. They don’t know what it’s like to see three heavies go after their sister, and all the other things that happen in the skinheads’ environment. Nobody wants the skinheads – the schools don’t want them, or the youth clubs, and the arts labs don’t want to know them least of all.

“When UFO started, they would never let the mods in and now they are getting their own back and getting more violent. We started our lab a few months ago with poets and artists who just came along. It’s got bigger and bigger and now we have our own light show and sculptures, et cetera. And I never knew there were so many sitar players in Beckenham.”

“I still don’t consider myself a performer,” said David, reluctantly returning to the subject of Mr Bowie. “I’m a writer; I really wouldn’t like to make singing a full-time occupation. “The record is based a lot on the film *2001*. It’s a mixture of Salvador Dalí, *2001* and the Bee Gees. Really, it’s just a record which amuses people.”

Since we spoke, David has been asked to join the Humble Pie tour, which is not so surprising as David and Peter Frampton are old friends from Beckenham. “I used to go to school with Peter. I haven’t seen him since, and





"My songs are from the heart": in Haddon Hall, September 1969

I always remember him being very little." David's current success could mean the start of a whole new career for an extremely talented and likeable person. *Chris Welch*

— NME NOVEMBER 15 —

IT LOOKED LIKE a piece of master planning, but it wasn't. It looked like a monster hit, and it was. David Bowie's "Space Oddity", inspired by a visit to the film *2001*, was released just as the world was staying up all night to watch the moon landing. Like the modest, self-effacing young man he is, David passed the credit on to his record company, but as it was written last November, he can hardly disown his amazing foresight!

"Put it down to luck," he aid over the phone from Perth, where he was about to begin a short tour of the Haggisland. "I really am amazed at the success of the record, even though I had confidence in it. I've been the male equivalent of the dumb blonde for a few years, and I was beginning to despair of people accepting me for my music.

"It may be fine for a male model to be told that he's a great-looking guy, but that doesn't help a singer much, especially now that the pretty-boy personality cult seems to be on the way out."

Much as David takes his songwriting seriously, he is amused by pundits who examine his material looking for hidden meanings even he is totally unaware of. "My songs are all from the heart, and they are wholly personal to me and I would like people to accept them as such.

"I dearly want to be recognised as a writer, but I would ask them not to go too deeply into my songs. As likely as not, there's nothing there but the words and music you hear at one listening.

"I see you've noticed that my songs are seldom about boy-and-girl relationships. That's because I've never had any traumas with girls. I like to think myself a pretty stable person, and I've never had a bad relationship with an intelligent girl. And if a girl isn't intelligent, I don't want to know."

Although David made a very good impression on the recent Humble Pie tour, he maintains he is a songwriter first, and even denies he is a good performer.

"It was my first tour," he told me, "and I never stopped being surprised it even went on. It appeared so badly organised to me, but I suppose everybody knew what they were doing.

"For me it was nothing near an artistic success, mainly because I was limited to a 20-minute spot, and I ended up accompanying myself after a mix-up. I was very pleased to see that 'Space Oddity' went down well; I thought the audience would miss the orchestral backing which was on the record.

"I throw myself on the mercy of an audience, and I really need them to respond to me. If they don't, I'm lost. But all the same, I'm determined to be an entertainer – clubs, cabaret, concerts, the lot.

"There is too much false pride within the pop scene, groups and singers decrying cabaret without ever having seen the inside of a northern nightclub. I just want to sing to as many people as want to hear me, and I don't care where I do it. Mind you, I refuse to have my hair cut or change my appearance for anybody. I'm quite happy with the way I look, and people will have to accept me the way I am, or not bother at all."

A former commercial artist, David played tenor sax with a modern jazz group, "went through the blues thing", during which time he switched to vocalist, and then he joined a traditional French mime company, where he met and worked with Marc Bolan. "Marc has been a great influence on me, not so much with his music, but with his attitude to the pop scene. He shuts himself away from the destructive elements, and prefers to get on with his work. That's how I intend to be; in fact, I ran away from London a while back when people started talking about me, and didn't come back unless it was really vital."

Inevitably, the underground cropped up, and David had some interesting comments on the movement. "I thought when the whole thing started," he said, "that a whole lot of new, musically minded groups were going to appear with some meaningful music and try and spread it around. Well, we've got the music, and most of it is very good, too, but I can't figure out the attitude of so many of the underground groups. It seems to me that they have

expanded their own personal little scene to a certain extent, and then they stop, contend to play to the converted. That doesn't get them anywhere, and in the end both the audiences and the groups will get fed up with the same faces and places.

"A lot is said and written about the musical snobbery with the fans, but I think the groups are just as bad. For some reason, even the words 'entertainer' and 'cabaret' make them shudder."

Obviously, having a hit record and being able to command the money that goes with it, is going to make a few changes to David's life, not least of all on his bank balance. He seems to have made a good start already. "I've bought a big car, and a nice little house which need a lot more time and some money spent on it before it will be as I want it. I suppose other little things will crop up as time goes on. At the moment, I'm more concerned with remaining a 22-year-old, or even going back a year to 21.

"This business might keep you young mentally, but I feel almost middle-aged physically. I often regret not leading a more normal teenage life. From the time I was about 16, I never kicked a football over a common with my mates, I haven't had to chat up a girl like an ordinary teenager for ages, and believe it or not, I miss it.

"I have to try and figure out if a girl knows who I am and whether she wants me for what I am or my name. It's a more difficult problem than it sounds, but as I was saying, I haven't had much trouble with girls, touch wood."

The immediate future for David Bowie looks bright, with as much live work as he wants, an LP on release this week, and even the prospect of his own TV show. But the usual pressing worry about follow-ups hasn't caught up with David yet. "Follow-up?" he queried. "But the first one's still alive at the moment. Actually, I haven't even thought about it. I'm not sure if I've got a suitable song for another single, but even if I have, I don't want to be one of those singers whose career depends on hit singles and they are virtually dead for six months of the year.

"I hope to get some free time to do some writing when I return from Scotland, but even then, I can't write just because I've got the time. But it's a bit early in life for all my ideas to have dried up, isn't it, so I suppose I'll come up with something."

At the moment, David seems to be the sort of person much needed in pop: full of original thoughts, a willingness to work, a hatred of the herd, drugs scene and class distinction in music, and common sense enough not to let the fame and adulation surely coming his way turn his head. I'm sure he has been around long enough to withstand the pressures, and if he can't, he'll be wise enough to run. *Gordon Coxhill* •

"It's a bit early in life for all my ideas to have dried up, isn't it"

1969

OCTOBER – DECEMBER

SINGLES
REVIEW
1969

"It would make someone a nice Christmas present"

MM DEC 27 Genial Jimmy Page commends sounds new and old in the *Maker's Blind Date* challenge.

Jeff Beck and myself have always dug him and poor old Wout Steenhuis has dedicated his life to emulating Les Paul, and he'll never top him. The only trouble with these records is that Mary Ford's voice dates them a bit. It's back to the early '50s and Kay Starr. Even so, it's very subtle and nice. Les Paul played brilliantly at the right speed as well as finger tremolo and feedback – he did all these things years ago. Let's listen to "Deep In The Blues". Blues fans probably think this is dated, but there is something there for every guitarist. He has the whole concept in his head of the straight guitar solo and the multi-tracking. The finished product is totally incredible.

Lonnie Johnson & Eddie Lang
Guitar Blues and Bull Frog Moan
from the LP *Stringing The Blues*
Vol 1 CBS

Who is it? Well I've never heard of Eddie Lang before, but I know Lonnie Johnson. (*Listens intently*) This reminds me of the gipsy players in Paris and gives me an image of women walking around with four or five skirts. They travel with all their clothes on! It conjures up an image for me of the bars and bistros, drinking wine and eating French bread, although I know this has nothing to do with that – I suppose I was thinking of Django. This is more into New Orleans and country blues, so much of it is relevant to today's guitar music, and it's so much damn good listening.

Charlie Christian
Blues In B from
the LP *With The Benny Goodman Sextet And Orchestra*
CBS

I know who it is – it must be Charlie Christian if the guy said, "Charlie!" Guitarists from this period could have could have done a lot more if they had better rhythm

sections. All the drummers used to chug along with a two-beat and it makes you wonder how the old guitarists would have sounded with today's drummers. So much has happened to drumming in the last 10 years, and when you get a heavy drummer backing – you just explode. Quite frankly, I never listened to Charlie Christian much. I listened to Les Paul and all the blues guitarists – BB King, Bukka White and Elmore James, plus all the early rock guitarists.

Fairport Convention
Come All Ye from the LP *Liege & Lief*
ISLAND

I don't know who it is, but it's bloody good. Just to help me, is it English or American? She's got a lovely purity to her voice. Is it Fairport Convention? Didn't they do "Chelsea Morning"?

Oh, Dave Swarbrick's in this group. He's a damn fine violinist, and the girl must be Sandy Denny. If the rest of the album is as good as this, it should be a big seller for them. It would make someone a very nice Christmas present.

Bukka White
Bed Spring Blues and Aberdeen, Mississippi Blues from the LP
Memphis Hot Shots
BLUE HORIZON

It's contemporary and sounds like an old blues singer who's been got together in the studio with a drummer. It's a bit difficult – I can't really tell who it is. Who is it? Well, I can't believe it. Who was responsible – own up! It really suffers from modern-day recording techniques. For a start, on the old records the washboard was right up close to the guitar, and I'm sorry to say there is none of the richness in sound he had before. It's impossible to recreate the old recording sound, because the old equipment has gone.



The Peddlers *Girlie* CBS

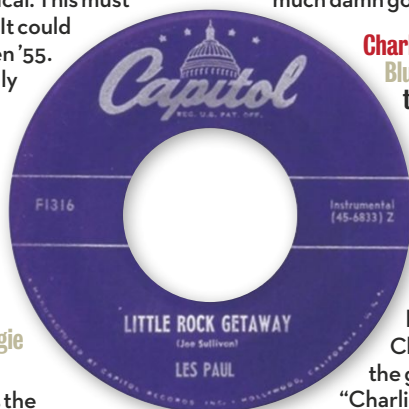
Peddlers, is it? His voice doesn't knock me out – it's always so false. He never sounds convincing. I've never heard him sing a note that sounded convincing, but I'll say that they always try very hard. That organ wah-wah is derived from The Pretty Things – they did that first. I know they are all good musicians, but they never move me. As far as their following goes, I suppose they have got the agency scene really sewn up – Talk Of The Town and The Morecambe & Wise Show, etc. Personally, I wouldn't think that will be a hit.

Merle Travis *Blue Smoke* CAPITOL
It's "Blue Smoke" by Merle Travis! Great! He's really into it, isn't he?

I suppose not many people in England have heard of him. Or know that Chet Atkins took his style from him – lock, stock and barrel. I like him because he has a sense of humour to his playing and occasionally he makes a mistake. Chet Atkins is so cut and dried and clinical. This must be pretty old. It could be 1958 or even '55. He's got a really nice country blues feel.

Les Paul & Mary Ford
Little Rock Getaway, Deep In The Blues and Mammy's Boogie
CAPITOL

Les Paul – he's the man who started everything – multi-track recording, the electric guitar – he's just a genius. I think he was the first to use a four-track – or was it an eight-track recording machine? I met him once and apparently he started multi-track recording in about 1945.



JIMMY PAGE

reviews the new sounds in *Blind Date*

Jimmy Page was both intrigued and pleased by the album tracks chosen for his *Blind Date* session.

"They're beautiful people"

MM OCT 18 Eric Clapton turns PR – to promote a new single by Delaney & Bonnie.

WHEN A TOP musician becomes an unpaid press and public relations man for a group, it can be fairly assumed that the group must have some unusual qualities. Eric Clapton calls Delaney & Bonnie quite simply "the best band in the world". And not content with shouting their praises, he has instigated a tour of Europe with himself joining the band on guitar.

Who are this duo Beatle George Harrison tried to secure for Apple? And why is Clapton so impressed by their work? Said Eric this week, "Delaney and Bonnie Bramlett are married with two children. The band who play with them have known each other all their lives and were raised in the South. They have such a good time playing together and are really good to an audience.

"People hearing them for the first time often think they are coloured. As white musicians, they are completely accepted by coloured audiences in the States. I first heard them when I went to the States with Cream for the last time. I came back and didn't really think much about them. Then I heard George was going after them. We asked them to be on the Blind Faith tour.

"Dave Mason of Traffic played with them and they both play instruments themselves. They're beautiful people – real Southern gentlemen – and women. I stayed with them in LA and they will be staying at my house in Surrey for two weeks before the tour. We'll be rehearsing and writing songs.

"They've only been working together since the beginning of the year. Before that they were playing at each other's houses. In fact, I think they

"They will be staying at my house in Surrey for two weeks"

hated each other when they worked in rival groups. Then they decided to marry!"

Biographically speaking, Delaney Bramlett (29) was raised in Randolph, Mississippi and played guitar from the age of eight. After three years in the navy, he began working in bars, singing and playing guitar. At a club in North Hollywood, Delaney was asked by Jack Good to do a pilot TV show, which became *Shindig*. He became part of a country duo called the Shindogs and met another duo which included Bonnie Lynn.

Bonnie, from St Louis, had been singing since she was 12 songs like "Kansas City" in taverns where country artists worked with names the Kissin'

Cousins. Later she worked with artists like Fontella Bass, Albert King and Ike and Tina Turner. She met Delaney in the Carolina Lanes Club and within a short time they were working together – and married.

At the end of 1968 they had a permanent band backing them and were gaining rave notices from public and musicians. When they opened at the Whiskey in Los Angeles for three nights in March, Steve Stills, Dave Crosby and Buddy Miles were all regular sitters-in with The Friends, as the band is known. The basic Friends include Bobby Whitlock on organ and vocals, Jerry McGee (guitar), Leon Russell (piano), Bobby Keys and Jim Price (horns), Carl Radle (bass) and Jim Keltner (drums).

And now they have a new friend – Eric Clapton. He has seen to it that English fans will be made aware of their talents and appeal, with a concert at the Albert Hall, London in December.

Chris Welch

Single tones throughout

MM NOV 15 A test pressing of John and Yoko's outré LP confuses a critic...

John Lennon & Yoko Ono
The Wedding Album APPLE

The open diary of Mr and Mrs JO Lennon continues. Its purpose? Who can tell, but John's latest multi-media kit will probably be bought by those who feel they require a memento of our time, a kind of time capsule.

The albums: Side One consists almost entirely of John and Yoko speaking each other's names superimposed on the sound of their heartbeats. They sing, shout, mutter cajole, scream, plead, threaten and demand each other, and once the listener is into the sound (preferably with headphones) certain facets become clear. The rhythm of the heartbeats, constantly colliding and separating, resembles (albeit accidentally) the playing of African drummers, and in the middle when the voices quieten the metabolic sound surges through with considerable strength.

Sides two and four consist entirely of single tones maintained throughout, presumably produced electronically [see Letters, p145]. This might sound arid to say the least but in fact constant listening reveals a curious point: the pitch of the tones alters frequently but only by microtones or at most a semitone. This oscillation produces an almost subliminal uneven beat which maintains interest. On a more basic level, you could have a ball by improvising your own raga, plainsong, even Gaelic mouth music against the drone.

Side three is the most varied, a montage of sounds and interviews with John and Yoko which begins with Yoko singing "Dear John, let's hope for peace". If memory serves, much of the talking on this side comes from their



honeymoon movie, and is basically on the peace/bagism/bed-in theme. John also sings a lugubrious version of "Goodnight" which he – not Paul – wrote for Ringo. This album will make interesting listening in 20 years' time. What will we think of it then? Richard Williams

WEDDING ALBUM



1969

OCTOBER—DECEMBER



December 14, 1969:
The Rolling Stones
perform at London's
Saville Theatre



“Don’t feel
sorry for me...
I feel sorry
for them”

After violent scenes at Altamont and across the USA, the **ROLLING STONES'** UK shows are more sedate. In London, conjurors perform and ice cream is served. “The audiences are blasé,” says Mick Jagger. “This is why we don’t play here.”

1969

OCTOBER–DECEMBER

— MELODY MAKER NOVEMBER 29 —

ALL'S WELL WITH the Stones and Mick Jagger is at peace with the world. They have returned to tour America after three years and, says Mick, "It's been crazy – great fun." Somehow California sunshine managed to sneak along the thousands of miles of telephone cable between LA and downtown Catford when Mick rang me this week. He sounded cool, calm and collected, although there was a burst of the old Mick on the subject of musicians' unions and a touch of the send-ups on the subject of pop operas.

A strange and hideous nightmare in which The Bonzo Dog Band and The Who were fighting on stage was mercifully interrupted when the phone shrilled dramatically at 4am. The call had been expected at midnight, and I had fallen into a fitful sleep of the kind that would have broken and encephalograph if one had been strapped to my head.

"Hello, its Mick Jagger here," came the highly together voice, as I stumbled around trying to switch on the light and find a ballpoint. "I've been out buying some records," he said chattily. "I found some Rolling Stones LPs I haven't seen before and some old blues stuff. Hang on a minute..." The sound of Rolling Stones clattering about in the background interrupted my in-depth probing, which had so far consisted of "hello".

"I'm talking to the *Melody Maker*, can you keep quiet?" I heard Mick calling out, and the long-distance muttering faded. "Sorry – just having some domestic problems.

"Did I wake you up? I'm in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, overlooking the sea and its a beautiful day. I'm completely relaxed because the tour has been really good fun – and the travelling has been easy. We've done Baltimore, New York and Philly, and we've got used to being on the road again very quickly. Its three years since we did it last, and it's just as exciting and crazy. We've been playing about an hour-and-a-quarter shows, and even longer if things go really well. We've been playing well. Mick Taylor is doing fine. We start off with five fast rock'n'rollers, then slow it down for a few acoustic numbers. We've been playing a few tracks off the new album *Let It Bleed* and from *Beggars Banquet*. The new album should be out here next week. How's London? We should be doing a couple of dates there when we get back."

Good news indeed. But where in London in winter can the Stones play? The parks will be a bit nippy. I gave him a brief resumé of current weather conditions. "That's the problem – there's nowhere to play, because the Albert Hall is banning rock concerts, right? Maybe it will be at the Lyceum. We'll do the concerts around Christmas, on December 10 and 22. But we've not confirmed anything yet."

Had there been much trouble riot-wise on the tour?

"There have been a few punch-ups in San Diego. But we managed to get the police outside of the concerts, which makes it much cooler. Chicago was incredible. The people there have so much energy; they are into doing so many things. You sometimes think it is all happening in England, then you realise it's mostly happening in the States. Yes, they really have a lot of energy here. I said they have a lot of energy here. It's fantastic!"

I smothered a yawn and hastily agreed before Mick thought I had fallen into a trance. Had the Stones been recording much?

"No. We're not allowed to record here because the English Musicians' Union won't let Americans record in England. We talked to the American union about it and they say they don't mind us recording there, but they can't do anything – the English Union causes such problems."

How was Mick's filming schedule coming along?

"Well, we've finished both films, and now we have to do some sound sync for *Performance* and *Ned Kelly*. I'm trying to get some music written and recorded for *Kelly*. We've got a few ideas about doing some country music that should fit with the mood of the film."

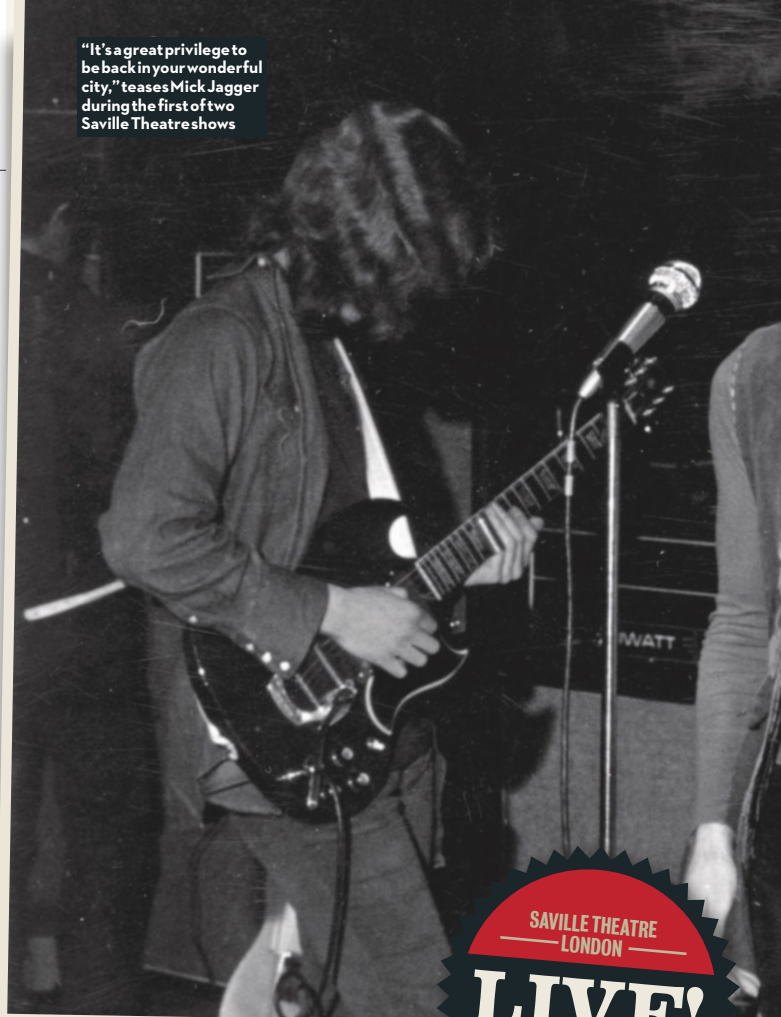
How were our other British groups doing in the States?

"Very well. The Kinks are opening here tonight with their opera *Arthur*. In fact, The Rolling Stones are going to do a pop opera now. It's called *Albert* – all about the sex life of a white blues singer."

"Great," I snored druggily.

"OK, that's enough, sleep tight, baby." *Chris Welch* •

"It's a great privilege to be back in your wonderful city," teases Mick Jagger during the first of two Saville Theatre shows



SAVILLE THEATRE
— LONDON —
LIVE!
— DECEMBER 14 —

Not quite a riot

MM Dec 20 Polite applause replaces screaming as the Stones return to the London stage.

IT WAS ICE Cream Sunday at the Saville with the Stones. Instead of stabbings there were conjuring tricks. Polite applause replaced premature birth in the stalls. And a jolly good job too! Typically British phlegm was displayed by the audience for The Rolling Stones' first London theatre appearance in years on Sunday, in sharp contrast to reports of hysteria and violence in America.

In San Francisco four people died and four were born when the group played to a half a million souls. In perambulating London, several hundred ladies and gentlemen, full of Sunday dinner, gently tapped their toes to the scintillating rhythms of Jagger and friends. Despite exhortations from Mick, the citizenry of London declined the offer to jive in the aisles and preferred to express their appreciation for such favourites as "Satisfaction" and "Sympathy For The Devil" with the generous if decorous hand clapping "in the usual manner", as toast masters invite at Rotary Club annual dinners.

"I was expecting a teeny-bopper audience. I'm so relieved it isn't," well-known columnist David Wigg whispered during a cathedral-like hush between numbers. It was nice to be able to hear and see the Stones playing and singing properly without all the bellowing and bopping of the mid-'60s. But Mick was not so pleased. As we drank champagne and ate strawberries about 24 hours after the show, he scowled and said, "The first show was a bore; the second show was much better. The first house was full of f-----g journalists."

Not having seen the second show, one has to report that the atmosphere was decidedly cool, but the audience could not be blamed 100 per cent. Knicker wetting doesn't happen by pressing a button. If this is the desired effect, long periods of inactivity between sets, David Berglas and his cabaret act and an indifferent rock revival group are not quite the way to build tension. Shakin' Stevens from Wales opened the show looking slightly uncomfortable in drape jackets and Elvis hairstyles. They are probably great fun in a small club, but the theatre tended to expose their weak instrumental ability. DJ Jeff Dexter occasionally

INSIDE: Buddy Rich/Kenny Rodgers/Nice

**STONES – TWO
LONDON
DATES**





materialised in front of the curtains bearing news of great events, one of them being Mr Berglas and his auto-suggestion show.

A girl was balanced horizontally on a chair-back and gauche "members of the audience" participated in certain tricks. Nobody pretended to drink ink, which was a shame, as I have always wanted to see somebody pretend to drink ink. The girl remained horizontal to great applause and the rest of the hocus-pocus worked with varying degrees of success.

At 6.15pm, after the show had been running an hour, we heard our first music. Mighty Baby, booked at the last minute, made a great impression with a beautiful overall sound in which nobody overpowered the others. It was collective improvisation, which floated along over the propulsive drums of Roger Powell. Ian Whiteman on organ, saxophone and flute took a few solos along with Martin Stone (lead guitar), Alan King (rhythm) and Mike Evans (bass guitar).

At this point ice cream was served. It was of the finest quality. If a trifle under-cooled. For our further enjoyment of the show, excellent programmes containing first-class photographs of the group were on sale. The safety curtain was lowered. Jeff Dexter played a record, and toffee-papers rustled in anticipation.

It was around 7pm when a voice whispered behind the curtain, "Two minutes' silence." It sounded like Jagger. To end the confusion about what might be happening next, Jeff Dexter suddenly crawled out on his hands and knees from under the curtain again. He shouted in a loud voice, "The Rolling Stones!" and it was evident something was up.

The curtains parted and there was Mick, Charlie, Keith, Bill and Mick. They blasted into "Jumping Jack Flash" and Mick was out there,

dressed in black with an orange drape entwining. The band sounded fine and were at their best on "Oh Carol" and similar reminders of the R&B boom. Mick Taylor, white and blond, played some nice lead guitar bits and used the steel effectively. Both Keith and Mick soloed on "Sympathy", while Charlie and Bill chugged along brightly. But while the applause came readily enough, it wasn't quite the riot Mick seemed to expect.

"Now you are not just going to sit there - or I'm going to crown you," he warned. But it was not until the house lights were turned up and Mick had wiggled his bottom, stretched on the floor and Charlie had socked out a heavy intro to "Under My Thumb" that the crowd began some dutiful handclapping, and later volunteered to dance in the aisle. "It's a great privilege to be back in your wonderful city," said Mick. "Perhaps you are more in the mood for something slower you can get into - to sleep, I mean!"

But there was no moody of any description. It was just that we wanted to listen to the music. I remember shouting, "Crazy, man, crazy!" - but that was during a performance of the motion picture *Rock Around The Clock* at the Queen's Cinema, Catford in 1956, and having been warned to keep quiet by an elderly lady soft-drink seller, have felt intimidated at public entertainments ever since.

There was one small, rather sad but significant episode. A little girl ran down to the front of the stage, watched impassively by the handful of stewards. She threw a scarf on stage, but it fluttered in the orchestra pit.

A man on duty in the pit picked up the wisp of material and courteously handed it back to the little girl, who tried again and succeeded in delivering it at Jagger's feet. But he didn't notice.

"Street Fighting Man" finally aroused the passions and a great roar went up as the curtain fell. "More" was the cry and shouts of "bravo" were noted. But there was to be no more. The curtain remained firmly drawn. The Stones had worked hard enough and it was too late to expect them to be impressed by the sudden change of heart.

Before he went, Mick threw a bucket of symbolic confetti at us, which according to ancient Greek legend means, "A pox upon you worthless dullards." Unwilling to enter any lengthy discussion, Mick, however, said, "The last show was full of trendy hippies and swingers. The first show was weird. The audience were totally lacking in energy."

"I felt sorry for you, I could see you were working really hard..." I began. This was a mistake. "Don't feel sorry for me. It was just another gig for me," he snapped. "I felt sorry for them. The most blasé audiences in the world are in our own country, which is why we don't play here."

A thousand groups began wailing in my head. "We are tired of playing to screamers. We want to play to listening audiences." The ghosts of interviews past haunted my skull. End of conversation. End of an era. *Chris Welch*

"Now you are not just going to sit there, or I'm going to crown you!" warned Jagger

1969

OCTOBER–DECEMBER



May 1969: John Lennon photographed during the second "Bed-In" at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal

GETTY

These are dark days for THE BEATLES. Apple has become a point of disagreement, while the group's members are writing too much to keep under the Beatles name. John Lennon examines their situation "What are we selling?" he wonders. "Do they buy it because it's worth it, or just because it says 'Beatles'?"

"It's no news that we argue"

— MELODY MAKER DECEMBER 6 —

THE RETURN OF his famous MBE may have been the starting-point of a new era for John Lennon — an era in which he feels freer to talk about all that has happened to him in the past seven years of Beatledom.

It is an undeniable fact that the four Beatles have grown further away from each other over the years and, as this happens, the truth about their early days is coming out. To some, the revelation of this truth represents the unnecessary shattering of a beautiful myth, the exploding of a fairy tale which depicted the group as the Fab Moptops, ever-ready with a handy witticism or a hummable song

But to John Lennon, this opening up is a vital step. Having lived within the legend for so long, he can maintain it no longer without being inconsistent. And honesty is undoubtedly one of John's main qualities. It makes some people squirm and write outraged letters to the newspapers, but it should be given a long-overdue welcome for the rare quality it is. »

Last week I spent some time with John, during which he told me the truth about the early days, the current relationships within The Beatles, and his consequent need for independence, and a host of other subjects. We begin with the group's rise to fame, and John's feelings about the way it was achieved.

"In the beginning it was a constant fight between Brian [Epstein] and Paul on one side and me and George on the other," he told me. "Brian put us in neat suits and shirts, and Paul was right behind him. I didn't dig that, and I used to try and get George to rebel with me. I'd say to him, 'Look, we don't need these _____ suits. Let's chuck them out of the window.' My rebellion was to have my tie loose, with the top button of my shirt undone, but Paul'd always come up to me and put it straight.

"I saw a film the other night, the first television film we ever did. The Granada people came down to film us, and there we were in suits and everything—it just wasn't us, and watching that film I knew that that was where we started to sell out. We had to do a lot of selling out then. Taking the MBE was a sell-out for me. You know, before you get an MBE the Palace writes to you to ask if you're going to accept it, because you're not supposed to reject it publicly and they sound you out first.

"I chucked the letter in with all the fanmail, until Brian asked me if I had it. He and a few other people persuaded me that it was in our interests to take it, and it was hypocritical of me to accept it. But I'm glad, really, that I did accept it—because it meant that four years later I could use it to make a gesture.

"We did manage to refuse all sorts of things that people don't know about. For instance, we did the Royal Variety Show once, and we were asked discreetly to do it every year after that—but we always said, 'Stuff it.' So every year there was always a story in the newspapers saying 'Why No Beatles For The Queen?', which was pretty funny, because they didn't know we'd refused it.

"That show was a bad gig anyway. Everybody's very nervous and uptight, and nobody performs well. The time we did do it, I cracked a joke onstage. I was fantastically nervous but I wanted to say something, just to rebel a bit, and that was the best I could do."

Was there, in fact, anything at all that he enjoyed about the years of Beatlemania?

"Oh sure. I dug the fame, the power, the money, and playing to big crowds. Conquering America was the best thing. You see, we wanted to be bigger than Elvis—that was the main thing. At first we wanted to be Goffin & King, then we wanted to be Eddie Cochran, then we wanted to be Buddy Holly, and finally we arrived at wanting to be bigger than the biggest—and that was Elvis.

"We reckoned we could make it because there were four of us. None of us would've made it alone, because Paul wasn't quite strong enough, I didn't have enough girl appeal, George was too quiet, and Ringo was the drummer. But we thought that everyone would be able to dig at least one

of us, and that's how it turned out."

When John returned his MBE in protest against Britain's involvement in the Vietnam and Biafra conflicts, he added, "And against 'Cold Turkey' slipping down the charts."

Does that mean that "Cold Turkey" is a specially important record for you?

"Yes, because it's MY record. When I wrote it I went to the other three Beatles and said, 'Hey lads, I think I've written a new single.' But they all said, 'Ummm... arrrrrr... welll...' because it was going to be my project, and so I thought, 'Bugger you! I'll put it out myself.'

That had happened once before, when I wanted to put 'Revolution' out as a single, but 'Hey Jude' went out instead."

Does that mean that Plastic Ono Band is, for John, a kind of alternative Beatles, particularly in view of Ringo's refusal to go on tour again?

"Yes, I suppose so. It's a way of getting my music out to the public. I don't bother so much about the others' songs. For instance, I don't give a damn about how 'Something' is doing in the charts—I watch 'Come Together', because that's my song."

Can he ever conceive of a time when he wouldn't want his songs to be on the same album as Paul's or George's?

"I can see it happening. The Beatles can go on appealing to a wide audience as long as they make albums like *Abbey Road*, which have nice little folk songs like 'Maxwell's Silver Hammer' for the grannies to dig.

"About 'Maxwell's Hammer'—well, all I can say is that I dig Engelbert Humperdinck as much as I dig John Cage, and I don't listen to either of them," he said with a marvellously relevant irrelevance. "I always wanted to have other people on our records, like the Stones and our other friends. But some of the others wanted to keep it tight—just like The Beatles, you know? But you wait—it's starting to get looser, and there should be some fantastic sessions in the next few years. That's what I wanted all along."

Going back to the past, did he enjoy doing The Beatles' two films, *Help!* and *A Hard Day's Night*?

"I dug *Hard Day's Night*, although Alun Owen only came with us for two days before he wrote the script. He invented that word 'grotty'—did you know that? We thought the word was really weird, and George curled up with embarrassment every time he had to say it. But it's part of the language now—you hear society people using it. Amazing.

"*Help!* was a drag, because we didn't know what was happening. In fact [Richard] Lester was a bit ahead of his time with the *Batman* thing, but we were on pot by then and all the best stuff is on the cutting-room floor, with us breaking up and falling about all over the place."

The present: has Allen Klein made an agreeable difference to Apple, which was bothering John the last time I spoke to him?

"Oh, it's really marvellous. People were very scared of him to start with—and some still are—but that's probably good. He's swept out all the rubbish and the deadwood, and stopped it being a resthouse for all the world's hippies. He won't let people order antique furniture for their offices and so forth; he's really tightened it up and it's starting to work a lot better.

"He's noticed that The Beatles had stopped selling records as they were doing around the world, and he found out that it was because the record company simply wasn't bothering to push them. They thought that our records would sell themselves, and they were wrong. They don't. If you can get to No 1 in Turkey, Greece, Switzerland and a couple of other countries then that's as good financially as getting a No 1 in Britain—they don't realise that.

"Klein's very good—he's going to make sure they stop sitting on the records and actually release them. He's even keeping tabs on me—I usually make mistakes about who to get in to survey my house, and I can spend a fortune without getting anything done. He's making sure that I do it the right way." *Richard Williams*

— MELODY MAKER DECEMBER 13 —

JOHN LENNON'S "PEACE Crusade" inspires a variety of emotions in people. Sadly, few of those emotions are worthy ones. John and Yoko have been mercilessly lampooned and vilified by the public and the mass media, and a great proportion of this reaction has been thoughtless and hurtful.

It would surely have been enough to make any lesser man, whose heart was not in his cause, retire from the field to a more comfortable, less





John and Yoko Ono share a cake at the Apple offices in London and (left) perform with the Plastic Ono Band at the Lyceum Ballroom in London, December 15, 1969

“We’re always together, like 24 hours of the day”

publicised existence. But not the Lennons. They have kept up their output of peaceful propaganda in the face of a ceaseless barrage of insults, and the time will surely come when even their most jaundiced and gout-ridden detractors will realise their essential honesty, and their right to exercise it in the way they most see fit.

But like it or not, John Lennon and his lovely wife are in the process of becoming leaders in the public eye. They stand for a cause, and as public figures they can be held responsible for the failings and excesses of that cause.

This is not how they want it. Leadership in any form is the last cloak which Lennon wishes to put on, as he told me.

“I’m not falling for that one. Like Peter Seeger said, we don’t have a leader but we have a song – ‘Give Peace A Chance’. So I refuse to be leader, and I’ll always show my genitals or do something which prevents me from being Martin Luther King or Ghandi and getting killed. Because that’s what happens to leaders. Our whole mistake is having leaders and people we can rely on or point a finger at.”

Yoko, as always at John’s side, chipped in: “For instance, many people say if you want to do that kind of thing, about peace, don’t do anything that is misleading like showing your genitals. Always keep a clean image so that people can believe in your peace movement.

“But that’s exactly what the establishment is doing (‘And that’s what the Beatles did too’ – John), taking their children to church on Sundays. This is showing that, ‘I’m the President of the United States and I’m alright and I’m healthy and very moral et cetera.’ You don’t get anywhere that way – you become just another hypocrite, and you’re playing the establishment game. We don’t want to do that. We try to be honest and the point is, if we are really honest, just to make it between us is a lifetime thing, and if we can’t make it together and endure each other, the world is nowhere.

“If ordinary couples can make it together and make it with their children and so forth, love-wise (‘She doesn’t mean ‘make it’ as you ‘lay’” – John), then you can look after the world.”

John continued, “One thing we’ve found out is that love is a great gift, like a precious flower or something. You have to feed it and look after it, and it has storms to go through and snow, but you have to protect it. It’s like a pet cat. You know, people get a cat and they don’t want to feed it, or they get a dog and they don’t want to walk it. But love has to be nurtured like a very sensitive animal, because that’s what it is.

“And you have to work at love; you don’t just sit round with it and it doesn’t just do it for you. You’ve got to be very careful with it; it’s the most delicate thing you can be given. It’s a very delicate situation.”

What will John and Yoko do about Vietnam and Biafra, which John mentioned in the letter that accompanied his MBE back to the Queen?

“We’ll keep promoting peace in the way we do, which, whichever way you look at it, is our way, because we’re artists and not politicians. We don’t organise; we do it in the best way we know

how, to make people aware that, if they want war to stop, only they can do it.

“The politicians can’t do it. I think our whole movement is successful, as shown by Nixon, who’s having to wriggle around a bit now and make propaganda films about the Moratorium claiming that the ‘silent majority’ is with him, with a highly polished Negro in an Italian suit saying how great it is to be American. Nixon has been moved by the peace movement – that includes John and Yoko and all the people in the world who are doing it, and that’s how we’re going to change it. We’re not going to Vietnam to die for it or going to Biafra to die for it. We’ve considered everything, not dying but going to the places.

“People prefer a dead saint to a living annoyance like John and Yoko. But we don’t intend to be dead saints for people’s convenience. They prefer Ghandi and Martin Luther King since they died, but you should see them in India now, celebrating Ghandi Year – anything less like Ghandi’s principles going on in India you’ve never seen. It’s a hoax. And so we don’t intend to be dead saints – or living saints either. People don’t like saints.”

Their highly unusual *Wedding Album* has caused its share of controversy. Why did they make it?

Yoko: “It’s like a diary, it reflects our love and peace ideas.”

John: “When people get married they usually make their own wedding albums. We’re public personalities and I’d enjoy reading Jackie and Onassis’ album. Our wedding was public, we we’re sharing our diaries and our feelings with the world. So one side shows our involvement with each other, and the other side shows what we do together outside of our involvement with each other, which is promote peace.”

Isn’t there a danger that the diary of Yoko and John will become too public?

“We have nothing to hide. ‘Everybody’s got something to hide except for me and my monkey’, you know? We keep certain parts of our life private because we’re not as wild as people think. I doubt if we’ll »

ever make love in public, or invite the TV cameras into our bedroom, and I doubt if I'll ever go to the toilet in public. Just because I think some things, I don't want to show that side of me."

Yoko: "We're from a certain generation, you can't deny that, and for people in our generation it is so difficult, and maybe the next John and Yoko will..."

"Show all," said John. "Maybe we will before we die. People hide themselves from each other all the time, and everybody's frightened of saying something nice about somebody in case they don't say anything nice back, or in case they get hurt, or of looking at somebody in case they say, 'What are you looking at?'"

"Everybody's so uptight and they're always building these walls around themselves. All you can do is try and break the walls down and show that there's nothing there but PEOPLE. It's just like looking in the mirror, there's nothing to worry about—it's only people."

Yoko: "And even we are not relaxed enough as people. We have many complexities and tensions. We try hard to be honest and expose ourselves, but there are certain things that we just can't... Maybe in the next generation they can, good luck to them. We're trying hard as we are"

John has always tried to carry out his philosophies and campaigns in a sense of fun. Are they, as some cynics suggest, in fact taking the mickey?

"That's true, although we're not taking the mickey. Everybody's frightened of being conned, of being tricked. If you say something nice to somebody they're not sure if you mean it, so that rather than respond to your loving movement they'll reject you, and that's what the press do. Because they're frightened of what we did with the MBE about the Biafra thing, they'll write about my Auntie Mimi's reaction to me giving the MBE back, because they don't want to fall for the con of 'Is he joking?'"

"Of course we're joking as well. We mustn't take ourselves too seriously, otherwise it's the end. We think the mistake of everyone—Ghandi and Martin Luther King AND the left wing AND the students and all society—is taking it too seriously. If you take it seriously, it IS serious. What we try and do is be non-serious about things, but we are very serious about being not serious."

Yoko: "We may be too serious, even. We try to have a sense of humour and we try to smile at everyone a really genuine smile from the bottom of our hearts. But it's very difficult for our generation to really genuinely smile, but we're trying."

John: "It's like when I sent the MBE back, and I wrote that it was against Britain's involvement in Biafra and Vietnam and against 'Cold Turkey' slipping down the charts. When we thought of that we were screaming with laughter, and so a few snobs and hypocrites got very upset about mentioning 'Cold Turkey' with the problem of Biafra and Vietnam, but that saved it from being too serious and being another colonel protesting! You have to try and do everything with humour, and keep smiling."

Richard Williams

— MELODY MAKER DECEMBER 20 —

FROM ALL THE publicity, welcome and unwelcome, that they have received during their two years together, John and Yoko Lennon might seem to have little or no private life together. In fact, they appear wilfully to present their joint life to the public, for that most altruistic and most misunderstood reason: to set a good example.

John has said in the past that he'd like them to be remembered as the Romeo and Juliet of the age, and when he says that I don't believe he's being egotistical. In fact the Lennons may, in a left-handed sort of way, be doing the establishment a favour—by bringing marriage back into fashion.

Like anybody else, they do have a more private side to their life, and John comments, "There's nothing I like more than to get home at the end of the day and sit next to Yoko and say, 'Well, we're together at last.' Although we may have been holding hands all day, it's not the same when we're working or talking to the press. We feel a hundred miles apart by comparison."

It's obvious that they have changed each other, the change in John being more noticeable because

we knew more of his earlier self. But how did meeting John change Yoko's life?

"He's changed everything in a sense that I was a very lonely person before I met him," she says. "Most people in the world are very lonely, that's the biggest problem, and because of their loneliness they become suspicious. And the reason we're lonely is because we can't communicate enough from the various complexes we have and from the various social habits we've created. We become very inhibited, but when I met John I started to open up a little, through love, you know, and that's the greatest thing that happened to me yet."

"There are various facets to my life and my personality, and I never met anybody else who could understand me. We understand each other so well, and I'm not lonely any more—which is a shocking experience, really. Also, through loneliness or something, I was starting to become a very firm and strong ego... but that's melting away, and it's very nice."

On the other side of the coin, how does John feel Yoko has changed him?

"Exactly the same, of course. I was lonely, and didn't have full communication with anybody and it took a bit of adjusting. She rediscovered or cultivated the thing that existed in me before I left Liverpool, maybe, and recultivated the natural John Lennon that had been lost in the Beatles thing and the worldwide thing. She encouraged me to be myself, because it was me that she fell in love with, not the Beatles or whatever I was."

"When you get sidetracked you believe it, and when you're in the dark you believe it. She came and reminded me that there was light, and when you remember there's light you don't want to get back in the dark again. That's what she did for me."

Yoko: "But you know I didn't do it intentionally or anything. It's the falling-in-love bit: you start to see all sorts of things that you don't see if you're not in love. I found that he has all these qualities that he was hiding away. Even in a practical sense, music-wise, he was doing all sorts of freaky things at home, just recording it on a cassette or something, but not really showing it publicly. Publicly he was doing The Beatles' things. But he showed me all these cassettes and things and I said, 'Why don't you produce these as records?'"

"I performed the role of a mirror in a way. He was doing all those things anyway—I didn't suggest them. It was there—and that goes for his drawing, paintings, and poetry too—especially his drawings. He's got a stack of beautiful drawings at home, and this one series he did is going to be produced as sort of lithograph. They're not like his cartoons—they're another kind of drawing. I think they're better than Picasso."

"She's biased," said John happily.

"You'll see them next year," continued Yoko. "And those things were always there in John—they just came out, but artists do need encouragement. We're always together, like 24 hours of the day. At the beginning, when we were less sure and we were still the previous us, once in a while when John was recording I'd go shopping on the King's Road or something—now we couldn't conceive of that."

"People say that if you're together 24 hours a day for two years you must get sick and tired of each other, but it's the contrary," asserted Yoko. "We got so addicted to that situation that we miss each other more. It's a very strange scene."

John: "Somebody said, 'Won't you get so reliant on each other that you can't manage without each other?' and we said yes! The only thing that could split us is death, and we have to face that... and we don't even believe we'll be split then, if we work on it. Our only worry in the world is that we die together, otherwise even if it's only three minutes later it's going to be hell. I couldn't bear three minutes of it."

"Most marriages have a little pretence going on, and we thought, 'Are we going to have to pretend that we're happy together because we daren't say that we want to be apart?' But that doesn't happen. When two of you are together, man and wife, there's nothing that can touch you. You have the power of two people, you have the protection—you don't need the society or the room or the uniform or the gun, because you have the power of two minds, which is a pretty powerful thing."

A major part of most marriages is childbearing. John and Yoko have one child each by their previous

"There isn't enough outlet for me in The Beatles"





I wanted out at one time. It was just that all my income was going in to Apple and being wasted by the joy-riding people who were here. We needed a businessman.

"I know that's what's going on all the time. People come to me and say, 'Paul wants this done, what do you think?', and they know damn well what I think and they say 'alright' and then they go to Paul and say, 'John wants this done, he's off again.' The result is that we kept sending in different instructions and nothing was being done. Like people anywhere, they were getting away with what they could. We were naive and stupid.

"What I want is for the freeloading to stop, but the old Apple spirit to remain. The spirit will be there, because if Apple is not a problem to The Beatles—which it was—it just can't help but get better. Our job is to put the creative side into Apple. If The Beatles never recorded together again, but each put their creative efforts though Apple... that at least would be better than me having a company, Paul having a company, George having a company, and Ringo having a company. Together we at least have that much more power.

"The only way we can help other artists at Apple is the same way the Beatles helped other artists... by breaking new barriers. That's what we didn't get before. We sat back, and we started to believe our own publicity, to tell ourselves how The Beatles helped people get long hair, and The Beatles started off this and the other.

"The Beatles split up? It just depends how much we all want to record together. I don't know if I want to record together again. I go off and on it. I really do. The problem is that in the old days, when we needed an album, Paul and I got together and produced enough songs for it. Nowadays, there's three of us writing prolifically and trying to fit it all onto one album. Or we have to think of a double album every time, which takes six months. That's the hang-up we have. It's not a personal 'The Beatles are fighting' thing, so much as an actual, physical problem.

"What do you do? I don't want to spend six months making an album I have two tracks on! And neither do Paul or George, probably. That's the problem. If we can overcome that, maybe it'll sort itself out. None of us want to be background musicians most of the time. It's a waste. We didn't spend 10 years making it to have the freedom of recording studios, to be able to have two tracks on an album.

"It's not like we spend our time wrestling in the studio trying to get our own songs on. We all do it the same way... we take it in turns to record a track. It's just that usually in the past, George lost out. Because Paul and I are tougher. It's nothing new, the way things are. It's human. We've always said we've had fights. It's no news that we argue. I'm more interested in my songs. Paul's more interested in his, and George is more interested in his. That's always been.

"This is why I've started with the Plastic Ono and working with Yoko... to have more outlet. There isn't enough outlet for me in the Beatles. The Ono Band is my escape valve. And how important that gets, as compared to The Beatles for me, I'll have to wait and see.

"You have to realise that there's a peculiar situation in that if 'Cold Turkey' had had the name 'Beatles' on it, probably it would have been a No 1. 'Cold Turkey' has got Ringo and me on, and yet half the Beatles tracks of *Abbey Road* I'm not on, or half the tracks on the double album—and even way back. Sometimes there might be only two Beatles on a track. It's got to the situation where if we have the name 'Beatle' on it, it sells. So you get to think, 'What are we selling? Do they buy it because it's worth it, or just because it says 'Beatles'?"

"George is in the same position. I mean, he's got songs he's been trying to get on since 1920. He's got to make an album of his own. And maybe if he puts 'Beatles' on the label rather than George Harrison, it might sell more. That's the drag. Of course we could each make an album and call it 'The Beatles'. But that would be cheating. And that's not my scene.

"Anyway, folks, remember the Plastic Ono Band LP from Toronto, released December the 12th, with a nice picture of the sky, and a fab calendar inside of a year's events with John and Yoko, with poetry and fun."

Alan Smith •

August 1969: Paul and Linda McCartney a week before the birth of their daughter Mary



marriages, and Yoko has had two miscarriages since they've been together.

How important do they think a child will be to their relationship?

"We're not even sure that we want children," said John. "We're that jealous. But if God or whoever gives us a child we'll accept it. Maybe we'd like two or three. But even then we have to consider: is a child going to interfere between us? How can we look after a child and be together 24 hours a day?"

Yoko: "It's not fair to the child, maybe, because we are so close. The child will be somebody that will be saying 'hello' once in a while."

John: "Obviously it'll probably be different if we have one, because all the times she's pregnant we consider it. We're full into it, wanting a child, but when you lose it and you get over the pain then you consider whether you wanted the child. Now maybe we had that in the back of our minds all along, and that's why she lost it. We don't really know whether we want one or not. If she gets pregnant we'll want one, but I'd like her not to be pregnant for a bit—she's been pregnant since I met her!

"I'd like her to stay slim for a year and then maybe have one. But we don't fancy birth pills, because I don't trust them and anything else is out of the question (*laughs*) because it's inconvenient. We're not like that—we try to act naturally at all times. That's one of our problems, besides death. It's in God's hands." *Richard Williams*

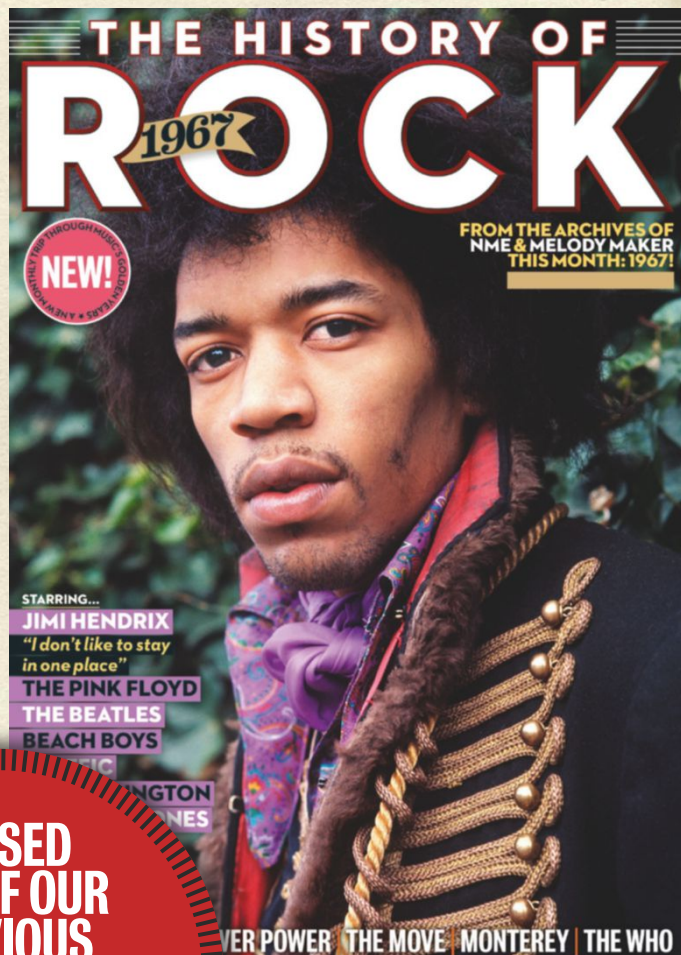
— NME DECEMBER 13 —

IMAYBE WRONG, and I hope I am, but these are dark days for The Beatles. A few days ago John and Yoko and I talked in a one-hour 15-minute exclusive interview. He was pleasant, together, straightforward, mellow and resolute, and only in references to Paul did his voice drop in doubt.

He told me, "Paul and I both have differences of opinion on how things should be run. But instead of it being a private argument about how an LP should be done, or a certain track, it's now a larger argument about the organisation of Apple itself. Whether we both want the same thing from Apple in the end is a matter of opinion. But how to achieve it—that's where we digress. Mainly, we disagree on the Klein bit. But you know, I don't really want to discuss Paul without him here. It's just that as far as I can see, Paul was always waiting for This Guy to just appear and come and save us from the mess we were in.

"I'm a quarter of this building and it became a question of whether I should pull my money out if I could—which I probably can't. I did say

BEATLES ARE ON THE BRINK OF SPLITTING



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MM OCT-DEC Lennon, Townshend and Bruford – plus a few readers – write...

BESIDE THE C-SIDE

A fortnight ago *MM*'s Richard Williams reviewed *Wedding Album* by John and Yoko Lennon, commenting in particular on two sides of the "double album" which in fact consisted throughout of an engineer's test signal. Last week he received the following telegram from John and Yoko in Bombay:

DEAR RICHARD THANK YOU FOR YOUR FANTASTIC REVIEW ON OUR WEDDING ALBUM INCLUDING C-AND-D SIDES. WE ARE CONSIDERING IT FOR OUR NEXT RELEASE. MAYBE YOU ARE RIGHT IN SAYING THAT THEY ARE THE BEST SIDES STOP WE BOTH FEEL THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME A CRITIC TOPPED THE ARTIST. WE ARE NOT JOKING. LOVE AND PEACE STOP JOHN AND YOKO LENNON
(*MM* Nov 29)

SHAKY OFFER

We understand that John Lennon wants to join a '56-type rock'n'roll outfit. Well, if he's still got the white drape suit he wore in Canada and if he knows all the words to "At The Hop", then we'll give the kid a break. Rock on.

SHAKIN' STEVENS, *The Sunsets*, Penarth, Glamorgan (*MM* Oct 4)

NOCTURNAL OMISSIONS

"Je T'Aime" may be an immortal record, likewise "Wet Dream", and the BBC may be justified in banning these songs. But when a song reaches the Top 5 then *Top Of The Pops* should play the number whether they approve of it or not.

JOHN DUNNE, Ripon, Yorkshire.
(*MM* Oct 25)

A WELL DISRESPECTFUL MAN

I have just heard the new record "Shangri-La" by The Kinks, and I am disgusted. Not by the banality of the music – I am no expert on that, so I shan't pursue the subject – but by the sentiments expressed in the song. Once again, they are on the kick of mocking the little man in his mortgaged semi, who catches the train to work every morning.

What is it about these people that stirs up such hilarity in Ray Davies? That he mocks them because they cannot, unlike him,

afford to buy a large house outright, because their jobs, unlike his, do not allow them to travel the world and virtually work when they please, seems to me an excess of bad manners.

So these houses look all the same – can they help that? So they pay for their radios and televisions on the HP – he must remember that it was exposure on these media that was largely responsible for the initial success of The Kinks. These people are all, well, PEOPLE. They possess the facility to love and be happy, and if some of them lack tolerance, Mr Davies scarcely provides a mode.
PAULINE EDMONDSON, Watford, Herts (*MM* Sept 20)



Mailbag recently published a letter from Pauline Edmondson saying she was "disgusted" by The Kinks' latest record, in which Ray Davies continues his tune of the little man and the mortgage and the steady job. Now comes a letter from Peter Townshend of The Who:

I leap from the railings, sword in hand, in defence of "Shangri-La". Ray Davies is a man who few people know very well. I don't know him but I know someone who does. This confirmed my suspicion that it's not cynicism at the root of Ray's writing – he loves the working class and their simple ways more than anybody since George Formby. His songs – and this applies to almost all of them – are hymns to the English way of life. Particularly to the people who don't always get what they want. Look a little further along the line and I think you'll become as big a Kinks fan as I am.
PETE TOWNSHEND (*MM* Oct 4)

OFFBEAT COMMENT

REGGAE – is it a rival to rock, or rhythmic rot? This is the question pop fans must be asking themselves as we see yesterday's

joke music taking over the chart. While I have nothing against West Indian pop – a lot of it is fun and good dance music – it's "skinhead" associations are odious to any half-educated mind, and the sudden fantastic lowering of musical standards, after such a long fight to improve them, can only be a disappointment. But perhaps reggae will get better – that tenor solo on "Return Of Django" and the cellos on Jimmy Cliff's hit are good omens for the future!

ERIC WENTWORTH, Oldham, Lancs (*MM* Nov 29)

RAVING ON

BLIND FAITH'S recent recording of Buddy Holly's "Well All Right" is evidence of the continuing influence of the late rock'n'roll singer 10 years after his death.

In case there are still some in doubt, let them listen to "Here Comes The Sun" on the new Beatles album. Holly really was 10 years ahead of his time.

MALCOLM JONES, London, SW5
(*MM* Oct 4)

FIVE-POINTED STARS

It is ironic in the so-called era of supergroups that the Pentangle get no recognition at all. Surely a great group with such individual artists like Bert Jansch, John Renbourn and Jacqui McShee must rate as the first supergroup.

JOHN SMITH, Nottingham
(*MM* Oct 4)

GRAHAM BOND'S YES MAN

Chris Welch and I fortunately agree on many subjects, but the most important single fact emerging from these hours of intoxicated discussion, is that "Wade In The Water" by The Graham Bond Organisation of 1965 is the most exciting two-and-a-half minutes ever recorded by a contemporary small band.

Were that masterpiece, and the equally magnificent "Love Come Shining Through", of the same period, to be released now, not only would that organisation receive the credit it deserved, but these guitar-less recordings would give a much-deserved break to tenor and alto horn players in the field of contemporary electric music.

BILL BRUFORD (drummer with Yes), London SW6 (*MM* Dec 20)

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MONTH BY MONTH



Coming next... in 1970!

SO... **THAT WAS** 1969. Hope it blew your mind. But that's far from it from our reporters on this heavy beat. The staffers of *NME* and *Melody Maker* enjoyed unrivalled access to the biggest stars of the time, and cultivated a feel for the rhythms of a diversifying scene; as the times changed, so did they. While in pursuit of the truth, they unearthed stories that have come to assume mythical status.

That's very much the territory of this monthly magazine. Each month, *The History Of Rock* will be bringing you verbatim reports from the pivotal events in pop culture, one year a month, one year at a time. Next up, 1970!

FLEETWOOD MAC

IT'S ALL CHANGE for these non-purist leaders of the British heavy blues boom. Guitar genius Peter Green feels himself being sidelined in his own group and "not happy with the way my life is being run". Drastic upheaval, suddenly, is afoot.

THE FACES

IN 1969 STEVE Marriott promised that "two good things would come out of one good thing". He was absolutely right! After his own Humble Pie, we meet the remainder of the split Small Faces – now with the addition of guitarist Ron Wood and the singer Rod Stewart. They are the Faces, and we'll drink to that!

LED ZEPPELIN

ANOTHER EXTRAORDINARY YEAR for the artists one Scottish paper mistakenly calls "Ned Zeppelin". The mighty band get their heads together acoustically in the country – and make *Led Zeppelin III* – but also share their thoughts with the press. Jimmy Page is profiled in depth, as is Robert Plant. "I don't think I've got any bother," he remarks, truthfully.

PLUS

Syd Barrett!

Soft Machine!

Mott the Hoople!

THE HISTORY OF **ROCK**

Every month, we revisit long-lost *NME* and *Melody Maker* interviews and piece together *The History Of Rock*. This month: 1969 — the year of the free concert and the super-session. “I’m free/To sing my song/Though it gets out of time...”



Relive the year...

THE ROLLING STONES PLAYED HYDE PARK

DAVID BOWIE WENT INTO SPACE

LED ZEPPELIN BROKE AMERICA

...and JOHN LENNON, FLEETWOOD MAC, NINA SIMONE,
THE WHO and CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG and many more
shared everything with *NME* and *MELODY MAKER*

More from **UNCUT**...

